
ישעיהו • ISAIAH

INTRODUCTION

The prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, proclaimed his message to Jerusalem and Judah from 742 until 701 BCE (some believe until 687 BCE), that critical period in which the Northern Kingdom was annexed to the Assyrian Empire (2K 17) while Judah lived uneasily in its shadow as a tributary (2Ch 28:21). Nothing is known about the early life of the prophet, though it has been conjectured from certain aspects of his message and from 6:1–8 that he may have been a priest.

Isaiah was one of the most popular books among Jews of the Second Temple Period (*circa* 515 BCE – 70 CE). In Christian circles, it was held in such high regard as to be known as the ‘Fifth Gospel’. Its influence extends far beyond Judaism and Christianity and it has made significant contributions to Western literature and culture.

Almost the entire text of the Book of Isaiah is found in the Qumran Scroll designated *1QIsa^a* (also known as “The Great Isaiah Scroll”). The scroll, written on 17 sheets of parchment, is large and is notable in being the only Qumran manuscript to be preserved (almost) entirely. The text of the Greek *Septuagint* frequently differs markedly from that of the *Masoretic Text* (which is in good concordance with that of *1QIsa^a*); significant differences between *MSS* are mentioned in the footnotes.

AUTHORSHIP AND DATES

It is virtually impossible that Isaiah wrote the entire book as it now stands and there has clearly been significant editing after his time. However, there is no reason to doubt that (most of) the prophecies in the first part of the book (Chs 1–35) were originally proclaimed by Isaiah, with an historical summary (largely copied from *Second Kings*) added by the editor (Chs 36–39).

The prophecies of Chs 40–55 are generally attributed to an anonymous prophet, most likely active during the last phase of the Exile (around 540 BCE), to whom the title, ‘Second Isaiah’, is often attached. These prophecies display a very different historical background, literary style, and theological perspective.

The last part of the book (Chs 56–66) contains a mixture of prophecies that appear to originate from different times and authors. Some seem clearly post-Exilic, while others can be (and have been) attributed to Isaiah himself. The section is sometimes referred to as ‘Third Isaiah’.

ישעיהו פרק א

א חֲזֹן יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ בֶן־אֲמוֹץ אֲשֶׁר חָזָה עַל־יְהוּדָה
וּירוּשָׁלַם בִּימֵי עֲזִיָּהוּ יוֹתָם אָחָז יְחִזְקִיָּהוּ מְלָכֵי
יְהוּדָה:

ב שָׁמְעוּ שָׁמַיִם וְהָאֲרֶץ
כִּי יְהוָה דֹּבֵר
בָּנִים גִּדַּלְתִּי וְרוֹמַמְתִּי
וְהֵם פָּשְׁעוּ בִּי:
ג יָדַע שׂוֹר קִנְיָהּ וַחֲמֹר אֲבוֹס בְּעָלָיו
יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יָדַע עַמִּי לֹא הִתְבּוֹנֵן:
ד הוּא גֹי חָטָא
עִם כָּבֵד עֹזֵן זֶרַע מִרְעִים
בָּנִים מִשְׁחִיתִים עֲזָבוּ אֶת־יְהוָה
נֶאֱצָו אֶת־קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל
נָזְרוּ אַחֲזֹר:

ISAIAH 1

¹ The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz concerning Judah and Jerusalem,
which he received in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah,
kings of Judah.

² Listen, you heavens; earth, attend,
for Yahweh is speaking,
“I have reared children and brought them up,
but they have rebelled against me.

³ The ox knows its owner and the donkey its master’s crib;
Israel does not know; my people do not understand.”

⁴ Woe to the sinful nation,
people weighed down with guilt,
seed of wrongdoers, perverted children!
They have despised Yahweh, despised the Holy One of Israel;
they have turned away from him.

ISAIAH 1

- ¹ ‘Judah and Jerusalem’ is to be taken not in a geographical sense but as a designation for the chosen people, for whose instruction all the prophecies are uttered, even those concerning the Northern Kingdom and foreign peoples. The name, ‘Isaiah’, means ‘Yahweh gives salvation’.
- ² Heaven and earth are summoned as witnesses in God’s lawsuit against his people (see Dt 4:26, 30:19, 32:1, Ps 50:4). The following poem refers to the devastation of the country and the siege of Jerusalem, either by Sennacherib in 701 BCE (see 36:1ff, 2K 18:13ff) or by Tiglath-Pileser III, during the Syro-Ephraimite War of 735 BCE (see 7:1–2, 2K 16:5–9).
- ³ The biblical word ‘know’ implies a profound, identifying comprehension of the right relationship with God; it is a recurring prophetic theme (Jr 1:5, Ho 2:20, 4:1, 1, 5:4).
- ⁴ The ‘Holy One of Israel’ is Isaiah’s favourite way of referring to Yahweh (see #6:3). For ‘seed’, the NJB has ‘race’ and the WEBBE has ‘offspring’.

ה על־מָה תִּכּוּ עוֹד תּוֹסִיפוּ סָרָה
 כֹּל־רֹאשׁ לַחֲלִי וְכָל־לֵבָב דּוֹי:
 ו מִכַּף־רֶגֶל וְעַד־רֹאשׁ אֵין־בּוֹ מֵתָם פָּצַע
 וְחִבּוּרָהּ וּמָכָה טְרִיָּה לֹא־זָרוֹ
 וְלֹא חֲפָשׂוּ וְלֹא רִפְּכָה בְּשֶׁמֶן:
 ז אֲרָצְכֶם שְׁמָמָה עָרֵיכֶם שָׂרָפוֹת אֵשׁ
 אֲדַמְתֶּכֶם לְנִגְדְּכֶם זָרִים אֹכְלִים אֹתָהּ
 וּשְׁמָמָה כְּמַהֲפַכַת זָרִים:
 ח וְנוֹתָרָה בַּת־צִיּוֹן כְּסֻכָּה בְּכָרֶם
 כְּמִלּוּנָה בְּמִקְשָׁה כְּעִיר נְצוּרָה:
 ט לֹאִלִּי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת הוֹתִיר לָנוּ שְׂרִיד כְּמַעֲט
 כְּסֻדָּם הָיִינוּ לַעֲמָרָה דְּמִינוּ: {פ}
 י שְׁמַעוּ דְּבַר־יְהוָה קָצִינוּ סֻדָּם
 הֶאֱזִינוּ תוֹרַת אֱלֹהֵינוּ עִם עֲמָרָה:
 יא לְמָה־לִּי רַב־זִבְחֵיכֶם יֹאמֶר יְהוָה
 שְׁבַעְתִּי עֹלֹת אֵילִים וַחֲלֹב מְרִיאִים
 וְדָם פָּרִים וְכִבְשִׁים וְעִתּוּדִים לֹא חִפַּצְתִּי:

5 Where shall I strike you next, if you persist in treason?
 The whole head is sick; the whole heart is diseased.
 6 From the sole of the foot to the head, there is nothing healthy:
 only wounds, bruises, and open sores,
 not dressed, not bandages, not soothed with ointment.
 7 Your country lies desolate, your towns burnt down;
 in your very presence, foreigners lay it waste;
 it is desolate, like devastation by foreigners.
 8 The daughter of Zion is left like a shanty in a vineyard,
 like a shed in a cucumber field, like a city besieged.
 9 Had Yahweh Sabaoth not left us a few survivors,
 we would be like Sodom, we should be the same a Gomorrah.
 10 Hear what Yahweh says, you rulers of Sodom;
 listen to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah.
 11 "What are your endless sacrifices to me?" says Yahweh.
 "I am sick of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of calves.
 I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs, and goats.

5 In vv. 5–9, Isaiah addresses the battered nation (5–8) and speaks as their representative (9).
 6 Vv. 6–9, which in their literal sense refer to the people of Judah punished for their sins, have been applied to the Passion of Christ.
 7 The last line follows the *MT*; the term translated as ‘devastation’ invariably designates the punishment suffered by Sodom and Gomorrah (see vv. 9–10). Hence, the frequent emendation of ‘by foreigners’ to ‘of Sodom’; but none of the ancient *MSS* supports this.
 8 The ‘*Daughter of Zion*’ is a personification of the city of Jerusalem (10:32, 16:1, *et cetera*) or of its population (37:22, Lm 4:22, Zp 3:14).
 9 The translation here follows the *MT* accents, indicating that כְּמַעֲט (*‘like a little’*) goes with ‘survivors’.
 10 The word here translated as ‘teaching’ is תוֹרַת, which more often means ‘law’.
 11 The verb שְׁבַעְתִּי (*‘I am sick’*) is often used of eating or drinking one’s fill; God here declares that he has eaten and drunk, as it were, his fill.

יב כִּי תֵבֹאוּ לִרְאוֹת פָּנַי
 מִי־בִקֵּשׁ זֹאת מִיִּדְכֶם רִמָּס חֲצֵרִי:
 יג לֹא תוֹסִיפוּ הֵבִיא מִנְחַת־שָׁוָא
 קִטְרֶת תוֹעֵבָה הִיא לִי
 חֹדֶשׁ וְשַׁבָּת קָרָא מִקְרָא
 לֹא־אוֹכֵל אֹזֶן וְעֶצְרָה:
 יד חֲדָשִׁיכֶם וּמוֹעֲדֵיכֶם שִׁנְאַה נִפְשִׁי
 הֵיוּ עָלַי לְטָרַח נִלְאִיתִי נִשְׂאָ:
 טו וּבִפְרִשְׁכֶם כַּפֵּיכֶם אֲעֲלִים עֵינַי מִכֶּם
 גַּם כִּי־תִרְבוּ תַפְלָה אֵינֹנִי שֹׁמֵעַ
 יִדְיֶכֶם דָּמִים מְלֹאוּ:
 טז רַחֲצוּ הַזֵּכּוֹ הִסִּירוּ רָע מֵעַלְלֵיכֶם מִגֵּד עֵינַי
 חֲדָלוּ הָרָע: י' לִמְדוּ הֵיטֵב דִּרְשׁוּ מִשְׁפָּט
 אֲשֶׁר־וּ חֲמוֹץ שִׁפְטוֹ יִתּוֹם רִיבוֹ אֲלִמְנָה: {ס}
 יח לְכוּ־נָא וְנוֹכַחַה יֹאמֶר יְהוָה אִם־יְהִיו
 חַטָּאֵיכֶם כַּשָּׁנִים כַּשָּׁלֹג יִלְבִּינוּ

- 12 When you enter my presence,
 who has asked you to trample through my courts?
 13 Bring no more futile cereal offerings:
 their smoke is an abomination to me.
 New Moons, Sabbaths, and assemblies:
 I cannot endure solemnity combined with guilt.
 14 Your New Moons and your assemblies I utterly detest;
 to me, they are a burden I am tired of bearing.
 15 When you stretch out your hands, I turn my eyes away.
 You may multiply your prayers – I shall not be listening.
 Your hands are full of blood.
 16 Wash! Clean yourselves! Remove your sinful deeds
 from my sight. Stop sinning. 17 Learn to do good; seek justice;
 discipline the violent; defend the orphan, plead for the widow.
 18 “Come, let us talk this over,” says Yahweh.
 “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow;

12 An alternative reading for ‘enter my presence’ is ‘see my face’.

13 Note other practices that God regards as ‘abominations’: homosexuality (Lv 18:22–30, 20:13), idolatry (Dt 7:25, 13:15), human sacrifice (Dt 12:31), eating unclean animals (Dt 14:3–8), sacrificing defective animals (Dt 17:1), occult activities (Dt 18:9–14), and ritual prostitution (1K 14:23).

14 The NJB has ‘meetings’ in place of ‘assemblies’, here following NETB.

15 The ‘blood’ refers to that of sacrificial animals, but also of innocent people.

16 Having demonstrated the people’s guilt, God calls them to repentance, which will involve concrete action, not mere emotion.

17 Orphans and widows, being economically weak, are protected by the Law (Ex 22:21–22, Dt 10:18, 14:29, 27:19, *et cetera*) and the prophets frequently plead their cause (Jr 7:6, 22:3). See, by way of contrast, Is 1:23, 9:16, Jr 49:10–11, Ezk 22:7.

18 Like judgement (Ps 9:7–8), forgiveness of sins is a divine prerogative (see #Ex 34:6, Ho 11:8–9).

אִם־יִאֲדִימוּ כְּתוֹלַעַ כְּצֶמֶר יִהְיוּ:
 יט אִם־תֵּאָב֡וּ וּשְׁמַעְתֶּם
 טוֹב הָאָרֶץ תֹּאכְלוּ:
 כ וְאִם־תִּמָּאֲנוּ וּמְרִיתֶם חֶרֶב תֹּאכְלוּ
 כִּי פִי יְהוָה דִּבֶּר: {פ}
 כא אֵיכָה הִיְתָה לְזוֹנָה קִרְיָה נְאֻמָּנָה
 מְלֹאֲתִי מִשְׁפָּט צֶדֶק
 ילִין בָּהּ וְעֵתָה מִרְצָחִים:
 כב כֶּסֶף הָיָה לְסִיגִים
 סִבְאָן מִהוֹל בִּמְיָם:
 כג שְׂרִיף סוֹרְרִים וְחִבְרֵי גִנְבִים
 כָּלֹו אֶהֱב שָׁחַד וְרֹדֶף שְׁלֹמִים
 יתוֹם לֹא יִשְׁפֹּטוּ
 וְרֵיב אֶלְמָנָה לֹא־יָבֹא אֲלֵיהֶם: {ס}
 כד לָכֵן נָאִם הָאֲדוֹן יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
 אֲבִיר יִשְׂרָאֵל
 הוֹי אֲנַחֵם מִצָּרִי
 וְאֲנַקְמָה מֵאוֹיְבֵי:

though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.

- 19 If you are willing and obey,
you shall eat the good things of the earth.
- 20 But, if you refuse and rebel, the sword shall eat you instead –
for Yahweh’s mouth has spoken.”
- 21 The faithful city – what a harlot she has become!
She was once full of justice,
fairness used to dwell in her, but now assassins!
- 22 Your silver has turned into dross
and your wine is watered.
- 23 Your princes are rebels, accomplices of brigands,
all of them greedy for presents and eager for bribes;
they show no justice to the orphan,
and the widow’s cause never reaches them.
- 24 Hence, says the Lord Yahweh Sabaoth,
the Mighty One of Israel:
“I shall pour out my wrath on my enemies
and avenge myself on my foes.

19 The literal translation of ‘obey’ is ‘listen’.

20 The ‘sword’ (the invasion with all its attendant disasters) is still only a threat, which may be removed by submitting to God (v. 19).

21 The NJB, following the LXX (Σίων) and the *Vetus Latina*, opens with the name ‘Zion’; here, we follow the MT (& NRSV), which omits the name.

22 The opening pronoun is feminine singular: personified Jerusalem (see v. 21) is addressed.

23 Isaiah may have chosen the word for ‘presents’ (שְׁלֹמִים, a *hapax legomena*), as a sarcastic pun on what these rulers should have been doing: instead of attending to peace and wholeness (שָׁלוֹם), they sought after payoffs (שְׁלֹמִים).

24 The literal translation of ‘pour out my wrath’ (here following the NRSV) is ‘console myself’.

כה ואשיבה ידי עליך
 ואצורף כבֹר סִגְיִךְ
 ואסירה כָּל־בְּדִילֶיךָ:
 כו ואשיבה שפְּטֶיךָ כְּבִרְאשֹׁנָה
 ויעצֶיךָ כְּבִתְחִלָּה
 אַחֲרֵי־כֵן יִקְרָא לְךָ
 עִיר הַצֶּדֶק קִרְיָה נְאֻמָּנָה:
 כז צִיּוֹן בַּמִּשְׁפָּט תִּפְדֶּה
 וְשָׁבִיָּה בַצִּדְקָה:
 כח וְשֹׁבֵר פִּשְׁעִים וְחַטָּאִים יִחָדּוּ
 וְעֹזְבֵי יְהוָה יָכֻלוּ:
 כט כִּי יִבְשׁוּ מַאֲיִלִּים אֲשֶׁר חֲמַדְתֶּם
 וְתַחֲפְרוּ מִהַגְנוֹת אֲשֶׁר בָּחַרְתֶּם:
 ל כִּי תִהְיוּ כְּאֵלֶּה נִבְלַת עֵלֶּה
 וְכִגְנָה אֲשֶׁר־מִים אֵין לָהּ:
 לא וְהָיָה הַחֹסֶן לְנִעֲרֹת וּפְעֻלּוֹ לְנִיצוֹץ
 וּבָעֲרוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחַד וְאֵין מְכַבֵּה: {פ}

- 25 I will turn my hand against you;
 I will purge your dross as with flux;
 I will remove all your alloy.
 26 And I will restore you judges as at first,
 your counsellors as in the beginning;
 then will be called City of Righteousness,
 the Faithful City."
 27 Zion shall be redeemed by fair judgement,
 and those who repent, by saving justice.
 28 Rebels and sinners will be destroyed together,
 and those who abandon Yahweh will perish.
 29 For, you will be ashamed of the oaks in which you delighted;
 and you will blush for the gardens that you chose!
 30 For, you will be like an oak with faded leaves,
 like a garden without water.
 31 The strong will become like tinder, his work like the spark;
 both will burn together, with no one to quench them.

25 'Flux' here refers to minerals added to the metals in a furnace to prevent oxides from forming; the WEBBE has 'tin' in place of 'alloy'.

26 A proper name defines the nature of the being that bears it and fixes its destiny – cf. the Jacob (Gn 25:26, 27:36) and his sons (Gn 29:31–30:24).

27 The 3rd person reference to Yahweh in v. 28 indicates that the prophet is again speaking (see vv. 21–24^a).

28 Vv. 27–28, forming a somewhat prosaic commentary on the foregoing, have perhaps been added by one of Isaiah's disciples.

29 The trees were not cult objects, but sheltered religious practices borrowed from the Canaanites (see #Dt 12:2).

30 An alternative reading for 'garden' is 'orchard'.

31 The word 'like' is not in the MT but is here added for clarity.

ישעיהו פרק ב

ISAIAH 2

^א ¹ הדְּבַר אֲשֶׁר חָזָה יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ בֶן־אֲמוֹץ עַל־יְהוּדָה וְיְרוּשָׁלַם: ¹ The vision that Isaiah son of Amoz saw, concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

- ^ב וְהָיָה | בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים
נִכְוֵן יִהְיֶה הָר בֵּית־יְהוָה בְּרֹאשׁ הַהָרִים
וְנִשָּׂא מִגְבָּעוֹת
וְנִהְרֻ אֵלָיו כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם:
^ג וְהָלְכוּ עַמִּים רַבִּים
וְאָמְרוּ לָכוּ | וְנַעֲלֶה אֶל־הַר־יְהוָה
אֶל־בֵּית אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב
וְיִרְנֻ מִדְּרָכָיו
וְנִלְכֶה בְּאַרְחֹתָיו
כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תוֹרָה
וּדְבַר־יְהוָה מִירוּשָׁלַם:
^ד וְשִׁפְט בֵּין הַגּוֹיִם
וְהוֹכִיחַ לְעַמִּים רַבִּים
- ² In days to come,
the mountain of Yahweh's house will endure
as the highest mountain,
raised above the hills; all the nations will stream to it.
- ³ Many peoples will come and say,
"Let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh,
to the house of the God of Jacob,
that he may teach us his ways
and we may walk in his ways."
For the Law will issue from Zion
and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem.
- ⁴ He shall judge between the nations
and arbitrate between many peoples.

ISAIAH 2

- ¹ This new title introduces the small collection of prophecies comprising Chs 2-5.
- ² The literal translation of the 1st line is '*in the end of days*': this phrase may refer generally to the future or, more technically, to the final period of history. The verse begins with a verb that functions as a 'discourse particle' (וְהָיָה) and is not translated; in numerous places throughout the OT, the 'to be' verb with a prefixed conjunction occurs in this fashion to introduce a circumstantial clause and does not require translation.
- ³ In this context, God's '*ways*' are the standards of moral conduct he decrees that people should live by.
- ⁴ The NJB has '*sickles*' in place of '*pruning hooks*', here following the NRSV & NETB; the implement – a short knife with a curved hook at the end, sharpened on the inside – was used to prune vines.

וְכָתְתוּ חֶרְבוֹתָם לְאֵתִים
וְחִנִּיתוּתֵיהֶם לְמִזְמֵרוֹת
לֹא־יִשָּׂא גֹי אֶל־גֹּי חֶרֶב
וְלֹא־יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד מִלְחָמָה: {פ}

ה בית יַעֲקֹב

לָכוּ וְנִלְכֶּה בְּאֹר יְהוָה:

ו כי נִטְשָׁתָה עַמּוּךְ בֵּית יַעֲקֹב

כי מִלֵּא מִקְדָּם וְעַנְגִּים כַּפְלִשְׁתִּים

וּבִילְדֵי נִכְרִים יִשְׁפִּיקוּ:

ז וּתְמֵלֵא אֶרֶצוֹ בְּסֶף וְזָהָב וְאִין קֶצֶה לְאַצְרֹתָיו

וּתְמֵלֵא אֶרֶצוֹ סוּסִים וְאִין קֶצֶה לְמַרְכָּבָתָיו:

ח וּתְמֵלֵא אֶרֶצוֹ אֱלִילִים

לְמַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו יִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ

לְאִשֶּׁר עָשׂוּ אֶצְבָּעֹתָ:

ט וַיִּשַׁח אָדָם וַיִּשְׁפֹּל־אִישׁ

וְאֶל־תִּשָּׂא לָהֶם:

They shall beat their swords into ploughshares,

and their spears into pruning hooks.

Nation will not lift sword against nation;

no longer will they learn how to make war.

⁵ House of Jacob,

come, let us walk in Yahweh's light.

⁶ You have rejected your people, House of Jacob,

for it has long been full of sorcerers like the Philistines,

and they clasp hands with foreigners.

⁷ The country is full of silver and gold, and treasures unlimited;

the country is full of horses, its chariots are unlimited.

⁸ The country is full of idols;

they worship the work of their hands,

what their own fingers have made.

⁹ And so, people are humbled, everyone brought low:

do not forgive them!

⁵ In this context, 'Yahweh's light' refers to his moral standards by which he seeks to guide his people.

⁶ The poem of vv. 6–21, the unity of which is attested by the repetition of the same phrases (vv. 9, 11, 17 and 10, 19, 21), dates from the first period of Isaiah's activity, when Judah was enjoying a long period of prosperity under Uzziah and Jotham.

The frequent emendation of 'long' (מִקְדָּם) to 'of divination' (מִקְסָם) is not here followed (unlike in the NRSV). It does, however, justify the 'and' occurring in the text before 'sorcerers', which is here omitted (following the NJB).

⁷ Judah's royal bureaucracy had accumulated great wealth and military might, in violation of Dt 17:16–17.

⁸ A more literal translation of 'worship' is 'bow down to'.

⁹ The literal translation of the last line is 'do not lift them up'; the verb 'lift up' (תִּשָּׂא) can be an idiom for 'forgive' or 'spare'. Since the verbs שְׁפֹל and שָׁח are used later in this discourse to describe how God will humiliate proud men (see vv. 11, 17), some understand v. 9^a as a prediction

י בוא בצור והטמן בעפר
 מפני פחד יהוה ומהדר גאנו:
 יא עיני גבהות אדם שפל
 ושח רום אנשים
 ונשגב יהוה לבדו ביום ההוא: {פ}
 יב כי יום ליהוה צבאות
 על כל-גאה ורם
 ועל כל-נשא ושפל
 יג ועל כל-ארצי הלבנון הרמים והנשאים
 ועל כל-אלוני הבשן:
 יד ועל כל-ההרים הרמים
 ועל כל-הגבעות הנשאות:
 טו ועל כל-מגדל גבה
 ועל כל-חומה בצורה:

10 Go into the rock; hide in the dust,
 in terror of Yahweh and the glory of his majesty.
 11 Haughty eyes shall be brought low,
 pride shall be humbled,
 and Yahweh alone shall be exalted, on that day.
 12 That will be a day for Yahweh Sabaoth,
 for all who are majestic and haughty,
 and for all who are proud, to be brought low,
 13 and for all the cedars of Lebanon, high and proud,
 and for all the oaks of Bashan,
 14 and for all the high mountains
 and for all the lofty hills,
 15 and for every high tower
 and for every fortified wall,

of judgment; however, these prefixed verbal forms with *vav* (ו) consecutive appear to carry on the description that precedes and are better taken with the accusation.

- 10 The NJB, following the LXX (ὅταν ἀναστῇ ῥαῦσαι τῆν γῆν) adds the following line: “when he arises to make the earth quake;” here, we follow the MT & NRSV.
- 11 The repetition of the verbs שפל and שח from v. 9 draws attention to the appropriate nature of the judgment: those proud men who worship idols will be forced to bow before God when he judges their sin.
- 12 On the ‘Day of Yahweh’, see #Am 5:18. Here, Yahweh’s intervention is described as an earthquake (vv. 10, 19, 21); in place of ‘for’, here following the NJB, the NRSV opens the 2nd and 3rd lines with ‘against’.
- 13 The ‘cedars of Lebanon’ and ‘oaks of Bashan’ were well-known for their size and prominence; they make apt symbols here for powerful men who think of themselves as prominent and secure.
- 14 The ‘high mountains’ and ‘lofty hills’ symbolise the apparent security of proud men.
- 15 The ‘high tower’ and ‘fortified wall’ are also symbols of pride.

טז וְעַל כָּל־אֲנִיּוֹת תַּרְשִׁישׁ
 וְעַל כָּל־שִׁכִּיּוֹת הַחֲמֻדָּה:
 יז וְשַׁח גְּבוּהוֹת הָאָדָם
 וְשַׁפֵּל רוּם אָנָשִׁים
 וְנִשְׁגָּב יְהוָה לְבָדּוֹ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא:
 יח וְהָאֱלִילִים כָּלִיל יִחְלָף:
 יט וּבָאוּ בַּמְעֲרוֹת צְרִים
 וּבְמַחֲלֹת עָפָר
 מִפְּנֵי פֶחַד יְהוָה וּמִהֲדָר גָּאוֹנוֹ
 בְּקוֹמוֹ לְעֶרֶץ הָאָרֶץ:
 כ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִשְׁלִיךְ הָאָדָם
 אֶת אֱלִילֵי כֶסֶף
 וְאֶת אֱלִילֵי זָהָב
 אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ־לָו לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת
 לַחֲפָר פְּרוֹת וּלְעִטְלָפִים:
 כא לְבוֹא בְּנִקְרוֹת הַצְּרִים

16 and for all the ships of Tarshish
 and for all the beautiful ships.
 17 Human pride will be humbled,
 human arrogance brought low,
 and Yahweh alone shall be exalted, on that day.
 18 The idols shall utterly pass away.
 19 Enter the caves of rock
 and the holes of the ground,
 in terror of Yahweh, at the glory of his majesty,
 when rises to terrify the earth.
 20 On that day, people will throw away
 their idols of silver
 and their idols of gold,
 which they made for themselves to worship,
 to the moles and to the bats,
 21 and enter the caves of the rocks

16 The text of the last line is uncertain; the NJB reads, 'and for all that is held precious'.

17 As in v. 11, the repetition of the verbs שָׁפַל and שָׁחַח from v. 9 draws attention to the appropriate nature of the judgment: those proud men who bow low before idols will be forced to bow low before God when he judges their sin.

18 The verb 'pass away' is singular in the MT, despite the plural subject ('idols') that precedes it; the verb should be emended to a plural: the final *vav* (ו) has been accidentally omitted by haplography (note the ו at the beginning of the immediately following word).

19 The innumerable caves in Palestine's limestone hills are age-old places of refuge.

20 The text translated 'moles' (לַחֲפָר פְּרוֹת) makes no sense as it stands; based on the MS of Theodotion and a similar reading in 1QIsa^a, most scholars suggest that the MT mistakenly divided a noun (a *hapax legomenon*).

21 The precise point of vv. 20-21 is not entirely clear: are they taking the idols into their hiding places with them, because they are so attached to

וּבְסַעֲפֵי הַסְּלָעִים
מִפְּנֵי פֶחַד יְהוָה וּמִהֲדַר גְּאוֹנוֹ
בְּקוֹמוֹ לַעֲרֹץ הָאָרֶץ:
כֹּב חֲדָלוּ לָכֶם מִן־הָאֱדָם
אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁמָה בָּאֶפֶס
כִּי־בִמָּה נַחֲשָׁב הוּא: {פ}

and the clefts on the cliffs,
in terror of Yahweh, at the glory of his majesty,
when rises to terrify the earth.

²² Have no more to do with mortals,
who have only breath in their nostrils.
For, of what account are they?

their man-made images? Or are they discarding the idols along the way as they retreat into the darkest places they can find? In either case, it is obvious that their idol-gods are incapable of helping them.

²² This verse, not present in the *LXX*, is probably a gloss and is grammatically corrupt.

ישעיהו פרק ג

א כִּי הִנֵּה הָאֲדֹנָי יְהוֹה צְבָאוֹת
מַסִּיר מִירוּשָׁלַם וּמִיהוּדָה
מִשְׁעָן וּמִשְׁעֵנָה
כָּל מִשְׁעָן-לֶחֶם וְכָל מִשְׁעָן-מַיִם:
ב גִּבּוֹר וְאִישׁ מִלְחָמָה
שׁוֹפֵט וְנָבִיא
וְקַסֵּם וְזָקֵן:
ג שְׂרָחֲמַיִם וְנִשְׂוֹא פָנִים
וְיֹעֵץ וְחָכֵם חֲרָשִׁים וְנָבוֹן לַחֵשׁ:
ד וְנָתַתִּי נְעָרִים שָׂרִיָּהֶם
וְתַעֲלוּלִים יִמְשְׁלוּ-בָם:
ה וְנָגַשׁ הָעָם אִישׁ בְּאִישׁ וְאִישׁ בְּרֵעֵהוּ
יִרְהָבוּ הַנָּעַר בַּזָּקֵן וְהַנְּקִלָּה בַּנִּכְבָּד:
ו בִּי-יִתְפֹּשׁ אִישׁ בְּאָחִיו
בֵּית אָבִיו שְׂמָלָה לָכֶה קָצִין תַּהֲיֶה-לָּנוּ
וְהַמְכָּשֶׁלָה הַזֹּאת תַּחַת יָדָי:

ISAIAH 3

- 1 For, behold, the Sovereign, Yahweh Sabaoth,
is about to deprive Jerusalem and Judah
of resources and provisions –
all reserves of food, all reserves of water –
- 2 of hero and warrior,
judge and prophet,
diviner and elder,
- 3 captain of fifty and dignitary,
counsellor, architect, soothsayer.
- 4 “I shall give them boys for princes,
raw lads to rule over them.”
- 5 People will treat each other harshly, each by his neighbour;
the young will insult the aged, and the low, the respected.
- 6 Yes, a man will grab his brother
in their father’s house, to say, “You have a cloak,
so you be leader and rule this heap of ruins.”

ISAIAH 3

- 1 The poem of vv. 1–15 is assigned to the beginning of the reign of Ahaz (about 735 BCE).
- 2 The NRSV has ‘warrior and soldier’ in place of ‘hero and warrior’.
- 3 The NJB text lacks ‘of fifty’, here following the NRSV; the NRSV has ‘skilful magician and expert enchanter’ in place of ‘architect and soothsayer’.
- 4 The phrase translated as ‘raw lads’ could alternatively be construed as a plural of abstraction, hence, ‘governing as the fancy takes them’.
- 5 In vv. 5–6, Isaiah predicts that civil unrest will become open violence.
- 6 The man’s motives are selfish: he tells his brother to assume leadership because he thinks he has some wealth to give away.

ז יִשָּׂא בַיּוֹם הַהוּא | לֵאמֹר
 לֹא-אֶהְיֶה חֹבֵשׁ וּבְבֵיתִי
 אֵין לֶחֶם וְאֵין שְׂמֵלָה
 לֹא תִשְׁמְנֵנִי קֶצֶץ עֵם:
 ח כִּי כָשְׁלָה יְרוּשָׁלַם וַיהוּדָה נָפְלָה
 כִּי-לְשׁוֹנָם וּמַעַלְלֵיהֶם אֶל-יְהוָה
 לְמַרְוֹת עֲנִי כְבוֹדוֹ:
 ט הִכָּרַת פְּנֵיהֶם עֲנָתָה בָם
 וַחֲטֹאתָם כְּסֹדִם
 הִגִּידוּ לֹא כִתְּדוּ אֹזִי לַנֶּפֶשׁ
 כִּי-גָמְלוּ לָהֶם רָעָה:
 י אָמְרוּ צַדִּיק כִּי-טוֹב
 כִּי-פָרִי מַעַלְלֵיהֶם יֵאָכְלוּ:
 יא אֹזִי לְרָשָׁע רָע
 כִּי-גָמוּל יִדּוּ יַעֲשֶׂה לוֹ:
 יב עַמִּי נִגְשָׁיו מְעוֹלָל
 וְנָשִׁים מְשָׁלוּ בּוֹ

- 7 On that day, the other will protest, saying,
 "I will not be a healer;
 in my house there is neither bread nor cloak;
 do not make me leader of the people."
- 8 For Jerusalem has collapsed and Judah has fallen,
 because their words and deeds affront Yahweh,
 insulting his glorious gaze.
- 9 The look on their faces testifies against them;
 they proclaim their sin like Sodom;
 they do not hide it: all the worse for them,
 for they bring disaster on themselves.
- 10 Tell the righteous that it is good for him,
 for he shall eat the fruit of his deeds.
- 11 Woe to the wicked sinner,
 for he will be treated as his actions deserve.
- 12 Oppressors treat my people cruelly;
 creditors rule over them.

7 The literal translation of 'healer' is 'wrapper' (of wounds).

8 The word, כְּבוֹדוֹ, frequently refers to Yahweh's royal splendour that is an outward manifestation of his authority as king.

9 The 'look on their faces' refers to their proud, arrogant demeanour.

10 This verse is very different in the LXX, following on from v. 9: "... having said, 'We should bind the just, for he is inconvenient to us;' therefore, he shall eat the fruit of his labour." (εἰπόντες Διήσωμεν τὸν δίκαιον, ὅτι δὺςχαρηστος ἡμῖν ἔστιν· τοίνυν τὰ γενήματα τῶν ἔργων αὐτῶν φάγονται.)

11 The literal translation of the 2nd line (here following the NJB) is, "for the work of his hands shall be done to him."

12 For the first 2 lines, the MT appears to read literally, "My people, his oppressors, he deals severely, and women rule over them." The correct text and precise meaning of the verse are debated, but the translation here (following NETB) assumes: 1 an emendation of נִגְשָׁיו ('his oppressors') to נָשִׁים

עַמִּי מֵאַשְׁרֵיךְ מִתְּעִים וְדֶרֶךְ אַרְחֲתֶיךָ בִּלְעָו: {פ}	My people's leaders misled them; they give you confusing directions.
יג נָצַב לְרִיב יְהוָה וְעָמַד לִדְיִן עַמִּים:	13 Yahweh has risen to accuse, he stands to judge his people.
יד יְהוָה בִּמְשָׁפֵט יָבֹוא עַם־זִקְנֵי עַמּוֹ וְשָׂרָיו וְאַתֶּם בְּעֶרְתֶּם הַכֶּרֶם גִּזְלֹת הָעָנִי בְּבֵתֵיכֶם:	14 Yahweh is about to try the elders and the princes of his people, "It is you who have ruined the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses.
טו מִלֵּכְכֶם [מֵה־לָּכֶם] תִּדְכָּאוּ עַמִּי וּפָנִי עֲנִיִּים תִּטְחֲנוּ נֹאֶם־אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת: {ס}	15 By what right do you crush my people and grind the faces of the poor?" says the Lord Yahweh Sabaoth.
טז וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה יֵעַן כִּי גָבְהוּ בָנוֹת צִיּוֹן וְתִלְכְּנָה נְטוּוֹת נְטוּיֹת גָּרוֹן	16 Yahweh says: Because Zion's daughters are proud and walk with heads held high,

(‘oppressors’) by moving the *mem* (ם) on the following word and dropping the *vav* (ו) as virtually dittographic; 2 an emendation of מְעוֹלִל (a singular participle that does not agree with the preceding plural subject) to עָלְלוּ (a 3rd person plural Poel perfect of ‘deal severely’; note that the following form begins with a *vav*, indicating possibly haplography); and 3 an emendation (with support from the LXX) of נָשִׁים (‘women’) to נָשִׁים (‘creditors’).

- 13 In place of ‘his people’, the MT has ‘nations’, but the preceding and following contexts make it clear that Yahweh is judging his covenant people: עַמִּים should be changed (with support from the LXX – *λαὸν αὐτοῦ*) to עַמּוֹ; The final *mem* in the MT is either dittographic or enclitic: when it was added or read as a plural ending, the *vav* (ו) was then misread as a *yod* (י).
- 14 The ‘elders’ were the primary administrators of justice (Ex 19:7, Jos 20:4, Dt 21:19–21) and the ‘princes’ were royal appointees (1K 4:2, 2K 10:1, Jr 34:19).
- 15 The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.
- 16 The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

וּמִשְׁקְרוֹת עֵינַיִם
הָלוֹךְ וְטָפֹף תִּלְכָּנָה
וּבִרְגְלֵיהֶם תַּעֲבֹסְנָה:
י' וְשָׁפַח אֲדָנִי קִדְקֹד בְּנוֹת צִיּוֹן
וַיהוָה פָּתַחַן יְעָרָה: {ס}

י"ב בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִסֹּר אֲדָנִי אֶת תְּפֹאֶרֶת הָעֲכָסִים
וְהַשְּׁבִיטִים וְהַשְּׁהֲרָנִים: י"ט הַנְּטָפוֹת וְהַשִּׁירֹת
וְהָרַעְלוֹת: כ' הַפָּאֲרִים וְהַצְּעָדוֹת וְהַקְּשָׁרִים וּבִתֵּי
הַנֶּפֶשׁ וְהַלְחָשִׁים: כ"א הַטְּבָעוֹת וְנִזְמֵי הָאָף:
כ"ב הַמַּחְלָצוֹת וְהַמַּעֲטָפוֹת וְהַמְטָפְחוֹת וְהַחֲרִיטִים:
כ"ג וְהַגְּלִינִים וְהַסְדִּינִים וְהַצְּנִיפּוֹת וְהַרְדִּידִים:

כ"ד וְהָיָה תַּחַת בִּשְׁם מֶקֶד יְהוָה
וְתַחַת חֲגוּרָה נִקְפָּה
וְתַחַת מַעֲשֵׂה מִקְשָׁה קֶרֶחַה

and flirt with their eyes,
mincing along as they go,
jingling the bangles on their feet,

¹⁷ the Lord will give Zion's daughters scabby heads;
Yahweh will lay their foreheads bare."

¹⁸ On that day, the Lord will take away the ornamental chains, the medallions and the crescents, ¹⁹ the pendants, the bracelets, and the scarves, ²⁰ the diadems, the ankle-chains, the necklaces, the scent bottles, and the amulets, ²¹ the finger-rings, and the nose-rings, ²² the dresses, the cloaks, the scarves, the shawls, and the handbags, ²³ the festal dresses, the linen clothes, the turbans, and the veils.

²⁴ "Instead of perfume, there will be a stench,
instead of a sash, a rope,
instead of well-set hair, baldness,

¹⁷ The term here translated 'the Lord' (אֲדָנִי) is the Hebrew word used when reading the Divine Name (יהוה) aloud. The precise meaning of the last line is unclear because of the presence of the rare word פֶּת; however, since the verb in the line means 'lay bare' or 'make naked', some take פֶּת as a reference to the genitals (cf. NRSV, 'secret parts'). (In 1K 7:50, a noun פֶּת appears, with the apparent meaning 'socket'.)

¹⁸ The translation assumes that the direct quotation ends with v. 17; the introductory formula, 'on that day', and the shift from a poetic to prosaic style indicate that a new speech unit begins here.

¹⁹ The NJB has 'trinkets' in place of 'scarves', here following the NRSV, and NETB has 'veils'.

²⁰ The literal translation of 'scent bottles' is 'houses of breath'.

²¹ The NRSV has 'signet rings' in place of 'finger-rings', here following the NJB, and NETB has simply 'rings'.

²² The NJB has 'mirrors' in place of 'handbags', here following the NRSV (NETB, an American translation, has 'purses').

²³ The rhetorical purpose for such a lengthy list is to impress on the reader the guilt of these women with their proud, materialistic attitude, whose husbands and fathers have profited at the expense of the poor.

²⁴ 'Shame' follows the NRSV & (the NJB and NETB have 'brand marks'); it is not present in the MT.

וְתַחַת פְּתִיגִיל מַחְגֶּרֶת שֹׁק

בִּי־תַחַת יָפִי:

כֹּה מִתֵּיךְ בַּחֶרֶב יִפְּלוּ

וְגִבּוֹרֶיךָ בַּמִּלְחָמָה:

כֹּו וְאֲנִי וְאֲבָלִי פִתְחֶיהָ

וְנִקְתָּה לָאָרֶץ תֵּשֵׁב:

instead of rich clothes, a sackcloth waistband,
shame instead of beauty.

²⁵ Your men shall fall by the sword,
your warriors in battle.

²⁶ Her gates shall lament and mourn;
deserted, she will sit on the ground.

²⁵ The opening pronoun is feminine singular, suggesting that personified Zion, as representative of its women, is the addressee; the reference to 'her gates' in v. 26 makes this identification almost certain.

²⁶ Jerusalem is personified as a destitute woman who sits mourning the empty city.

ישעיהו פרק ד

א וְהָחִזְקוּ שִׁבְעַת נָשִׁים בְּאִישׁ אֶחָד בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא
לֵאמֹר לְחַמְנוּ נֹאכֵל וְשִׁמְלָתֵנוּ נִלְבָּשׁ רַק יִקְרָא
שְׁמֶךָ עָלֵינוּ אֲסֹף חֲרָפָתֵנוּ: {ס}

ב בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִהְיֶה צִמְחַת יְהוָה לְעֵבִי וּלְכַבֹּד וּפְרִי
הָאָרֶץ לְגִאּוֹן וּלְתִפְאֶרֶת לְפִלִּיטַת יִשְׂרָאֵל: ג וְהָיָה
הַנִּשְׁאָר בְּצִיּוֹן וְהַנּוֹתָר בִּירוּשָׁלַם קְדוֹשׁ יֹאמֶר לוֹ
כָּל־הַכְּתוּב לַחַיִּים בִּירוּשָׁלַם: ד אִם רָחַץ אֲדָנִי אֶת
צִאֲתַת בְּנוֹת־צִיּוֹן וְאֶת־דַּמֵּי יְרוּשָׁלַם יָדִיחַ מִקֶּרְבָּהּ
בְּרוּחַ מִשְׁפָּט וּבְרוּחַ בַּעַר: ה וּבְרָא יְהוָה עַל כָּל־
מִכּוֹן הַר־צִיּוֹן וְעַל־מִקְרָאָהּ עָנָן יוֹמָם וְעֶשֶׂן וְנֹגַהּ
אֵשׁ לְהִבֶּה לַיְלָה כִּי עַל־כָּל־כְּבוֹד חָפָה: ו וְסִכָּה
תְּהִיָּה לְעַלְיוֹמָם מִחֶרֶב וּלְמַחֲסֵהּ וּלְמִסְתָּוֶר מִזֶּרֶם
וּמִמָּטָר: {פ}

ISAIAH 4

¹ On that day, seven women will take hold of one man and say, “We will eat our own food and wear our own clothing but just let us bear your name. Take our disgrace away.”

² On that day, Yahweh’s seedling shall become beauty and honour, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and glory of Israel’s survivors.

³ Those left in Zion and remaining in Jerusalem will be called holy; all who are destined to live in Jerusalem. ⁴ When the Lord has washed away the filth of Zion’s daughters and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem’s midst by a spirit of judgment and burning, ⁵ Yahweh will create, over all of Mount Zion and over its convocations, a cloud by day and smoke with the brightness of a flaring fire by night. For, over all will be the Glory as canopy ⁶ and tent, to give shade by day from the heat, refuge and shelter from the storm and the rain.

ISAIAH 4

¹ In the city, where the male population has been decimated by war (3:25–26), the proud women of Jerusalem will become concubines.

² The ‘seedling’ and the ‘fruit of the land’ designate either the Messiah (Jr 23:5 = 33:15, Zc 3:8, 6:12) or the ‘remnant’ of Israel (see #3).

³ Faithless Israel will be punished but, because God loves his people, a small ‘remnant’ will escape the invader’s sword.

⁴ The word here translated as ‘filth’ can refer to vomit (28:8) or excrement (36:12).

⁵ Vv. 5^b–6^a evoke the Pillar of Cloud or Fire, which guided the Israelites during the Exodus. This allusion to the Exodus suggests a late date for the passage (cf. 10:26, which is an addition, and 11:15–16, which is Exilic, and the presentation of the return from Exile as a Second Exodus in ‘Second Isaiah’ (see #40:3).

⁶ Since both the last nouns of this verse can mean rain, they can also refer to a ‘heavy downpour’ (as NETB).

ישעיהו פרק ה

א אֲשִׁירָה נָא לִידִידִי
שִׁירַת דּוֹדִי לְכַרְמִי
כַּרְם הִיא לִידִידִי
בְּקֶרֶן בֹּר־שֶׁמֶן:
ב וַיַּעֲזָקְהוּ וַיִּסְקֶלְהוּ
וַיִּטְעֵהוּ שֵׁרֶק
וַיִּבֶן מִגְדָּל בְּתוֹכֹוּ
וְגַם־יֵקֵב חֶצֶב בּוֹ
וַיִּקֹּוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת עֲנָבִים
וַיַּעַשׂ בָּאֲשִׁים:
ג וַעֲתָה יוֹשֵׁב יְרוּשָׁלַם וְאִישׁ יְהוּדָה
שִׁפְטוּ־נָא בֵּינִי וּבֵין כַּרְמִי:
ד מַה־לַּעֲשׂוֹת עוֹד לְכַרְמִי
וְלֹא עָשִׂיתִי בּוֹ

ISAIAH 5

- 1 Let me sing for my beloved,
the song to my lover for his vineyard.
My beloved had a vineyard
on a fertile hillside.
- 2 He dug it, cleared it of stones,
and planted it with red grapes.
In the middle, he built a tower;
he hewed a press there, too.
He expected it to yield fine grapes:
sour grapes were all it yielded.
- 3 Now, citizens of Jerusalem and people of Judah,
judge between me and my vineyard.
- 4 What more could I have done for my vineyard
that I have not done?

ISAIAH 5

- ¹ The poem of vv. 1–7, the ‘Song of the Vineyard’, was composed by Isaiah at the beginning of his ministry, perhaps based on a grape harvest song. The literal translation of the last line is ‘on a horn, a son of oil’: apparently, קֶרֶן (*‘horn’*) here refers to the horn-shaped peak of a hill or to a mountain spur, i.e., a ridge that extends laterally from a mountain; the expression ‘son of oil’ pictures this hill as one capable of producing olive trees. Isaiah’s choice of קֶרֶן, a rare word for hill, may have been driven by poetic concerns, because it sounds like כַּרְם (*‘vineyard’*).
- ² ‘Red grapes’ translates שֵׁרֶק, the name of a high quality plant (16:8, Jr 2:21, cf. Gn 49:11), designated by the colour of its fruit. At this point, the love song turns sour as Yahweh himself breaks in and completes the story (see vv. 3–6); in the final line of this verse, the love song presented to Yahweh becomes a judgment speech by him.
- ³ Judah’s only possible answer would be judgement against the vineyard; Judah is asked to pass judgement on herself, much as Nathan, through a parable, had David pass judgement on himself (2S 12:1–12).
- ⁴ The NJB has ‘wild’ in place of ‘sour’, here following the NRSV (as also in v. 2).

מִדּוּעַ קוֹיֹתִי לַעֲשׂוֹת עֲנָבִים וַיַּעַשׂ בָּאֵשִׁ׃		Why, when I expected it to yield fine grapes, did it yield sour ones?
וַעֲתָה אֹדִיעָה-נָא אֶתְכֶם אֶת אֲשֶׁר-אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה לְכַרְמִי הָסֵר מִשׁוֹכְתּוֹ וְהָיָה לְבָעֵר פָּרָץ גָּדְרוֹ וְהָיָה לְמַרְמָסִ׃	ה	5 Very well, I shall tell you what I will to do to my vineyard: I shall take away its hedge, for it to be grazed on, and knock down its walls, for it to be trampled on.
וַאֲשִׁיתָהוּ בְתָה לֹא יִזְמַר וְלֹא יַעֲדֹר וְעָלָה שִׁמִּיר וְשִׁית וְעַל הָעֵבִים אֲצִוֶּה מִהַמָּטִיר עָלָיו מָטֶר׃	ו	6 I shall let it go to waste, not pruned, not hoed, thorns and brambles will grow there, and I shall command the clouds to rain no rain on it.
כִּי כָרַם יְהוָה צִבְאוֹת בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאִישׁ יְהוּדָה נָטַע שַׁעֲשׁוּעִיו וַיִּקּוּ לְמִשְׁפָּט וְהָנָה מִשְׁפָּח לְצַדִּיקָה וְהָנָה צַעֲקָה׃ {פ}	ז	7 For, the vineyard of Yahweh Sabaoth is the House of Israel, and the people of Judah the plant he cherished. He waited for justice, but found disobedience, for righteousness, but found cries of distress.
הוּא מוֹסִיף בַּיִת בְּבַיִת שָׂדֶה בְּשָׂדֶה יִקְרִיבוּ	ח	8 Woe to those who add house to house and join field to field

-
- 5 בָּעֵר ('to graze') is a homonym of the more often used verb, 'to burn'.
- 6 The last line makes it very clear, indeed, that it is Yahweh speaking here.
- 7 The meaning of מִשְׁפָּח ('disobedience', here following *NETB*), which occurs only here in the OT, is uncertain; some have suggested 'bloodshed' (as *NRSV*); the term is obviously chosen as a wordplay, sounding very much like מִשְׁפָּט ('justice' – the *NJB* translates the latter as 'injustice').
- 8 The curses of vv. 8–24 also date from the beginning of Isaiah's ministry but were perhaps not all uttered on a single occasion. To these 6 curses, it sometimes suggested that a seventh should be added, 10:1–4, which may have been accidentally displaced.

עַד אֵפֶס מְקוֹם
 וְהוֹשְׁבֹתֶם לְבַדְכֶם בְּקֶרֶב הָאָרֶץ:
 ט בְּאֶזְנֵי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
 אֲסֹלָא בְּתִים רַבִּים לְשֹׁמֵה יְהוֹ
 גְּדֹלִים וְטוֹבִים מֵאֵין יוֹשֵׁב:
 י כִּי עֲשֹׂרֶת צִמְדֵי-כֶרֶם יַעֲשׂוּ בֵּת אֶחָת
 וְזֶרַע חֹמֶר יַעֲשֶׂה אֵיפָה: {ס}
 יא הוּא מְשַׁכְּמִי בַּבֶּקֶר שֹׁכֵר יִרְדָּפוּ
 מֵאַחֲרֵי בִנְשֹׁף יַיִן יִדְלִיקֶם:
 יב וְהָיָה כְנֹזֶר וְנָבֶל
 תָּף וְחָלִיל וַיֵּין מִשְׁתֵּיהֶם
 וְאֵת פֹּעַל יְהוָה לֹא יִבְטֹוּ
 וּמַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו לֹא רְאוּ:
 יג לָכֵן גָּלָה עַמִּי מִבְּלִי-דַעַת
 וּכְבוֹדוֹ מִתִּי רָעַב וְהִמּוֹנֹו צָחָה צָמָא:
 יד לָכֵן הִרְחִיבָהּ שְׂאוֹל נִפְשָׁהּ
 וּפְעָרָהּ פִּיהָ לְבִלִי-חֶק
 וַיֵּרֶד הַדָּרָה וְהִמּוֹנָהּ וּשְׂאוֹנָהּ וַעֲלֹזָהּ בָּהּ:

until there is nowhere left
 and they are the sole inhabitants of the land.

- 9 Yahweh Sabaoth has told me,
 "Many houses will be brought to ruin;
 great and fine ones left untenanted.
- 10 For, ten acres of vineyard will yield only one bath,
 and a homer of seed will yield only one ephah."
- 11 Woe to those who get up early to go after strong drink
 and stay up late at night inflamed with wine.
- 12 Their feats are nothing but lyre and harp,
 tambourine and pipe, and wine for their parties.
 They never regard the works of Yahweh;
 they never see what his hands have done.
- 13 That is why my people are in exile, for want of perception;
 her nobles are starving, her masses parched with thirst.
- 14 So, Sheol opens wide its throat and immeasurable gape,
 and down go her noblemen and populace
 and her loud revellers, and all those who exult in her.

9 The literal translation of the last line is, "great and good, without a resident."

10 With ten ephah to one homer, this verse envisages major crop failure, where only one-tenth of the anticipated crop harvest is realised.

11 This verse does not condemn drinking *per se* but refers to the carousing lifestyle of the rich bureaucrats.

12 The two types of stringed instruments mentioned in the 1st line are כְּנֹזֶר ('lyre') and נָבֶל ('harp').

13 For 'are in exile', the suffixed (perfect) form of the verb is used; in this way, the coming event is described for rhetorical effect as completed.

14 Vv. 14–16 seem to be out of context and possibly belong to the poem in 2:6–22, the refrain of which (2:9 & 2:11) recurs here in v. 15.

טו וַיִּשְׁחַ אָדָם וַיִּשְׁפַּל־אֵיֶשׁ
 וְעֵינֵי גְבוּהִים תִּשְׁפַּלְנָה:
 טז וַיִּגְבֶּה יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת בַּמִּשְׁפָּט
 וְהָאֵל הַקְּדוֹשׁ נִקְדָּשׁ בַּצְּדָקָה:
 יז וְרָעוּ כִבְשִׁים בְּדִבְרָם
 וְחֲרֻבוֹת מַחִים גָּרִים יֹאכְלוּ: {ס}
 יח הוּי מִשְׁכֵּי הָעוֹן בַּחֲבִלֵי הַשּׁוֹא
 וְכַעֲבוֹת הָעֲגֹלָה חֲטָאָה:
 יט הָאֹמְרִים יִמְהָר | יַחֲשֵׁה מַעֲשָׂהוּ
 לְמַעַן נִרְאֶה
 וְתִקְרַב וְתִבּוֹאָה
 עֲצַת קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנִדְעָה: {פ}
 כ הוּי הָאֹמְרִים לָרַע טוֹב וְלַטּוֹב רָע
 שְׂמִים חֹשֶׁךְ לְאוֹר וְאוֹר לְחֹשֶׁךְ
 שְׂמִים מָר לְמֶתוֹק וּמֶתוֹק לְמָר: {ס}

- 15 Mankind has been humbled, men brought low,
and the eyes of the proud have been humbled.
- 16 Yahweh Sabaoth is exalted for his judgement;
and the Holy God shows himself holy by righteousness!
- 17 Now the lambs will graze in their old pastures,
and the fields laid waste by fat cattle will feed the kids.
- 18 Woe to those who drag guilt along by the reins of falsehood,
who drag sin along as with a cart rope,
- 19 to those who say, "Let him make haste,
so we can see;
let the Holy One of Israel's design hurry up and come true
so that we can experience it?"
- 20 Woe to those who call evil good and good evil,
who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness,
who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.

15 Literally translated, this verse reads, "Men are brought down, men are brought low, the eyes of pride are brought low."

16 God's 'holiness' (#6:3) 'separates' him from all created things: since he transcends them, they cannot contaminate him. However, this transcendent sanctity of God is apparent in his dealings with human beings in its aspect as 'justice' (see #1:26), thereby emphasising its moral nature: God rewards good and punishes evil; this is God's 'judgement'.

17 'Kids' follows the LXX (ἄρνες); the MT has 'foreigners' – the change requires emending גָּרִים to גְּדִים, and confusion of ד and ר is quite common.

18 The MT reads literally, "Woe to those who pull evil with the ropes of emptiness, and, as [with] ropes of a cart, sin." Though several textual details are unclear, the basic idea is apparent: the sinners are so attached to their sinful ways that they strain to drag them along behind them.

19 This verse alludes to the Day of Yahweh, foretold in 2:12, and which the sceptics are drawing down upon themselves by their insolence.

20 In this verse, the prophet denounces the perversion of moral standards: darkness and bitterness are metaphors for evil; light and sweetness symbolise uprightness.

כא הוּי חֲכָמִים בְּעֵינֵיהֶם
 וַיִּגְדּוּ פָנֵיהֶם נְבִנִים: {ס}
 כב הוּי גִבּוֹרִים לְשִׁתּוֹת יֵין
 וְאַנְשֵׁי־חַיִל לְמִסְדֹּךְ שֹׁכֵר:
 כג מַצְדִּיקֵי רָשָׁע עֶקֶב שַׁחַד
 וְצִדְקַת צְדִיקִים יִסְרוּ מִמֶּנּוּ: {פ}
 כד לִכְן כָּאֵלֶּל קֵשׁ לְשׁוֹן אֵשׁ
 וְחֹשֶׁשׁ לְהִבָּה יִרְפָּה
 שְׂרָשָׁם בַּמָּקֵי יִהְיֶה
 וּפְרִיָם כְּאֶבֶק יֵעָלֶה
 כִּי מֵאִסּוֹ אֵת תּוֹרַת יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
 וְאֵת אִמְרַת קְדוֹשׁ־יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶאֱצָו:
 כה עַל־כֵּן חָרָה אַף־יְהוָה בָּעַמּוֹ וַיִּטּ יָדוֹ
 עֲלֵיו וַיִּכֶּהוּ
 וַיִּרְגְּזוּ הַהָרִים

- 21 Woe to those who think themselves wise
 and believe themselves enlightened.
- 22 Woe to those whose are heroes when drinking wine,
 and valiant when mixing strong drinks,
- 23 who acquit the guilty for a bribe
 and deny justice to the innocent.
- 24 Therefore, as the tongue of fire devours the stubble,
 as dry grass disintegrates in the flame,
 so their roots will rot
 and their blossom blow away like dust,
 for, they have rejected the law of Yahweh Sabaoth,
 and have spurned the word of the Holy One of Israel.
- 25 Therefore, Yahweh's anger has blazed out against
 his people,
 he has raised his hand and struck them,

- 21 Vv. 18–21 contain 3 'woe-sayings' that are purely accusatory and have no formal announcement of judgment attached (as in the 'woe-sayings' recorded in vv. 8–17); while this lack of symmetry is odd, it has a clear rhetorical purpose: having established a pattern earlier, the prophet deviates from it here to grab his audience's attention.
- 22 The language used here is quite sarcastic and paves the way for the shocking description of the enemy army in vv. 25–30; the rich leaders of Judah are nothing but 'party animals', who are totally incapable of withstanding real warriors.
- 23 'The innocent' is singular in the LXX but plural in the MT. In vv. 22–23, the prophet returns to themes with which he opened his speech; the accusatory elements of vv. 8, 11–12 & 18–23 are arranged in a chiastic manner: **A** social injustice (v. 8), **B** carousing (vv. 11–12^a), **C** spiritual insensitivity (v. 12^b); **C'** spiritual insensitivity (vv. 18–21), **B'** carousing (v. 22), **A'** social injustice (v. 23).
- 24 They are compared to a flowering plant that withers quickly in a hot, arid climate.
- 25 The fragment of vv. 25–30 probably belongs to the poem in 9:7–20, the refrain of which also occurs here.

וּתְהִי נִבְלָתָם כַּסּוּחָה
בְּקֶרֶב חוּצוֹת
בְּכָל־זֹאת לֹא־שָׁב
אַפּוֹ וְעוֹד יָדוֹ נְטוּיָה:
כו וַיִּשְׂא־גַם לְגוֹיִם מֵרָחוֹק
וַיִּשְׂרַק לֹו מִקְצֵה הָאָרֶץ
וַהֲנִה מְהֵרָה קֵל יָבוֹא:
כז אִין־עֵיף וְאִין־כּוֹשֵׁל בּוֹ
לֹא יָנוּם וְלֹא יִישָׁן
וְלֹא נִפְתַּח אֲזוֹר חֲלָצִיו
וְלֹא נָתַק שְׂרוֹד נַעֲלָיו:
כח אֲשֶׁר חֲצִיו שְׁנוּנִים
וְכָל־קִשְׁתֵּיהֶם דִּרְכוֹת
פָּרָסוֹת סוּסֵיהֶם כָּצֹר נִחְשְׁבוּ
וְגִלְגָּלֵיהֶם כַּסּוּפָה:
כט שֹׁאֵג לֹו כְּלִבִּיא
וּשֹׁאֵג יִשְׂאֵג כַּכְּפִירִים וַיִּנְהֵם וַיֹּאחֲזוּ טָרֶף
וַיִּפְלִיט וַאֲיִן מַצִּיל:

the mountains have shuddered
and corpses are lying like dung in the streets.
Despite all this, his anger is not spent
and his hand is still stretched out!

- ²⁶ He hoists a signal for a distant nation;
he whistles them up from the ends of the earth;
see how swiftly, how speedily they come!
²⁷ None of them is tired, none of them stumbles,
none of them slumbers or sleeps,
none of them with belt unfastened,
none of them with broken sandal-strap.
²⁸ Their arrows are sharpened,
their bows are bent;
their horses' hoofs seem like flint
and their wheels like a whirlwind!
²⁹ Their roar is like a lion's;
like young lions, they roar, growl, and seize their prey
and carry it off, with no one to rescue it.

²⁶ 'Nation' is conjectural; the MT has the plural but the final ם on לְגוֹיִם may be enclitic or dittographic. In the latter case, one could read לְגוֹי ('for a nation from a distance' – see Dt 28:49, Jl 3:8). Another possibility is to emend the text to לְגוֹי מִמְּרָחֶק ('for a nation from a distant place'), a phrase which occurs in Jr 5:15; in this case, we have an error of division: the ם of the prefixed preposition being taken as a plural ending.
²⁷ Literally translated, the last 2 lines read, "and the belt on his waist is not opened, and the thong of his sandals is not torn in two."
²⁸ The NJB has 'strung' in place of 'bent', here following the MT & NRSV.
²⁹ The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

וַיִּגְהָם עָלָיו בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא ל
 כְּנִהְמַת־יָם
 וַנִּבֶּט לָאָרֶץ וְהָיָה־חָשֶׁךְ
 צָר וָאֹזֶר חָשֶׁךְ בַּעֲרִיפָהּ: {פ}

³⁰ They will growl at it, on that day,
 like the growling of the sea.
 And look at the country: darkness and distress,
 and the light turned to darkness by the clouds.

³⁰ On the 'darkness' of the Day of Yahweh, cf. Am 5:18–20. The motif of light turning to darkness is ironic when compared to v. 20: there, the sinners turn light (moral/ethical good) to darkness (moral/ethical evil); now, ironically, God will turn light (the sinners' sphere of existence and life) into darkness (judgment and death).

ישעיהו פרק ו

א בִּשְׁנַת־מוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ עֲזִיָּהוּ וַאֲרָאָה אֶת־אֲדֹנָי יֹשֵׁב
עַל־כִּסֵּא רָם וְנִשְׂא וְשׁוּלָיו מְלֵאִים אֶת־הַהִיכָל:
ב שְׂרָפִים עֹמְדִים | מִמַּעַל לוֹ שֵׁשׁ כְּנָפִים שֵׁשׁ
כְּנָפִים לְאֶחָד בְּשִׁתַּיִם | יְכֶסֶּה פָנָיו וּבְשִׁתַּיִם יְכֶסֶּה
רַגְלָיו וּבְשִׁתַּיִם יַעֲזֹפֶף: ג וְקָרָא זֶה אֵל־זֶה וַאֲמַר

קְדוֹשׁ | קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

מְלֵא כָּל־הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדּוֹ:

ד וַיִּנָּעוּ אֲמוֹת הַסָּפִים מִקּוֹל הַקּוֹרָא וְהַבַּיִת יִמָּלֵא
עָשָׁן: ה וַאֲמַר

אֲוִילִי כִי־נִדְמִיתִי

כִּי אִישׁ טָמֵא־שִׁפְתַיִם אָנֹכִי

וּבִתְוֹךְ עַם־טָמֵא שִׁפְתַיִם אָנֹכִי יוֹשֵׁב

כִּי אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת רָאוּ עֵינָי:

ו וַיַּעַף אֵלַי אֶחָד מִן־הַשְּׂרָפִים וּבִידּוֹ רִצְפָּה
בְּמִלְקָחַיִם לָקַח מֵעַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: ז וַיַּגַּע עַל־פִּי וַיֹּאמֶר

ISAIAH 6

¹ In the year of King Uzziah's death, I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne; his train filled the Sanctuary. ² Seraphim were in attendance above him; each one with six wings: with two they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and two were for flying; ³ and they were shouting these words to one another:

Holy, holy, holy is Yahweh Sabaoth.

His glory fills the whole earth.

⁴ The doorposts shook at the sound of their shouting, and the Temple was full of smoke. ⁵ Then I said:

"Woe is me! I am lost,

for I am a man of unclean lips

and I live among a people of unclean lips,

and my eyes have seen the King, Yahweh Sabaoth."

⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me, holding a live coal, taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷ With this it, it touched my mouth and said:

ISAIAH 6

¹ Uzziah died around 741 BCE. The 'Sanctuary' (*Hekal*) was the chamber leading into the 'Holy of Holies' (*Debir*), see 1K 6:1-38.

² Etymologically, 'seraphim' (שְׂרָפִים) means the 'burning ones' but, apart from the name, these creatures have nothing in common with the fiery serpents of Nb 21:6-8 (cf. Dt 8:15) or the flying ones of Is 14:29, 30:6.

³ God's holiness is a central theme of Isaiah's preaching; he frequently calls Yahweh the 'Holy One of Israel'.

⁴ The 'smoke' was the sign of God's presence (see #Ex 19:16, Ex 40:34-35, 1K 8:10-12, Ezk 10:4).

⁵ A sinful man cannot stand before the holy God (Ex 33:18-20).

⁶ After 'holding', the NJB & NETB add 'in its hand'; here, we follow the NRSV.

⁷ The prophet acts as God's 'mouth' (cf. Ex 4:16). All fire purifies (Jr 6:29 & #Mi 3:11); much more so, the fire from the altar.

הִנֵּה נִגַּע זֶה עַל־שִׁפְתַיִךְ וְסֵר עֲוֹנְךָ וְחַטֹּאתֶךָ תִּכְפֹּר: וְאָשַׁמְעַתְּ קוֹל אֲדֹנָי אֶמֶר אֶת־מִי אֲשַׁלַּח וּמִי יֵלֶךְ־לָנוּ וְאָמַר הִנְנִי שְׁלַחְנִי: וַיֹּאמֶר לֵךְ וְאָמַרְתָּ לָעָם הַזֶּה שִׁמְעוּ שְׁמוֹעַ וְאַל־תִּבְיִנוּ וּרְאוּ רְאוּ וְאַל־תִּדְעוּ: הַשִּׁמְן לִב־הָעָם הַזֶּה וְאִזְנוֹ הַכֶּבֶד וְעֵינָיו הַשֶּׁעַר פֶּן־יִרְאֶה בְּעֵינָיו וּבְאָזְנוֹ יִשְׁמַע וּלְבָבוֹ יִבֵּן וְשָׁב וּרְפָא לוֹ: וְאָמַר עַד־מָתַי אֲדֹנָי וַיֹּאמֶר עַד אֲשֶׁר אֶסְשָׂא עָרִים מֵאֵין יוֹשֵׁב וּבְתֵימִס מֵאֵין אָדָם וְהָאֲדָמָה תִּשָּׂא שְׂמָמָה: יִבְּרַח יְהוָה אֶת־הָאָדָם וְרֵבָה	<p>“Look, this has touched your lips, your guilt has been removed and your sin is forgiven.”</p> <p>8 I then heard the voice of the Lord saying: “Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?”</p> <p>I said, “Here I am, send me.” 9 He said, “Go and say to this people: “Keep listening, but never understand! Keep looking, but never perceive!”</p> <p>10 Make this people’s heart coarse, make their ears dull, shut their eyes tight, or they will use their eyes to see, use their ears to hear, understand in their heart, change their ways and be healed.”</p> <p>11 I then said, “Until when, Lord?” He replied. “Until towns are in ruins and deserted, houses untenanted and a great desolation reigns in the land, 12 and Yahweh has driven these people away and the country is</p>
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⁸ The plural pronoun (‘us’) refers to Yahweh, the seraphim, and the rest of the heavenly assembly.

⁹ This verse, which ostensibly records the content of Isaiah’s message, is clearly ironic: v. 10^b is also clearly sarcastic; on the surface it seems to indicate Isaiah’s hardening ministry will prevent genuine repentance. But, as the surrounding chapters clearly reveal, the people were hardly ready or willing to repent; therefore, Isaiah’s preaching was not needed to prevent repentance!

¹⁰ The prophet’s teaching will be met by incomprehension on the part of his audience. The imperatives used in vv. 9–10 should not mislead, since they have the force of the indicative (cf. 29:9): God does not desire this incomprehension; he foresees it and incorporates it into his designs. It reveals sin lodged in the heart and precipitates judgement; compare the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart (Ex 4:21, 7:3 *et cetera*). This passage in Isaiah is quoted several times in the NT – Mt 13:14–15ff, Jn 12:40, Ac 28:26–27, with special reference to the parables (Mt 13:13).

¹¹ The prophet does not want to accept the condemnation as final. Without confounding his hope, God’s reply stresses the gravity of the ordeals that will precede salvation.

¹² Literally translated, this verse ends, “and great is the abandonment in the midst of the land.”

הַעֲזֹבָה בְּקֶרֶב הָאָרֶץ: יָ וְעוֹד בָּהּ עֲשֵׂרָה וְשֶׁבַע totally abandoned.¹³ Even if a tenth of them remain in it, that will be
וְהִיְתָה לְבַעַר פֶּאֱלָה וְכַאֲלוֹן אֲשֶׁר בְּשִׁלְכָת מַצְבֵּת stripped again, like a terebinth or an oak, cut back to the stock; their
בָּם זֶרַע קֹדֶשׁ מִצִּבְתָּהּ: {פ} stock is a holy seed.”

¹³ This is a difficult verse. The final phrase is not present in the *LXX* but should be retained: from the truncated stock, a new tree will grow (see 4:2-3). The central part should perhaps be restored to read, “... like the terebinth (of the goddess) and the oak of Asherah, cast out with the pillar of the high places.”

ISAIAH 7

ישעיהו פרק ז

א וַיְהִי בַיָּמִי אֲחָז בֶּן־יֹאחָז בֶּן־עֲזִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה
עָלָה רָצִין מֶלֶךְ־אַרָם וּפֶקַח בֶּן־רִמְלִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ־
יִשְׂרָאֵל יְרוּשָׁלַם לַמִּלְחָמָה עָלָיָהּ וְלֹא יָכַל לְהִלָּחֵם
עָלֶיהָ: ב וַיִּגָּד לְבֵית דָּוִד לֵאמֹר נָחָה אֲרָם עַל־
אֶפְרַיִם וַיִּנָּע לִבָּבוֹ וּלְבַב עַמּוֹ כְּנוֹעַ עֲצֵי־יַעַר מִפְּנֵי־
רוּחַ: {ס}

ג וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ צֶאֱנָא לְקִרְאֵת אֲחָז
אֲתָהּ וּשְׂאֵר יָשׁוּב בְּנֶגֶד אֶל־קֶצֶה תַּעֲלֵת הַבֵּרֶכֶה
הָעֲלִיזָנָה אֶל־מִסְלַת שְׂדֵה כּוֹבֶס: ד וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו
הַשְׁמֹר וְהִשְׁקֹט אֶל־תִּירָא וּלְבַבְךָ אֶל־יִרְדָּךְ מִשְׁנֵי
זַנְבוֹת הָאוֹדִים הָעֹשְׂנִים הָאֵלֶּה בַּחֲרִי־אָף רָצִין
וְאַרָם וּבֶן־רִמְלִיָּהוּ: ה יַעַן כִּי־יַעַן עָלֶיךָ אֲרָם רָעָה
אֶפְרַיִם וּבֶן־רִמְלִיָּהוּ לֵאמֹר: ו נִעְלָה בִיהוּדָה

¹ And, in the reign of Ahaz son of Jotham son of Uzziah, king of Judah, Razon king of Aram advanced on Jerusalem with Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel, to attack it; but he was unable to attack it. ² The House of David was informed: "Aram has halted in Ephraimite territory." At this, his heart and his people's hearts shook like forest trees shaking in the wind.

³ Yahweh then said to Isaiah, "Go out with your son, Shear-Jashub, and meet Ahaz at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, on the road to the Fuller's Field, ⁴ and say to him, "Pay attention and keep calm. Do not be frightened or demoralised by these two smouldering sticks of firewood, by the fierce anger of Razon, Aram and the son of Remaliah. ⁵ Because Aram, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah have been plotting against you ⁶ and saying: Let us mount an attack on Judah, terrorise it

ISAIAH 7

- ¹ 'Razon' (here and elsewhere) follows the LXX (*Ραασσω*) and Assyrian inscriptions (and the NJB); the MT (and NRSV) has 'Rezin' (רִצִּין).
- ² In this context, 'the House of David' includes King Ahaz, his family, and the royal court; see also Jr 21:12, Zc 12:7-12, for a similar use of the phrase. 'Heart' (לִבָּב) here refers to the seat of the emotions.
- ³ The prophetic name, 'Shear-Jashub' (see #1:26) means 'a remnant will return', i.e., will be converted to Yahweh and thus escape punishment (see #4:3 and 10:20-23). The 'upper pool' was a reservoir south of the Pool of Siloam.
- ⁴ The derogatory metaphor indicates that the power of Razon and Pekah is ready to die out.
- ⁵ This sentence opens with the conjunction כִּי יַעַן ('because'); consequently, we take vv. 5-6 with what precedes, as another reason why Ahaz might be tempted to fear (as NJB). However, NETB assumes that vv. 5-6 give the basis for the Lord's announcement in vv. 7-9.
- ⁶ The 'son of Tabeel' was probably an Aramaean of the Damascus court. The name means 'God is good', but the MT rearranges the vowels in it to mean 'good for nothing'. He could also have been a prince of Judah, whose mother came from Tabeel, a region of northern Transjordan.

וְנִקְיָצְנָה וְנִבְקַעְנָה אֵלֵינוּ וְנִמְלִיךְ מֶלֶךְ בְּתוֹכָהּ אֶת
בֶּן־טַבְאֵל: {פ} and force it onto our side. Then we can install the son of Tabeel there as
its king.

ז' כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה 7 “Lord Yahweh says this:

לֹא תִקּוּם וְלֹא תִהְיֶה: This will not happen; it will never occur.

ח' כִּי רֹאשׁ אֲרָם דַּמָּשֶׁק 8 For the head of Aram is Damascus,
וְרֹאשׁ דַּמָּשֶׁק רָצִין and the head of Damascus is Razon;
וּבְעוֹד שְׁשִׁים וְחֲמֵשׁ שָׁנָה יִחַת אֶפְרַיִם מֵעַם: within sixty-five years, Ephraim will cease to be a people.

ט' וְרֹאשׁ אֶפְרַיִם שַׁמְרוֹן 9 The head of Ephraim is Samaria,
וְרֹאשׁ שַׁמְרוֹן בֶּן־רִמְלִיָּה and the head of Samaria is the son of Remaliah.
אִם לֹא תִאָּמְנוּ כִּי לֹא תִאָּמְנוּ: {פ} If you do not take your stand on me, you will not stand firm.”

י' וַיֹּסֶף יְהוָה דְּבַר אֶל־אֲחָז לֵאמֹר: י"א שְׁאַל־לְךָ אוֹת מֵעַם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ הַעֲמֵק שְׁאֵלָה אוֹ הַגְּבִה לְמַעַלָּה: י"ב וַיֹּאמֶר אֲחָז לֹא־אֶשְׁאַל וְלֹא־אֲנַסֶּה אֶת־יְהוָה: י"ג וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמַעוּ־נָא בֵּית דָּוִד הַמַּעַט מִכֶּם הַלְאֹת אֲנָשִׁים כִּי תִלְאוּ גַם אֶת־אֱלֹהֵי: 10 Yahweh again spoke to Ahaz, saying: 11 “Ask Yahweh your God for a sign, either in the depths of Sheol or in the heights of heaven.” 12 But Ahaz said, “I will not ask; I will not put Yahweh to the test.” 13 He then said: “Listen, now, House of David: Are you not satisfied with trying human patience that you should try my God’s patience too?”

7 The word here (and elsewhere) translated is ‘Lord’ is אֲדֹנֵי.

8 The words of vv. 8 – 9 are intended to reduce Ahaz’s panic: behind Aram and Ephraim are, simply, two men.

9 The text of vv. 8–9 is difficult. Some textual critics propose the repositioning of 8^b after 9^b and the emending of ‘sixty-five years’ to ‘five or six years’. In fact, Samaria fell in 722 or 721 BCE.

10 The NJB lacks the word ‘again’.

11 This verse suggests that Ahaz can feel free to go beyond the bounds of ordinary human experience.

12 Ahaz uses the verb נָסָה in its negative sense of ‘challenge’ or ‘provoke’; but this is false piety, designed to cover up his lack of faith in God.

13 This verse expresses Isaiah’s impatience. The address to the ‘house of David’ is designed to remind Ahaz and his royal court of the protection promised to them through the Davidic covenant; the king’s refusal to claim God’s promise magnifies his lack of faith.

יד לִכֵּן יִתֵּן אֲדֹנִי הוּא לָכֶם אֹת
 הִנֵּה הָעַלְמָה הָרָה וְיִלְדֶּת בֵּן
 וְקָרְאת שְׁמוֹ עִמָּנוּ אֵל:
 טו חֲמָאָה וּדְבַשׁ יֹאכֵל
 לְדַעְתּוֹ מֵאִס בָּרַע וּבָחֹר בְּטוֹב:
 טז כִּי בִטָּרִם יָדַע הַנֶּעֶר
 מֵאִס בָּרַע וּבָחֹר בְּטוֹב
 תַּעֲזֹב הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה קָץ
 מִפָּנֵי שְׁנֵי מְלָכֶיהָ:
 יז יָבִיא יְהוָה עָלֶיךָ
 וְעַל-עַמֶּךָ וְעַל-בֵּית אָבִיךָ
 יָמִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא-בָאוּ
 לְמִיָּם סוּר-אֶפְרַיִם מֵעַל יְהוּדָה
 אֶת מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר: {פ}
 יח וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִשְׂרָאֵל יִהְיֶה לְזָבוּב
 אֲשֶׁר בִּקְצָה יְאֵרֵי מִצְרַיִם

- 14 The Lord will give you a sign in any case.
It is this: the young woman is with child
and will give birth to a son whom she will call Immanuel.
- 15 He will feed on curds and honey
until he knows how to refuse the bad and choose the good.
- 16 Before the child knows how to refuse the bad
and choose the good,
the lands whose two kings are frightening you
will be deserted.
- 17 Yahweh will bring times for you,
your people and your ancestral House
such as have not been seen
since Ephraim broke away from Judah
(the king of Assyria).
- 18 When that day comes, Yahweh will whistle up mosquitoes
from the distant streams of Egypt

14 The sign Ahaz refuses to ask for is given him nonetheless: the birth of a child whose name, 'Immanuel' (עִמָּנוּ אֵל), meaning 'God with us' (cf. 8:8–10), is prophetic (see #1:26), proclaiming that God is about to protect and bless Judah. In place of 'young woman', here following the MT (עַלְמָה, meaning either a young girl or a recently married woman), the LXX has the more explicit 'virgin' (παρθένος); the LXX is an important witness to an early Jewish interpretation, later adopted by the evangelists: Mt 1:23 takes this to prophesy the virginal conception of Jesus.

15 'Curds and honey' are simple foods for a child being weaned.

16 Like the previous prophecy (7:7–9), this one foretells reverses about to overtake the kingdoms of Samaria and Damascus as God's promised method of avenging the kingdom of Judah, now under threat.

17 'The king of Assyria' is a gloss based on a misinterpretation.

18 The passage of vv. 18–25 has nothing to do with the Syro-Ephraimite War but concerns Egypt and Assyria.

וְלִדְבוּרָה אֲשֶׁר בְּאֶרֶץ אַשּׁוּר:
יט וּבָאוּ וְנָחוּ כָל־ם בְּנַחְלֵי הַבְּתֹת

וּבְנִיקֵי הַסְּלָעִים
וּבְכָל הַנְּעֻצֹצִים
וּבְכָל הַנְּהַלְלִים:

כ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִגְלַח
אֲדֹנָי בְּתֵּעַר הַשְּׂכִירָה בְּעֵבֶר
נָהַר בְּמֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר
אֶת־הָרֹאשׁ וְשֵׁעַר הַרְגָּלִים
וְגַם אֶת־הַזָּקֵן תִּסְפֶּה: {פ}

כא וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא
יְחִי־אִישׁ עֹגֶלֶת בָּקָר וּשְׂתֵי־צֹאן:

כב וְהָיָה מִרְבַּע עֲשׂוֹת חֶלֶב
יֹאכֵל חֲמָאָה
כִּי־חֲמָאָה וּדְבַשׁ יֹאכֵל
כָּל־הַנוֹתָר בְּקֶרֶב הָאָרֶץ: {ס}

כג וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא
יְהִיָּה כָל־מְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יְהִי־שָׁם אֶלֶף גֶּפֶן

and bees from the land of Assyria.

19 They will all come and settle
on the streams in the gullies,
in the holes in the rocks,
on all the thorn bushes and on all the water-points.

20 On that day, the Lord will shave,
with a razor hired from the other side of the River
(with the king of Assyria),
the head and the hair of the feet,
and take off the beard, too.

21 When that day comes,
each man will raise one heifer and two sheep,

22 and, because of the abundant milk they give
on curds he will feed,
all who are left in the country
will feed on curds and honey.

23 When that day comes,
wherever there used to be a thousand vines

19 The meaning of the word נְהַלְלִים ('water-points') is uncertain; some take it as another type of thorn bush and the NRSV has 'pastures'.

20 'Hair of the feet' is probably a euphemism for pubic hair.

21 The verb that introduces this verse (as also vv. 18 & 23) can be understood to serve as a discourse particle and is not translated by some.

22 The NJB puts the 2nd line in parentheses.

23 In place of 'become', NETB has 'be overrun with'.

בְּאַלֶּף כֶּסֶף
לְשָׁמִיר וְלִשְׂיֵת יִהְיֶה:
כִּד בַּחֲצִים וּבִקְשֵׁת יָבוֹא שָׁמָּה
כִּי־שָׁמִיר וְשִׂית תִּהְיֶה כָּל־הָאָרֶץ:
כֵּה וְכָל הַהָרִים
אֲשֶׁר בַּמַּעֲדָר יַעֲדִירוֹן
לֹא־תָבוֹא שָׁמָּה
יִרְאֵת שָׁמִיר וְשִׂית
וְהָיָה לְמִשְׁלַח שׂוֹר וּלְמִרְמָס שֶׁה: {פ}

worth a thousand pieces of silver,
all will become brambles and thorn bushes.

²⁴ With bow and arrows, one will go there;
for, the country will be nothing but brambles and thorn bushes.

²⁵ No more will you venture
on any hillside formerly under the hoe
for fear of the brambles and thorn bushes;
it will be fit only for pasturing the cattle,
a tramping-ground for sheep.

²⁴ The literal translation of 'bow and arrow' is 'arrows and a bow'.

²⁵ At this point one, is able to summarise the content of the 'sign' (vv. 14– 15) as follows: A young woman known to be present when Isaiah delivered this message to Ahaz (perhaps a member of the royal family or the prophetess mentioned in 8:3) would soon give birth to a boy whom the mother would name Immanuel ('God is with us'). Eventually, Immanuel would be forced to eat sour milk and honey, which would enable him to make correct moral decisions. How would this situation come about and how would it constitute a sign? Before this situation developed, the Israelites and Syrians would be defeated; but then Yahweh would usher in a period of time unlike any since the division of the kingdom almost 200 years earlier. The Assyrians would overrun the land, destroy the crops, and force the people to subsist on goats' milk and honey. At that time, as the people saw Immanuel eating his sour milk and honey, the Davidic family would be forced to acknowledge that God was indeed with them: he was present with them in the Syrian-Israelite crisis, fully capable of rescuing them; but he was also present with them in judgment, disciplining them for their lack of trust. The moral of the story is quite clear: Failure to appropriate God's promises by faith can turn potential blessing into disciplinary judgment.

ISAIAH 8

ישעיהו פרק ח

א וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי קַח-לָךְ גְּדוֹל וּכְתֹב עָלָיו
בְּחֶרֶט אֲנוֹשׁ לְמַהֵר שָׁלַל חֶשׂ בָּז׃ ב וְאַעֲיֶדָה לִּי
עֲדִים נְאֻמָּנִים אֶת אֲוִרְיָה הַכֹּהֵן וְאֶת-זְכַּרְיָהוּ בֶן
יְבִרְכָּיָהוּ׃ ג וְאֶקְרַב אֶל-הַנְּבִיאָה וְתָהָר וְתִלְדַּ
בֶּן {ס}

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵלַי קְרָא שְׁמוֹ מַהֵר שָׁלַל חֶשׂ בָּז׃ ד כִּי
בְּטֶרֶם יָדַע הַנְּעָר קְרָא אָבִי וְאִמִּי יִשָּׂא | אֶת-חִיל
דְּמֶשֶׂק וְאֶת שָׁלַל שְׁמֶרֶן לִפְנֵי מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר׃ {ס}
ה וַיִּסֹּף יְהוָה דְּבַר אֵלַי עוֹד לֵאמֹר׃ ו יַעַן כִּי מָאֵס
הָעָם הַזֶּה אֶת מִי הַשְׁלַח הַהֲלֹכִים לְאֵט וּמִשּׁוֹשׁ
אֶת-דְּרָצִין וּבְזִדְמָלְיָהוּ׃ ז וְלֹכֵן הִנֵּה אֲדֹנִי מַעֲלָה
עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת-מִי הַנָּהָר הַעֲצוּמִים וְהַרְפִּים אֶת-מֶלֶךְ
אַשּׁוּר וְאֶת-כָּל-כְּבוֹדוֹ וְעָלָה עַל-כָּל-אֲפִיקָיו וְהִלָּךְ

¹ Yahweh said to me, "Take a large tablet and on it, with an ordinary stylus, write, 'Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz'." ² And take reliable witnesses, the priest Uriah and Zechariah son of Jeberechiah." ³ I then had intercourse with the prophetess, who then conceived and gave birth to a son.

Yahweh said to me, "Call him Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz; ⁴ for, before the child can say 'mother' or 'father', the wealth of Damascus and the booty of Samaria will be carried away while the king of Assyria looks on."

⁵ And Yahweh spoke to me again and said, ⁶ "Since this people has rejected the waters of Shiloah, which flow smoothly, and has trembled before Razon and the son of Remaliah, ⁷ now, therefore, against it, the Lord will bring the mighty, swelling waters of the River (the king of Assyria and all his glory). The River will flood up all its channels and

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- ¹ The prophetic name of Isaiah's second son is a sign and portent (see #1:26, 7:3, 8:18); it means 'Speedy-Spoil-Quick-Booty' and foretells the imminent sack of Damascus and Samaria by the Assyrians.
- ² 'Take' follows the LXX (ποίησον) and 1QIsa^a; the MT has 'let me take'. 'Zechariah' is perhaps Ahaz's father-in-law (2K 18:2).
- ³ The 'prophetess' is Isaiah's wife.
- ⁴ The child's name foreshadows what will happen to Judah's enemies: when their defeat takes place, the child will be a reminder that God predicted the event and brought it to pass; as such, the child will be a reminder of God's protective presence with his people.
- ⁵ The NRSV & NETB lacks the repetitive 'and said', here following the MT (literally, 'saying') and NJB.
- ⁶ 'Trembled' (literally 'melted') is a conjectural translation; the MT has 'exultation', which makes no sense, unless it is related to the verb of the same root (to rejoice) and taken to refer to a pro-Syrian party; other MSS have 'have chosen (as king)', which is historically impossible.
- ⁷ The word here translated as 'Lord' is אֲדֹנִי – the same as normally substituted for the Divine Name when reading aloud.

עַל־כָּל־גְּדֻזָּתָיו: ^ח וַחֲלָף בִּיהוּדָה שֹׁטֵף וְעֶבֶר עַד־
צוּאֵר יִגָּיעַ וְהִיָּה מִטּוֹת כְּנָפָיו מְלֵא רַחֲב־אַרְצָךְ
עִמָּנוּ אֵל: {ס}

^ט רָעוּ עַמִּים וַחֲתוּ וְהֶאֱזִינוּ
כָּל מְרַחֲקֵי־אָרֶץ
הִתְאַזְרוּ וַחֲתוּ
הִתְאַזְרוּ וַחֲתוּ:
^י עֲצוּ עֲצָה וְתִפְר
דַּבְּרוּ דָּבָר וְלֹא יִקּוּם
כִּי עִמָּנוּ אֵל: {ס}

^{יא} כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה אֵלֵי בַחֲזָקַת הַיָּד וַיִּסְרֵנִי מִלִּכְתּוֹ
בַּדֶּרֶךְ הָעַם־הַזֶּה לֵאמֹר: ^{יב} לֹא־תֹאמְרוּן קֶשֶׁר לְכָל
אֲשֶׁר־יֹאמַר הָעָם הַזֶּה קֶשֶׁר וְאֶת־מִזְרָאוֹ לֹא־
תִירָאוּ וְלֹא תַעֲרִיצוּ: ^{יג} אֶת־יְהוָה עֲבָאוֹת אֹתוֹ
תִקְדִּישׁוּ וְהוּא מִזְרָאֲכֶם וְהוּא מַעֲרָצְכֶם: ^{יד} וְהִיָּה
לְמִקְדָּשׁ וּלְאַבֵּן נִגָּף וּלְצוּר מִכְשׁוֹל לְשְׁנֵי בְתֵי

overflow all its banks. ⁸ It will flow into Judah as a flood; pouring over, it will reach up to the neck, and its outspread wings will fill your entire land, Immanuel!

⁹ Realise this, peoples, and be afraid;
listen, all members of far-off nations!

Arm yourselves yet be afraid!

Arm yourselves yet be afraid!

¹⁰ Devise your plans: they will come to nothing!

Issue your order: it will not happen!

For God is with us!"

¹¹ For, Yahweh spoke to me thus when his hand was strong upon me and he warned me not to follow the path of this people, saying, ¹² "Do not call conspiracy all this people calls conspiracy; do not dread what they dread, have no fear of that. ¹³ Yahweh Sabaoth is the one you will proclaim holy; him you will dread and him you will fear. ¹⁴ He will be a sanctuary, a stumbling stone, a rock to trip up the two Houses of Israel;

⁸ The use of the prophetic name 'Immanuel' here, and undisguised in v. 10, underlines the unity of this group of prophetic sayings.

⁹ 'Realise this' follows the LXX (γινώτε – literally 'know', and NJB); the MT has 'were you going' and the NRSV has 'band together'.

¹⁰ The literal translation of the 2nd line is, "Speak a word but it will not stand!"

¹¹ Here, Isaiah seems to be explaining the reason for his attitude, for the benefit of his disciples (v. 16). Yahweh himself has taught him to oppose the people of Judah and put his trust in no one but God – a difficult attitude to adopt in circumstances so ambiguous (vv. 14–15) and destined to make true fidelity the more apparent.

¹² The verb translated 'do not call' is 2MP, indicating that this exhortation is directed to Isaiah and other followers of God (see v. 16).

¹³ The roots יָרָא and עָרַץ are repeated from v. 12^b.

¹⁴ Instead of 'sanctuary' (מִקְדָּשׁ), the Tg reads 'trap' (מוֹקֵשׁ), as at the end of the verse; the MT seems to be either a mistake or a scribal correction.

יִשְׂרָאֵל לִפְחָ וּלְמוֹקֵשׁ לְיוֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם: ^{טו} וְכָשְׁלוּ
בָם רַבִּים וְנָפְלוּ וְנִשְׁבְּרוּ וְנוֹקְשׁוּ וְנִלְכְּדוּ: {פ}

^{טז} צֹר תַעֲוֹדָה חֲתוּם תּוֹרָה בְּלִמְדִי: "וְחִפְּתִי
לִיהוָה הַמִּסְתִּיר פָּנָיו מִבֵּית יַעֲקֹב וְקוֹיֵתִי-לוֹ:
י" הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי וְהַיִּלָּדִים אֲשֶׁר נָתַן-לִי יְהוָה לְאַתּוֹת
וּלְמוֹפְתִים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל מֵעַם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת הַשֹּׁכֵן בְּהָר
צִיּוֹן: {ס}

^{יט} וְכִי-יֹאמְרוּ אֲלֵיכֶם דִּרְשׁוּ אֱלֹהֵאֲבוֹת וְאֵל-
הַיִּדְּעָנִים הַמְצַפְצָפִים וְהַמְהַגִּים הַלּוֹא-עֵם אֵל-
אֱלֹהֵיו יִדְרֹשׁ בְּעַד הַחַיִּים אֱלֹהֵי-הַמָּתִים: ^כ לְתוֹרָה
וּלְתַעֲוֹדָה אִם-לֹא יֹאמְרוּ כַּדָּבָר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֵין-לוֹ
שָׁחַר: ^{כא} וְעָבַר בָּהּ נִקְשָׁה וְרָעַב וְהָיָה כִּי-יִרְעַב

a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, ¹⁵ over which many of them will stumble, fall and be broken, be ensnared and made captive.

¹⁶ Bind up the testimony, seal the teaching among my disciples." ¹⁷ I will wait for Yahweh, who hides his face from the House of Jacob; I will hope in him. ¹⁸ See, I and the children whom Yahweh has given me shall become signs and portents from Yahweh Sabaoth, who dwells on Mount Zion.

¹⁹ And if they say to you, "Consult ghosts and wizards that whisper and mutter – a people should consult its gods and the dead on behalf of the living, ²⁰ for teaching and instruction;" then surely those who speak like this will have no dawn. ²¹ Oppressed and hungry, they will wander the land; and, once starving, they will be enraged and curse the king and

¹⁵ NETB opens this verse with, "Many will stumble and fall over the rock."

¹⁶ 'Bind' and 'seal' are actions also taken with a scroll (Jr 32:10).

¹⁷ The NJB opens with 'my trust is in' in place of 'I will wait for', here following the NRSV.

¹⁸ The names of all three individuals have symbolic value: Isaiah's name (which means 'Yahweh delivers') was a reminder that Yahweh was the nation's only source of protection; 'Shear-Jashub' meant, at least originally, to encourage Ahaz (see #7:3), and the name, 'Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz', was a guarantee that God would defeat Israel and Syria (see #8:4).

¹⁹ It is uncertain if the prophet or God is speaking in vv. 19–22; if the latter, then vv. 19–22 resume the speech recorded in vv. 12–15, after the prophet's response in vv. 16–18.

²⁰ Vv. 19–20, possibly misplaced, are very obscure. Isaiah is reporting the words of his opponents, who claim that the people have the right to practice divination (see #2:6). The answer (v. 19^b) is probably ironic, and the prophet seems to conclude (v. 20) by saying that this kind of talk leads to a dead-end. However, the text is uncertain and the meaning is in doubt.

²¹ Here, again, we seem to have a misplaced prophetic fragment. In principle, it seems to be about someone travelling through the ravaged country and giving vent to his distress. However, it is not clear what connexion this verse has with its immediate context. It ought perhaps to be attached to 5:26–30, to which it would make an appropriate continuation.

וְהִתְקַצֵּף וְקָלַל בְּמַלְכוֹ וּבֵאלֹהָיו וּפָנָה לְמַעַלָּה׃
כב וְאֶל-אֶרֶץ יִבֵּיט וְהִנֵּה צָרָה וַחֲשֹׁכָה מְעוֹף צוּקָה
 וְאַפְלָה מִנֶּדַח׃ **כג** כִּי לֹא מוֹעֵף לְאִשֶּׁר מוֹצֵק לָהּ
 כְּעֵת הָרֵאשׁוֹן הַקָּל אֶרְצָה זְבֻלוֹן וְאֶרְצָה נַפְתָּלִי
 וְהָאֲחֵרוֹן הַכְּבִיד דֶּרֶךְ הַיָּם עֲבַר הַיַּרְדֵּן גָּלִיל הַגּוֹיִם׃

his gods as they look upward. ²² Or, they will look to the earth but will see only distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish, and they will be thrust into thick darkness. ²³ But there will be no gloom for those who were anxious. As the past humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, so the future will glorify the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan, and Galilee of the nations.

²² The precise meaning of מְעוֹף ('gloom') is uncertain; the word occurs only here. The word מִנֶּדַח ('thrust') appears to be a Pual participle from נָדַח, but the Piel is unattested for this verb and the Pual occurs only here.

²³ This verse (included as 9:1 in the NRSV and most English translations), foretelling a glorious future in contrast to the humiliating past for the northern parts of Palestine, apparently alludes to the campaign of Tiglath-Pileser III in Galilee and the deportation of 732 BCE (see 2K 15:29). In the following prophetic saying, Isaiah foretells a 'Day of Yahweh' that will bring deliverance to the deportees; at the same time, he foretells the peaceful reign of a child of royal race, the Immanuel of 7:14. In place of the 1st sentence, the NJB has the question, "*For, is not everything dark as night for a country in distress?*"

ישעיהו פרק ט

א העם ההלכים בחשך
ראו אור גדול
ישבי בארץ צלמות
אור נגה עליהם:
ב הרבית הגוי לא לו הגדלת השמחה
שמחו לפניך כשמחת בקציר
כאשר יגילו בחלקם שלל:
ג בין את-על סבלו
ואת מטה שכמו
שבט הנגש בו
החתת כיום מדין:
ד כי כל-סאון סאן ברעש
ושמלה מגוללה בדמים
והיתה לשרפה מאכלת אש:
ה כי-ילד ילד-לנו בן נתן-לנו
ותהי המשרה על-שכמו

ISAIAH 9

- 1 The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those who lived in a country of deep darkness,
light has blazed forth.
- 2 You have enlarged the nation, you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest,
as they exult when dividing the spoils.
- 3 For the yoke of its burden
and the bar across its shoulders,
the rod of its oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.
- 4 For, all the boots clanking over the ground
and all the clothing rolled in blood
shall be burnt as food for the flames.
- 5 For, a son has been born to us, a son has been given to us,
and dominion has been laid on his shoulders;

ISAIAH 9

- 1 This verse is 9:2 in the NRSV and most other English Bibles (see #8:23); therein, all other verse numbers of this chapter are accordingly incremented. Traditionally, צלמות ('deep darkness') has been interpreted as a compound noun, meaning 'shadow of death' but usage indicates that the word, though it can refer to death, means 'darkness'; the term should probably be repointed as an abstract noun צלמות – see #Ps 23:4.
- 2 In the 1st line, the translation follows the Qere (reading לו); the Ketiv (לא) would read, "You have enlarged the nation, you do not make great the joy."
- 3 The singular pronouns her are collective, referring to the people. The 'day of Midian' refers to Gideon's victory over Midian (see Jg 7:15–25).
- 4 The literal translation of the 1st line is, "For all the footgear of clangour."
- 5 The royal child will possess the wisdom of Solomon, the valour and piety of David, and the great virtues of Moses and the patriarchs (cf. 11:2).

וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ
 פֶּלֶא יוֹעֵץ אֱלֹהֵי גִבּוֹר
 אֲבִי־עַד שֶׁר־שָׁלוֹם:
 לִם רֵבָה [לְמַרְבֵּה] הַמִּשְׁרָה וּלְשָׁלוֹם אֵין־קֶץ
 עַל־כִּסֵּא דָוִד וְעַל־מַמְלַכְתּוֹ
 לְהַכִּין אֹתָהּ וּלְסַעְדָּהּ
 בְּמִשְׁפָּט וּבִצְדָקָה
 מִעַתָּה וְעַד־עוֹלָם
 קִנְיַת יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת תַּעֲשֶׂה־זֶה: {פ}
 דְּבַר שֶׁלַח אֲדָנִי בִיעָקֵב
 וְנָפַל בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל:
 וַיֵּדְעוּ הָעָם כֻּלּוֹ
 אֶפְרַיִם וְיוֹשֵׁב שְׁמֶרֹן
 בְּגִאוֹה וּבְגָדָל לֵבָב לֵאמֹר:
 לְבָנִים נָפְלוּ וְגִזִּית נִבְנָה
 שְׁקָמִים גִּדְּעוּ וְאַרְזִים נִחְלִיף:
 וַיִּשְׁגֹּב יְהוָה אֶת־צָרֵי רָצִין עָלֵיו
 וְאֶת־אֹיְבָיו יִסְכֶּסֶד:

and he is named,

Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty God,

Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

6 His dominion shall be vast, and there shall be eternal peace over the throne of David and his kingdom,

He shall establish and uphold it

in fair judgement and integrity,

from this time onwards and forever.

The jealous love of Yahweh Sabaoth will do this.

7 The Lord has launched a word at Jacob and it has fallen on Israel.

8 The people were all aware of it, Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria, who say in the pride of their arrogant hearts:

9 "The bricks have fallen but we will rebuild with dressed stone; the sycamores are felled but we will replace them with cedars."

10 So, Yahweh has raised their foe Razon against them; he has stirred up their enemies:

6 The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

7 This poem, with refrain (vv. 11b, 16, 20; cf. 10:4b & 5:25) was uttered during a time of hostility between Israel and Judah, either in 739 BCE, before the war against Ahaz (2K 15:37) or in 734 BCE, when the war was over and Israel was dominated by Assyria (2K 15:29).

8 The translation of the 1st line assumes vv. 8–9 describe the people's response to a past judgment; the perfect is taken simply and the *vav* (ו) is taken as conjunctive. Another option is to take the *vav* on the perfect as consecutive and translate, 'all the people will know' (as *NJB*).

9 'Bricks' and 'sycamores' were for ordinary houses; 'dressed stone' and 'cedars' were for palaces (Jr 22:7,23).

10 'Their foe Razon' is conjectural, following the *NJB*; the *MT* has 'the foes of Razon', making no sense.

יא אַרם מִקֶּדֶם וּפְלִשְׁתִּים מֵאַחֲזֹר
 וַיֹּאכְלוּ אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכַל־פֶּה
 בְּכַל־זֹאת לֹא־שָׁב
 אָפוּ וְעוֹד יָדוֹ נְטוּיָה:
 יב וְהֵעָם לֹא־שָׁב עַד־הַמָּכָהוּ
 וְאֶת־יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת לֹא דָרְשׁוּ: {ס}
 יג וַיִּכְרֹת יְהוָה מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל רֹאשׁ
 וְזֹנֵב כֶּפֶה וְאַגְמוֹן יוֹם אֶחָד:
 יד זָקֵן וְנָשׂוּא־פָנִים הוּא הָרֹאשׁ
 וְנָבִיא מוֹרָה־שֹׁקֵר הוּא הַזֹּנֵב:
 טו וַיְהִיו מְאַשְׂרֵי הָעַם־הַזֶּה מִתְּעִים
 וּמְאַשְׂרֵיו מִבְלָעִים:
 טז עַל־כֵּן עַל־בַּחֲזוֹרָיו לֹא־יִשְׁמַח | אֲדֹנָי
 וְאֶת־יְתֻמָּיו וְאֶת־אַלְמָנוֹתָיו לֹא יִרְחֵם
 כִּי כָל חַגָּף וּמְרָע
 וְכָל־פֶּה דֹבֵר נְבִלָה

- 11 Aram to the east, Philistines to the west,
 to devour Israel with gaping jaws.
 After all this, his anger is not spent:
 his hand is still stretched out!
 12 The people did not turn to him who struck them;
 they would not seek out Yahweh Sabaoth.
 13 So, Yahweh has topped and tailed Israel,
 palm branch and reed in a single day.
 14 The top is the elder and the man of rank;
 the tail is the prophet teaching lies.
 15 This people's leaders have led them astray
 and those being led are swallowed up.
 16 So, the Lord was not pleased with their young men;
 he took no pity on their orphans and widows,
 for all of them were godless and evil,
 and everything they say was folly.

11 The combined hostility of Philistines and Aramaeans is not attested elsewhere.

12 This verse describes the people's response to the judgment described in vv. 10–11; the perfects are understood as indicating simple past.

13 'Top' and 'tail', 'palm' and 'reed' seem to mean rulers and the ruled (cf. 19:15, Dt 28:13,44).

14 The literal translation of 'the man of rank' is 'the one lifted up with respect to face'. This verse is probably an explanatory gloss.

15 Perhaps 5:25, probably misplaced, ought to be included here.

16 In place of 'was not pleased with' (יִשְׁמַח), 1QIsa^a has לֹא יַחְמוֹל ('he did not spare'), which is an obvious attempt to tighten the parallelism (note 'he took no pity' in the following line); instead of taking יִשְׁמַח in one of its well attested senses ('rejoice over', 'be pleased with'), some propose, with support from Arabic, a rare homonymic root meaning 'be merciful'.

בְּכָל־זֹאת לֹא־שָׁב
אָפוּ וְעוֹד יָדוֹ נְטוּיָ:
יז כִּי־בַעֲרָה כָּאֵשׁ רִשְׁעָהּ
שָׁמִיר וְשִׁית תֹּאכֵל
וְתִצַּת בְּסִבְכֵי הַיַּעַר
וַיֵּתְאֲבְכוּ גִּאוֹת עָשָׂן:
יח בַּעֲבֹרַת יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת נִעְתָּם אֶרֶץ
וַיְהִי הָעָם כְּמֹאכְלֹת אֵשׁ
אִישׁ אֶל־אָחִיו לֹא יִחְמְלוּ:
יט וַיִּגְזֹר עַל־יְמִין וְרָעַב
וַיֹּאכַל עַל־שְׁמֹאול וְלֹא שָׁבְעוּ
אִישׁ בֶּשֶׁר־זֶרְעוֹ יֹאכְלוּ:
כ מְנַשֶּׁה אֶת־אֶפְרַיִם וְאֶפְרַיִם אֶת־מְנַשֶּׁה
יַחֲדוֹ הָמָּה עַל־יְהוּדָה
בְּכָל־זֹאת לֹא־שָׁב אָפוּ
וְעוֹד יָדוֹ נְטוּיָה: {ס}

After all this, his anger is not spent:
his hand is still stretched out!

- 17 For, wickedness burned like a fire,
devouring bramble and thorn bush,
setting the forest thickets ablaze
and they went up in billowing smoke!
18 Through the fury of Yahweh Sabaoth, the land was set on fire
and the people are like food for the flames.
No one spares a thought for his brother.
19 They gorged to the right and were still hungry;
they devoured to the left and were not satisfied;
each devoured the flesh of his own arm.
20 Manasseh devoured Ephraim, Ephraim Manasseh;
together, they turned against Judah.
After all this, his anger is not spent:
his hand is still stretched out!

17 In place of 'for', the NJB opens with 'yes'; the verb that introduces this verse serves as a discourse particle and is untranslated.

18 'Set on fire' follows the LXX (συνέκαυσται); the MT (נִעְתָּם), which occurs only here) is not clear.

19 The NRSV has 'kindred' in place of 'arm', reading זֶרְעוֹ in place of זֶרְעוֹ.

20 The word 'devoured' is not present in the MT but is here added for clarity.

ישעיהו פרק י

א הוֹי הַחֲקִיקִים חֲקִי־אֲוֹן
וּמִכְתָּבִים עֲמַל כְּתָבוֹ:
ב לְהַטּוֹת מִדִּין דָּלִים וְלִגְזֹל
מִשְׁפַּט עֲנִי עָמִי
לְהַיּוֹת אֶלְמָנוֹת שְׁלָלָם
וְאֶת־יְתוּמִים יַבְזּוּ:
ג וּמָה־תַּעֲשׂוּ לַיּוֹם פְּקֻדָּה
וּלְשׂוֹאָה מִמָּרְחָק תָּבוֹא
עַל־מִלִּי תִּנּוּסוּ לְעִזָּרָה
וְאַנָּה תַעֲזֹבוּ כְּבוֹדְכֶם:
ד בְּלִתִּי כָרַע תַּחַת אֲסִיר
וְתַחַת הַרוּגִים יִפְּלוּ
בְּכָל־זֹאת לֹא־שָׁב אָפוּ
וְעוֹד יָדוֹ נְטוּיָה: {פ}
ה הוֹי אֲשׁוּר שִׁבַּט אֲפִי
וּמִטָּה־הוּא בִידָם זַעֲמִי:

ISAIAH 10

- 1 Woe to those who enact unjust decrees,
who compose oppressive legislation,
- 2 to deny justice to the weak,
to deprive the poor of my people of their right,
that widows may be their plunder
and they may rob orphans.
- 3 What will you do on the day of punishment,
when disaster comes from far away?
To whom will you run for help
and where will you leave your riches,
- 4 to avoid squatting among the captives
or falling among the slain?
After all this, his anger is not spent:
his hand is still stretched out!
- 5 Woe to Assyria, rod of my anger,
the club in their hands is my fury!

ISAIAH 10

- ¹ The literal translation of the 2nd line is, “*the writers who write out harm*,” the particle and verb are in the Piel, suggesting repetitive action.
- ² On the socio-economic background to vv. 1–2, see #1:23.
- ³ The literal translation of ‘*day of punishment*’ is ‘*day of visitation*’ – that is, the day when God arrives to execute justice on the oppressors.
- ⁴ Literally translated, the 1st 2 lines read, “*Except one kneels in the place of the prisoner, and in the place of the slain (who) fall.*”
- ⁵ This passage seems to refer to Sennacherib and the invasion of 702 BCE. Compare vv. 8–11 with 36:18–20. Without knowing it, the king of Assyria is the instrument executing God’s judgement on a rebellious people (see 5:26, 7:18, 8:7, 13:5).

1 בְּגֹי חֲנָף אֲשַׁלְּחֵנּוּ
 וְעַל-עַם עִבְרָתִי אֲצַוֵּנּוּ
 לְשַׁלֵּל שָׁלָל וּלְבַז בָּז
 וּלְשִׁימוּ וּלְשׁוּמוּ מִרְמָס בְּחֹמֶר חוּצוֹת:
 2 וְהוּא לֹא-כֵן יִדְמֶה
 וּלְבַבּוֹ לֹא-כֵן יַחְשֹׁב
 כִּי לְהַשְׁמִיד בְּלִבּוֹ
 וּלְהַכְרִית גּוֹיִם לֹא מַעֲט:
 3 כִּי יֹאמֶר הֲלֹא שָׂרֵי יַחֲדוֹ מְלָכִים:
 4 הֲלֹא כְּכַרְכַּמִּישׁ בָּלָגוּ
 אִם-לֹא כְּאַרְפַּד חֲמַת
 אִם-לֹא כְּדַמָּשֶׁק שֹׁמְרוֹן:
 5 כַּאֲשֶׁר מָצָאָה יָדִי לְמַמְלַכַת הָאֱלִילִים
 וּפְסִילֵיהֶם מִירוּשָׁלַם וּמִשֹּׁמְרוֹן:
 6 הֲלֹא כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי לְשֹׁמְרוֹן וּלְאֱלִילֵיהָ
 בֶּן אֶעֱשֶׂה לִירוּשָׁלַם וּלְעִצָּבֶיהָ: {פ}

6 Against a godless nation I sent him,
 commanding him against the people who enraged me,
 to take spoil and seize plunder
 and trample them down like dirt in the streets.
 7 But this is not his intention
 nor does his heart plan it so;
 for, he dreams of putting an end to them,
 of liquidating nations without number!
 8 For he says, "Are not my officers all kings?
 9 Is not Calno like Carchemish,
 Hamath like Arpad,
 Samaria like Damascus?
 10 As my hand has found the kingdoms of the false gods,
 whose images were greater than in Jerusalem and Samaria,
 11 as I have treated Samaria and her false gods
 shall I not treat Jerusalem and her statues too?"

6 The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

7 Literally translated, this verse reads, "But he, not so does he intend, and his heart, not so does it think; for, to destroy (is) in his heart, and to cut off nations, not a few."

8 The *NJB* has virtually all the verbs in this section in the past tense; here, we follow the *MT*, *NRSV* & *NETB*.

9 Isaiah cites the powerful cities that have been ravaged by the Assyrians in previous campaigns.

10 Isaiah makes the Assyrian king talk like a good Yahwist, for whom the foreign gods were 'nothings-whatever' (הָאֱלִילִים), a term often used by Isaiah for idols.

11 This verse is constructed as a rhetorical question in the *MT*: "Is it not (true that) just as I have done to Samaria and its idols, so I will do to Jerusalem and its idols?"

- ^{יב} וְהָיָה כִּי־יַבְצֵעַ אֲדֹנָי אֶת־כָּל־מַעֲשָׂהוּ בְּהָר צִיּוֹן
וּבִירוּשָׁלַם אֶפְקֹד עַל־פְּרִי־גִדְלֹ לִבָּב מֶלֶךְ־אֲשׁוּר
וְעַל־תַּפְאֶרֶת רוּם עֵינָיו: ^{יג} כִּי אָמַר
בְּכַח יָדִי עָשִׂיתִי
וּבְחִכְמָתִי כִי נִבְנֹתִי
וְאָסִיר | גְּבוּלֹת עַמִּים
וְעַתִּידֵיהֶם וְעַתּוּדֵיהֶם שׁוֹשְׁתִּי
וְאוֹרִיד כַּאֲבִיר יוֹשְׁבִים:
^{יד} וְתִמְצָא כִקְוֹן | יָדִי
לְחֵיל הָעַמִּים
וְכֹאסֶף בִּיצִים עֲזֹבוֹת
כָּל־הָאָרֶץ אֲנִי אֶסְפָּתִי
וְלֹא הָיָה נֹדֵד כָּנָף
וּפִצָּה פֶה וּמִצְפָּץ:
^{טו} הֲיִתְפָּאֵר הַגִּרְזֵן עַל הַחֶצֶב בּוֹ
אִם־יִתְגַּדֵּל הַמִּשׁוֹר
עַל־מְנִיפּוֹ כְּהִנִּיף שִׁבְט
וְאֶת־מְרִימָיו כְּהָרִים מִטָּה לֹא־עֵץ: {פ}
^{טז} לָכֵן יִשְׁלַח הָאֲדֹנָן יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת בְּמִשְׁמָנִי
- ¹² When the Lord has completed all his work on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, he will punish the fruit of the king of Assyria's boastful heart and the insolence of his haughty looks. ¹³ For he says:
"By the strength of my hand I have done this
and by my wisdom; for, I understand!
I have removed the borders of nations;
and have plundered their treasures;
like a bull, I have brought down their rulers.
¹⁴ My hand has found, like a nest,
the riches of peoples.
Like someone collecting deserted eggs,
I have collected the whole world
while no one has fluttered a wing
or opened a beak to squawk."
¹⁵ Does an axe exalt itself over he who wields it,
or a saw magnify itself over the man who handles it?
As though a rod should wield the one who raises it,
or a club lift what is not made of wood!
¹⁶ Thus, Yahweh Sabaoth will inflict leanness on his stout men,

¹² 'He will punish' follows the LXX (ἐπάξει); the MT has 'I shall punish'.

¹³ The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹⁴ The Assyrians' conquests were relatively unopposed, like robbing a bird's nest of its eggs when the mother bird is absent.

¹⁵ This verse is a rhetorical question recalling v. 5 (cf. 45:9).

¹⁶ The irrational arrogance of the Assyrians (v. 15) will prompt the judgment about to be described.

רִזּוֹן וְתַחַת כְּבוֹדוֹ יִקַּד יִקַּד בִּיקוֹד אֵשׁ:

יז וְהָיָה אֹרֶז־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאֵשׁ

וְקִדּוּשׁוֹ לִלְהָבָה

וּבַעֲרָה וְאָכְלָה שִׁיתוֹ וְשִׁמְרֹו בְיוֹם אֶחָד:

יח וְכְבוֹד יַעֲרֹו וְכִרְמָלוֹ

מִנֶּפֶשׁ וְעַד־בָּשָׂר יִכָּלָה

וְהָיָה בְּמָסָס נֶסֶס:

יט וְשָׂאֵר עֵץ יַעֲרֹו מִסֶּפֶר יִהְיוּ

וְנֶעַר יִכְתֹּבָם: {ס}

כ וְהָיָה | בְּיוֹם הַהוּא לֹא־יֹסִיף עוֹד שְׂאֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל

וּפְלִיטַת בֵּית־יַעֲקֹב לְהִשָּׁעַן עַל־מַכְּהוֹ וְנִשְׁעֵן עַל־

יְהוָה קִדּוּשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאַמְתּוֹ: כא שְׂאֵר יִשׁוּב שְׂאֵר

יַעֲקֹב אֶל־אֵל גִּבּוֹר: כב כִּי אִם־יְהוָה עִמָּךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל

כָּחוֹל הַיָּם שְׂאֵר יִשׁוּב בּוֹ כְּלִיזֹן חֲרוּץ שׁוֹטֵף צְדָקָה:

כג כִּי כָלָה וְנִחְרָצָה אֲדָנִי יְהוָה עֲבָאוֹת עֲשֵׂה בְּקֶרֶב

כָּל־הָאָרֶץ: {פ}

and beneath his glory kindle a fever burning like a fire.

17 The Light of Israel will become a fire

and its Holy One a flame

burning and devouring his thorns and briers in a day.

18 The glory of his forest and his fruitful land

will be destroyed, body and soul;

as when a sick man's life ebbs away.

19 The remnant of the trees of his forest will be so few

that a child could write their number.

20 On that day, the remnant of Israel and the survivors of the House of

Jacob will stop relying on the man who strikes them and will truly rely

on Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel. 21 A remnant will return, the

remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God. 22 Israel, though your people are

like the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will return: destruction

is decreed overflowing with justice. 23 For, throughout the country, the

Lord Yahweh Sabaoth will enforce the destruction decreed.

17 In this context, the 'Light of Israel' is a divine title pointing to God's royal splendour, which overshadows and, when transformed into fire, destroys the 'majestic glory' of the king of Assyria (v. 16^b).

18 The precise meaning of the last line is uncertain; מָסָס, which is used elsewhere of substances dissolving or melting, may here mean 'waste away' or 'despair' and נֶסֶס, which appears only here, may mean 'be sick' or 'stagger'.

19 Some think that vv. 16–19 are about Judah, rather than the king of Assyria.

20 Vv. 20–23 seem to be a commentary on the name given by Isaiah to his eldest son, Shear-Jashub, 'a remnant will return' (see 7:3).

21 The referent of אֵל גִּבּוֹר ('mighty God') is uncertain: the title appears only here and in 9:6, where it is one of the titles of the coming ideal king.

22 The good news is that a remnant of God's people will return; the bad news is that only a remnant will be preserved and come back.

23 The NRSV has 'earth' in place of 'country'.

כד לֹכֵן כָּה־אָמַר אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֶל־תִּירָא עַמִּי
יֹשֵׁב צִיּוֹן מֵאֲשׁוּר בַּשֵּׁבֶט יַכְכָּה וּמִטֵּהוּ יִשָּׂא־עָלֶיךָ
בַּדֶּרֶךְ מִצְרַיִם: כה כִּי־עוֹד מַעַט מִזֶּעַר וְכֻלָּה זַעַם
וְאָפִי עַל־תְּבִלִיתָם: כו וְעוֹרֵר עָלָיו יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
שׁוֹט כַּמַּכַּת מִדִּין בַּצּוֹר עוֹרֵב וּמִטֵּהוּ עַל־הֵימָּם
וְנִשְׂאוֹ בַּדֶּרֶךְ מִצְרַיִם: כז וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִסּוֹר
סִבְלוֹ מֵעַל שִׁכְמְךָ וְעָלוּ מֵעַל צוּאֲרֶךָ

וְחָבַל עַל מִפְּנֵי־שָׁמֶן:

כח בָּא עַל־עֵיֶת

עָבַר בְּמִגְרוֹן

לְמַכְמֶשׁ יִפְקִיד כָּלָיו:

כט עָבְרוּ מֵעִבְרָה גִבֵּעַ מַלּוֹן לָנוּ

חֲרָדָה הִרְמָה גִּבְעַת שְׂאוֹל נִסָּה:

ל צֶהְלִי קוֹלְךָ בַּת־גָּלִים

הַקְשִׁיבִי לִישָׁה עֲנִיָּה עֲנִתוֹת:

²⁴ So, the Lord Yahweh Sabaoth says this: My people, who live in Zion, do not be afraid of Assyria when they beat you with the rod and raise the club against you, as the Egyptians did. ²⁵ For, very soon, my fury will subside, and my anger will destroy them. ²⁶ Yahweh Sabaoth will brandish a whip at him as he struck Midian at Oreb's Rock; he will raise his rod over the Sea as he lifted it in Egypt. ²⁷ On that day, his burden will fall from your shoulder and his yoke from your neck.

He has gone up from Rimmon,

²⁸ he has reached Aiath;

he has moved on to Migron;

he has left his baggage at Michmash.

²⁹ They went through the pass, spent the night at Geba.

Ramah quaked; Gibeah of Saul ran away.

³⁰ Cry your loudest, Bath-Gallim!

Pay attention, Laish! Answer her, Anathoth!

²⁴ The last clause of this verse (parenthesised in the *NJB*) is probably a gloss taken from v. 26.

²⁵ For 'my fury', the *MT* has just 'fury' (מִזֶּעַר), but the pronominal element can be assumed on the basis of what immediately follows; it is possible that the suffixed yod (י) has been accidentally dropped by virtual haplography – note the vav (ו) on the following word.

²⁶ The referent of 'at him' is the king or leader who stands for the entire nation (Assyria).

²⁷ The last line of the verse is not clear (literally 'and the yoke will fall before the fat'). He, following the *NRSV*, we attach 'will fall' to the previous phrase and then emend the *MT*.

²⁸ Vv. 28–32 describe the invader's advance. If the passage applies to Sennacherib (see v. 5), this was not the route taken by his army (see 2K 18:17), but a conventional description of an invasion coming from the north (cf. Is 14:31).

²⁹ The *NJB* has 'defile' in place of 'pass', here following the *NRSV* & *NETB*.

³⁰ 'Answer her' is an emendation of עֲנִיָּה ('unlucky') to עֲנִיָּה, supported by the *Peshitta*.

לא נִדְּדָה מִדְּמִנָּה
 יֹשְׁבֵי הַגְּבִים הֶעֱיִזוּ:
 לב עוֹד הַיּוֹם בָּנוּב לַעֲמֹד
 יִנַּפֵּף יָדוֹ הָרַב בֵּית בַּת־צִיּוֹן
 גְּבַעַת יְרוּשָׁלַם: {פ}
 לג הִנֵּה הָאֲדוֹן יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
 מִסַּעַף פְּאֲרָה בְּמַעֲרָצָה
 וְרָמִי הַקּוֹמָה גְּדוּעִים
 וְהַגְּבִהִים יִשְׁפָּלוּ:
 לד וְנִקְףָּ סִבְכֵי הַיַּעַר בְּבִרְזֵל
 וְהַלְבָּנוֹן בְּאֲדִיר יָפוֹל: {ס}

- 31 Madmenah has fled;
 the residents of Gebim have hidden.
 32 This very day, he will halt at Nob,
 shaking his fist at the mount of the daughter of Zion,
 the hill of Jerusalem.
 33 Look! The Lord Yahweh Sabaoth
 will violently lop the boughs;
 the tallest trees shall be cut down;
 the loftiest shall be laid low!
 34 The forest thickets shall fall beneath the axe,
 and the Lebanon shall fall to the blows of a Mighty One.

31 In place of 'have hidden', here following NETB, the NJB has 'have taken cover' and the NRSV has 'flee for safety'.

32 The In place of 'daughter', here following the Qere (בַּת־), the Ketiv has 'house' (בֵּית־).

33 The literal translation of 'the tallest trees' is 'the exalted of the height', which could refer either to the tallest trees or the highest branches.

34 For the last line, here following the MT (and NJB), the NRSV, conjecturally following the LXX (ὁ δὲ Λίβανος σὺν τοῖς ὑψηλοῖς πεσεῖται) and Vg (et Libanus cum excelsis cadet), reads, "and Lebanon with its majestic trees will fall."

ישעיהו פרק יא

א ויצא חֹטֵר מִגִּזְע יֵשׁוּ
וְנָצַר מִשְׁרָשָׁיו יִפְרֶה:
ב וְנָחָה עָלָיו רוּחַ יְהוָה
רוּחַ חֲכָמָה וּבִינָה
רוּחַ עֲצָה וּגְבוּרָה
רוּחַ דַּעַת וִירָאת יְהוָה:
ג וְהָרִיחוּ בִירָאת יְהוָה
וְלֹא-לְמַרְאֵה עֵינָיו יִשְׁפּוֹט
וְלֹא-לְמִשְׁמַע אָזְנוֹ יוֹכִיחַ:
ד וְשָׁפַט בְּצִדִּיק דְּלִים
וְהוֹכִיחַ בְּמִישׁוֹר לְעַנְוֵי-אָרֶץ
וְהִכָּה-אָרֶץ בְּשֶׁבֶט פִּי
וּבְרוּחַ שְׁפָתָיו יָמִית רָשָׁע:

ISAIAH 11

- 1 A shoot will spring from the stock of Jesse;
a new shoot will grow from his roots.
- 2 On him will rest the Spirit of Yahweh,
the spirit of wisdom and insight,
the spirit of counsel and power,
the spirit of knowledge and fear of Yahweh.
- 3 His delight will lie in the fear of Yahweh.
He will not judge by what his eye sees
or decide by what his ears hear.
- 4 He will judge the weak with integrity
and give fair sentence for the humblest in the land.
He will strike the earth with the sceptre of his mouth
and, with the breath of his lips, bring death to the wicked.

ISAIAH 11

- ¹ The messianic poem of vv. 1–9 describes in some detail the salient characteristics of the coming Messiah: of Davidic stock (v. 1), he will be filled with the spirit of the prophets (v. 2), will establish in society the ‘integrity’ that is the reflection of God’s sanctity on earth (vv. 3–5), he will restore the peace of Eden (vv. 6–8), which is the fruit of the knowledge of God (v. 9).
- ² The ‘Spirit of Yahweh’ is found active throughout biblical history (42:1, 61:1ff, 63:10–13, Ps 51:12, Ws 1:5, 9:17). Before the Creation, it rests on the abyss (Gn 1:2) and to it all creatures owe life (Gn 2:7, Ps 33:6, 104:29–30, cf. Ezk 37:5–6, 9–10). It inspires the Judges (Jg 3:10, 6:34, 11:29) and Saul (1S 11:6). It gives judges their discretion (Nb 11:17), Joseph his wisdom (Gn 41:38) and it inspires the prophets (48:16, 61:1, Nb 11:17, 25–26, 24:2, 1S 10:6, 10, 19:20, 2S 23:2, 2K 2:9, 2Ch 15:1, 20:14, Mi 3:8, Zc 7:12).
- ³ The prophetic spirit confers on the Messiah the outstanding virtues of his great ancestors: the wisdom and insight of Solomon, the heroism and prudence of David, the knowledge and fear of God characteristic of patriarch and prophet, of Moses, Jacob, and Abraham (cf. 9:5).
- ⁴ The 3rd line follows the MT literally (and the NJB); some suggest, in this context, אָרֶץ (‘earth’) as an object of judgment seems too broad in scope, and the parallelism is tighter if one emends the word to עֶרֶץ (‘tyrant’).

ה	וְהָיָה צֶדֶק אֲזֹר מִתְּנִי וְהָאֱמוּנָה אֲזֹר חִלְצִיו: וְגַר זֵאֵב עִם-כֶּבֶשׂ וְנֹמֵר עִם-גִּדֵּי יִרְבֵּץ וְעֹגֵל וּכְפִיר וּמְרִיא יִחְדּוּ וְנֶעֱר קֶטָן נְהַג בָּם: וּפָרָה וּדְבִל תִּרְעִינָה יִחְדּוּ יִרְבְּצוּ יִלְדֵיהֶן וְאַרְיֵה כִבְקֹר יֹאכֹל-תֶּבֶן: וְשִׁשְׁשָׁע יֹנֵק עַל-חֹר פֶּתֶן וְעַל מְאוּרֹת צִפְעוֹנִי גָמוּל יָדוֹ הָדָה: לֹא-יִרְעוּ וְלֹא-יִשְׁחִיתוּ בְּכָל-הָהָר קִדְשִׁי כִּי-מִלְאָה הָאָרֶץ דַּעַה אֶת-יְהוָה בְּמִים לַיִם מְבַסִּים: {ס}	5 Righteousness will be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt about his hips. 6 The wolf will live with the lamb; the panther lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and shall graze together, and a little boy shall lead them. 7 The cow and the bear will graze together; their young will lie down together. The lion will eat hay like the ox. 8 The infant will play over the den of the cobra; the baby will put his hand into the serpent's lair. 9 No hurt, no harm will be done on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea.
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- ⁵ The point of the 'belt' metaphor is uncertain: if a belt worn outside the robe is in view, then the point might be that justice/integrity will be readily visible or that these qualities will give support to his rule; if an undergarment is in view, then the idea might be that these characteristics support his rule or that they are basic to everything else.
- ⁶ For the 3rd line, the MT reads, "and an ox, and a young lion, and a fatling together." However, since the preceding lines refer to two animals and include a verb, many emend וּמְרִיא ('and the fatling') to an otherwise unattested verb יִמְרִאוּ ('they will graze'); moreover, 1QIsa^a confirms this suggestion and the present translation (following NETB) assumes this change.
- ⁷ Literally translated, the first 2 lines read, "and a cow and a bear will graze – together – they will lie down, their young;" this is a case of pivot pattern; יִחְדּוּ ('together') goes with both the preceding and following statements.
- ⁸ 'Lair' translates the otherwise unattested noun, מְאוּרֹת (literally, 'place of light', possibly meaning the opening of a hole).
- ⁹ In the most basic sense, God's 'holy mountain' is the mountain from which he rules over his kingdom (Ezk 28:14, 16); more specifically, it probably refers to Mount Zion.

י' וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא שָׁרֵשׁ יִשְׂי אֲשֶׁר עֲמֵד לְנֶס עַמִּים
 אֱלֹו גּוֹיִם יִדְרָשׁוּ וְהָיְתָה מְנַחְתּוֹ כְּבוֹד: {פ}
 י"א וְהָיָה | בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יוֹסִיף אֲדָנִי | שְׁנִית יָדוֹ לִקְנוֹת
 אֶת־שָׂאֵר עַמּוֹ אֲשֶׁר יִשְׂאָר מֵאֲשׁוּר וּמִמִּצְרַיִם
 וּמִפַּתְרוֹס וּמִכּוּשׁ וּמִעִילָם וּמִשֹּׁנֶעַר וּמִחֲמַת וּמֵאֵי
 הַיָּם:

יב וְנָשָׂא נֵס לְגוֹיִם
 וְאַסְף נִדְחֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 וְנִפְצוֹת יְהוּדָה יִקְבֹּץ
 מֵאַרְבַּע כְּנָפּוֹת הָאָרֶץ:
 יג וְסָרָה קִנְאֵת אֶפְרַיִם
 וְצָרֵי יְהוּדָה יִכָּרְתוּ
 אֶפְרַיִם לֹא־יִקְנָא אֶת־יְהוּדָה
 וְיְהוּדָה לֹא־יִצָּר אֶת־אֶפְרַיִם:
 יד וְעָפוּ בְּכִתְף פְּלִשְׁתִּים יָמָה
 יַחְדּוֹ יִבְזּוּ אֶת־בְּנֵי־קֶדֶם
 אֱדוֹם וּמוֹאָב מִשְׁלֹחַ יָדָם
 וּבְנֵי עַמּוֹן מִשְׁמַעְתָּם:

¹⁰ On that day, the root of Jesse shall stand like a signal for the peoples;
 the nations shall enquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

¹¹ When that day comes, the Lord will stretch out his hand a second time
 to ransom the remnant of his people, those still left, from Assyria, from
 Egypt, from Pathros, Cush and Elam, from Shinar, Hamath and the
 islands of the Sea.

¹² He will raise a signal for the nations
 and assemble the outcasts of Israel;
 he will gather the dispersed of Judah
 from the four corners of the earth.

¹³ Then Ephraim's jealousy will cease
 and Judah's enemies be suppressed;
 Ephraim will no longer be jealous of Judah,
 nor Judah any longer hostile to Ephraim.

¹⁴ They will swoop on the Philistines' hills to the west,
 and together pillage the peoples of the east.
 Edom and Moab will be subject to their sway
 and the Ammonites will obey them.

¹⁰ The prophecy of vv. 10–16, dating from the end of the Exile in Babylon, has been inserted here on the strength of it mentioning the 'root of Jesse'.

¹¹ This verse lists the countries to which the Jews had been dispersed at the period of the Exile.

¹² An alternative reading for 'outcasts' is 'banished'.

¹³ In the messianic context, the prophets often foretell the end of the schism between, and the reconciliation of, Israel and Judah (Jr 3:18, 23:5–6, 31:1, Ezk 37:15–27, Ho 2:2, Mi 2:12, Zc 9:10).

¹⁴ Literally translated, the 1st line ends, "on the shoulder of Philistia toward the sea," referring to the slopes of the hill country west of Judah.

טו וַהֲחָרִים יְהוָה אֶת לְשׁוֹן יַם-מִצְרַיִם
 וַהֲנִיף יָדוֹ עַל-הַנָּהָר בְּעֵינָם
 רוּחוֹ וַהֲכָהוּ לְשִׁבְעָה נָחָלִים וַהֲדָרִיד בַּנְּעָלִים:
 טז וַהֲיִתָּה מְסָלָה לְשָׂאֵר עַמּוֹ
 אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁאַר מֵאֲשׁוּר
 כַּאֲשֶׁר הָיְתָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל
 בְּיוֹם עָלְתוֹ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:

- 15 Then Yahweh will utterly destroy the gulf of the Sea of Egypt;
 he will raise his hand against the River with his hot breath.
 He will divide it into seven streams for them to cross dry-shod.
- 16 Thus, there shall be a highway from Assyria
 for the remnant of his people,
 as there was for Israel
 when he came out of Egypt.

¹⁵ In place of 'utterly destroy', here following the MT (and NRSV), the NJB, following the versions, has 'dry up'.

¹⁶ The miracles predicted are a repetition of those of Moses and Joshua (the crossing of the Sea of Reeds and the crossing of the Jordan River): the return of the Exiles is described as a Second Exodus (see #40:3).

ישעיהו פרק יב

א וְאָמַרְתָּ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא
אוֹדֶה יְהוָה כִּי אָנַפְתָּ בִּי
יֹשֵׁב אֶפְדָּה וּתְנַחֲמֵנִי:
ב הִנֵּה אֵל יִשְׁוּעָתִי אֲבָטָה
וְלֹא אֶפְחַד
כִּי־עֹזִי וְזִמְרָתִי יְהוָה
וַיְהִי־לִי לִישׁוּעָה:
ג וּשְׂאֲבָתִים־מִים בְּשִׁשְׁוֹן
מִמַּעַיְנֵי הַיִּשׁוּעָה:
ד וְאָמַרְתָּם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא הוֹדוּ
לַיהוָה קְרָאוּ בְּשִׁמּוֹ
הוֹדִיעוּ בָּעַמִּים עֲלִילְתִּיו הַזִּכִּירוּ
כִּי נִשְׁגָּב שְׁמוֹ:
ה זַמְּרוּ יְהוָה כִּי גֵאוֹת עָשָׂה
מִידַעַת מוֹדַעַת זֹאת בְּכָל־הָאָרֶץ:
ו צִהְלִי וְרַנִּי יוֹשְׁבַת צִיּוֹן
כִּי־גָדוֹל בְּקִרְבְּךָ קָדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל: {ס}

ISAIAH 12

- 1 On that day, you will say,
"I praise you, Yahweh; you were angry with me
but your anger turned away and you comforted me.
- 2 Look, he is the God of my salvation;
I will trust and not fear,
for Yahweh is my strength and my song,
he has been my salvation."
- 3 Joyfully, you will draw water
from the springs of salvation.
- 4 And, on that day, you will say,
"Praise Yahweh, invoke his name.
Proclaim his deeds to the people;
declare his name exalted.
- 5 Sing of Yahweh, for his works are majestic;
make them known throughout the world.
- 6 Cry and shout for joy, you who live in Zion,
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel."

ISAIAH 12

- 1 This psalm concludes the Book of Immanuel. It is the thanksgiving hymn of someone in distress, whom God has helped and rescued.
- 2 The 3rd line follows the LXX (ὁδοῖς ἡ δόξα μου καὶ ἡ αἰνέσις μου κύριος) and 1QIsa^a (cf. Ex 15:2); the MT reads, "and the song and Yah (is) Yahweh."
- 3 Water is here a metaphor for renewed life; the springs symbolise the restoration of God's favour.
- 4 God's 'name' stands here for his character and reputation.
- 5 In place of 'make them known', here following the Qere, (מודעת), the Ketiv has 'they are made known' (מידעת).
- 6 In place of 'you who live in Zion', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'O royal Zion'.

ישעיהו פרק יג

א מִשָּׁא בָבֶל אֲשֶׁר חָזָה יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ בֶן-אֲמוֹץ:

ב עַל הַר-נִשְׁפָּה שְׂאוּ-נֹס

הַרִימוּ קוֹל לָהֶם

הַנִּיפּוּ יָד וַיָּבֹאוּ פֶתַח נְדִיבִים:

ג אֲנִי צִוִּיתִי לְמִקְדָּשִׁי

גַּם קִרְאתִי גִבּוֹרִי לְאַפִּי

עֲלִיזִי גֵאוֹתַי:

ד קוֹל הַמּוֹן בְּהָרִים דְּמוֹת עַם-רַב

קוֹל שֹׁאֵן מִמְּלָכוֹת גּוֹיִם נֹאסְפִים

יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת מִפְקֵד צָבָא מִלְחָמָה:

ה בָּאִים מֵאֶרֶץ מְרַחֵק מִקְצֵה הַשָּׁמַיִם

יְהוָה וְכָלִי זַעֲמֹו

לְחַבֵּל כָּל-הָאָרֶץ: {ס}

ו הִלֵּילוּ כִּי קָרוֹב יוֹם יְהוָה

כְּשֶׁד מִשְׁדֵּי יָבוֹא:

ISAIAH 13

¹ An oracle about Babylon, seen by Isaiah son of Amoz.

² On a bare hill raise a signal,

shout to them, wave your hand,

for them to enter the Nobles' Gate.

³ I have issued orders to my sacred warriors;

I have summoned my heroes to serve my anger,

my proud champions.

⁴ Listen! A tumult in the mountains, like an immense people,

the tumultuous sound of kingdoms, of nations mustering:

it is Yahweh Sabaoth marshalling the troops for battle.

⁵ They come from a distant country, from the far horizons,

Yahweh and the instruments of his fury,

to destroy the whole earth.

⁶ Howl! For, the Day of Yahweh is near,

coming like devastation from Shaddai.

ISAIAH 13

¹ Chs 13–23 consist of proclamations about foreign nations, grouped together as in Jr 46–51 and Ezk 25–32.

² The 'Nobles' Gate' was perhaps a name of one of Babylon's city gates.

³ The literal translation of 'sacred warriors' is 'sanctified ones' (cf. Jr 51:27–28, against Babylon, and Jr 6:4, 22:7, Jl 4:9, against Jerusalem).

⁴ In vv. 4–10, the prophet appears to be speaking, since God is referred to in the 3rd person; however, since God refers to himself in the 3rd person later in this chapter (see v. 13), it is possible that he speaks throughout the chapter.

⁵ 'Distant country' perhaps refers to Persia; the NRSV has 'whole earth' in place of 'whole country', probably referring to the Babylonian empire.

⁶ 'Shaddai' (שַׁדַּי) is the sovereign king/judge of the world who grants life/blesses and kills/judges. While the origin and meaning of this name is uncertain, its significance is clear: it is used in contexts where God appears as the source of fertility and life; when blessing Joseph on his

ז על־כֶּן כָּל־יָדַיִם תִּרְפִּינָה
 וְכָל־לֵבב אֲנֹשׁ יִמָּס׃
 ח וְנִבְהָלוּ צִירִים וְחִבְלִים יֶאֱחִזּוּן
 כִּי־לִדָּה יִחִלּוּן
 אִישׁ אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ יִתְמָהוּ
 פָּנָיו לְהַבִּים פָּנֵיהֶם׃
 ט הִנֵּה יוֹם־יְהוָה בָּא
 אֲכַזְרִי וְעִבְרָה וְחָרוֹן אַף
 לְשׁוֹם הָאָרֶץ לְשִׁמָּה
 וְחִטָּאִיהָ יִשְׁמִיד מִמֶּנָּה׃
 י כִּי־כּוֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְכִסְלֵיהֶם
 לֹא יִהְיוּ אוֹרָם
 חֹשֶׁךְ הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ בְּצֵאתוֹ
 וְיָרֵחַ לֹא־יָגִיה אוֹרוֹ׃
 יא וּפָקַדְתִּי עַל־תִּבְלִי רָעָה
 וְעַל־רָשָׁעִים עֲוֹנָם

- 7 This is why all hands hang limp,
why all the men are losing heart.
- 8 They panic, seized with pains and convulsions,
like a woman in labour;
they look at one another appalled,
with faces aflame.
- 9 Look, the Day of Yahweh is coming,
merciless, with wrath and burning anger,
to make the earth a desolation
and to destroy its sinners from it.
- 10 For in the sky the stars and constellations
will shed their light no longer,
the sun will be dark when it rises,
and the moon will no longer give its light.
- 11 I will punish the world for its evil
and the wicked for their iniquity,

deathbed, Jacob refers to Shaddai as the one who provides abundant blessings, including ‘blessings of the breast and womb’ (49:25): the association of the name with שָׂדַיִם (‘breasts’) suggests the meaning, ‘the one of the breast’, but the juxtaposition is probably better explained as wordplay. The most likely proposal is that the name means ‘The One of the Mountain’ – an Accadian cognate means ‘mountain’, to which the Hebrew שֶׁד (‘breast’) is probably related.

7 A more literal translation of the 2nd line is, “and every man’s heart will melt.”

8 The last line suggests that their faces will be red with fear and embarrassment.

9 The NJB has ‘country’ (cf. KJV, NAB, NASV, NIV – ‘land’) in place of ‘earth’, here following the NRSV.

10 At this point, God is definitely speaking (again – see #4). The NJB, following the LXX (Ὠρίων), has ‘Orion’ in place of ‘constellations’.

11 In the 1st line, רָעָה could refer to the judgment (i.e. ‘disaster’) or to the evil that prompts it; the structure of the 2nd line favours the latter.

וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי גֵאוֹן זֹדִים
וְגֵאוֹת עֲרִיצִים אֲשָׁפִיל:
יב אֲוָקִיר אֲנוֹשׁ מִפֶּז
וְאָדָם מִכֶּתֶם אוֹפִיר:
יג עַל־כֵּן שָׁמַיִם אֶרְגִּז
וְתִרְעַשׁ הָאָרֶץ מִמְּקוֹמָהּ
בְּעִבְרַת יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
וּבְיוֹם חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ:
יד וְהָיָה כַּצִּי מִדָּח
וּכְצֹאן וְאִין מִקֶּבֶץ
אִישׁ אֶל־עַמּוֹ יִפְנוּ
וְאִישׁ אֶל־אַרְצוֹ יָנוּסוּ:
טו כָּל־הַנִּמְצָא יִדָּקֵר
וְכָל־הַנִּסְפָּה יָפֹל בַּחֲרֹב:
טז וְעַל־לֵיהֶם יִרְטְשׁוּ לְעֵינֵיהֶם
יִשְׁסּוּ בְּתֵיהֶם וּנְשֵׁיהֶם תִּשְׁכַּבְנָה:
יז הַנְּנִי מַעִיר עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת־מִדֵּי
אֲשֶׁר־כֶּסֶף לֹא יַחְשְׁבוּ

and put an end to the pride of the arrogant
and humble the haughtiness of tyrants.

12 I will make people rarer than pure gold,
human life rarer than the gold of Ophir.

13 Therefore, I will shake the heavens;
the earth will reel on its foundations,
at the wrath of Yahweh Sabaoth,
on the day when his anger ignites.

14 Then, like a hunted gazelle,
like sheep that nobody gathers in,
all will turn to their own people,
all will flee to their native lands.

15 All those who are found will be stabbed;
all those seized will fall by the sword.

16 Their babies will be dashed to pieces before their eyes,
their houses plundered, their wives raped.

17 Look, against them I am stirring up the Medes
who care nothing for silver,

12 There is no verb in the 2nd line – that in the 1st does ‘double duty’.

13 The term שָׁמַיִם may be translated ‘heavens’ or ‘sky’, depending on the context.

14 The verb that introduces this verse serves as a discourse particle and is translated as ‘then’.

15 The literal translation of ‘seized’ (here following NETB) is ‘carried off’ – i.e., grabbed from the fleeing crowd.

16 The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

17 The ‘Medes’ were Indo-European warrior tribes who could not be bought off (they had a lust for bloodshed).

וְזָהָב לֹא יַחְפְּצוּ-בּוֹ:
 יח וְקִשְׁתּוֹת נְעָרִים תִּרְטֹשְׁנָה
 וּפְרִי-בֶטֶן לֹא יִרְחֲמוּ
 עַל-בָּנִים לֹא-תַחֲוֹס עֵינָם:
 יט וְהִיְתָה בָבֶל צְבִי מַמְלָכוֹת
 תִּפְאֶרֶת גְּאוֹן כְּשָׂדִים
 כְּמִהַפְּכַת אֱלֹהִים
 אֶת-סֹדֶם וְאֶת-עֲמֹרָה:
 כ לֹא-תֵשֵׁב לְנֶצַח
 וְלֹא תִשְׁכֵּן עַד-דָּוָר וְדָוָר
 וְלֹא-יִהְיֶה שָׁם עֶרְבִי
 וְרָעִים לֹא-יִרְבְּצוּ שָׁם:
 כא וְרִבְצוּ-שָׁם צִיִּים
 וּמִלְאוּ בְתִיָּהֶם אֲחִים
 וְשָׁכְנוּ שָׁם בְּנוֹת יַעֲנָה
 וְשִׁעִירִים יִרְקְדוּ-שָׁם:
 כב וְעֵנָה אֵיִם בְּאֶלְמְנוֹתָיו
 וְתַנִּים בְּהִיכְלֵי עֹגֹג

who set no value by gold.

- 18 Arrows will slaughter the young men;
they will have no pity for the fruit of the womb,
or mercy in their eyes for children.
- 19 And Babylon, that pearl of kingdoms,
that splendid jewel of the Chaldaeans,
will, like Sodom and Gomorrah,
be overthrown by God.
- 20 Never again will anyone live there,
or reside there for all generations to come.
The Arab will not pitch his tent there,
nor will the shepherd make his fold there.
- 21 But beasts of the desert will make their haunt there,
and howling creatures will fill the ruined houses;
there, ostriches will settle their home,
there, goats will dance.
- 22 Hyenas will howl in its shrines,
jackals in its delightful palaces;

18 The literal translation of 'arrows' is 'bows' (metonymy gives 'arrows').

19 The 'Chaldaeans' were a group of tribes who established the so-called neo-Babylonian empire in the late 7th Century BCE.

20 God declares that Babylon, personified as a woman, will not be inhabited: in other words, the Chaldean empire will come to a permanent end.

21 The precise meaning of אֲחִים ('howling creatures', here following the NRSV & NLT) is uncertain; the NJB, NAB & NASB have 'owls', NETB has 'hyenas' (but cf. v. 22), the NCV has 'wild dogs' and the NIV has 'jackals'.

22 'In its shrines follows the Vg (*in ædibus ejus*), which assumes and emendation of בְּאֶלְמְנוֹתָיו ('among his widows'), אֶרְמְנוֹתֶיהָ.

וְקָרֹב לְבוֹא עֲתָהּ
וַיִּמְהַר לֹא יִמָּשְׁכוּ:

for, its time is close at hand
and its days will not last long.

ISAIAH 14

ישעיהו פרק יד

^א כִּי יִרְחֹם יְהוָה אֶת־יַעֲקֹב וּבָחַר עוֹד בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל
וְהִנִּיחָם עַל־אֲדָמָתָם וְנָלוּהָ הַגֵּר עֲלֵיהֶם וְנִסְפְּחוּ
עַל־בֵּית יַעֲקֹב: ^ב וְלִקְחוּם עַמִּים וְהִבִּיאוּם אֶל־
מְקוֹמָם וְהִתְנַחֲלוּם בֵּית־יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל אֲדָמַת יְהוָה
לְעִבָדִים וְלִשְׁפָחוֹת וְהָיוּ שָׂבִים לְשִׁבְיָהֶם וְרָדוּ
בְּגִשְׁיָהֶם: {ס}

^ג וְהָיָה בְּיוֹם הַנִּיחַ יְהוָה לָךְ מַעֲצָבָךְ וּמִרְגָּזָךְ וּמִן־
הָעִבָדָה הַקָּשָׁה אֲשֶׁר עָבַדְתָּ: ^ד וְנִשְׂאתָ הַמַּשָּׁל
הַזֶּה עַל־מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל וְאָמַרְתָּ

אֵיךְ שָׁבַת נָגִישׁ
שָׁבַתָה מְדַהְבָּה:
^ה שֹׁבֵר יְהוָה מִטֵּה רִשְׁעִים
שֹׁבֵט מַשְׁלִים:
^ו מִכֵּה עַמִּים בְּעִבְרָה
מִכַּת בִּלְתִּי סָרָה

¹ Yahweh will have pity on Jacob; he will choose Israel once more and settle them in their own land; foreigners will join them and attach themselves to the House of Jacob. ² Nations will take them and escort them home, and the House of Israel will take them as slaves, men and women on Yahweh's soil. They will enslave those who enslaved them and will master their oppressors.

³ When Yahweh gives you rest from your suffering and torment and the grim servitude to which you have been subjected, ⁴ you will recite this satire on the king of Babylon and say:

"How did the tyrant end?

How did his arrogance end?

⁵ Yahweh has broken the staff of the wicked,
the sceptre of rulers,

⁶ that furiously struck down peoples
with continual blows,

ISAIAH 14

¹ This prediction of the return from the Exile and the conversion of the nations seems out of place in this collection of proclamations about foreign peoples. It is similar in thought to 49:22, 66:20 (and see #45:14).

² Literally, the 1st sentence ends, "and the House of Israel will take possession of them on the land of Yahweh, as male servants and female servants."

³ The verb that introduces this verse serves as a discourse particle and is untranslated.

⁴ 'Arrogance' (the NRSV has 'insolence') follows 1QIsa^a (מְרִהְבָּה), assuming a ד-ר emendation; the word in the MT (מְדַהְבָּה) is unattested elsewhere.

⁵ In place of 'staff', here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has 'club'.

⁶ The present translation understands the referent of the opening pronoun to be the 'sceptre' of the preceding verse.

רִדָּה בְּאֵף גּוֹיִם
 מִרְדָּף בְּלִי חֶשֶׁד:
 ז נַחַה שְׁקֵטָה כָּל-הָאָרֶץ
 פָּצְחוּ רִנָּה:
 ח גַּם-בְּרוֹשִׁים שִׂמְחוּ לָךְ
 אֲרָזֵי לְבָנוֹן
 מֵאֲז שְׁכַבְתָּ
 לֹא-יַעֲלֶה הַכֶּרֶת עָלֵינוּ:
 ט שְׂאוֹל מִתַּחַת רָגְזָה לָךְ
 לְקִרְאָת בּוֹאֶךָ
 עוֹרֵר לָךְ רָפָאִים
 כָּל-עֲתוּדֵי אֶרֶץ
 הַקִּים מִכְּסֹאוֹתָם
 כָּל מַלְכֵי גּוֹיִם:
 י כֻּלָּם יַעֲנוּ וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלֶיךָ
 גַּם-אַתָּה חֲלִיתָ כְּמוֹנוּ
 אֲלֵינוּ נִמְשַׁלְתָּ:
 יא הוֹרֵד שְׂאוֹל גְּאוּנֶךָ
 הַמִּית נִבְלֶיךָ

that angrily hammered nations,
with unrelenting persecution.

7 The whole world is at rest and calm,
they break into song.

8 The cypresses exult over you,
and the cedars of Lebanon:
"Since you were laid low,
no one comes to cut us down."

9 Sheol below is stirred up
to greet your arrival;
it rouses the ghosts to greet you,
all the rulers of the world;
it raises from their thrones
all who were kings of the nations.

10 They will all speak to you, saying,
"So, you have become weak like us!
You have become just like us.

11 Your pride is brought down to Sheol
with the music of your lyres;

7 For the 2nd line, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has, "with shouts of joy resounding."

8 The kings of Assyria and Babylon exploited the forests of the Lebanon for their buildings.

9 'Sheol' (שְׂאוֹל), grammatically feminine, is the proper name for the subterranean world that was regarded as the land of the dead.

10 Those in Sheol (the dead) have no power.

11 Literally translated, the last 2 lines read, "under you maggots are spread out, and worms are your cover."

תַּחֲתִיךָ יִצַּע רִמָּה
 וּמִכְסִיךָ תוֹלָעָה:
 יב אֵיךְ נִפַּלְתָּ מִשָּׁמַיִם
 הֵילֵל בֶּן־שָׁחַר
 נִגְדַּעְתָּ לָאָרֶץ
 חוֹלֵשׁ עַל־גּוֹיִם:
 יג וְאַתָּה אָמַרְתָּ בְּלִבְבְּךָ
 הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶעֱלֶה
 מִמֶּעַל לְכוֹכְבֵי־אֵל אֲרִים כִּסְאִי
 וְאֶשֶׁב בְּהַר־מוֹעֵד
 בִּירְכָתִי צָפוֹן:
 יד אֶעֱלֶה עַל־בִּמְתֵי עֵב
 אֲדַמָּה לְעִלְיוֹן:
 טו אֵךְ אֶל־שָׂאוֹל תוֹרֵד
 אֶל־יִרְכַּת־בּוֹר:
 טז רְאִיךָ אֵלֶיךָ יִשְׁגְּחוּ
 אֵלֶיךָ יִתְבּוֹנְנוּ

maggots are the mattress beneath you
 and worms are your blanket.

- 12 How are you fallen from heaven,
 Daystar, son of Dawn?
 How are you thrown to the ground,
 conqueror of nations?
 13 You said in your heart,
 “I will scale the heavens;
 I will set my throne higher than the stars of God.
 I will sit on the Mount of Assembly
 on the heights of Zaphon.
 14 I will climb high above the clouds;
 I will rival the Most High.”
 15 Now you have been flung down to Sheol,
 into the depths of the Pit!
 16 Those who see you will scrutinise you
 and ponder over you, thinking:

12 Vv. 12–15 seem to follow a Phoenician model: ‘Daystar’ and ‘Dawn’ were two divinities; the ‘Mount of Assembly’, or ‘Zaphon’, (v. 13) was where the gods used to meet, like Mount Olympus in Greek mythology.

13 For the last line, the NJB has, “far away to the north.”

14 Normally in the OT the title, ‘Most High’, belongs to the God of Israel but, in this context, where the mythological overtones are so strong, it probably refers to the Canaanite high god, El.

15 The ‘Pit’ (בּוֹר – literally, ‘cistern’) is an alternative designation of the underworld (Ezk 31:15–18).

16 The word ‘thinking’ is supplied in the translation in order to make it clear that the following lines record their thoughts as they gaze at him.

הַזֶּה הָאִישׁ מִרְגִּיז הָאָרֶץ מִרְעִישׁ מַמְלָכוֹת: שֵׁם תִּבְלֶה בַּמִּדְבָּר יז וְעָרָיו הָרֶס אֲסִירָיו לֹא-פָתַח בֵּיתָה: כָּל-מֶלֶךְ גּוֹיִם כָּלָם יח שָׁכְבוּ בְּכְבוֹד אִישׁ בְּבֵיתוֹ: וְאַתָּה הָשַׁלַּכְתָּ מִקְבְּרְךָ יט כַּנֶּצֶר נִתְעַב לְבַשׁ הָרָגִים מְטַעֲנֵי חֶרֶב יּוֹרְדֵי אֶל-אֲבֵי-בּוֹר כַּפָּגֶר מוֹבֵס: לֹא-תִתְחַד אַתָּם בְּקִבּוּרָה כ כִּי-אַרְצְךָ שָׁחַת עַמְּךָ הָרָגְתָּ לֹא-יִקְרָא לְעוֹלָם זֶרַע מִרְעִים: הִכִּינוּ לְבָנָיו מִטְבַּח כא בְּעוֹן אֲבוֹתָם	<p>"is this the man who made the world tremble, who shook kingdoms, 17 who made the world like a desert and levelled its cities, who never freed his prisoners to go home." 18 All other kings of nations, all of them, lie honourably, each in his own tomb; 19 but you have been thrown away, unburied, like a loathsome branch, covered with heaps of the slain pierced by the sword who fall on the rocks of the abyss like trampled carrion. 20 "You will not join them in the grave, for you have destroyed your land and killed your people. The offspring of the wicked leave no name behind them. 21 Prepare the slaughter for his sons for the guilt of their father!</p>
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¹⁷ The pronominal suffix on 'cities' is masculine, even though its antecedent appears to be the feminine noun 'world'; some emend עָרָיו (a plural noun with 3MS suffix) to עָרֶיהָ (a plural noun with 3FS suffix) but may be unnecessary.

¹⁸ It is unclear where the quotation of the kings, begun in v. 10^b, ends; however, the reference to the 'kings of the nations' here (see also v. 9) seems to indicate that the quotation has ended at this point and that Israel's direct taunt (cf. vv. 4b-10^a) has resumed.

¹⁹ 'Branch' in Hebrew is נֶצֶר, alluding to the name Nebuchadnezzar; the NRSV has instead the conjectural 'carrion'.

²⁰ An alternative reading of for the 1st line is, "You will not be united with them in burial."

²¹ The NJB, following the Peshitta, has 'his father' in place of 'their father', here following the MT & NRSV.

בְּלִי־קִמּוֹ וַיִּרְשׁוּ אֶרֶץ
וּמְלָאוּ פְּנֵי־תֵבֶל עָרִים:

כב וְקִמַּמְתִּי עֲלֵיהֶם נָאִם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת וְהִכַּרְתִּי לְבָבֶל
שֵׁם וּשְׂאֵר וְנִין וְנֶכֶד נְאֻם־יְהוָה: כג וְשִׁמַּמְתִּיהָ
לְמֹרֶשׁ קֶפֶד וְאִגְמִי־מִים וְטֹאטְאֶתֶּיהָ בְּמִטְאֵטָא
הַשֹּׁמֵד נָאִם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת: {ס}

כד נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת לֵאמֹר
אִם־לֹא כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּמַּמְתִּי
בֶּן הַיִּתֵּה וְכַאֲשֶׁר יַעֲצֵתִי הִיא תִּקּוּם:
כה לְשֹׁבֵר אֲשׁוּר בְּאַרְצִי
וְעַל־הָרִי אֲבוֹסְנוּ
וְסָר מֵעֲלֵיהֶם עֲלֹו וְסִבְּלוּ
מֵעַל שִׁכְמוֹ יָסוּר:
כו זֹאת הָעֲצָה הִיעֲזָה עַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ
וְזֹאת הַיָּד הִנְטוּיָה עַל־כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם:
כז כִּי־יִהְיֶה צְבָאוֹת יַעַן וּמִי יִפֹּר
וַיִּדּוּ הַנְּטוּיָה וּמִי יִשִּׁיבָנָה: {פ}

Never again must they rise to conquer the world
and cover the face of the earth with their cities."

22 "I will rise against them, declares Yahweh Sabaoth, and deprive
Babylon of name, remnant, offspring and posterity, declares Yahweh.

23 I will turn it into the haunt of hedgehogs, a swamp. I will sweep it
with the broom of destruction, declares Yahweh Sabaoth."

24 Yahweh Sabaoth has sworn it,
Yes, what I have planned shall take place;
as I have planned, so shall it come to pass:

25 I will break Assyria in my country;
I will trample on him on my mountains.
Then his yoke will slip off them;
his burden shall slip from their shoulders.

26 This is the plan I have devised the whole world,
this is the hand outstretched over all the nations.

27 For, once Yahweh Sabaoth has decided, who will stop him?
Once he stretches out his hand, who can withdraw it?

22 These two verses in prose seem to have been added to give emphasis to the end of the poem.

23 The 'broom of destruction' is a very powerful image of God's anger sweeping away sinners from the earth.

24 In vv. 24-27 Isaiah speaks against Assyria, at the time of Sennacherib's invasion (701 BCE; cf. 10:24-27, 30:27-33, 31:4-9, 37:22-29).

25 The pronoun of the 2nd line is a collective singular referring to the nation, or a reference to the king of Assyria who, by metonymy, stands for the entire nation.

26 For this verse, here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB reads, "This is the decision taken in defiance of the whole world, this, the hand outstretched in defiance of all nations."

27 Another reading for 'withdraw it' is 'turn it back'.

בשנת־מות המלך אחז היה המשא הזה:

כט אל־תשמחי פלשת כלך

כי נשבר שבט מכך

כי־משרש נחש יצא צפע

ופריו שרף מעופף:

ל ורעו בכורי דלים

ואביונים לבטח ירבצו

והמתי ברעב שרשך

ושארי־ך יהרג:

לא הילילי שער זעקי־עיר

נמוג פלשת כלך

כי מצפון עשן בא

ואין בודד במועדיו:

לב ומה־יענה מלא־כיגוי

כי יהוה יסד ציון

ובה יחסו עניי עמו: {פ}

28 In the year that Ahaz died came this proclamation:

29 Do not rejoice, all you Philistines,
because the rod that used to beat you is now broken,
for the serpent stock will produce a viper
and its offspring will be a flying dragon.

30 The first-born of the poor will graze
and the destitute lie down in safety;
but I will make your stock die of hunger
and your remnant I will kill.

31 Howl, O gate! Shriek, O city!
Melt in fear, O Philistia, all of you!
For, a smoke is coming from the north,
and there is not straggler in its ranks.

32 What reply will they give to the messengers of that nation?
That Yahweh founded Zion
and there the poor of his people will find refuge.

28 The 'rod that used to beat' Philistia (v. 29) may be Sargon II, who invaded Philistia on several occasions, the last being in 711 BCE (see 20:1ff). Sargon died in 705 BCE but his successor, Sennacherib ('viper' or 'flying dragon') was to prove an even more redoubtable enemy. Alternatively, perhaps the 'viper' and the 'flying dragon' refer to Hezekiah son of Ahaz who, according to 2K 18:8, devastated Philistia.

29 The identity of this 'rod' (also referred to as a 'serpent' in the next line) is uncertain; it may refer to an Assyrian king, or to Ahaz.

30 'I will kill' follows the Vg (*interficiam*) and 1QIsa^a; the MT has 'he will kill'.

31 The Assyrian and Babylonian invasions came from the north (see Jr 1:3, 4:6, 6:1, 27, Ezk 26:7).

32 The 'messengers' are perhaps those sent by the Philistines to draw Judah into an anti-Assyrian coalition, but the text is uncertain. Nevertheless, the answer affirms the impregnability of Zion under Yahweh's protection.

ישעיהו פרק טו

ISAIAH 15

א * מִשָּׂא מוֹאָב 1 A proclamation against Moab:

- | | |
|---|---|
| כִּי בַלַּיִל שָׁדַד עַר מוֹאָב נִדְמָה | Laid waste in a night, Ar-Moab lies silent; |
| כִּי בַלַּיִל שָׁדַד קִיר־מוֹאָב נִדְמָה: | laid waste in a night, Kir-Moab lies silent. |
| ב עֲלֵה הַבַּיִת וְדִבֶּן הַבְּמוֹת לְבָכִי | 2 They climb to the Temple of Dibon, |
| עַל־נֶבֹז וְעַל מִדְבָּא | to the high places to weep; |
| מוֹאָב יִלְלֵי בְּכָל־רֹאשֵׁיו קְרָחָה | on Nebo and in Medeba, Moab laments. |
| כָּל־זָקֵן גְּרוּעָה: | Every head shaven, every beard cut off. |
| ג בְּחוּצוֹתָיו חָגְרוּ שָׂק | 3 They wear sackcloth in the streets; |
| עַל גִּגּוֹתֶיהָ וּבְרַחֲבֹתֶיהָ כָּלָה יִלְלֵי | on their roofs and in their squares, everyone wails |
| יָרַד בִּבְכִי: | and collapses in tears. |
| ד וְתִזְעַק חֶשְׁבּוֹן וְאֶלְעָלָה | 4 Heshbon and Elealeh cry out; |
| עַד־יָהֵץ נִשְׁמַע קוֹלָם | their voices are heard as far as Jahaz. |
| עַל־כֵּן חִלְצֵי מוֹאָב יִרְעוּ | That is why the warriors of Moab are shivering; |
| נַפְשׁוֹ יִרְעָה לוֹ: | his soul trembles. |

ISAIAH 15

¹ Some dispute Isaian authorship of the long poem against Moab in Chs 15–16. Some consider the prophecies to pre-date Isaiah, who adapted them to his own times (see the prose conclusion, 16:13–14). Others date the poem, or parts of it, to a period later than Isaiah – there are numerous parallels with the prophecy on Moab in Jr 48.

Devastation has overtaken the whole of Moab, the principles towns of which are mentioned in vv. 1–4, going roughly from south to north, from ‘Kir’ (Kerak) to ‘Heshbon’ and ‘Elealeh’, north of ‘Nebo and Medeba’. Vv. 5–9 describe the flight of the inhabitants southwards.

² For the 1st line, the NJB follows the Tg and Peshitta, reading “The daughter of Dibon has climbed” and the NRSV has “Dibon has gone up to the Temple;” here, we follow the MT.

³ The literal translation of ‘collapses’ is ‘melts’.

⁴ The literal translation of ‘soul’ is ‘loins’ (i.e. inner being).

- ה לְבִי לְמוֹאָב יִזְעַק בְּרִיחָה
 עַד-צָעַר עֲגַלַּת שְׁלִישִׁיָּה
 כִּי מֵעֹלָה הַלֹּחִית
 בְּבָכִי יַעֲלֶה-בּוֹ כִּי דֶרֶךְ חוֹרֲנַיִם
 זַעֲקַת-שֹׁבֵר יַעֲרֹו:
 ו כִּי-מִי נִמְרִים מְשֻׁמּוֹת יִהְיוּ
 כִּי-יִבֹּשׁ חֲצִיר כָּלָה דָּשָׂא
 יֵרֶק לֹא הָיָה:
 ז עַל-כֵּן יִתְּרָה עֲשֶׂה וּפְקֻדָּתָם
 עַל נַחַל הָעֲרָבִים יִשְׁאוּם:
 ח כִּי-הִקִּיפָה הַזַּעֲקָה
 אֶת-גְּבוּל מוֹאָב
 עַד-אֶגְלַיִם יִלְלָתָהּ
 וּבְאֵר אֵילִים יִלְלָתָהּ:
 ט כִּי מִי דִימוֹן מָלְאוּ דָם כִּי-אֲשִׁית עַל-דִּימוֹן
 נֹסְפוֹת לַפְּלִיטָת מוֹאָב אֲרִיָּה וְלִשְׁאֲרֵית אֲדָמָה:
- 5 His heart cries out for Moab,
 whose fugitives flee to Zoar, to Eglath-Shelishiyah.
 For, at the ascent of Luhith,
 they go up weeping on the road to Horonaim;
 they utter heart-rending cries.
- 6 The waters of Nimrim have become a wasteland;
 the grass dried up, the plants withered away,
 nothing green any more.
- 7 Therefore, what they could save of their stores
 they carry across the Wadi of the Willows.
- 8 For the cry of distress echoes
 round the land of Moab;
 their wailing reaches to Eglaim,
 to Beer-Elim, their wailing.
- 9 Dimon's waters are swollen with blood, and I have worse in store for
 Dimon: a lion for those of Moab who survive, for those left on its soil.

⁵ In place of 'his heart', here following the Tg, the MT has 'my heart'. 'Fugitives' follows 1QIsa^a; the MT has 'bolts' (the LXX has 'the heart of Moab cries' – ἡ καρδία τῆς Μωαβίτιδος βοᾷ).

⁶ In place of 'wasteland', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'desolation'.

⁷ The 'Wadi of the Willows' (NETB has 'Stream of the Poplars') was the southern frontier of Moab.

⁸ The literal translation of the last 2 lines is, "to Eglaim (is) her wailing, and (to) Beer Elim (is) her wailing."

⁹ 'Dimon' (דִּימוֹן) is perhaps a dialect version of 'Dibon' (v. 2), chosen as invoking the idea of blood (dam); but 1QIsa^a has 'Dibon' (דִּיבֹן).

ישעיהו פרק טז

א שְׁלַח-כֹּר מִשְׁל־אֶרֶץ
מִסְלַע מִדְבָּרָה
אֶל-הָר בִּתְצִיּוֹן:
ב וְהָיָה כְּעוֹף-נְוֹד קֶן מְשֻׁלַּח
תְּהִינָה בְּנוֹת מוֹאָב
מַעַבְרַת לְאֶרְנוֹן:
ג הִבִּיאוּ הַבִּיאי עֵצָה עֲשׂוּ פְלִילָה
שִׁיתִי כִלְיִל צִלְךָ בְּתוֹךְ צְהָרִים
סְתִרְלִי נִדְחִים נִדָּד אֶל-תִּגְלִי:
ד יִגְוּרוּ בְךָ נִדְחֵי
מוֹאָב הוֹי-סִתֵּר לָמוּ מִפְּנֵי שׂוֹדֵד
כִּי-אָפַס הַמֶּן כָּלָה שׂוֹד
תָּמוּ רַמִּס מִן-הָאֶרֶץ: {ס}

ISAIAH 16

- 1 Send a lamb to the ruler of the land,
from Sela by the desert,
to the mountain of Daughter Zion.
- 2 Like fluttering birds, like nestlings cast out,
will be the women of Moab
at the fords of the Arnon.
- 3 Hold a council, make a decision.
At noon, spread your shadow as if it were night.
Hide the outcasts; do not betray the fugitive.
- 4 Let my outcasts live with you;
be a refuge for Moab in the face of the devastator.
For, the oppression will pass and the devastation will stop,
and those now trampling on the country will go away.

ISAIAH 16

- ¹ This verse is a difficult text, variously translated. Apparently, the Moabites, threatened by the invasion, are trying to put themselves under the protection of the king of Judah or take refuge in his territory. The 'lamb' sent out would presumably be a token of submission (cf. 2K 3:4). 'Sela' (the Rock) has sometimes been identified with modern Petra, situated in Edom, but there must have been other 'Rocks' in Moab or the adjacent desert.
- ² The verb that introduces this verse serves as a discourse particle and is untranslated.
- ³ Vv. 3-4^a contain the Moabite fugitives' petition to be granted asylum in Judah. To support their request, they express their confidence (vv. 4^b-5) in the future of Judah, especially in the stability of the Davidic throne, founded on the premises frequently proclaimed by Isaiah. The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.
- ⁴ It is tempting to open the 3rd line, 'until the oppression is past', and to link it to the previous line but no textual witness supports this. The translation, here following *NETB*, assumes that the perfect verb forms are used for rhetorical effect: the demise of the oppressor(s) is described as if it had already happened.

ה וְהוֹכֵן בַּחֶסֶד כֶּסֶא
 ויֵשֵׁב עָלָיו בְּאַמַּת בְּאֵהֶל דָּוִד
 שֹׁפֵט וְדֹרֵשׁ מִשְׁפָּט וּמֹהֵר צֶדֶק:
 ו שְׁמַעְנוּ גְאוֹן־מוֹאָב גֵּא מְאֹד
 גְּאוֹתוֹ וּגְאוֹנוֹ וְעִבְרָתוֹ
 לֹא־כֵן בִּדְיוֹ:
 ז לָכֵן יִלְיֵל מוֹאָב לְמוֹאָב כָּלָה יִלְיֵל
 לְאִשִּׁישֵׁי קִיר־חֲרֶשֶׁת תִּהְיוּ אֲדָנִיכֶם:
 ח כִּי שִׁדְמוֹת חֶשְׁבּוֹן אִמְלֵל גִּפְן שִׁבְמָה
 בְּעָלֵי גוֹיִם הִלְמוּ שְׂרוּקֶיהָ
 עַד־יַעְזֹר נִגְעוּ תָּעוּ מִדְּבָר
 שְׁלַחוֹתֶיהָ נִטְשׁוּ עֲבְרוּ יָם:
 ט עַל־כֵּן אֶבְכֶּה בְּבִכִּי יַעְזֹר גִּפְן שִׁבְמָה
 אֲרִיזֶךְ דְּמַעְתִּי חֶשְׁבּוֹן וְאַלְעֵלָה
 כִּי עַל־קִיצֶךָ וְעַל־קִצִּירֶךָ הִידָד נָפַל:
 י וְנֶאֱסַף שִׁמְחָה וְגִיל מִן־הַכֶּרְמֶל
 וּבִכְרָמִים לֹא־יִרְנֶן לֹא יִרְעַע
 יִין בִּיקָבִים לֹא־יִדְרֹךְ הַדְרֹךְ הִידָד הַשְּׂבֵתִי:

- 5 The throne will be made secure in faithful love,
 and on it will sit in constancy within the tent of David
 a judge seeking justice and swift to do what is right.
 6 We have heard of Moab's pride – how very proud he is!
 His arrogance, his pride and his insolence:
 his boasts are false!
 7 So, let Moab wail, let everyone wail for Moab!
 Mourn, utterly stricken, for the raisin cakes of Kir-Hareseth.
 8 For the fields of Heshbon are withered and the vines of Sibmah,
 whose grapes used to overcome the lords of the nations,
 reached to Jazer and strayed into the desert;
 their shoots spread out and crossed the sea.
 9 So, I weep, as Jazer weeps, for the vines of Sibmah.
 I water you with my tears, Heshbon and Elealeh,
 for, over your harvest and vintage, the shout has fallen.
 10 Joy and gladness have vanished from the orchards.
 No more revelry in the vineyards, no more happy shouting;
 no one treads out wine in the presses, it has ceased.

5 Many (including the NRSV, followed here), take מֹהֵר as meaning 'swift' but some (including NETB) assume the meaning 'experienced'.

6 This verse seems to be Judah's answer to the Moabites.

7 'Kir-Hareseth' (also 'Kir-Heres' in v. 11) is the same place as Kir-Moab (or Kerak) in 15:1 (see 2K 3:25).

8 In place of 'grapes', the NRSV has 'clusters'; the reference here is to getting the kings drunk.

9 The translation assumes the 'shout' of the last line is the joyful shout of the grape harvesters; others translate, 'the (war) cry has rung (out) over'.

10 The end of last line here follows the LXX (πέπαυται γάρ); the MT has 'I have ceased'.

יא עַל־כֵּן מְעִי לְמוֹאָב כַּכֶּנּוֹר יִהְיֶה

וְקִרְבִּי לְקִיר חֶרֶשׁ:

יב וְהָיָה כִּי־נִרְאָה כִּי־נִלְאָה מוֹאָב עַל־הַבָּמָה

וּבָא אֶל־מִקְדָּשׁוֹ לְהִתְפַּלֵּל וְלֹא יוֹכֵל: {ס}

יג זֶה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֶל־מוֹאָב מֵאָז:

יד וְעַתָּה דִּבֶּר יְהוָה לֵאמֹר בְּשָׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים כְּשֶׁנִּי

שָׁכִיר וְנִקְלָה כְּבוֹד מוֹאָב בְּכָל הָהָמוֹן הָרַב וְשָׂאֵר

מַעֲט מִזֶּעַר לֹא כִּבִּיר: {פ}

¹¹ That is why my heart quivers like harp strings for Moab, my very soul, for Kir-Heres.

¹² Moab will present itself, wearing itself out on the high places and going to its temple to pray, but it will accomplish nothing.

¹³ Such was the word that Yahweh spoke about Moab in the past; ¹⁴ but now Yahweh speaks thus, “In three years, as a hired worker reckons them, the glory of Moab will be humbled, despite its great population. It will be reduced to nothing, an insignificant remnant.”

¹¹ The word מְעִי (*‘intestines’*) is used here of the seat of the emotions but English idiom requires the word *‘heart’*. The point of the comparison to a harp is not clear; perhaps his mourning sighs resemble a harp, or his constant sighing is like the repetitive strumming of a harp.

¹² The verb that introduces this verse serves as a discourse particle and is untranslated.

¹³ The prose addition of vv. 13–14 may be the confirmation of an earlier prophecy now very shortly to be fulfilled (see #15:1).

¹⁴ The three years must be reckoned exactly, just as a hired worker would carefully keep track of the time he had agreed to work for an employer in exchange for a predetermined wage.

ישעיהו פרק יז

ISAIAH 17

א מִשָּׂא דַמְשֶׁק	1 A proclamation about Damascus:
הִנֵּה דַמְשֶׁק מוֹסֵר מְעִיר	Damascus will soon cease to be a city;
וְהִיְתָה מְעִי מַפְלָה:	it will become a heap of ruins.
ב עֲזָבוֹת עָרֵי עֲרֹעַר	2 The towns of Aroer will be abandoned;
לְעֶדְרִים תִּהְיֶינָה	they will be pastures for flocks;
וּרְבָצוּ וְאֵין מַחְרִיד:	there they will rest with no one to disturb them.
ג וְנִשְׁבֶּת מִבְצָר מֵאֶפְרַיִם	3 The fortress will disappear from Ephraim
וּמַמְלָכָה מִדַּמְשֶׁק וּשְׂאֵר אֲרָם	and the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Aram
כְּכְבוֹד בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל יִהְיֶה	will be like the glory of the Israelites –
נֹאם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת: {פ}	declares Yahweh Sabaoth.
ד וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא	4 On that day,
יִדָּל כְּבוֹד יַעֲקֹב	Jacob's glory will diminish;
וּמִשְׁמֶן בְּשָׁרוֹ יִרְזֶה:	from being fat, he will grow lean.
ה וְהָיָה כַּאֲסֹף קַצִּיר קִמָּה	5 It shall be as when a reaper gathers in the standing corn,
וְזָרְעוּ שְׂבָלִים יִקְצֹר	harvesting the ears of corn with his arm,

ISAIAH 17

- ¹ Despite the title, Damascus is the subject only of the first strophe and even then, in parallel with Israel, which forms the subject of the following strophes.
- ² For the 1st line, the NJB & NRSV, loosely following the LXX (καταλελειμμένη εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, εἰς κοίτην – ‘being left behind into the eon for a bed’), reads, “Her towns will be deserted forever;” here, we follow the MT.
- ³ Throughout the OT, NETB tends to use the name ‘Syria’ in place of ‘Aram’, here following the MT (אֲרָם).
- ⁴ The literal translation of the last line is, “and the fatness of his flesh will be mad lean.”
- ⁵ ‘Reaper’ is a conjectural translation; the MT has ‘harvest’. The ‘Valley of Rephaim’ is northwest of Jerusalem (2S 5:18).

וְהָיָה כְּמִלְקֵט שִׁבְלִים

בְּעֵמֶק רִפְאִים:

¹ וְנִשְׂאֲרֻבוּ עוֹלָלֹת כְּנֹקֶף זֵית

שְׁנַיִם שְׁלֹשָׁה גִּרְגָּרִים בְּרֹאשׁ אָמִיר

אַרְבַּעַת חֲמִשָּׁה בְּסַעֲפֶיהָ פְּרִיָּה

נֹאֵם־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

² בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִשְׁעָה הָאָדָם עַל־עֲשָׂהוּ וְעֵינָיו אֶל־

קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל תִּרְאֶינָה: ³ וְלֹא יִשְׁעָה אֶל־

הַמִּזְבְּחוֹת מַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו וְאֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ אֲצַבְעֹתָיו לֹא

יִרְאֶה וְהָאֲשֵׁרִים וְהַחֲמָנִים: {ס}

^ט בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִהְיוּ עָרֵי מְעוֹזוֹ

כְּעִזְבוֹת הַחֲרָשׁ וְהָאָמִיר

אֲשֶׁר עָזְבוּ מִפְּנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

וְהִיתָה שְׂמָמָה:

^י כִּי שָׁכַחְתָּ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעֲךָ

וַצֹּר מְעוֹזְךָ לֹא זָכַרְתָּ

עַל־כֵּן תִּטְעֵל נְטָעִי נְעֻמִּים

וְזִמְרַת זֶר תִּזְרַעְנָו:

or when they glean the ears

in the Valley of Rephaim.

⁶ Only gleanings will remain, as when an olive tree is beaten:

two or three berries left on the topmost bough,

four or five on the branches of the tree,

declares Yahweh, God of Israel.

⁷ On that day, a man will look to his Maker and his eyes will turn to the

Holy One of Israel. ⁸ He will no longer look to altars, his own

handiwork, or to what his own fingers have made: the sacred poles and

the incense altars.

⁹ On that day, its cities of refuge will be like

the deserted woods and the heaths,

which they deserted because of Israel's advance:

there will be desolation.

¹⁰ Since you have forgotten the God of your salvation,

and failed to keep the Rock, your refuge, in mind,

you plant pleasure gardens,

you sow exotic seeds.

⁶ The NJB has 'pickings' in place of 'gleanings', here following the NRSV.

⁷ Vv. 7-8, predicting conversion, comprise a later addition to this prophecy of woe.

⁸ The literal translation of 'sacred poles' is 'Asherim'.

⁹ In place of 'woods and heaths', here following the MT (& NJB), the NRSV, following the LXX (ἐγκατέλιπον οἱ Ἀμορραῖοι καὶ οἱ Εὐαῖοι) has 'places of the Hivites and the Amorites'.

¹⁰ The 3rd line is an allusion to 'Adonis-Gardens', ephemeral creations grown in honour of the god of vegetation, Adonis-Tammuz (see Ezk 8:14).

יא בַּיּוֹם נִטְעַן תִּשְׁגְּשְׁגִי
 וּבִבְקָר זֶרַעְךָ תִּפְרִיחִי
 גַּד קִצִּיר בַּיּוֹם נַחֲלָה
 וּכְאֵב אָנוּשׁ: {ס}
 יב הֲוֵי הַמּוֹן עַמִּים רַבִּים
 כְּהַמּוֹת יָמִים יַהֲמִיּוֹן
 וּשְׁאוֹן לְאֻמִּים
 כְּשְׁאוֹן מַיִם כְּבִירִים יִשְׁאוֹן:
 יג לְאֻמִּים כְּשְׁאוֹן מַיִם רַבִּים יִשְׁאוֹן
 וְגֵעַר בּוֹ וְנָס מִמֶּרְחָק
 וְרֹדֵף כְּמֶזְזָה הָרִים לִפְנֵי-רוּחַ
 וּכְגִלְגָּל לִפְנֵי סוּפָה:
 יד לַעֲתָ עֶרֶב וְהַנָּה בַּלָּהָה
 בְּטָרִם בִּקְרֵי אֵינָנוּ
 זֶה חֵלֶק שׁוֹסְטֵינוּ
 וְגוֹרֵל לְבַזְזֵינוּ: {פ}

- 11 The day you plant them, you make them grow
and, next morning, your seedlings are in flower;
but the harvest will vanish on the day of disease
and incurable pain.
- 12 Disaster: the thunder of vast hordes:
they thunder like the thundering of the seas;
the roar of nations:
they roar like the roaring of mighty floods.
- 13 The nations roar like the roaring of the ocean,
but he rebukes them and they flee far away,
driven like chaff on the mountains before the wind,
like an eddy of dust before the storm.
- 14 At evening, all is terror;
by morning, all have disappeared.
Such will be the lot of those who plunder us,
the fate of our despoilers.

11 The precise meaning of the verb תִּשְׁגְּשְׁגִי ('make them grow') is unclear; it is sometimes derived from שׁוּג/שׁוּג ('to fence in'), in which case one could translate 'you build a protective fence', but the parallelism is tighter if one derives the form from שָׁגָה/שָׁגָה ('to grow').

12 Vv. 12-14 apparently refer to Sennacherib's invasion and the deliverance of Jerusalem in 701 BCE (see 29:5-7, 37:36), which will be dispelled by God, who defends his people.

13 The literal translation of 'ocean' is 'mighty waters'.

14 The literal translation of the 2nd line is 'before morning he is not'.

ישעיהו פרק יח

א הוֹי אֶרֶץ צִלְצַל כְּנָפַיִם
אֲשֶׁר מַעֲבִיר לְנַהַר־יְכוֹשׁ:
ב הַשִּׁלַּח בְּיָם צִירִים
וּבְכֵל־גִּמְאָה עַל־פְּנֵי־מַיִם
לָכוּ מִלְּאָכִים קָלִים אֶל־גּוֹי מִמְשָׁךְ וּמִזֶּרֶט
אֶל־עַם נֹרָא מִן־הוּא וְהַלָּאָה
גּוֹי קוֹרָקוּ וּמְבוֹסָה
אֲשֶׁר־בָּזְאוּ נְהָרִים אֶרְצוֹ:
ג כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֶל וְשֹׁכְנֵי אֶרֶץ
כְּנַשְׂא־נֶגֶס הָרִים תִּרְאוּ
וְכַתְקַע שׁוֹפָר תִּשְׁמָעוּ: {ס}
ד כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה אֵלַי
אֲשֶׁקוּטָה אֲשֶׁקוּטָה וְאֶבִּיטָה בְּמִכּוֹנִי
כְּחֹם צֶחַ עַל־אֹר
כָּעֵב טַל בְּחֹם קָצִיר:

ISAIAH 18

- 1 Disaster: land of the buzzing wings
beyond the rivers of Cush,
- 2 who send ambassadors by sea,
in little reed-boats across the waters!
Go, swift messengers, to a nation tall and smooth,
to a people feared far and near,
a mighty and masterful nation
whose country is criss-crossed with rivers.
- 3 All you who inhabit the world, you who people the earth:
When the signal is hoisted on the mountains, look!
When the ram's horn is sounded, listen!
- 4 For, this is what Yahweh has told me,
"I shall sit here quietly looking down,
like the burning heat in the daytime,
like a dewy mist in the heat of harvest."

ISAIAH 18

- ¹ The significance of the phrase 'buzzing wings' is uncertain: some suggest that it points to Cush as a land with many insects, others that it refers to the swiftness with which this land's messengers travel (v. 2^a), moving over the sea as swiftly as an insect flies through the air.
- ² The 'swift messengers' are Pharaoh's envoys, whom the prophet invites to go home and stop intriguing for an anti-Assyrian alliance.
- ³ In place of the imperatives, 'look' and 'listen', here following the NRSV, the NJB & NETB have 'you will see' and 'you will hear'.
- ⁴ The prophet predicts that Egypt is to be ravaged by invasion. Egypt was, in fact, invaded, pillaged, and subjugated by Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal in the first half of the 7th Century BCE. In the 4th line, some medieval MSS, with support from the LXX (ἡμέρας), Peshitta & Vg (*in die*) read 'in the day' in place of 'in the heat'. The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

ה כִּי־לִפְנֵי קָצִיר כְּתֹם־פָּרַח
 וּבִסֵּר גִּמְלָה יִהְיֶה נֹצֵחַ
 וְכָרַת הַזֹּלְזָלִים בַּמְזֻמָּרוֹת
 וְאֶת־הַנְּטִישׁוֹת הַסִּיר הֵתַז:
 ו יַעֲזֹבוּ יַחְדָּו לְעֵיט הָרִים
 וּלְבֵהֶמַּת הָאָרֶץ
 וְקָץ עָלֵיו הָעֵיט
 וְכָל־בֵּהֶמַּת הָאָרֶץ עָלֵיו תַּחֲרֹף: {ס}

ז בָּעֵת הַהִיא יוֹבֵל־שָׁנָה לִיהוָה צְבָאוֹת עִם מְמִשָּׁךְ
 וּמִזֶּרֶט וּמִמַּעַם נוֹרָא מִן־הוּא וְהַלָּאָה גְּזִי' קוֹקְוָה
 וּמְבוֹסָה אֲשֶׁר בָּזְאוּ נְהָרִים אֶרְצוֹ אֶל־מְקוֹם שֵׁם־
 יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת הַר־צִיּוֹן: {פ}

5 For, before the harvest, once the flowering is over
 and blossom turns into ripening grape,
 he will cut off the branches with pruning knives,
 and the shoots he will remove, cut off.
 6 They shall all be left to the mountain birds of prey
 and the wild animals:
 the birds of prey will summer on them,
 and all the wild animals will winter on them.

7 Then, an offering will be brought to Yahweh Sabaoth from a people
 tall and smooth, from a people feared far and near, from a mighty and
 masterful nation whose country is criss-crossed with rivers: to the place
 where the name of Yahweh Sabaoth resides, Mount Zion.

⁵ For the 4th line, the NRSV reads, "and the spreading branches he will hew away."

⁶ The literal translation of 'wild animals' is 'beasts of the earth'.

⁷ This prose conclusion predicts the conversion of Ethiopia, which, laid low by these events, will send its offerings to the Temple in Jerusalem.

ישעיהו פרק יט

ISAIAH 19

א משא מצרים 1 A proclamation about Egypt:

- הִנֵּה יְהוָה רֹכֵב עַל-עָב קֶלַע
וּבָא מִצְרַיִם
וְנָעוּ אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם מִפָּנָיו
וּלְבַב מִצְרַיִם יִמָּס בְּקִרְבּוֹ:
ב וְסִכְסַכְתִּי מִצְרַיִם בְּמִצְרַיִם
וְנִלְחָמוּ אִישׁ-בְּאָחִיו וְאִישׁ בְּרֵעֵהוּ
עִיר בְּעִיר מִמְּלָכָה בְּמִמְלָכָה:
ג וְנִבְקָה רוּחַ-מִצְרַיִם בְּקִרְבּוֹ
וְעֲצָתוֹ אֲבִלַע
וְדָרְשׁוּ אֱלֹהֵי-אֱלִילִים וְאֱלֹהֵי-אֲטִים
וְאֱלֹהֵי-אֲבוֹת וְאֱלֹהֵי-יִדְעָנִים:
ד וְסִכְרַתִּי אֶת-מִצְרַיִם בְּיָד
אֲדָנִים קָשָׁה
וּמֶלֶךְ עָז יִמְשֹׁל-בָם
נֹאֵם הָאֲדֹנָן יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת:
ה וְנִשְׁתַּוּ-מֵי הַיָּם
- Look, Yahweh, riding a swift cloud,
is coming to Egypt.
The false gods of Egypt totter before him
and Egypt's heart quails within her.
2 I will stir up Egypt against Egypt;
they will fight: man against brother, man against friend,
city against city, kingdom against kingdom.
3 Egypt's spirit will fail within her
and I will confound her plans.
They will consult idols and spirits of the dead,
the ritual pits and the magicians.
4 I will hand Egypt over to the clutches
of a cruel master;
a ruthless king will rule them,
declares the Lord, Yahweh Sabaoth.
5 The waters will ebb from the sea,

ISAIAH 19

- ¹ Isaiah was opposed to any alliance with Egypt (see 30:1ff, 31:1ff).
² Civil strife will extend all the way from the domestic level to the provincial arena.
³ The word אֲבוֹת ('ritual pits') refers to pits used by necromancers to conjure up underworld spirits.
⁴ The 'cruel master' may be Pianchi, the founder of the 25th (Ethiopian) Dynasty, begun about 714 BCE.
⁵ Vv. 5-10 foretell a new plague for Egypt: the drying up of the Nile, on which the country's wealth depends.

וְנָהָר יִחְרַב וַיִּבָּשׁ:		and the river will dry up and run low.
וְהָאֲזִנִּיחוּ נְהָלוֹת	ו	6 The streams will stink,
דָּלְלוּ וַחֲרָבוּ יְאֹרֵי מִצְרַיִם		the rivers of Egypt will diminish and dry up,
קָנָה וְסוּף קָמְלוּ:		and rush and reed will rot.
עֲרוֹת עַל-יְאֹר	ז	7 The plants by the River,
עַל-פִּי יְאֹר		on the brink of the River,
וְכָל מִזְרַע יְאֹר		all that is sown by the River,
יִיבֹשׁ נִדָּף וַאֲיָנָנוּ:		will dry up, scatter, and vanish.
וְאָנוּ הַדִּיגִים וְאָבְלוּ	ח	8 The fishermen will mourn and lament
כָּל-מַשְׁלִיכֵי בִּיאֹר חֶכָה		for all who cast hook in the River;
וּפְרָשֵׁי מִכְמֶרֶת עַל-פְּנֵי-מַיִם אֲמָלְלוּ:		those who spread nets on the waters will lose heart.
וּבָשׁוּ עַבְדֵי פִשְׁתִּים	ט	9 The flax workers will despair
שָׂרִיקוֹת וְאַרְגָּמִים חוֹרִי:		and the weavers will grow pale.
וְהָיוּ שְׂתִיתֵיהָ מִדְּכָאִים	י	10 Her weavers will be dismayed
כָּל-עֹשֵׂי שָׂכָר אֲגַמִּי-נַפֶּשׁ:		and all the hired workers will be depressed.
אֲדָ-אֲוִלִּים שָׂרֵי צֶעַן	יא	11 Indeed, the princes of Zoan are fools;
חֲכָמֵי יַעֲצִי פֶרְעָה עֲצָה נִבְעָרָה		Pharaoh's wise councillors give stupid advice.

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- 6 The verb translated 'will stink' appears as a Hiphil in 1QIsa^a; the form in the MT may be a so-called 'mixed form', reflecting the Hebrew Hiphil stem and the functionally corresponding Aramaic Aphel stem.
- 7 The 'River' here (יְאֹר) is, of course, the Nile.
- 8 Alternative readings for 'lose heart' (following the NJB) are 'languish' (NRSV), 'grieve' (NETB) and 'disappear'.
- 9 'Grow pale' is a reading for חוֹרִי suggested by 1QIsa^a, which has חוֹרִי (probably a Qal perfect 3PL form of חוֹר - 'be white').
- 10 'Her weavers' is a conjectural translation (שְׂתִיתֵיהָ) of שְׂתִיתֵיהָ ('her foundations').
- 11 'Zoan' is Tanis, a city in the Delta. In vv. 11-15, Isaiah taunts Egypt; if she, with her vaunted wisdom, can devise schemes effecting national destinies, how could she have overlooked God's plan for herself?

אֵיךְ תֹאמְרוּ אֶל־פַּרְעֹה
 בְּנִי־חֲכָמִים אֲנִי בֶן־מַלְכֵי־קִדְמָה:
 יב אֵימ אֲפֹא חֲכָמֶיךָ
 וַיִּגִּדּוּ גַּא לָךְ וַיִּדְּעוּ
 מִה־יַּעַן יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת עַל־מִצְרַיִם:
 יג נוֹאֲלוּ שָׂרֵי צֶעַן
 נִשְׂאוּ שָׂרֵי נָף
 הִתְעוּ אֶת־מִצְרַיִם פֶּנֶת שְׁבָטֶיהָ:
 יד יְהוָה מָסַךְ בְּקִרְבָּהּ רוּחַ עֲוֹנוֹת
 וְהִתְעוּ אֶת־מִצְרַיִם בְּכָל־מַעֲשֶׂהָ
 כְּהִתְעוֹת שִׁכּוֹר בְּקִיאוֹ:
 טו וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה לְמִצְרַיִם מַעֲשֶׂה
 אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה רֹאשׁ וְזֶנֶב כַּפֶּה וְאַגְמוֹן:

טז בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִהְיֶה מִצְרַיִם כְּנָשִׁים וְחָרָד וּפָחַד
 מִפְּנֵי תְנוּפַת יַד־יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֲשֶׁר־הוּא מַגִּיף
 עָלֶיהָ: ^אזֹה־יִתֶּה אֲדָמַת יְהוּדָה לְמִצְרַיִם לְחֶגְאָה כָּל־
 אֲשֶׁר יִזְכִּיר אֹתָהּ אֵלָיו יִפָּחַד מִפְּנֵי עֲצַת יְהוָה
 צְבָאוֹת אֲשֶׁר־הוּא יוֹעֵץ עָלֶיהָ: {ס}

How can you say to Pharaoh,
 "I am one of the sages, a son of ancient kings."

- 12 Where, oh where, are those sages of yours?
 Let them tell you, so that all may know
 the plans Yahweh Sabaoth has made against Egypt!
- 13 The princes of Zoan are fools,
 the princes of Noph, self-deceivers;
 the cornerstones of her tribes have led Egypt astray.
- 14 Yahweh has infused them with a spirit of confusion;
 they lead Egypt astray in all she does,
 like a drunkard staggering as he vomits.
- 15 Egypt will be able to do nothing:
 head nor tail, palm frond nor reed.

- 16 On that day, Egypt will be like women, trembling and terrified at the threatening hand of Yahweh Sabaoth, when he raises it against her.
- 17 The land of Judah will become Egypt's shame; everyone to whom she is mentioned will be terrified, because of the plan that Yahweh Sabaoth has laid against her.

12 Literally translated, the 1st line reads, "Where are they? Where are your wise men?" The juxtaposition of the interrogative pronouns is emphatic.

13 'Noph' is Memphis, near Cairo, the capital of Lower Egypt.

14 The literal translation of 'spirit of confusion' is 'spirit of blindness'.

15 'Palm frond' and 'reed' represent rulers and the ruled (9:14).

16 The prose passage of vv. 16–25 (5 paragraphs, each beginning with 'On that day') is late and presupposes a Jewish settlement in Egypt.

17 In place of 'everyone to whom she is mentioned will fear', here following the NRSV (and MT), the NJB has 'whenever she is mentioned, all will fear'.

י"ח בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִהְיוּ חָמֵשׁ עָרִים בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
מְדְבָרוֹת שֹׁפֵת כְּנָעַן וְנִשְׁבָּעוֹת לַיהוָה צְבָאוֹת עִיר
הַהָרֶם יֵאמָר לְאַחַת: {ס}

י"ט בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִהְיֶה מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה בְּתוֹךְ אֶרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם וּמִצְבֵּה אֲצֶל-גְּבוּלָהּ לַיהוָה: כ' וְהָיָה לְאוֹת
וּלְעֵד לַיהוָה צְבָאוֹת בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם כִּי-יִצְעֲקוּ אֶל-
יְהוָה מִפְּנֵי לִחְצִים וַיִּשְׁלַח לָהֶם מוֹשִׁיעַ וְרֹב
וְהַצִּילָם: כא וְנוֹדַעַת יְהוָה לְמִצְרַיִם וַיֵּדְעוּ מִצְרַיִם אֶת-
יְהוָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וַעֲבָדוּ זִבְחָהּ וּנְדָרוֹ-גִּדְרָהּ
לַיהוָה וְשָׁלְמוּ: כב וְנִגְּף יְהוָה אֶת-מִצְרַיִם נִגְף
וּרְפּוֹא וְשָׁבוּ עַד-יְהוָה וְנִעְתָּר לָהֶם וּרְפָאָם: {ס}

כג בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא תִּהְיֶה מְסִלָּה מִמִּצְרַיִם אֲשׁוּרָה וּבֹא-
אֲשׁוּר בְּמִצְרַיִם וּמִצְרַיִם בְּאֲשׁוּר וַעֲבָדוּ מִצְרַיִם
אֶת-אֲשׁוּר: {ס}

¹⁸ On that day in Egypt, there will be five towns speaking the language of Canaan and pledging themselves to Yahweh Sabaoth; one of them will be called City of the Sun.

¹⁹ On that day, there will be an altar to Yahweh in the centre of Egypt and, close to the frontier, a sacred pillar to Yahweh; ²⁰ it will be a sign and a witness to Yahweh Sabaoth in Egypt: when they cry to Yahweh for help because of oppressors, he will send them a deliverer and defender. ²¹ Yahweh will reveal himself to Egypt and Egypt will know Yahweh on that day; they will give sacrifices and offerings and make vows to Yahweh and fulfil them. ²² Yahweh will strike Egypt, striking and healing; they will turn to Yahweh, who will hear their prayers and heal them.

²³ On that day, there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. Assyria will have access to Egypt and Egypt will have access to Assyria. Egypt will worship with Assyria.

¹⁸ The 'City of the Sun' (following 1QIsa^a – עִיר הַהָרֶם; the MT has עִיר הַהָרֶס, 'City of Destruction') is perhaps Heliopolis (compare Jr 43:13), now a suburb of Cairo.

¹⁹ The word מִצְבֵּה ('sacred pillar') is sometimes associated with pagan worship, but here it is associated with the worship of Yahweh.

²⁰ The masculine noun מִזְבֵּחַ ('altar') in v. 19 is probably the subject of the opening (masculine singular) verb הָיָה ('it will be') rather than the feminine noun מִצְבֵּה ('sacred pillar'), also in v. 19.

²¹ The phrase 'know Yahweh', in this context, means that the Egyptians will acknowledge him as God.

²² The literal translation of 'he will hear their prayers' is 'he will be entreated', but the Niphal has a sense of toleration here.

²³ The last sentence could be translated, "Egypt will serve Assyria," but subjugation of one nation to the other does not seem to be a theme in vv. 23–25; rather, the nations are viewed as equals before God (v. 25), so it is better to take אֶת as a preposition ('together with') rather than as the accusative sign.

כִּד בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִהְיֶה יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁלִישִׁיָּה לְמִצְרַיִם
 וּלְאַשּׁוּר בִּרְכָּה בְּקֶרֶב הָאָרֶץ: כִּה אֲשֶׁר בֵּרְכוּ יִהְיֶה
 עֲבָאוֹת לֵאמֹר בְּרוּךְ עַמִּי מִצְרַיִם וּמַעֲשֵׂה יָדֵי
 אֲשּׁוּר וְנַחֲלָתִי יִשְׂרָאֵל: {ס}

²⁴ On that day, Israel will make a third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing at the centre of the world, ²⁵ and Yahweh Sabaoth will bless them in the words, “Blessed be my people Egypt, Assyria my creation, and Israel my heritage.”

²⁴ One could also translate ‘world’ as ‘earth’, or even as ‘land’.

²⁵ The 3MS suffix on the form בֵּרְכוּ should probably be emended to a 3FS suffix (בִּרְכָּה), for its antecedent appears to be the feminine noun (אֶרֶץ) at the end of v. 24.

ISAIAH 20

ישעיהו פרק כ

א בְּשָׁנָה בָּא תִּרְתֵּן אֲשֶׁדּוֹדָה בְּשִׁלַּח אֹתוֹ סָרְגוֹן
מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר וַיִּלְחֶם בְּאֲשֶׁדּוֹד וַיִּלְכְּדָהּ: ב בַּעַת הַהִיא
דִּבֶּר יְהוָה בְּיַד יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ בֶן־אֲמוֹץ לֵאמֹר לֵךְ וּפְתַחַת
הַשֵּׁק מֵעַל מַתְּנֶיךָ וְנָעַלְךָ תַּחְלָץ מֵעַל רַגְלֶךָ וַיַּעַשׂ
כֵּן הָלַךְ עָרוֹם וַיַּחֲף: {ס}

ג וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה כֹּאֲשֶׁר הָלַךְ עַבְדִּי יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ עָרוֹם
וַיַּחֲף שְׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים אֹת וּמוֹפֶת עַל־מִצְרַיִם וְעַל־
כּוּשׁ: ד כֵּן יָנִיחַ מֶלֶךְ־אַשּׁוּר אֶת־שְׂבִי מִצְרַיִם וְאֶת־
גָּלוֹת כּוּשׁ נְעָרִים וְזָקְנִים עָרוֹם וַיַּחֲף וַיַּחֲשׁוּפֵי שֵׁת
עֶרְוַת מִצְרַיִם: ה וַחֲתּוּ וּבָשׂוּ מִכּוּשׁ מִבֶּטֶם וּמִן־
מִצְרַיִם תִּפְאָרָתָם: ו וַאֲמַר יֹשֵׁב הָאֵי הַזֶּה בְּיוֹם
הַהוּא הִנֵּה־כֹה מִבֶּטֶנוּ אֲשֶׁר־נִסְנּוּ שָׁם לְעִזְרָה
לְהִנָּצֵל מִפְּנֵי מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר וְאִידָּה נִמְלֹט אֲנַחְנוּ: {פ}

¹ In the year that the general-in-chief, sent by Sargon king of Assyria, came to Ashdod, and stormed and captured it, ² at that time, Yahweh spoke through Isaiah son of Amoz and said, “Go, undo the sackcloth around your waist and take the sandals off your feet,” and he did so, and walked about, naked and barefoot.

³ Yahweh then said, “As my servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot for three years as a sign and portent for Egypt and Cush, ⁴ so the king of Assyria will lead the captives of Egypt and the exiles of Cush, young and old, naked and barefoot, their buttocks bared, to the shame of Egypt. ⁵ And they will be afraid and ashamed of Cush, their hope, and Egypt, their pride, ⁶ and the inhabitants of this coast will say on that day, “Look what has happened to our hope, to those to whom we fled for help, to escape the king of Assyria. How shall we escape?”

ISAIAH 20

- ¹ Sargon II captured ‘Ashdod’, a Philistine town, in 711 BCE. The town, having risen in revolt at the instigation of Egypt, seems to have inspired Isaiah to predict an Assyrian victory over Egypt. This chapter is from a tradition about Isaiah, as are Chs 36–39, but it is not found in 2K.
- ² Apparently, sackcloth was customarily worn by prophets (2K 1:8, Zc 13:4–6, and see #Is 3:24).
- ³ The word here translated ‘naked’ (עָרוֹם) can also mean simply ‘lightly dressed’, i.e., stripped to one’s undergarments.
- ⁴ The literal translation of ‘to the shame of Egypt’ is ‘the nakedness of Egypt’.
- ⁵ A more literal translation of ‘pride’ (following the NJB) is ‘beauty’; the NRSV has ‘boast’.
- ⁶ The ‘inhabitants of this coast’ refers to the Israelites and the Philistines, who were always tempted to rely on Egypt and to form coalitions with it against Assyria.

ישעיהו פרק כא

ISAIAH 21

^א ¹ משא מְדַבְּרִים A proclamation about the coastal desert:

כְּסוּפּוֹת בְּנִגְבַּל לַחֲלֹף	As whirlwinds sweeping over the Negeb,
מִמֶּדְבַּר בָּא מֵאֶרֶץ נּוֹרָאָה:	he comes from the desert, from a fearsome country.
ב חֲזוֹת קָשָׁה הִגֵּדְלִי	² A harsh vision has been shown to me:
הַבּוֹגֵד בּוֹגֵד וְהַשּׂוֹדֵד שׂוֹדֵד	The betrayer betrays and the destroyer destroys.
עָלִי עֵילָם צוּרֵי מִדְּיָה	Advance, Elam! Lay siege, Media!
כָּל־אֲנַחְתָּהּ הִשְׁבַּתִּי:	I have cut short all groaning.
ג עַל־כֵּן מָלְאוּ מַתְנֵי חֻלְחָלָה	³ This is why my loins are racked with pain,
צִירִים אֲחֻזּוֹנִי כְּצִירֵי יוֹלְדָה	pangs have seized me like the pangs of a woman in labour;
נִעֻוִּיתִי מִשְׁמַע גְּבִהְלָתִי מֵרְאוֹת:	I am too distressed to hear, too afraid to look.
ד תַּעַה לִּבִּי פִלְצוֹת בַּעֲתַתְנִי	⁴ My heart is bewildered; dread overwhelms me;
אֶת גִּשְׁף חֲשָׁקִי שֶׁם לִי לַחֲרָדָה:	the twilight I longed for has become my horror.
ה עָרְךָ הַשְׁלַחַן צָפָה הַצִּפִּית	⁵ They lay the table, spread the cloth,
אֲכֹל שָׂתָה	they eat, they drink.
קוֹמוּ הַשָּׂרִים מִשְׁחוּ מִגָּן: {ס}	Up, princes, grease the shield!

ISAIAH 21

- ¹ The 'coastal desert' (מְדַבְּרִים) is possibly a translation of the Assyrian *mat tamti* ('maritime country'), designating southern Babylonia.
- ² 'Elam', situated to the east of Mesopotamia, was the homeland of the Medes and Persians, who overthrew the Babylonian Empire in the 6th Century BCE. The 'groaning' is often interpreted to mean all that Babylon has caused others.
- ³ In place of 'too distressed', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'bowed down' (i.e., 'bent double').
- ⁴ A more literal translation of 'dread overwhelms me' is 'shuddering terrifies me'.
- ⁵ The precise meaning of the verb translated 'spread' (צִפִּית) is debated; some prefer to derive the form from the homonymic צָפָה ('keep watch') and translate 'post a guard' (KJV, 'watch in the watchtower', ASV, 'set the watch', and cf. v. 6). Shields were greased to preserve leather.

^ו כִּי כֹה אָמַר אֱלֹהֵי אֲדָנִי
לֵךְ הָעֵמֶד הַמִּצְפָּה
אֲשֶׁר יֵרָאֶה יִגִּיד:
^ז וְרָאֶה רֹכֵב צֶמֶד פָּרָשִׁים
רֹכֵב חֲמֹר רֹכֵב גָּמֹל
וְהִקְשִׁיב קֶשֶׁב רֶב־קֶשֶׁב:
^ח וִיקְרָא אֲרִיָּה עַל־מִצְפָּה | אֲדָנִי
אֲנֹכִי עֹמֵד תָּמִיד יוֹמָם
וְעַל־מִשְׁמַרְתִּי אֲנֹכִי נֹצֵב כָּל־הַלַּיְלוֹת:
^ט וְהִנֵּה־זֶה בָּא רֹכֵב אִישׁ
צֶמֶד פָּרָשִׁים
וַיַּעַן וַיֹּאמֶר נָפְלָה נָפְלָה בָּבֶל
וְכָל־פְּסִילֵי אֱלֹהֶיהָ שָׁבַר לָאָרֶץ:
^י מִדְּשֶׁתִּי וּבֶן־גִּרְנִי אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַעְתִּי
מֵאֵת יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
הִגַּדְתִּי לָכֶם: {פ}
^{יא} מִשָּׁא דוּמָה
אֵלֶי קָרָא מִשְׁעִיר

- ⁶ For, this is what the Lord has told me,
"Go, post a lookout;
let him report what he sees.
⁷ He will see cavalry, horsemen two by two,
men mounted on donkeys, men mounted on camels;
let him watch alertly: be very alert indeed!"
⁸ Then the lookout shouted,
"On the watchtower, Lord, I stay all day,
and at my post I stand all night.
⁹ Now the cavalry is coming, horsemen two by two."
Then he shouted,
"Babylon has fallen, has fallen,
and all the images of her gods lie shattered on the ground!"
¹⁰ You whom I have threshed, grain of my threshing-floor,
what I have heard from Yahweh Sabaoth, God of Israel,
I am telling you now.
¹¹ A proclamation about Dumah:
From Seir, someone shouts to me,

⁶ The Hebrew word here translated 'the Lord' is אֱלֹהֵי.

⁷ This verse refers not to the invading army but to the hurrying messengers, and later the caravans, coming to announce the news (see v. 9).

⁸ 'Lookout' (הַרְאָה, literally 'the one who looks') follows 1QIsa^a; the MT has 'a lion' (אֲרִיָּה).

⁹ The literal translation of the 2nd line is, "And he answered and said."

¹⁰ The literal translation of the 1st line is 'my crushed one, son of my threshing-floor', i.e. the Israelites exiled to Babylon, whose deliverance is near.

¹¹ Some scholars doubt that the short proclamation of vv. 11-12 about 'Seir' (= Edom) was written/made by Isaiah.

שֹׁמֵר מַה־מַּלְיָלָה
 שֹׁמֵר מַה־מַּלְיָל:
 אָמַר שֹׁמֵר יב
 אַתָּה בֹקֵר וְגַם־לַיְלָה
 אִם־תִּבְעִיּוֹן בְּעִיּוֹ שָׁבוּ אִתּוֹ: {פ}

יג מִשָּׂא בְּעֶרֶב יד
 בֵּיעַר בְּעֶרֶב תְּלִינוּ
 אַרְחוֹת דְּדָנִים:
 לְקִרְאֵת צִמָּא הִתְיוּ מֵיִם
 יֵשְׁבֵי אֶרֶץ תִּימָא
 בְּלַחְמוֹ קִדְמוּ נִדָּד:
 טו כִּי־מִפְנֵי חֲרָבוֹת נִדְּדוּ
 מִפְּנֵי | חֶרֶב נְטוּשָׁה
 וּמִפְּנֵי קֶשֶׁת דְּרוּכָה
 וּמִפְּנֵי כָּבֵד מִלְחָמָה: {ס}

טז כִּי־כֵּה אָמַר אֲדָנִי אֵלַי בְּעוֹד שָׁנָה כְּשֶׁנִּי שָׁכִיר
 וְכֻלָּה כָּל־כְּבוֹד קֶדָר: יז וְשָׂאֵר מִסִּפְר־קֶשֶׁת גְּבוּרֵי
 בְּנֵי־קֶדָר יִמְעָטוּ כִּי יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל דֹּבֵר: {ס}

"Watchman, what time of night?

Watchman, what time of night?"

¹² The watchman answers,

"Morning is coming, then night again.

If you want to ask, ask! Come back again!"

¹³ A proclamation about the desert plain:

In the thickets, on the desert plain, you spent the night,
 you caravans of Dedanites.

¹⁴ Bring water for the thirsty!

You inhabitants of Tema,
 bring bread to greet the fugitive.

¹⁵ For, these have fled from the sword,

from naked sword,
 from the bent bow,
 and from the press of battle.

¹⁶ For, thus the Lord has told me: "Within a year, as a hired worker reckons it, all the glory of Kedar will end ¹⁷ and the remaining bows of Kedar's warriors will be few, for Yahweh, God of Israel, has spoken."

¹² The point of the watchman's final instructions is unclear; perhaps they are included to add realism to the dramatic portrayal.

¹³ The title 'about the desert plain' given to this prophecy is merely taken from its first verse.

¹⁴ The NRSV inverts the order of the last 2 lines.

¹⁵ In place of 'press', here following the NJB, the NJB has 'stress' and NETB has 'severity'.

¹⁶ A hired worker would carefully keep track of the time he had agreed to work for an employer in exchange for a predetermined wage.

¹⁷ Literally translated, this verse opens, "and the remnant of the number of the bow, the mighty men of the sons of Kedar, will be few."

ישעיהו פרק כב

ISAIAH 22

א	מִשָּׂא גִיא חֲזִיוֹן	1	A proclamation on the Valley of Vision:
	מֵה־לֶּךְ אָפֹא		Now what is the matter with you
	בִּי־עֲלִית כָּלֶךְ לַגָּזוֹת:		for you all to be up on the housetops?
ב	תִּשְׂאוֹת מְלֵאָה עִיר הַזֹּמִיָּה	2	The noisy city is full of excitement,
	קִרְיָה עֲלִיזָה		the boisterous town.
	חֲלָלֶיךָ לֹא חָלְלִי־חֶרֶב		Your slain have not fallen to the sword
	וְלֹא מִתִּי מִלְחָמָה:		nor died in battle.
ג	כָּל־קִצִּינֶיךָ נָדְדוּ־יַחַד	3	Your leaders have all fled together,
	מִקֶּשֶׁת אֶסְרוּ		captured without a bow between them;
	כָּל־נִמְצָאֶיךָ אֶסְרוּ יַחַד		all your found ones have been captured,
	מִרְחוֹק בְּרָחוּ:		far though they had fled.
ד	עַל־כֵּן אָמַרְתִּי שְׁעוּ מִנִּי	4	Therefore, I said, "Look away from me
	אֶמְרָר בִּבְכִי		and let me weep bitterly;
	אֶל־תֵּאֵיצוּ לְנַחֲמֵנִי		do not try to comfort me
	עַל־שֹׂד בַּת־עַמִּי:		for the ruin of the daughter of my people."
ה	כִּי יוֹם מְהוּמָה וּמְבוֹסָה וּמְבוֹכָה	5	For, this is a day of rout, panic, and confusion,
	לֹאֲדַנִּי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת		from the Lord Yahweh Sabaoth

ISAIAH 22

- ¹ No 'Valley of Vision' is known near Jerusalem; some emend to 'Valley of Hinnom' (Gehenna) but no MS supports this.
- ² Apparently, the inhabitants died from starvation during the siege that preceded the final conquest of the city.
- ³ Some emend נִמְצָאֶיךָ ('your found ones') to אֶמְצִיךָ ('your strong ones') or to נִאֲמָצִיךָ ('your strengthened ones').
- ⁴ 'Daughter' is here used metaphorically to express the speaker's emotional attachment to his people, as well as their vulnerability and weakness.
- ⁵ The precise meaning of the phrase 'people shout' is unclear; some (e.g. NJB, NRSV) take קָרַע as 'wall' and interpret the verb to mean 'tear down',

בְּגִי חֲזִיוֹן
מְקַרְקַר קָר וְשׁוֹעַ אֶל־הָהָר:
וְעִלָּם נָשָׂא אֲשָׁפָה ^ו
בְּרֶכֶב אָדָם פְּרָשִׁים
וְקִיר עָרָה מִגֵּן:
וַיְהִי מִבְּחַר־עֲמֻקֵּיךְ מָלְאוּ רֶכֶב ^ז
וְהַפְּרָשִׁים שָׁתוּ שְׁתוּ הַשְּׁעָרָה:
וַיִּגְלֹל אֶת מִסְדֵּי יְהוּדָה ^ח

in the Valley of Vision,
people shout, and cries for help to the mountains.

- ⁶ Elam has picked up his quiver,
with manned chariots and horsemen,
and Kir has bared his shield.
⁷ Your fairest valleys are full of chariots
and horsemen boldly take their stand at the gates.
⁸ They uncovered the defences of Judah.

וַתִּבְטַל בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא אֶל־נֶשֶׁק בֵּית הַיַּעַר: ^ט וְאַתָּה
בְּקִיעֵי עִיר־דָּוִד רָאִיתָם כִּי־רָבוּ וַתִּקְבְּצוּ אֶת־מִי
הַבְּרֶכָה הַתַּחְתּוֹנָה: ^י וְאַתָּה־בָּתִּי יְרוּשָׁלַם סָפַרְתָּם
וַתִּתְּצוּ הַבָּתִּים לְבַצֵּר הַחוּמָה: ^{יא} וּמִקּוּהָ | עָשִׂיתָם
בֵּין הַחֲמֹמֹתִים לְמִי הַבְּרֶכָה הַיִּשְׁנָה וְלֹא הִבַּטְתָּם
אֶל־עֹשֶׂיהָ וַיִּצְרָה מִרְחֹק לֹא רָאִיתָם:

On that day, you looked for weapons in the House of the Forest, ⁹ and you saw many breaches in the City of David. You collected water in the lower pool. ¹⁰ You surveyed the houses in Jerusalem and pulled houses down to fortify the wall. ¹¹ Between the two walls, you made a reservoir for the waters of the old pool, but you did not look to its maker, and you did not look to the one who planned it long ago.

but tighter parallelism (note the reference to crying for help in the next line) is achieved if one takes both the verb and noun from a root, attested in Ugaritic and Arabic, meaning ‘make a sound’.

⁶ The Elamites and the Aramaeans (‘Kir’, cf. Am 1:5, 9:7) are possibly mentioned here as allied to, or mercenaries of, Sennacherib.

⁷ The literal translation of ‘boldly take their stand’ is ‘taking a stand, take their stand’; the infinitive absolute emphasises the following finite verb, and the translation attempts to bring out this emphasis with the adverb, ‘boldly’.

⁸ On the ‘House of the Forest’, see #1K 7:2. Vv. 8–11 speak of works undertaken by Hezekiah in anticipation of Sennacherib’s attack or between his two campaigns.

⁹ Literally translated, this verse opens, “the breaks in the City of David, you saw that there were many.”

¹⁰ On repairs to the city walls, see 2K 20:20; on the ‘reservoir’ (v. 11), see 2K 20:20 and Si 48:17.

¹¹ The antecedent of the 3FS suffix on the pronouns ‘its’ and ‘it’ is unclear; the closest feminine noun is ‘pool’ in the 1st half of the verse: perhaps this ‘old pool’ symbolises the entire city, which had prospered because of God’s provision and protection through the years.

יב וִיקְרָא אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
 בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לִבְכֹּי
 וּלְמִסְפָּד וּלְקִרְחָה וּלְחִגְר שָׁק:
 יג וְהָיָה | שְׂשׂוֹן וְשִׂמְחָה
 הָרֶג | בָּקָר וְשִׁחַט צֹאן
 אָכַל בָּשָׂר וְשָׁתוּת יַיִן
 אָכּוּל וְשָׁתוּ כִּי מָחָר נָמוּת:
 יד וְנִגְלָה בְּאָזְנֵי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
 אִם־יִכָּפֹר הָעֹן הַזֶּה לָכֶם עַד־תָּמּוּתוֹן
 אָמַר אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת: {פ}

טו כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת לְדָבָא אֱלֹהֵסְכֵן
 הַזֶּה עַל־שִׁבְנָא אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַבַּיִת: טז מֶה־לָּךְ פֹּה וּמִי
 לָךְ פֹּה כִּי־חָצַבְתָּ לָךְ פֹּה קֶבֶר חֲצָבִי מְרוֹם קִבְרוֹ
 חֲקִקִי בַסֵּלַע מִשְׁכָּן לֹ: יז הִנֵּה יְהוָה מִטְּלִטְלָךְ
 טִלְטֵלָה גִּבְרָה וְעֵטָךְ עֵטָה: יח צָנּוֹף יִצְנַפֶּךָ צִנְפָּה
 כְּדֹר אֶל־אָרֶץ רַחֲבַת יָדַיִם שָׁמָּה תָּמוּת וְשָׁמָּה

12 On that day, the Lord Yahweh Sabaoth
 called on you to weep and mourn,
 to shave your heads, to put on sackcloth.
 13 Instead, there was joy and merriment,
 killing of oxen, slaughtering of sheep,
 eating of meat, drinking of wine,
 "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."
 14 Then Yahweh Sabaoth revealed this to my ears,
 "This guilt will never be forgiven you, until you are dead,"
 says the Lord Yahweh Sabaoth.

15 Thus says the Lord Yahweh Sabaoth: Go find that steward, Shebna,
 the master of the palace: 16 "What do you own here? What relatives do
 you have buried here, that you hew yourself a tomb?" He is digging a
 resting place for himself in the rock. 17 Yahweh is about to throw you
 away, you mere mortal. He will grasp you in his grip, 18 whirl you round
 and round, and throw you like a ball into a vast space. There you will

12 Shaving the head (and beard) were outward signs of mourning and grief.

13 The prophet here quotes what the fatalistic people are saying: the concluding verb 'we die' makes it clear the people are speaking.

14 The 2nd line does not imply that their death will bring atonement; rather, it emphasises that their sin is unpardonable.

15 The remainder of this chapter forms Isaiah's only prophecy about a private individual. 'Shebna' was Hezekiah's major-domo, possibly a foreigner, who had climbed to the highest dignity of state, that of master of Hezekiah's palace.

16 The point of the second question is not entirely clear: the interpretation reflected in the translation (following NETB) is based on the following context, which suggests that Shebna has no right to think of himself so highly and arrange such an extravagant burial place for himself.

17 In place of 'you mere mortal', here following NETB/NAB, the NJB has 'strong as you are' and the NRSV has 'my fellow'.

18 Literally translated, this verse opens, "and he will tightly wind you (with) winding like a ball, to a land broad of hands."

מִרְכָּבוֹת כְּבוֹדָךְ קִלּוֹן בֵּית אֲדֹנֶיךָ: יט וְהִדְפַּתִּיךָ
 מִמַּצְבֶּךָ וּמִמַּעַמְדֶּךָ יִהְרָסֶךָ: כ וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא
 וְקִרְאֹתִי לְעַבְדִּי לְאֵלִיכִים בֶּן־חִלְקִיָּהוּ:
 כא וְהִלְבַּשְׁתִּיו כִּתְנֹתָיִךְ וְאַבְנֹתָיִךְ אַחֲזִקְנוּ וּמִמְשַׁלְתֶּךָ
 אֶתֵּן בְּיָדוֹ וְהָיָה לְאָב לְיוֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם וּלְבֵית יְהוּדָה:
 כב וְנָתַתִּי מִפֶּתַח בֵּית־דָּוִד עַל־שַׁכְמוֹ וּפֶתַח וְאֵין
 סָגֹר וְסָגֹר וְאֵין פֶּתַח: כג וְתִקְעֵתִיו יָתֵד בְּמָקוֹם
 נֶאֱמָן וְהָיָה לְכֶסֶּא כְבוֹד לְבֵית אָבִיו: כד וְתָלוּ עָלָיו
 כָּל כְּבוֹד בֵּית־אָבִיו הַצֹּאצָּאִים וְהַצִּפּוֹת כָּל כְּלִי
 הַקֶּטָן מִכְּלֵי הָאֵגְנוֹת וְעַד כָּל־כְּלֵי הַנְּבִלִים: כה בַּיּוֹם
 הַהוּא נֶאֱמָן יִהְיֶה צְבָאוֹת תָּמוּשׁ הַיָּתֵד הַתְּקוּעָה
 בְּמָקוֹם נֶאֱמָן וְנִגְדָּעָה וְנִפְלָה וְנִכְרַת הַמֶּשָּׂא אֲשֶׁר־
 עָלֶיהָ כִּי יִהְיֶה דִבָּר: {פ}

die, with your splendid chariots, a disgrace to your master's house! ¹⁹ I shall hound you from your office; he shall snatch you from your post. ²⁰ On that day, I shall call my servant Eliakim son of Hilkiyah. ²¹ I shall dress him in your robe, put your sash around his waist, and invest him with your authority; he will be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the House of Judah. ²² I shall place the key of David's house on his shoulder: he shall open and no one shall shut; he shall shut and no one shall open. ²³ I shall drive him like a peg into a firm place and he will become a glorious throne for his family. ²⁴ On him will hang all the glory of his family, the offspring and issue, every small vessel, from cups to flagons. ²⁵ On that day, says Yahweh Sabaoth, the peg driven into a firm place will give way, will be torn out and fall; and the load hanging on it will be lost. For, Yahweh has spoken."

¹⁹ The NJB has 'I shall snatch' in place of 'he will snatch', here following the MT, while the NRSV & NETB convert the verb to a passive form; the shift from the 1st to 3rd person is peculiar and abrupt, but certainly not unprecedented in Hebrew poetry.

²⁰ The verb that introduces this verse serves as a discourse particle and is untranslated.

²¹ The term אב ('father') is here used metaphorically of one who protects and supports those under his care and authority, like a father does his family; for another example of this use of the word, see Job 29:16.

²² Opening and closing the doors of the king's palace was one of the functions of the Egyptian chief minister, to whom the master of the palace corresponded in Judah.

²³ The opening metaphor depicts how secure his position will be.

²⁴ This closing supplement refers to the disgrace of Eliakim himself; his whole family, which had profited by his rise to power, was dragged down with him.

²⁵ The authority of Eliakim, though seemingly secure, will eventually be removed, and with it his family's prominence.

ישעיהו פרק כג

ISAIAH 23

^א מִשָּׂא צָר ¹ A proclamation about Tyre:

הִלִּילוּ | אֲנִיּוֹת תַּרְשִׁישׁ
כִּי־שָׁדָד מִבַּיִת מִבּוֹא
מֵאֶרֶץ כִּתִּים נִגְלָה־לָּמוֹ:
דָּמוֹ יֵשְׁבִי אִי ^ב
סַחַר צִידוֹן עָבַר יָם מִלְּאוֹךְ:
וּבְמִים רַבִּים זָרַע שָׁחַר ^ג
קֶצֶיר יְאוֹר תְּבוּאַתָּה
וְתָהִי סַחַר גּוֹיִם:
בוֹשֵׁי צִידוֹן כִּי־אָמַר יָם ^ד
מִעוֹז הַיָּם לֹא־מָר
לֹא־חָלָתִי וְלֹא־יָלַדְתִּי
וְלֹא גִדַּלְתִּי בַּחֲוָרִים רוֹמְמָתִי בְּתוֹלוֹת:

Howl, ships of Tarshish,
for the port is too devastated to enter:
from Kittim, this news has reached them.

- ² Keep quiet, inhabitants of the coast,
you merchants of Sidon, whose messengers crossed the sea
³ and were on the mighty waters.
The grain of Shihor, the harvest of the Nile, was her revenue;
she was the market for nations.
⁴ Blush, Sidon, for the sea has spoken,
citadel of the seas, saying:
"I have not gone into labour, never given birth,
never reared boys nor brought up girls."

ISAIAH 23

- ¹ The literal translation of the 3rd line is, "for it is destroyed, from a house, from entering;" the translation, following NETB, assumes that the **מ** on **בַּיִת** was originally an enclitic *mem* suffixed to the preceding verb: this assumption allows one to take **בַּיִת** as the subject of the preceding verb. It is used in a metaphorical sense for the port city of Tyre. The preposition prefixed to **בּוֹא** indicates negative consequence: 'so that no one can enter'. 'Kittim' (**כִּתִּים**) is the island of Cyprus, where there were Phoenician colonies.
- ² The MT of vv. 2^b-3^a reads literally, "merchant of Sidon, the one who crosses the sea, they filled you, and on the deep waters." Instead of **מִלְּאוֹךְ** ('they filled you'), 1QIsa^a reads **מִלְּאֲכֶיךָ** ('your messengers').
- ³ In place of 'Shihor', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'the Canal'; Shihor, meaning 'the waters of the Horus', was near Zoan. The literal translation of 'market' is 'merchandise'.
- ⁴ The sea is personified here as a lamenting childless woman; the foreboding language anticipates the following announcement of Tyre's demise, viewed here as a child of the sea, as it were.

ה	כַּאֲשֶׁר-שָׁמַע לְמִצְרַיִם יִחִילוּ כְּשָׁמַע צָר:	5	When the news reaches Egypt, they will tremble to hear Tyre's fate.
ו	עָבְרוּ תַרְשִׁישָׁה הִלִּילוּ יוֹשְׁבֵי אֵי:	6	Cross over to Tarshish; howl, inhabitants of the coast.
ז	הֲזֹאת לָכֶם עֲלִיזָה מִימֵי-קֶדֶם קִדְמָתָהּ יִבְלוּהָ רַגְלֶיהָ מֵרַחֵק לָגוּר:	7	Is this your boisterous city founded far back in the past, whose feet led her to settle far away?
ח	מִי יַעַן זֹאת עַל-צָר הַמַּעֲטִירָה אֲשֶׁר סַחְרֶיהָ שָׂרִים כְּנַעְנִיָּה נִכְבְּדֵי-אָרֶץ:	8	Who took this decision against Tyre, who used to hand out crowns, whose merchants were princes, whose traders were the honoured of the earth?
ט	יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת יַעֲצֶה לְחַלֵּל גָּאוֹן כָּל-צִבִּי לְהַקְל כָּל-נִכְבְּדֵי-אָרֶץ:	9	Yahweh Sabaoth took this decision to whither the pride of all beauty and humiliate the honoured of the earth.
י	עֲבְרֵי אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן בֵּית-תַּרְשִׁישׁ אֵין מִזֶּה עוֹד:	10	Cultivate your land like the Delta, daughter of Tarshish, for your docks are no more.

⁵ A more literal translation of 'tremble' (here following the NJB) is 'be in pain'; the NRSV has 'be in anguish'.

⁶ NETB has 'travel' in place of 'cross over', here following the NJB & NRSV.

⁷ The literal translation of the 1st line is, "Is this to you, boisterous one?" The pronoun 'you' is masculine plural, like the imperatives in v. 6, so it is likely addressed to the Egyptians and residents of the coast; 'boisterous one' is a feminine singular form, probably referring to the personified city of Tyre.

⁸ The precise meaning of הַמַּעֲטִירָה ('crowns') is uncertain, but Tyre's prominence in the international political arena is in view.

⁹ The NRSV has 'glory' in place of 'beauty', here following the NJB & NETB.

¹⁰ 'Cultivate' follows the LXX (ἐργάζου – literally, 'work') and 1QIsa^a (עֲבָדִי); the MT has 'cross' (עֲבָרִי). 'Daughter of Tarshish' (the NRSV has 'ships of Tarshish') is difficult to explain: 'daughter of Tyre' would seem more apposite, in parallel with 'daughter of Sidon' in v. 12.

יא יְדוֹ נָטָה עַל־הַיָּם
 הִרְגִּיז מַמְלָכוֹת
 יְהוָה צִוָּה אֶל־כְּנָעַן
 לְשַׁמֵּד מְעֻזֶּיהָ:
 יב וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא־תוֹסִיפִי עוֹד לִעְלֹז
 הַמַּעֲשָׂקָה בְּתוֹלַת בַּת־צִידֹן
 כְּתִיִּים כְּתִים קוֹמֵי עֲבָרִי
 גַּם־שָׁם לֹא־יִנּוּחַ לָךְ:
 יג הֵן אֶרֶץ כַּשְׂדִּים
 זֶה הָעָם לֹא הָיָה
 אֲשׁוּר יִסְדָּה לְצִיִּים
 הִקִּימוּ בַּחֲנִיּוֹ בַּחוּנָיו עֹזְרוֹ
 אֲרַמְנוֹתֶיהָ שָׂמָה לְמַפְלָה:
 יד הִלִּילוּ אֲנִיּוֹת תַּרְשִׁישׁ
 כִּי שָׁדַד מְעֻזְכֶּן: {ס}

טו וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וְנִשְׁכַּחַת צֹר שִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה כִּימֵי
 מֶלֶךְ אֶחָד מִקֵּץ שִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה יִהְיֶה לְצֹר כְּשִׁירַת
 הַזֹּנָה:

- 11 He has raised his hand against the sea;
he has shaken kingdoms;
Yahweh has ordained the destruction
of the fortresses of Canaan.
- 12 He has said, "Exult no more,
ill-treated virgin daughter of Sidon!
Get up, cross to Kittim:
no respite for you there, either."
- 13 Look at the land of the Chaldeans,
a people who used not to exist!
Assyria assigned it to the creatures of the wilds;
they raised their siege-towers against it,
demolished its bastions, reduced it to ruin.
- 14 Howl, ships of Tarshish,
for you fortress is destroyed.
- 15 On that day, Tyre will be forgotten for seventy years, the length of one
king's life. At the end of seventy years, Tyre will become like the whore
in the song:

11 The NLT & NIV have 'Phoenicia' in place of 'Canaan', here following the MT (כְּנָעַן), NJB, NRSV & NETB.

12 The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

13 The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation. This whole verse seems to be corrupt, and the translation is uncertain.

14 Here, and in v. 1, NETB has 'large ships' in place of 'ships of Tarshish'.

15 The number 'seventy' is probably used in a stereotypical, nonliteral sense here to indicate a long period of time that satisfies completely the demands of God's judgment.

טז קְחִי כִנּוֹר סְבִי עִיר
 זֹנָה נִשְׁכַּחַה
 הִיטִיבִי נֶגֶן הָרְבִי-שִׁיר
 לְמַעַן תִּזְכָּרִי:

¹⁶ "Take your harp, walk the town,
 forgotten whore!
 Play sweetly, song after song,
 so you'll be remembered."

יז וְהָיָה מִקֵּץ שִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה יִפְקֹד יְהוָה אֶת-צָר
 וְשָׁבָה לְאַתְנָנָהּ וְזִנְתָה אֶת-כָּל-מַמְלָכוֹת הָאָרֶץ
 עַל-פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה: יח וְהָיָה סַחְרָהּ וְאַתְנָנָהּ קֹדֶשׁ
 לַיהוָה לֹא יֵאָצֵר וְלֹא יִחָסֵן כִּי לִישָׁבִים לִפְנֵי יְהוָה
 יִהְיֶה סַחְרָהּ לֶאֱכֹל לְשִׁבְעָה וְלִמְכָּסָה עֲתִיק: {פ}

¹⁷ At the end of seventy years, Yahweh will visit Tyre and she will return to her trade and play the whore with all the kingdoms of the world on the face of the earth. ¹⁸ Her profits and wages will be set apart for Yahweh; they will not be stored or hoarded, but her profits will supply abundant food and fine clothes for those who live in Yahweh's presence.

¹⁶ The message of this 'song' is obvious, if sarcastic.

¹⁷ The verb that introduces this verse serves as a discourse particle and is untranslated.

¹⁸ The point of this verse, which in its blatant nationalism comes precariously close to comparing God to one who controls or manages a prostitute, is that Tyre will become a subject of Israel and her God; Tyre's commercial profits will be used to enrich Yahweh's people. The prose ending (excluding the song of v. 16) is a late addition, comparable to those of 18:7 and 19:16–25 and the late oracles in Jr 48:47. Tyre will recover its prosperity; the fruits of its trade, of its 'whoring', formerly offered to false gods, will henceforth be consecrated to Yahweh (cf. 18:7, 45:14).

ישעיהו פרק כד

א הִנֵּה יְהוָה בּוֹקֵק הָאָרֶץ וּבֹלֶקֶה
וְעֹנֶה פָּנֶיהָ וְהִפִּיץ יִשְׁבֵּיהָ:
ב וְהָיָה כָּעַם כַּכֹּהֵן
כַּעֲבָד כַּאֲדֹנָיו
כַּשֹּׁפְחָה כַּגְּבִרְתָּהּ
כַּקּוֹנֶה כַּמוֹכֵר
כַּמְלוֹה כַּלּוֹה
כַּנִּשְׁאָה כַּאֲשֶׁר נִשָּׂא בּוֹ:
ג הַבּוֹק | תְּבוֹק הָאָרֶץ וְהַבּוֹז | תְּבוֹז
כִּי יְהוָה דִּבֶּר אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה:
ד אֲבֵלָה נִבְלָה הָאָרֶץ
אֲמִלְלָה נִבְלָה תִּבְלֵ
אֲמִלְלוּ מְרוֹם עַס־הָאָרֶץ:
ה וְהָאָרֶץ חֲנֹפָה תַּחַת יִשְׁבֵּיהָ

ISAIAH 24

- 1 See, Yahweh is about to ruin the earth and make it desolate, buckle its surface and scatter its inhabitants.
- 2 It shall be as the people, so the priest, as the slave, so his master, as the maid, so her mistress, as the buyer, so the seller, as the lender, so the borrower, as the creditor, so the debtor.
- 3 The earth will be utterly laid waste, utterly despoiled, for Yahweh has uttered this word.
- 4 The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers, the pick of the earth's people fade away.
- 5 The earth is defiled by the feet of its inhabitants;

ISAIAH 24

- 1 Chs 24–27 see beyond the immediate events to God's final judgement; of this they give a poetic description interspersed with supplication and thanksgiving psalms. Though not all the distinctive qualities are present, these chapters anticipate apocalyptic literature as found in Daniel, Zechariah 9–14 and the apocryphal Book of Enoch. This is a (very) late addition and probably dates from between 540 and 425 BCE.
- 2 Each of the lines of this verse has the literal form, *'like the servant, like his master'*.
- 3 The NJB has *'his word'* in place of *'this word'*.
- 4 The literal translation of *'pick of the earth's people'* is *'the elevation of earth's people'* (following the MT) or *'the earth's great men'* (following the LXX). For the last line, the NRSV (strangely) reads, *"the heavens languish together with the earth."*
- 5 The *'covenant'* does not, seemingly, refer to that with Abraham or Moses, but God's covenant with the entire human race, analogous to that with Noah according to the Priestly tradition in Gn 9:9 – 17. Once this covenant is violated, judgement overtakes the entire world (v. 6).

כִּי־עֲבָרוּ תוֹרַת חֻלְפוֹ חֹק
 הִפְרוּ בְרִית עוֹלָם:
 עַל־כֵּן אֱלֹה אָכְלָה אֶרֶץ ^ו
 וַיֹּאשְׁמוּ יוֹשְׁבֵי בָהּ
 עַל־כֵּן חָרוּ יוֹשְׁבֵי אֶרֶץ
 וְנִשְׁאַר אֲנוֹשׁ מְזֵעַר:
 אֲבָל תִּירוֹשׁ אִמְלִלָּה גִּפְּן ^ז
 נֶאֱנָחוּ כָל־שִׂמְחֵי־לֵב:
 שָׁבַת מְשׁוֹשׁ תַּפִּים ^ח
 חָדַל שִׁאֲוֹן עֲלִיזִים
 שָׁבַת מְשׁוֹשׁ כְּנֹר:
 בַּשִּׁיר לֹא יִשְׁתּוּ־יַיִן ^ט
 יִמַּר שֹׂכֵר לִשְׁתֵּיוֹ:
 נִשְׁבְּרָה קִרְיַת־תְּהוֹ ^י
 סָגַר כָּל־בֵּית מְבוֹא:
 צוּחָה עַל־הַיֵּין בַּחוּצוֹת ^{יא}
 עֲרֵבָה כָל־שִׂמְחָה

for, they have transgressed laws, violated statutes,
broken the everlasting covenant.

- ⁶ Therefore, a curse has consumed the earth
and its inhabitants pay for their guilt;
therefore, the inhabitants of the earth have dwindled
and few people are left.
- ⁷ The new wine dries up, the vine languishes
and those who like to celebrate groan.
- ⁸ The happy sound of tambourines is silent,
the sound of revelling is over
and the happy sound of the harp is stilled.
- ⁹ No more will they sing over their wine;
liquor will taste bitter to the drinker.
- ¹⁰ The city of chaos is in ruins,
every house is shut and no one can enter.
- ¹¹ There is an outcry over wine in the streets;
all joy turns to sorrow –

⁶ Ancient Middle Eastern treaties often had ‘curses’, or threatened judgments, attached to them (see Dt 28); the party or parties taking an oath of allegiance acknowledged that disobedience would activate these curses, which typically threatened loss of agricultural fertility as depicted in the following verses.

⁷ The literal translation of ‘those who like to celebrate’ is ‘all the joyful in heart’, but the context suggests parties and drinking bouts.

⁸ The literal translation of ‘happy sound’ (twice in this verse) is ‘joy’.

⁹ Literally translated, the 1st line reads, “With a song they do not drink wine.”

¹⁰ The destruction of the ‘city of chaos’ constitutes the occasion for this apocalypse (see 25:2, 26:5, 27:10–11).

¹¹ The literal translation of ‘sorrow’ is ‘evening’ – the darkness of evening symbolises distress and sorrow.

גָּלָה מִשּׁוֹשׁ הָאָרֶץ:
יב נִשְׁאַר בְּעִיר שָׁמָּה
וּשְׂאִיָּה יִכָּתֵשׁ:
יג כִּי כֹה יִהְיֶה בְּקֶרֶב הָאָרֶץ
בְּתוֹךְ הָעַמִּים כְּנֻקָּף זֵית
כְּעוֹלֵלֶת אֶם-כָּלָה בְּצִיר:
יד הִמָּה יִשְׁאוּ קוֹלָם יִרְנוּ
בְּגִאוֹן יְהוָה צִהְלוּ מִיָּם:
טו עַל-כֵּן בְּאֲרָיִם כִּבְדּוּ יְהוָה
בְּאֵיִי הַיָּם שֵׁם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: {ס}
טז מִכִּנֹּף הָאָרֶץ זִמְרַת שְׁמִעֲנוּ
צְבִי לְצַדִּיק
וְאִמַּר רְזִי-לִי רְזִי-לִי אוֹי לִי
בְּגָדִים בְּגָדוּ
וּבְגָד בּוֹגְדִים בְּגָדוּ:

happiness is banished from the earth.

- 12 Desolation is left in the city;
the gate is reduced to rubble.
- 13 For, thus it shall be on earth, among the nations,
as when an olive tree is beaten,
as at the gleaning when the grape harvest is over.
- 14 They raise their voices, shouting for joy;
in Yahweh's honour, they shout from the west.
- 15 "Yes, in the east, give glory to Yahweh;
along the seacoasts, to the name of Yahweh, God of Israel!"
- 16 We have heard psalms from the remotest parts of the earth,
"Give glory to the Upright One!"
But I say, "I pine away, I pine away! Woe is me!"
The traitors have betrayed;
the traitors have acted more treacherously.

12 The 2nd line reads, literally, "and (into) rubble the gate is crushed."

13 The judgment will severely reduce the earth's population.

14 The remnant of the nations (v. 13) may be the unspecified subject of the verbs; if so, then those who have survived the judgment begin to praise God.

15 The literal translation of 'east' is 'lights', interpreted by some to mean 'in the region of light', referring to the east; however, some scholars have suggested the emendation of בְּאֲרָיִם to בְּאֵיִי הַיָּם ('along the seacoasts'), a phrase that is repeated in the next line, in which case the two lines form synonymous parallelism. If one retains the MT reading, 'in the east' and 'along the seacoasts' depict the two ends of the earth to refer to all the earth (as a merism).

16 Verse 16^b is a classic example of Hebrew wordplay: in the 3rd line ('I pine away...'), 4 consecutive words end with a *yod*; in the 4th & 5th lines, all forms are derived from the root בָּגַד; the repetition of sound draws attention to the prophet's lament.

יז פַּחַד וּפַחַת וּפֶחַח
 עֲלֶיךָ יוֹשֵׁב הָאָרֶץ:
 יח וְהָיָה הַנֶּסֶם מִקּוֹל הַפַּחַד יִפֹּל אֶל־הַפַּחַת
 וְהַעֲזֹלָה מִתּוֹךְ הַפַּחַת יִלְכַּד בַּפֶּחַח
 כִּי־אַרְבּוֹת מַמְרוֹם נִפְתָּחוּ
 וַיִּרְעָשׁוּ מוֹסְדֵי אֶרֶץ:
 יט רָעָה הִתְרַעְעָה הָאָרֶץ
 פֹּזַר הִתְפּוֹרְרָה אֶרֶץ
 מוֹט הִתְמוֹטְטָה אֶרֶץ:
 כ גוּעַ תִּנּוּעַ אֶרֶץ כְּשֹׁכֹר וְהִתְנוֹדְדָה בַּמְּלוּנָה
 וְכָבֵד עָלֶיהָ פִּשְׁעָהּ
 וְנָפְלָה וְלֹא־תִסִּיף קוּם: {ס}
 כא וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא
 יִפְקֹד יְהוָה עַל־צֶבָא הַמָּרוֹם בַּמָּרוֹם
 וְעַל־מַלְכֵי הָאָדָמָה עַל־הָאָדָמָה:
 כב וְאִסְפוּ אִסְפָּה אֲסִיר עַל־בּוֹר
 וְסָגְרוּ עַל־מִסְגָּר

- 17 Terror, the pit and the snare
 are upon you, inhabitants of the city!
 18 Whoever flees from the cry of terror will fall into the pit,
 and whoever climbs out of the pit will be caught in the snare.
 Yes, the sluice gates above are open,
 and the foundations of the earth are quaking.
 19 A cracking, the earth cracks open
 a jolting, the earth gives a jolt;
 a lurching, the earth lurches violently.
 20 The earth staggers around like a drunk and sways like a hut;
 so heavy will be its sin on it,
 that it will fall, never to rise again.
 21 On that day,
 Yahweh will punish the host of heaven above
 and on earth the kings of the earth.
 22 They will be herded together like prisoners in a pit;
 they will be shut up in a prison

17 The description of the Judgement, interrupted by the song about the ruined city, resumes here.

18 The verb that introduces this verse serves as a discourse particle and is untranslated.

19 Once more, repetition is used to draw attention to a statement; in the MT, each line ends with אֶרֶץ ('earth') and each line uses a Hitpolel verb form from a geminate root, preceded by an emphatic infinitive absolute.

20 The literal translation of 'staggers around' is 'staggering, staggers'; the text uses the infinitive absolute before the finite verb for emphasis.

21 The 'host of heaven above' refers to the heavenly luminaries (stars and planets: see, among others, Dt 4:19, 17:3, 2K 17:16, 21:3-5, 23:4-5).

22 The verb translated 'punished' can mean to visit for good or for evil; the translation assumes the latter, based on v. 21.

וּמִרְבַּי יָמִים יִפְקְדוּ:
בג וְחִפְּרָה הַלְבֵנָה וּבוֹשָׁה הַחֲמָה
כִּי־מֶלֶךְ יִהְיֶה צְבָאוֹת
בְּהָר צִיּוֹן וּבִירוּשָׁלַם
וְנִגְדַּד זִקְנָיו כְּבוֹד: {פ}

and, after many days, punished.

²³ The moon will be confused and the sun ashamed,
for Yahweh Sabaoth will be king
on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem,
and the Glory will radiate on their elders.

²³ The 'moon' and the 'sun' will lose their divine status (Jr 8:2, Dt 17:3).

ישעיהו פרק כה

א יהוה אלהי אתה
ארוממך אודה שמך
כי עשית פלא
עצות מרחק אמונה אמן:
ב כי שמת מעיר לגל
קריה בצורה למפלה
ארמון זרים מעיר
לעולם לא יבנה:
ג על-כן יכבדוך עס-עז
קרית גוים עריצים יראוך:
ד ביהלית מעוז לדל
מעוז לאביון בצר-לו
מחסה מזרם צל מחרב
כי רוח עריצים כזרם קיר:
ה כחרב בציון
שאון זרים תכניע

ISAIAH 25

- 1 Yahweh, you are my God!
I shall exalt you; I shall praise your name;
for, you have accomplished marvels,
plans long conceived, faithful and sure.
- 2 For, you have made the town a heap,
the fortified city a ruin.
The citadel of foreigners is a city no longer;
it will never be rebuilt.
- 3 Hence, mighty peoples will honour you;
the cities of pitiless nations hold you in awe.
- 4 For, you are a refuge for the weak,
a refuge for the needy in distress,
a shelter from the storm, a shade from the heat;
for the breath of the pitiless is like a winter storm.
- 5 Like heat in a dry land,
you calm the foreigners' tumult;

ISAIAH 25

- ¹ This hymn of thanksgiving (vv. 1-5) refers to the event previously related: the destruction of the city (v. 2, 24:10), the conversion of distant peoples (v. 3, 24:15) and victory over the proud (vv. 2, 4, 24:21-22).
- ² The identity of the 'town' or 'city' is uncertain. Some, with support from the LXX (*ἀσεβῶν*), emend זרים ('foreigners') to זדים ('the insolent').
- ³ For 'cities', the MT has a singular (קרית) but it should be emended to a plural or eliminated; it may have been accidentally copied from v. 2.
- ⁴ 'Winter' is a conjectural translation (קר); the MT has 'wall' (קיר).
- ⁵ The translation of the last line assumes that the verb יענה is a Hiphil imperfect from ענה ('be afflicted' 'be humiliated').

חָרַב בַּצֵּל עָב
 זָמִיר עָרִיצִים יַעֲנֶה: {פ}
 וַעֲשֵׂה יְהוָה צַבָּאוֹת לְכָל־הָעַמִּים
 בְּהָר הַזֶּה מִשְׁתֶּה שְׂמָנִים מִשְׁתֶּה שְׂמָרִים
 שְׂמָנִים מִמַּחִים שְׂמָרִים מִזְקָקִים:
 וּבִלְע בְּהָר הַזֶּה
 פְּגִי־הַלּוֹט | הַלּוֹט עַל־כָּל־הָעַמִּים
 וְהַמַּסְכָּה הַנְּסוּכָה עַל־כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם:
 בִּלְע הַמּוֹת לַנֶּצֶחַ
 וּמָחָה אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה דִּמְעָה מֵעַל כָּל־פָּנִים
 וְחָרַפַּת עַמּוֹ יִסִּיר מֵעַל כָּל־הָאָרֶץ
 כִּי יְהוָה דִּבֶּר: {פ}
 וְאָמַר בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא
 הִנֵּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ זֶה קִוִּינוּ לוֹ וַיִּזְשִׁיעֵנוּ
 זֶה יְהוָה קִוִּינוּ לוֹ
 נִגִּילָה וְנִשְׂמְחָה בִּישׁוּעָתוֹ:
 כִּי־תִנּוּחַ יַד־יְהוָה בְּהָר הַזֶּה
 וְנִדְּוַשׁ מוֹאָב תַּחְתָּיו

as heat under the shadow of a cloud,
 so he causes the song of the ruthless to cease.

- 6 On this mountain, Yahweh Sabaoth will make, for all peoples, a banquet of rich food, a banquet of fine wines, of succulent food, of well-strained wines.
- 7 And he will destroy on this mountain the veil that used to cover all peoples, the pall enveloping all nations.
- 8 He will swallow up death forever.
Lord Yahweh will wipe away the tears from every cheek and take his people's shame away everywhere on earth, for Yahweh has spoken.
- 9 On that day, it will be said,
"Lo, this is our God, we waited for him that he should save us; this is Yahweh, for whom we have waited.
Let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."
- 10 For, Yahweh's hand will rest on this mountain and Moab will be trodden under his feet

-
- 6 Using and amplifying Universalist concepts already found in earlier prophets (2:2–3, 56:6–8, 60:11–14, Zc 8:20, 14:16 *et cetera*), the author describes the flooding in of foreign nations to Jerusalem as an immense banquet. The literal translation of 'rich food' is 'fat things'.
 - 7 The 'veil' could either be that of mourning or of ignorance; the phraseology of vv. 7–8 is reminiscent of Canaanite mythology.
 - 8 The image of God 'swallowing' death is especially powerful: the Canaanites saw death as a hungry enemy that swallows its victims.
 - 9 The literal translation of 'it will be said' is 'one will say'.
 - 10 In the last line, the *Ketiv* has 'in the water' (בַּמֵּי) in place of 'in the dust', here following the *Qere* (בְּמִי).

כְּהִדּוּשׁ מִתְבֵּן בְּמִי בְּמוֹ מִדְּמֹנָה:
 וּפָרֵשׁ יָדָיו בְּקִרְבּוֹ יא
 כַּאֲשֶׁר יִפְרֹשׁ הַשָּׁחָה לַשָּׁחוֹת
 וְהַשְׁפִּיל גְּאוֹתוֹ עִם אַרְבּוֹת יָדָיו:
 וּמִבְצָר מְשֻׁגָּב חֹמֹתָיִךְ יב
 הַשָּׁח הַשְׁפִּיל הִגִּיעַ לָאָרֶץ עַד־עָפָר: {ס}

as straw is trodden into the dung-heap.

- ¹¹ He will stretch out his hands in the midst of it
 like a swimmer stretching out his hands to swim,
 but he will humble his pride as he spreads his hands.
- ¹² The impregnable fortress of your walls
 he has overthrown, laid low, flung to the ground, in the dust.

¹¹ The meaning of the last line is uncertain, reading literally, “he will bring down his pride along with the [?] of his hands.” The meaning of אַרְבּוֹת, which occurs only here in the OT, is unknown.

¹² Moab is being addressed here.

ישעיהו פרק כו

א בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא
יוֹשֵׁר הַשִּׁירָה־זֶה בְּאֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה
עִיר עֲזֻלָּנוּ
יְשׁוּעָה יִשִּׁית חוֹמוֹת וְחָלִי:
ב פָּתְחוּ שַׁעֲרִים וַיָּבֹא גִי־צָדִיק
שֹׁמֵר אֱמָנִים:
ג יַצֵּר סִמּוּךְ תַּעֲזֹר שְׁלוֹם |
שְׁלוֹם כִּי בָךְ בְּטוּחַ:
ד בְּטַחֲוֹ בִיהוָה עַד־עֶד
כִּי בִיהַ יְהוָה צוּר עוֹלָמִים:
ה כִּי הֵשֵׁחַ יִשְׁבִּי מְרוֹם
קְרִיָּה נִשְׁגְּבָה

ISAIAH 26

- 1 On that day,
this song will be sung in Judah:
“We have a fortress city,
the walls and ramparts provide safety.
- 2 Open the gates, so that the righteous nation that keeps faith
may enter in.
- 3 Those of steadfast mind you keep in peace –
in peace because they trust in you.
- 4 Trust in Yahweh forever;
for, in the Lord Yah you have an everlasting rock.
- 5 He has brought low the dwellers on the heights,
the lofty citadel;

ISAIAH 26

- ¹ The ‘city’ – Jerusalem, fortified by Yahweh and serving as refuge for the righteous – is contrasted with the ‘lofty citadel’ (v. 5) – the ruined city of Chs 24–25 (see #24:7). Vv. 1–6 form a processional psalm, sung on entering Jerusalem.
- ² For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, “Open the gates! Let the upright nation come in, the nation that keeps faith!”
- ³ The term יַצֵּר refers to what one devises in the mind; סִמּוּךְ probably functions here like an attributive adjective and carries the nuance ‘firm’, so the opening phrase literally means, ‘a firm purpose’; however, as the object of the verb ‘keep’, it must stand by metonymy for the one(s) who possess a firm purpose. In this context, the ‘righteous nation’ (v. 2) is probably in view and the ‘firm purpose’ refers to their unwavering faith in God’s vindication (see 25:9). Also, שְׁלוֹם (‘peace’), which is repeated for emphasis, likely refers to national security, not emotional or psychological composure (see vv. 1–2). The passive participle בְּטוּחַ expresses a state that results from the subject’s action.
- ⁴ For the 2nd line, the MT reads, “for in Yah, Yahweh, an everlasting rock.” Some have suggested that the word בִּיהַ (‘in Yah’) is the result of dittography: a scribe seeing כִּי יְהוָה in his original text would somehow have confused the letters and accidentally inserted בִּיהַ between the words (ב and כ can be confused in later script phases). 1QIsa^a confirms the MT reading.
- ⁵ This verse contains a familiar antithesis: the proud are abased, the humble exalted (Ps 147:6, Lk 1:52).

יִשְׁפִּילָנָה יִשְׁפִּילָהּ עַד־אָרֶץ	
יִגִּיעֶנָּה עַד־עָפָר:	
תִּרְמָסֶנָּה רֶגֶל	ו
רִגְלֵי עֲנִי פַעֲמֵי דָלִים:	
אֶרֶח לְצַדִּיק מִיִּשְׁרָיִם	ז
יֵשֶׁר מַעַגָּל צַדִּיק תִּפְלֹס:	
אִף אֶרֶח מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ יְהוָה	ח
קוֹיִנוּךָ לְשִׁמְךָ וּלְזִכְרֶךָ	
תַּאֲוֹת־נַפְשׁ:	
נַפְשִׁי אֹוִיתְךָ בַּלַּיְלָה	ט
אִף־רוּחִי בְּקֶרְבִּי אֲשַׁחֲרֶךָ	
כִּי בְּאִשֶּׁר מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ	
לְאָרֶץ צֶדֶק לְמַדּוֹ יִשְׁבִּי תֵּבֵל:	
יִחַן רָשָׁע בַּל־לַמַּד צֶדֶק	י
בְּאֶרֶץ נִכְחוֹת יַעוֹל	
וּבִל־יֵרָאֶה גְּאוֹת יְהוָה: {פ}	
he lays it low, brings it to the ground, and flings it down in the dust.	
6 It will be trodden under foot, by the feet of the needy, the steps of the weak.”	6
7 The path of the Upright One is honesty; you smooth the honest way of the upright.	7
8 Yes, as your judgments unfold, Yahweh, we wait for you; your name and your memory are all our soul desires.	8
9 At night, my soul longs for you and my spirit within me seeks you out; for, when your judgements appear on earth, the inhabitants of the world learn what justice is.	9
10 If pity is shown to the wicked, he does not learn justice, he will act wrongly in the land of right conduct and not see the majesty of Yahweh.	10

⁶ The ‘song’ started in v. 1 appears to end here.

⁷ Yahweh’s judgement, being just (vv. 7–10), assures the deliverance and glory of his people (vv. 11–15); the present ordeals prepare for the rebirth (vv. 16–19). The pangs of childbearing become a conventional image for the tribulations inevitably preceding the coming of the Messiah (see Mt 24:8, Mk 13:8, Jn 16:20–22).

⁸ For the 1st line, the MT has, “Yes, the way of your judgments, Yahweh;” the translation (following NETB) assumes that ‘way’ is related to the verb ‘we wait’ as an adverbial accusative.

⁹ The translation understands צֶדֶק in the sense of ‘justice’, but it is possible that it carries the nuance ‘righteousness’, in which case one might translate, “the inhabitants of the world learn to live in a righteous manner” (cf. NRSV & NCV).

¹⁰ See the note on צֶדֶק (‘justice’) in #9.

יא יהוה רמה ידך בלי־חזיון
 יחזו ויבשו קנאת־עם
 אף־אש צריך תאכלם: {ס}
 יב יהוה תשפת שלום לנו
 כי גם כל־מעשינו פעלת לנו: {ס}
 יג יהוה אלהינו בעלוננו אדנים זולתך
 לבד־בך נזכיר שמך:
 יד מתים בלי־חיו רפאים בלי־קמו
 לכן פקדת ותשמידם
 ותאבד כל־זכר למו:
 טו יספת לגוי יהוה
 יספת לגוי נכבדת
 רחקת כל־קצוי־ארץ: {פ}
 טז יהוה בצר פקדוך
 צקון לחש מוסרך למו:

- 11 Yahweh, your hand is raised but they do not see!
 They will see and be put to shame by your angry judgment;
 with your fiery wrath, you will devour your enemies.
- 12 Yahweh, you will grant us peace;
 for, even all we have accomplished, you have done for us.
- 13 Yahweh our God, other lords than you have ruled us
 but we acknowledge your name alone.
- 14 The dead do not live; the shadows do not rise;
 for, you have punished them, annihilated them,
 and wiped out their very memory.
- 15 You have made the nation larger, Yahweh,
 made the nation larger and won yourself glory;
 you have rolled back the frontiers of the country.
- 16 Yahweh, in distress they sought you;
 they uttered incantations because of your discipline.

- 11 The meaning of the phrase קנאת־עם (literally, 'zeal of people') is unclear; the translation (following NETB) assumes that this refers to God's angry judgment upon people. Another option is to understand the phrase as referring to God's zealous, protective love of his covenant people, in which case one might translate, 'by your zealous devotion to your people'.
- 12 Some suggest emending כל גם ('even all') to כגמל ('according to the deeds of'); one might then translate, "for, according to what our deeds deserve, you have acted on our behalf." Accepting the MT as it stands, the prophet affirms that Yahweh deserves the credit for all Israel has accomplished.
- 13 For the 2nd line, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "but loyal to you alone, we invoke your name."
- 14 In light of what is said in the 2nd and 3rd lines, the 'dead' here may be the 'lords' mentioned in v. 13.
- 15 The 'nation' here is Judah.
- 16 The meaning of this verse is unclear, appearing to read literally, "Yahweh, in distress they visit you, they pour out an incantation, your discipline to them." פקד may here carry the sense of 'seek with interest' (cf. Ezk 23:21) or 'seek in vain' (cf. Is 34:16) but it is peculiar for God to be the object of

יז כִּמּוֹ הָרָה תִּקְרִיב לֵלֶדֶת
 תַּחֲלִיל תִּזְעַק בַּחֲבֻלָּהּ
 בֶּן הָיִינוּ מִפְּנֵיךָ יְהוָה:
 יח הָרִינוּ חֲלָנוּ כִּמּוֹ יִלְדְנוּ רוּחַ
 יְשׁוּעַת בַּל־נַעֲשֶׂה אֶרֶץ
 וּבַל־יִפְּלוּ יֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֶל:
 יט יַחֲיוּ מֵתֶיךָ נִבְלָתִי יְקוֹמּוּן
 הִקְיֹצוּ וְרִנְנוּ שְׁכֵנֵי עָפָר
 כִּי טַל אֹזֶרֶת טֶלֶךְ
 וְאֶרֶץ רַפָּאִים תִּפְּיֵל: {פ}
 כ לֵךְ עַמִּי בֹא בַחֲדָרֶיךָ
 וְסָגַר דִּלְתֶיךָ דִּלְתָהּ בַּעֲדָהּ
 חֲבִי כַמַּעֲט־רִגָּע
 עַד־יַעֲבוֹר־יַעֲבֹר־זַעַם:

- 17 As a pregnant woman writhes and cries out in her pangs,
when she is near her time,
so we have been in your eyes, Yahweh.
- 18 We were pregnant, we writhed; we gave birth only to wind:
we have not given salvation to the earth;
no inhabitant for the world is born.
- 19 Your dead will live; your corpses will rise up.
Wake up and sing, you dwellers in the dust,
for your dew is a radiant dew,
and the earth will give birth to the shades.
- 20 Go my people, enter your chambers
and shut your doors behind you.
Hide yourselves a little while
until the retribution has passed.

this verb. צָקוֹן may be a Qal perfect third plural form from צוֹק (*'pour out' 'melt'*), though the verb is not used of pouring out words in its two other occurrences. Because of the appearance of צָר (*'distress'*) in the preceding line, it is tempting to emend the form to a noun and derive it from צוֹק (*'be in distress'*). The term לַחֲשׁ elsewhere refers to an incantation (3:3, Jr 8:17, Qo 10:11) or amulet (Is 3:20); perhaps here it refers to ritualistic prayers or to magical incantations used to ward off evil.

17 The NJB transposes phrase *'writhes and cries'* with *'when she is near her time'*.

18 Israel's distress and suffering, likened here to the pains of childbirth, seemed to be for no purpose: a woman in labour endures pain with the hope that a child will be born; in Israel's case, no such positive outcome was apparent. The nation was like a woman who strains to bring forth a child but can't push the baby through to daylight; all her effort produces nothing.

19 *'Your corpses'* follows the Tg and Peshitta; the MT has *'my corpse'*. In place of *'the shades'*, here following the MT, the NRSV has *'those long dead'*. It is uncertain if the resurrection envisioned here is intended to be literal or figurative: comparison with 25:8 and Dn 12:2 suggests a literal interpretation, but Ezk 37:1-14 uses resurrection as a metaphor for deliverance from exile and the restoration of the nation (see Is 27:12-13).

20 The Kethib/Qere differences here would benefit from explanations.

כא כִּי־הִנֵּה יְהוָה יֵצֵא מִמְּקוֹמוֹ
לִפְקֹד עוֹן יֹשְׁבֵי־הָאָרֶץ עָלָיו
וְגִלָּתָה הָאָרֶץ אֶת־דַּמֶּיהָ
וְלֹא־תִכְסֶּה עוֹד עַל־הַרוּגֶיהָ: {פ}

²¹ For see, Yahweh emerges from his dwelling
to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their guilt;
and the earth will reveal the blood shed on it
and no longer hide its slain.

²¹ The 2nd half of the verse implies that rampant bloodshed is one of the reasons for divine judgment.

ISAIAH 27

ישעיהו פרק כז

- ^א בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִפְקֹד יְהוָה בְּחַרְבּוֹ הַקָּשָׁה וְהַגְדֹּלָה וְהַחֲזָקָה עַל לְוִיתָן נָחֵשׁ בָּרֵחַ וְעַל לְוִיתָן נָחֵשׁ עֹקֶלֶתוֹן וְהָרַג אֶת־הַתַּנִּין אֲשֶׁר בַּיָּם: {ס}
- ^ב בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא
בְּרֶם חֲמֵר עֲנוּלָה:
^ג אֲנִי יְהוָה נֹצֵרָה
לְרֹגְעִים אֲשַׁקֶּנָּה
פֶּן יִפְקֹד עָלֶיהָ
לַיְלָה וַיּוֹם אֲצַרְנָה:
^ד חֲמָה אֵין לִי
מִיִּיתָנִי שְׁמִיר שִׁית
בְּמַלְחָמָה אֶפְשָׁעָה בָּהּ
אֲצִיתְנָה יַחַד:
^ה אֹי יִחְזַק בְּמַעֲוָי
- ¹ On that day, Yahweh will punish with his cruel sword, massive and strong, Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the coiling serpent; he will kill the dragon that lives in the sea.
- ² On that day,
sing of the splendid vineyard!
- ³ I, Yahweh, am its guardian;
I water it regularly;
I guard it night and day
so that no harm befalls it.
- ⁴ I have no wrath.
Who can reduce me to thorns and briers?
I will make war and trample on it
and, at the same time, burn it.
- ⁵ Or, should he beg for my protection,

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- ¹ On 'Leviathan', see #Job 3:8. The text here is influenced by one of the Ras-Shamra poems (14th Century BCE), which reads: "You will crush Leviathan the fleeing serpent; you will consume the twisting serpent, the mighty one with seven heads."
- ² As in 5:1-7, Israel is depicted as a vineyard, lovingly tended by God, if recourse is made to him. 'Splendid vineyard' is a conjectural translation (בְּרֶם חֲמֵר); the MT has 'vineyard of wine' (בְּרֶם חֲמֵר).
- ³ The literal translation of 'regularly' is 'by moments' (cf. NRSV - 'every moment').
- ⁴ In place of 'wrath' (חֲמָה), here following the MT (and NRSV), the NJB has the conjectural translation, 'a wall' (different vowel pointing).
- ⁵ For the 2nd & 3rd lines, the MT reads, "he makes peace with me, peace he makes with me;" some contend that 2 alternative readings are preserved here and one should be deleted: the 1st has the object שְׁלֹמִים ('peace') following the verb עָשָׂה ('make'), while the 2nd reverses the order; another option is to retain both statements to emphasise the need to make peace with Yahweh.

יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם לִי
 שְׁלוֹם יַעֲשֶׂה-לִּי:
 הַבָּאִים יִשְׂרָשׁ יַעֲקֹב
 יֵצִיץ וּפְרַח יִשְׂרָאֵל
 וּמִלְאוּ פְּנֵי-תֵבֶל תְּנוּבָה: {פ}
 הַכֹּמֶכֶת מִכֵּהוּ הִכֵּהוּ
 אִם-כִּהְרֹג הִרְגִּיו הִרְגֵּהוּ:
 ח בְּסִאסְאָה בְּשִׁלְחָה תִּרְיֶבְנָה
 הִגָּה בְּרוּחוֹ הַקָּשָׁה בְּיוֹם קָדִים:
 ט לָכֵן בְּזֹאת יִכְפֹּר עוֹן-יַעֲקֹב
 וְזֶה כָּל-פְּרִי הַסֵּר חֲטָאתוֹ
 בְּשׁוּמוֹ | כָּל-אַבְנֵי מִזְבֵּחַ
 כָּאֲבָנֵי-גֹר מִנְפָצוֹת
 לֹא-יִקְמוּ אֲשֵׁרִים וְחִמָּנִים:
 י כִּי עִיר בְּצוּרָה בְּדָד נִוָּה
 מִשְׁלַח וְנַעֲזֹב כַּמִּדְבָּר
 שָׁם יִרְעָה עֵגֶל וְשָׁם יִרְבֵּץ
 וְכָלָה סַעֲפֶיהָ:

let him make peace with me;

let them make peace with me.

6 In days to come, Jacob shall take root,

Israel shall bud and blossom,

and fill the whole world with fruit.

7 Has he struck him as he was struck by those who struck him?

Has he killed him as he was killed by those who killed him?

8 By expulsion, by excluding her, you have executed a sentence;
he has blown her away with a breath as fierce as the east wind.

9 For that is how Jacob's guilt will be forgiven,
such will be the result of renouncing his sin,
when all the altar stones have been smashed to pieces
like lumps of chalk,
when the sacred poles and the incense altars stand no longer.

10 For the fortified city is solitary now,
deserted, forsaken as a desert
where calves browse, where they lie down,
destroying its branches.

6 Owing to the apparent disorder and corrupt state of the text of vv. 6–11, the sense of this passage is obscure. Vv. 7–8 and 10–11 seem to be about Israel's oppressors, identified with the 'fortified city' of this apocalypse (v. 10). Vv. 6 and 9, being a promise to Israel whose guilt has been atoned for, may have been the introduction to the prophecy in Chs 12–13.

7 The meaning of this verse is unclear but the rhetorical questions suggest Israel has not experienced the same divine judgment as her enemies.

8 The meaning of the word here translated as 'expulsion' is uncertain.

9 'Sacred poles' translates the Hebrew word אֲשֵׁרִים ('Asherim'): Israel (Jacob) will be blessed after all semblance of idolatry has been removed.

10 The identity of the 'fortified city' is uncertain; the context suggests that an Israelite city, perhaps Samaria or Jerusalem, is in view.

יא בִּיבֹשׁ קִצְיָהּ תִּשְׁבְּרָנָה
 נָשִׁים בָּאוֹת מְאִירוֹת אוֹתָהּ
 כִּי לֹא עִם-בִּינּוֹת הוּא
 עַל-כֵּן לֹא-יִרְחֲמֶנּוּ
 עֲשֵׂהוּ וַיִּצְרוּ לֹא יִחַנְּנוּ: {פ}

11 When boughs go dry, they are burnt;
 women come and use them for firewood.
 Now, this is a people without understanding,
 and so its Maker will not take pity on it;
 he who formed it will not show it any mercy.

יב וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יַחֲבֹט יְהוָה מִשְׁבַּלַּת הַנָּהָר עַד-
 נַחַל מִצְרַיִם וְאַתֶּם תִּלְקָטוּ לְאַחַד אֶחָד בְּנֵי
 יִשְׂרָאֵל: {פ}

12 On that day, Yahweh will start his threshing from the course of the
 River to the Wadi of Egypt, and you will be gathered one by one,
 Israelites!

יג וְהָיָה | בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִתְקַע בְּשׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל וּבְאוֹ
 הָאֲבָדִים בְּאַרְצָן אַשּׁוּר וְהַנִּדְחִים בְּאַרְצָן מִצְרַיִם
 וְהִשְׁתַּחֲווּ לַיהוָה בְּהַר הַקֹּדֶשׁ בִּירוּשָׁלַם: {פ}

13 On that day, the great ram's horn will be sounded, and those lost in
 Assyria will come, and those banished to Egypt, and they will worship
 Yahweh on the holy mountain in Jerusalem.

11 The city is likened to a dead tree with dried up branches that is only good for firewood.

12 The prophecy of vv. 12-13, placed here as a conclusion, predicts the return of all the scattered Israelites to Jerusalem. The 'River' is the Euphrates; the 'Wadi of Egypt' is the Wadi El-Arish, 80 Km southwest of Gaza.

13 The 'ram's horn', having a number of uses (see #Jl 2:1), here sounds the gathering for Judgement Day (Mt 24:31, 1Th 4:16). The verb that introduces this verse (וְהָיָה) serves as a discourse particle and is not translated (as also in v. 12).

ישעיהו פרק כח

א הוֹי עֲטֶרֶת גִּאוֹת שְׁכָרֵי אֶפְרַיִם
וְצִיץ נָבֵל צְבִי תִפְאֶרְתּוֹ
אֲשֶׁר עַל־רֹאשׁ גִּיא־שְׁמָנִים
הַלּוּמֵי יַיִן:
ב הִנֵּה חֲזָק וְאַמֵּץ לְאֲדָנִי
כֹּזֵר בְּרֹד שֶׁעַר קֶטֶב
כֹּזֵר מִים כְּבִירִים שֹׁטְפִים
הַנִּיחַ לָאָרֶץ בְּיָד:
ג בְּרַגְלִים תִּרְמָסֶנָּה
עֲטֶרֶת גִּאוֹת שְׁכָרֵי אֶפְרַיִם:
ד וְהִיתָה צִיצֵת נָבֵל צְבִי תִפְאֶרְתּוֹ
אֲשֶׁר עַל־רֹאשׁ גִּיא־שְׁמָנִים
כְּכֹפֹרֶה בְּטָרֶם קֵץ
אֲשֶׁר יִרְאֶה הָרֹאֶה אוֹתָהּ
בְּעוֹדָה בְּכַפּוֹ יִבְלַעְנָהּ: {ס}
ה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִהְיֶה יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
לְעֵטֶרֶת צְבִי

ISAIAH 28

- 1 Woe to the haughty crown of Ephraim's drunkards,
to the fading flower of its proud splendour
sited at the head of the lush valley,
to those prostrated by wine!
- 2 See, a string and mighty man in the service of the Lord,
like a storm of hail, a destroying tempest,
like immense waters overflowing,
with his hands, he throws it to the ground.
- 3 It will be trampled underfoot,
the haughty crown of Ephraim's drunkards.
- 4 The faded flower of its proud splendour,
sited at the head of the lush valley,
will be like a fig ripe before the summer comes:
whoever sees it eats it up
as soon as it comes to hand.
- 5 On that day, Yahweh Sabaoth
will be a crown of splendour

ISAIAH 28

- 1 The prophecy of vv. 1–6 was delivered some time before the fall of Samaria (721 BCE).
- 2 The word translated 'Lord', here and in vv. 16 & 22, is אֲדֹנִי.
- 3 NETB transposes the order of the 2 lines in this verse; here, we follow the MT.
- 4 Literally translated, the last 2 lines read, "which the one seeing sees, while still it is in his hand he swallows it."
- 5 The mention on the 'remnant' suggests that this passage is later (see #4:3); the similar imagery may account for its having been placed here.

וּלְצַפִּירַת תְּפָאֲרָה לְשֹׂאֵר עַמּוֹ: וְלָרוּחַ מְשַׁפֵּט לַיּוֹשֵׁב עַל־הַמְּשַׁפֵּט וְלַגְבוּרָה מְשִׁיבֵי מַלְחָמָה שְׁעָרָה: {ס} וְגַם־אֱלֹהִים בֵּין שָׁגוֹ וּבִשְׁכָּר תִּעְוֹ כֹּהֵן וְנָבִיא שָׁגוֹ בִּשְׁכָּר גָּבְלוּ מִן־הַיֵּין תִּעְוֹ מִן־הַשְּׁכָר שָׁגוֹ בְּרָאָה פָּקוּ פְּלִילִיָּה: כִּי כָל־שְׁלַחֲנוֹת מְלָאוּ קִיא צֹאָה בְּלִי מָקוֹם: {פ} אֶת־מִי יוֹרֶה דַּעָה וְאֶת־מִי יִבִּין שְׁמוּעָה גְּמוּלִי מִחֲלֹב עֲתִיקִי מִשְׁדִּים: כִּי צוֹ לָצוּ צוֹ לָצוּ קוֹ לָקוּ קוֹ לָקוּ	and a proud diadem for the remnant of his people, 6 and a spirit of fair judgement for him who sits in judgement, and the strength of those who repel the assault on the gate. 7 These too have reel with wine, and stagger through liquor. Priest and prophet reel through strong drink, are sodden with wine, stagger through liquor; they err in vision, they stumble in their decisions. 8 All tables are covered in filthy vomit, not one is clean! 9 Whom does he think he is lecturing? Whom does he think his message is for, babies just weaned, babies just taken from the breast? 10 With his, "Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line,
--	---

6 God will provide internal stability and national security.

7 The prophecies of vv. 7-22 date from slightly before Sennacherib's campaign of 701 BCE.

8 The literal translation of the 2nd line is 'vomit, without a place'.

9 The translation assumes that Yahweh is the subject in the 1st 2 lines, and that the prophet is asking the questions (see v. 12); however, according to some vv. 9-10 record the people's sarcastic response to God's message through Isaiah.

10 The NJB here uses the original Hebrew words, chosen merely for their sound: "Sav lasav, sav lasav; kav lakav, kav lakav; zeer sham, zeer sham!"

זָעִיר שֵׁם זָעִיר שֵׁם:
 יא כִּי בִלְעָגִי שָׁפָה
 וּבִלְשׁוֹן אַחֲרֵת יְדַבֵּר
 אֶל־הָעָם הַזֶּה:
 יב אֲשֶׁר | אָמַר אֱלֹהִים
 זֹאת הַמְנוּחָה הַנִּיחוּ לְעֵינִי
 וְזֹאת הַמְרָגְעָה
 וְלֹא אָבּוּא שְׂמוֹעַ:
 יג וְהָיָה לָהֶם דְּבַר־יְהוָה
 צוֹ לָצֹו צוֹ לָצֹו
 קוֹ לָקוֹ קוֹ לָקוֹ
 זָעִיר שֵׁם זָעִיר שֵׁם
 לְמַעַן יִלְכוּ וְכָשְׁלוּ אַחֲוֹר
 וְנִשְׁבְּרוּ וְנוֹקְשׁוּ וְנִלְכְּדוּ: {פ}
 יד לְכֵן שָׁמְעוּ דְּבַר־יְהוָה
 אֲנָשִׁי לָצֹון מִשְׁלֵי הָעָם הַזֶּה
 אֲשֶׁר בִּירוּשָׁלַם:
 טו כִּי אָמַרְתֶּם כָּרְתֵנוּ בְרִית אֶת־מָוֶת
 וְעַם־שְׂאֹל עָשִׂינוּ חֲזָה שֵׁט שׂוֹט

- here a little, there a little!"
- 11 Now, with stammering lips
and in a foreign language,
he will talk to this nation.
- 12 He used to say to them, "Here you can rest!
Here you can let the weary rest!
Here all is quiet;"
but they refused to listen.
- 13 Now Yahweh is going to say to them,
"Precept upon precept, precept upon precept,
line upon line, line upon line,
here a little, there a little;"
so that, when they walk, they will fall over backwards
and so be broken, trapped and taken captive.
- 14 Hence, listen to Yahweh's words,
you who mock, rulers of this people
who live in Jerusalem.
- 15 Because you have said, "We have made a treaty with Death
and have struck a pact with Sheol.

11 Yahweh is the subject of the verb 'will talk', as v. 12 makes clear.

12 This message encapsulates God's invitation to his people to find security in his protection and blessing.

13 As time goes on, God's appeals through the prophets will have no impact on the people.

14 In place of 'you who mock' here following NETB, the NJB has 'you insolent men' and the NRSV has 'you scoffers'.

15 The Kethib/Qere differences here would benefit from explanations.

שׁוֹטֵף כִּי־יַעֲבֹר עֲבַר לֹא יִבֹּאֲנוּ
 כִּי שְׁמָנוּ כִּזְבִּי מַחֲסָנוּ וּבִשְׁקָר נִסְתָּרְנוּ: {פ}
 טז לָכֵן כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה
 הִנְנִי יֹסֵד בְּצִיּוֹן אֶבֶן
 אֶבֶן בַּחֵן פִּנֵּת יִקְרָת
 מוֹסֵד מוֹסֵד הַמַּאֲמִין לֹא יִחִישׁ:
 יז וְשִׁמְתִּי מִשְׁפָּט לְקוֹ
 וְצִדְקָה לְמִשְׁקָלָת
 וַיֵּעָה בָרָד מַחֲסֵה כִּזְבִּי
 וְסִתְּרֵי מַיִם יִשְׁטְפוּ: {ס}
 יח וְכִפֹּר בְּרִיתְכֶם אֶת־מֹות
 וְחֻזּוֹתְכֶם אֶת־שְׂאוֹל לֹא תִקּוּם
 שׁוֹטֵף שׁוֹטֵף כִּי יַעֲבֹר
 וְהִיִּיתֶם לוֹ לְמַרְמָס:
 יט מִדֵּי עֲבָרוּ יִקַּח אֶתְכֶם
 כִּי־בִבְקָר בִּבְקָר יַעֲבֹר בַּיּוֹם וּבַלַּיְלָה
 וְהָיָה רִקְזוּעָה הַבֵּין שְׁמוּעָה:
 כ כִּי־קָצֵר הַמִּצֵּעַ מִהַשְׁתַּרְעַ
 וְהַמִּסְכָּה צָרָה כִּהֶתְכַנֵּס:

When the scourging flood comes over, it will not touch us;
 for, we have made lies our refuge and hid under falsehood."

- 16 So, the Lord Yahweh says this,
 "Now I shall lay a stone in Zion,
 a granite stone, a precious corner stone,
 a firm foundation stone: no one who relies on this will stumble.
- 17 And I will make fair judgement the measure,
 and fairness the plumb line.
 But hail will sweep away the refuge of lies
 and floods will wash away the hiding place.
- 18 "Your treaty with Death will be broken
 and your pact with Sheol will not hold.
 When the scourging flood comes over,
 you will be trodden down by it.
- 19 Every time it comes over, it will seize on you;
 for, it will sweep by every morning, by day and by night.
 Nothing but fear will make you understand what you hear.
- 20 For the bed is too short to stretch in,
 the blanket too narrow for covering.

16 Vv. 16–17 form a brief prophecy interrupting the development of the poem.

17 The literal translation of 'refuge of lies' is 'the refuge, the lie'.

18 'Broken' follows the Tg; the MT has 'covered' (כִּפֹּר).

19 The literal translation of 'every morning' is 'morning by morning'.

20 The prophet seems here to be quoting a popular proverb: the bed and blanket probably symbolise their false sense of security.

כא כִּי כְהַר־פְּרָצִים יִקּוּם יְהוָה
 בְּעֶמֶק בְּגִבְעוֹן יִרְגֹז
 לַעֲשׂוֹת מַעֲשָׂהוּ זֶר מַעֲשָׂהוּ
 וּלַעֲבֹד עֲבֹדָתוֹ נְכִרְיָה עֲבֹדָתוֹ:
 כב וְעַתָּה אֶל־תִּלְוָצְצוּ
 פֶּן־יִחְזְקוּ מוֹסְרֵיכֶם
 כִּי־כָלָה וְנִחְרָצָה שְׁמִעָתִי
 מֵאֵת אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת עַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ: {פ}
 כג הֲאִזְנִינוּ וְשָׁמְעוּ קוֹלִי
 הִקְשִׁיבוּ וְשָׁמְעוּ אִמְרָתִי:
 כד הֲכֹל הַיּוֹם יַחֲרֹשׁ הַחֲרֹשׁ לְזָרַע
 יִפְתַּח וְיִשְׁדֹּד אֲדָמָתוֹ:
 כה הֲלוֹא אִם־שׁוֹה פָּנֶיהָ
 וְהִפִּיץ קֶצֶחַ וְכִמְּזוֹ יִזְרֹק
 וְשֵׁם חֹטֵה שׁוֹרָה וְשַׁעֲרָה נִסְמָן
 וְכִסְמַת גְּבֻלָּתוֹ:
 כו וַיִּסְרוּ לַמֶּשֶׁפֶּט אֱלֹהֵיו יוֹרְנֹו:
 כז כִּי לֹא בַחֲרוּן יוֹדֵשׁ קֶצֶחַ

- 21 Yes, as on Mount Perazim, Yahweh will rise;
 as in the Valley of Gibeon, he will storm
 to do his work, his mysterious work,
 to do his deed, his extraordinary deed.
- 22 Stop scoffing, then,
 or your bonds will be tightened further,
 for I have heard it: it has been irrevocably decided
 as regards the whole earth by the Lord Yahweh Sabaoth.
- 23 Listen closely to my words;
 be attentive, understand what I am saying.
- 24 Does the ploughman plough all day to sow,
 breaking up and harrowing his ground?
- 25 Once he has levelled its surface,
 does he not scatter fennel, sow cumin?
 Then he puts in wheat, millet, barley [, ...]
 and, round the edges, spelt.
- 26 For, his God has taught him this rule and instructed him.
- 27 Fennel must not be crushed with a sledge,

21 The 1st 2 lines allude to the victories over the Philistines at Baal Perazim (2S 5:20) and over the Canaanites at Gibeon (Jos 10:10–11).

22 In place of 'earth', the NJB has 'country' and the NRSV has 'land'.

23 The wisdom of the farmer, who plants and threshes each seed differently, is an emanation of Yahweh's wisdom in the way he treats his people.

24 The phrase 'all day' here has the sense 'continually'.

25 After 'barley', the MT has an unknown word (שַׁעֲרָה), possibly the name of another cereal; many translate as 'in its place'.

26 Literally translated, this verse reads, "he teaches him the proper way, his God instructs him."

27 The 'sledge' had sharp wheels or stones for threshing wheat.

וְאוֹפֵן עֲגָלָה עַל־כֶּמֶן יוֹסֵב
 כִּי בַמֶּטֶה יַחֲבֹט קֶצֶחַ
 וְכֶמֶן בַּשֹּׁבֵט:
 כח לֶחֶם יוֹדֵק כִּי לֹא לִנְצַח אֲדוֹשׁ יְדוּשָׁנוּ
 וְהַמֶּם גִּלְגַּל עֲגָלָתוֹ וּפְרָשָׁיו לֹא יִדְקְנוּ:
 ט גַּם־זֹאת מִעַם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת יֵצֵא
 הַפֶּלֶא עֲצָה הַגְדִּיל תוֹשִׁיָּה: {פ}

nor cartwheels driven over cumin;
 fennel must be beaten with a stick
 and cumin with a flail.

- 28 Grain is crushed but one does not thresh it forever;
 you drive the cartwheel over it but the horses do not crush it.
 29 All this is a gift from Yahweh Sabaoth,
 marvellous advice leading to great achievements.

28 The message here is that God's words can be understood, but they should not be deliberately misinterpreted.

29 Vv. 23–29 emphasise that God possesses great wisdom and has established a natural order; evidence of this can be seen in the way farmers utilise divinely imparted wisdom to grow and harvest crops.

ישעיהו פרק כט

ISAIAH 29

א	הוֹי אֲרִיאֵל אֲרִיאֵל קִרִית חָנָה דָּוִד סָפוּ שָׁנָה עַל-שָׁנָה חֲגִים יִנְקֹפוּ: ב	1	Woe, Ariel, Ariel, city where David encamped. Let year after year pass; let the feasts make their full round.
ג	וְהִצִּיקוֹתִי לְאֲרִיאֵל וְהִיְתָה תִאֲנִיָּה וְאֲנִיָּה וְהִיְתָה לִי כְּאֲרִיאֵל: ד	2	Yet, I will inflict trouble on Ariel, and there will be sighing and sobbing, and I shall make it truly Ariel.
ה	וְחִנֵּיתִי כְּדֹר עֲלֶיךָ וְצִרְתִּי עֲלֶיךָ מִצֵּב וְהִקִּימְתִּי עֲלֶיךָ מִצֵּרֶת: וְשָׁפַלְתָּ מֵאֶרֶץ תְּדַבְּרִי וּמֵעַפָּר תִּשָּׁח אִמְרֹתֶיךָ וְהָיָה כְּאֹזֶב מֵאֶרֶץ קוֹלֶךָ וּמֵעַפָּר אִמְרֹתֶיךָ תִּצְפָּצֵף: וְהָיָה כְּאֶבֶק דֶּק הַמֶּזֶן זֵרֶיךָ וּכְמֶזְעַב עֵבֶר הַמֶּזֶן עֲרִיצִים וְהָיָה לִפְתָּע פְּתָאִם:	3	I shall encamp all round you; I shall lay siege to you and mount siege-works against you.
ו		4	You will be laid low, will speak from the underworld; your words will rise like a murmur from the dust. Your voice from the earth will be like a ghost's; it will whisper as though coming from the dust.
ז		5	The hordes of your enemies will be like fine dust, the horde of the warrior like flying chaff. And suddenly, in an instant,

ISAIAH 29

- ¹ This prophecy may be dated from the period preceding the siege of Jerusalem in 701 BCE.
- ² The prophecy here is that the entire city of Jerusalem will be burnt.
- ³ The literal translation of 'all round you' is 'like a circle' (כְּדֹר); the LXX, confusing ר with ד, has 'like David' (ὡς Δαυὶδ), as does the NRSV.
- ⁴ The word אֹזֶב in the 3rd line (literally 'ritual pit') refers to a pit used by a magician to conjure up underworld spirits.
- ⁵ 'Enemies' is a conjectural translation; the MT has 'strangers'. For 'truly Ariel', the WEBBE has 'an altar hearth'.

מַעַם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת תִּפְקֹד ^ו
 בָּרָעַם וּבְרָעַשׁ וְקוֹל גָּדוֹל
 סוּפָה וְסַעֲרָה וְלֶהֱבֹא אֵשׁ אוֹכֵלָה:
 וְהָיָה כְּחֹלֹם חֲזוֹן לַיְלָה ^ז
 הַמּוֹן כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם הַצְבָּאִים עַל־אַרְיֵאל
 וְכָל־צָבָיָהּ וּמַצְדֹּתֶיהָ וְהַמְצִיקִים לָהּ:
 וְהָיָה כַּאֲשֶׁר יַחֲלֹם הָרֹעֵב וְהִנֵּה אוֹכֵל ^ח
 וְהַקִּיץ וְרִיקָה נַפְשׁוֹ
 וְכַאֲשֶׁר יַחֲלֹם הַצָּמֵא וְהִנֵּה שֹׁתֶה
 וְהַקִּיץ וְהִנֵּה עָיִף וְנַפְשׁוֹ שׁוֹקֵקָה
 כֵּן יִהְיֶה הַמּוֹן כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם
 הַצְבָּאִים עַל־הָרִ צִיּוֹן: {פ}
 הִתְמַהְמְהוּ וְתִמְהוּ ^ט
 הִשְׁתַּעֲשְׂעוּ וְשַׁעוּ
 שִׁכְרוּ וְלֹא־יֵין
 נָעוּ וְלֹא שִׁכָּרוּ:
 כִּי־נִסַּךְ עֲלֵיכֶם יְהוָה רוּחַ תִּרְדָּמָה ^י
 וַיַּעֲצֵם אֶת־עֵינֵיכֶם
 אֶת־הַנְּבִיאִים וְאֶת־רְאִשֵׁיכֶם הַחַיִּים כְּסָה:

- 6 you will be visited by Yahweh Sabaoth
 with thunder, earthquake, mighty din,
 hurricane, tempest, flame of devouring fire.
 7 And the multitude of all the nations that fight against Ariel,
 all who fight her and her stronghold, and who distress her,
 shall be like a dream, a vision of the night.
 8 It will be like the dream of a hungry man:
 he eats, then wakes up with an empty belly;
 or like the dream of a thirsty man:
 he drinks, then wakes up exhausted with a parched throat.
 Thus will it be with the horde of tall the nations
 making war on Mount Zion.
 9 Be stupefied and stunned,
 go blind, unseeing,
 drunk but not on wine,
 staggering but not through liquor.
 10 For, Yahweh has poured on you a spirit of lethargy;
 he has closed your eyes, you prophets,
 and veiled your heads, you seers.

6 The 3FS passive verb form תִּפְקֹד (literally, 'she/it will be visited') is used here in an impersonal sense.

7 The NJB reads, "It will be like a dream, like a vision at night: the horde of all the nations at war with Ariel, all those fighting, besieging and troubling it."

8 A more literal reading of 'with an empty belly' is 'with his appetite unsatisfied'.

9 The translation of the first line, following the NJB, renders the alliteration of the MT.

10 The NJB parenthesises 'you prophets' and 'you seers', stating that they are glosses explaining the metaphors.

י^א וְתִהְיֶה לְכֶם חֲזוֹת הַכֹּל כְּדִבְרֵי הַסֵּפֶר הַחֲתוּם
 אֲשֶׁר־יִתְּנוּ אֹתוֹ אֶל־יֹדֵעַ הַסֵּפֶר סֵפֶר לֵאמֹר קְרָא
 נֶאֱזָה וְאָמַר לֹא אוֹכֵל כִּי חֲתוּם הוּא: י^ב וְנָתַן
 הַסֵּפֶר עַל־אִשֶּׁר לֹא־יָדַע סֵפֶר לֵאמֹר קְרָא נֶאֱזָה
 וְאָמַר לֹא יָדַעְתִּי סֵפֶר: {ס}

י^ג וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי

יַעַן כִּי נִגַּשׁ הָעָם הַזֶּה
 בִּפְיוֹ וּבִשְׁפָתָיו כְּבָדוּנִי
 וּלְבָבוֹ רָחֵק מִמֶּנִּי
 וְתִהְיֶה יִרְאָתָם אֹתִי
 מִצְוֹת אֲנָשִׁים מְלֻמָּדָה:

י^ד לָכֵן הִנְנִי יוֹסֵף לְהַפְלִיא אֶת־הָעַם־הַזֶּה
 הַפֶּלֶא וּפְלֵא
 וְאֲבַדָּה חֲכָמַת חֲכָמָיו
 וּבִינַת נְבוֹנֵיו תִּסְתָּר: {ס}

טו הוּא הַמַּעֲמִיקִים מִיָּהוָה לְסַתֵּר עֲצָה
 וְהִיָּה בְּמַחְשָׁבָה

¹¹ For, to you, every vision has become like the words of a sealed book. You give it to someone able to read and say, “Read that.” He replies, “I cannot, because it is sealed.” ¹² You then give the book to someone who does not know a scroll and say, “Read that.” He replies, “I do not know a scroll.”

¹³ The Lord then said:

Because this people approaches me only in words,
 honours me only with lip-service,
 while their hearts are far from me,
 and reverence for me, as far as they are concerned,
 is nothing but human commandment, a lesson memorised,

¹⁴ very well, I shall have to go on
 astounding this people with shocking and amazing deeds:
 for the wisdom of its wise men is doomed,
 the understanding of any who understand will vanish.

¹⁵ Woe to those who burrow down
 to conceal their plans from Yahweh,

¹¹ The *Kethib*/ *Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹² The phrases ‘does/do not know a scroll’ mean ‘cannot read (a scroll)’ and are thus translated by the *NJB* & *NRSV*.

¹³ The prophecy of vv. 13–24 is difficult to date; the prophet attacks hypocritical religion, as in 1:10–20.

¹⁴ In place of ‘shocking and amazing deeds’, here following the *NRSV*, the *NJB* has ‘prodigies and wonders’.

¹⁵ Yahweh’s gaze penetrates the plans of the wicked (vv. 15–16). He will deliver the humble from their enemies and establish the rule of justice (vv. 17–21). Vv. 22–24 seem to be additional – it is not characteristic of Isaiah to talk of the ‘House of Jacob’ or to refer to the past (here, Abraham, compare 41:8, 51:2).

מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ
 מִי רֹאֵנוּ וּמִי יִדְעֵנוּ:
 טז הַפֶּכֶךְם
 אִם-כֹּחֶמֶר הַיֵּצֵר
 יִחְשָׁב כִּי־יֹאמֶר מַעֲשֵׂה לַעֲשֹׂהוּ לֹא
 עָשִׂנִי וַיֵּצֵר אָמַר לַיֵּצֵרוֹ לֹא הֵבִין:
 יז הֲלוֹא־עוֹד מֶעֱט מִזֶּעֶר
 וְשֵׁב לְבָנוֹן לְכַרְמֶל
 וְהַכְרַמֶּל לִיעַר יִחְשָׁב:
 יח וְשָׁמְעוּ בַיּוֹם־הַהוּא הַחֲרָשִׁים
 דְּבַר־סֵפֶר
 וּמֵאֶפֶל וּמִחֹשֶׁךְ
 עֵינֵי עֹרִים תִּרְאֶינָה:
 יט וַיִּסְפוּ עֲנוּיִם בִּיהוָה שִׂמְחָה
 וְאַבְיוֹנֵי אָדָם בְּקֹדֶשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל יִגִּילוּ:
 כ כִּי־אָפֶס עָרִיץ וְכָלָה לֶץ
 וְנִכְרְתוּ כָל־שֹׁקְדֵי אֹן:

who scheme in the dark
 and say, "Who can see us? Who knows where we are?"

- 16 How perverse you are!
 Is the potter no better than the clay?
 Can a thing made say of its maker, "He did not make me,"
 or a pot say of the potter, "He does not know his job"?
- 17 Is it not true that, in a very short time,
 the Lebanon will become an orchard,
 and you might take the orchard for a forest?
- 18 On that day, the deaf
 will hear the words of the book
 and, delivered from shadow and darkness,
 the eyes of the blind will see.
- 19 The lowly will find ever more joy in Yahweh
 and the poorest of people will delight in the Holy One of Israel.
- 20 For, the tyrant will be no more, the scoffer has vanished
 and all those on the lookout for evil have been destroyed:

16 The ancient story of Creation (Gn 2:7) had already pictured Yahweh as a potter, shaping man from the earth.

17 The meaning of this verse is debated, but it seems to depict a reversal in fortunes: the mighty forest of Lebanon (symbolic of the proud and powerful, see 2:13, 10:34) will be changed into a common orchard, while the common orchard (symbolic of the oppressed and lowly) will grow into a great forest.

18 Perhaps this verse depicts the spiritual transformation of the once spiritually insensitive nation (see vv. 10–12, cf. also 6:9–10).

19 See #1:4 on the title 'Holy One of Israel'.

20 The literal translation of the 2nd line is, "and all the watchers of wrong have been cut off."

כא מַחֲטִיאִי אָדָם
בְּדָבָר וּלְמוֹכִיחַ בַּשַּׁעַר
יִקְשֹׁן וַיִּטּוּ בַתְּהוֹ צְדִיק: {פ}
כב לֶכֶן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב
אֲשֶׁר פָּדָה אֶת־אַבְרָהָם
לֹא־עֲתָה יָבוֹשׁ יַעֲקֹב
וְלֹא עֲתָה פָנָיו יַחֲוֹרוּ:
כג כִּי בִּרְאֹתוֹ יִלְדְּיוּ מַעֲשֵׂה יָדַי
בְּקִרְבּוֹ יִקְדִּישׁוּ שְׁמִי
וְהִקְדִּישׁוּ אֶת־קְדוֹשׁ יַעֲקֹב
וְאֶת־אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יַעֲרִיצוּ:
כד וַיִּדְעוּ תַעֲיִרוּחַ בִּינָה
וְרוֹגְגִים יִלְמְדוּ־לִקַּח: {ס}

- 21 Those who incriminate others by their words,
those who lay traps for the arbitrator at the gate
and groundlessly deprive the upright of fair judgement.
- 22 That is why Yahweh, God of the House of Jacob,
Abraham's redeemer, says this,
"No longer shall Jacob be disappointed;
no more shall his face grow pale.
- 23 For, when he sees his children, the work of my hands,
home again with him, he will sanctify my name;
he will acknowledge the Holy One of Jacob to be holy
and will hold the God of Israel in awe.
- 24 Erring spirits will learn to understand
and those who murmur will accept instruction."

21 Legal disputes were resolved at the city gate, where the town elders met (see Am 5:10).

22 It is uncertain to what event in Abraham's experience this refers; perhaps the name 'Abraham' stands here by metonymy for his descendants through Jacob: if so, the Exodus is in view.

23 'His children' is possibly a gloss on the words following.

24 In place of 'accept instruction', here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has 'acquire insight'.

ישעיהו פרק ל

א הוֹי בָּנִים סוֹרְרִים נֶאֱמָרְהוּ
לַעֲשׂוֹת עֲצָה וְלֹא מִנִּי
וְלַנְסֹךְ מִסִּכָּה וְלֹא רוּחִי
לַמַּעַן סְפוֹת חַטָּאת עַל־חַטָּאת:
ב הֵהָלְכִים לָרֶדֶת מִצְרַיִם
וּפִי לֹא שָׁאֵלוּ
לְעֹז בְּמַעֲוֹז פֶּרְעָה
וּלְחִסּוֹת בַּצֵּל מִצְרַיִם:
ג וְהָיָה לָכֶם מַעֲוֹז פֶּרְעָה לְבָשֶׁת
וְהַחֲסוֹת בַּצֵּל־מִצְרַיִם לְכָל־מָה:
ד כִּי־הָיוּ בָצְעַן שָׂרָיו
וּמַלְאָכָיו חָנַס יִגְיָעוּ:
ה כָּל הַבָּאִישׁ
עַל־עַם לֹא־יִוָּעִילוּ לָמוֹ
לֹא לְעֹזֶר וְלֹא לְהוֹעִיל
כִּי לְבָשֶׁת וְגַם־לְחִרְפָּה: {ס}

ISAIAH 30

- 1 Woe to the rebellious children, declares Yahweh,
who make plans that do not come from me
and make alliances not inspired by me,
and so add sin to sin!
- 2 They are leaving for Egypt,
without consulting me,
to take refuge in Pharaoh's protection,
to shelter in Egypt's shadow.
- 3 Pharaoh's protection will be your shame,
the shelter of Egypt's shadow your humiliation.
- 4 For his princes have gone to Zoan
and his messengers have reached Hanes.
- 5 Everyone comes to shame
through a people who cannot help,
who bring neither aid nor profit,
only disappointment and confusion.

ISAIAH 30

- 1 This prophecy (vv. 1–5) was delivered when an embassy from Hezekiah was leaving to ask Pharaoh for Egyptian help against the Assyrians (circa 703–702 BCE).
- 2 The literal translation of the 2nd line is, “*but of my mouth they do not inquire.*”
- 3 The NJB has ‘*confounding*’ in place of ‘*humiliation*’, here following the NRSV & NETB.
- 4 ‘*Zoan*’ was Tanis and ‘*Hanes*’ was the Anusis of Herodotus and the Heracleopolis Magna of the Romans, about 80 Km south of Memphis; the two cities were in the Delta.
- 5 Some MSS have ‘*is made to stink*’ in place of ‘*comes to shame*’.

⁶ ^י מִשָּׂא בַּהֲמוֹת נֶגֶב ⁶ A proclamation about the beasts of the Negeb:

בְּאֶרֶץ צָרָה וְצוֹקָה לְבִיָּא וְלִישׁ מֵהֶם

אִפְעָה וְשָׂרָף מְעוֹפֵף

יִשְׂאוּ עַל־כַּתְּף עֵיִרִים חִילָהֶם

וְעַל־דִּבְשֶׁת גְּמָלִים אוֹצְרֵתָם

עַל־עַם לֹא יוֹעִילוּ

^ז וּמִצְרַיִם הֶבֶל וָרִיק יִעֲזְרוּ

לְכֹן קָרָאתִי לָזֹאת

רַהַב הֵם שֹׁבֶת:

^ח עֲתָה בּוֹא כְּתֹבָה עַל־לוּחַ אֲתָם

וְעַל־סֵפֶר חֻקָּה

וְתִהְיֶה לְיוֹם אַחֲרוֹן

לְעַד עַד־עוֹלָם:

^ט כִּי עַם מָרִי הוּא בָנִים

כְּחָשִׁים בָּנִים לֹא־אָבוּ שְׁמוֹעַ תּוֹרַת יְהוָה:

Into a land of trouble and distress, of lioness and roaring lion,
of viper and flying dragon,
they bear their riches on donkeys' backs,
their treasures on camels' humps,
to a nation that cannot help.

⁷ Egypt, whose help is vain and futile;
and so I have called her
'Rahab the Collapsed'.

⁸ Now go, inscribe this before them on a tablet,
and write it on a scroll,
so that it may serve for time to come
forever and forever.

⁹ This is a rebellious people; they are faithless children,
children who will not listen to Yahweh's Law.

⁶ The subject of this prophecy (vv. 6–7) is probably the same embassy as that of the previous one. 'Roaring' is a conjectural translation (הֲמָה); the MT has 'of them' (מֵהֶם).

⁷ 'The Collapsed' is a conjectural translation (הַמְשֻׁבֶּת); the MT (הֵם שֹׁבֶת) is unintelligible and the NRSV has 'who sits still'. 'Rahab', like Leviathan (see 27:1), was a monster of primordial chaos (51:9, Job 2:6, 12:13, cf. 9:13, Ps 89:11). Here, and in Ps 87:4, it stands for Egypt. Maintaining the same emendation, one might also translate 'Rahab the Tamed': the monster has been rendered harmless (cf. Job 40:25–26 in connexion with Leviathan, the crocodile of Egypt).

⁸ Recording the message will enable the prophet to use it in the future as evidence that God warned his people of impending judgment and clearly spelled out the nation's guilt; it will also serve as proof of the prophet's authority as God's spokesman.

⁹ Vv. 9–17 of this poem dates from the beginning of the reign of Hezekiah. They comprise three quite distinct prophecies, vv. 9–11, 12–14 and 15–17, repeating Isaiah's complaints against his contemporaries. These having refused to listen, the prophet puts his threats into writing: the

י אֲשֶׁר אָמְרוּ לְרֹאִים לֹא תִרְאוּ וְלַחֲזִים
 לֹא תַחֲזוּ-לָנוּ נִכְחוֹת
 דְּבַרוּ-לָנוּ חֲלָקוֹת חֲזוֹ מִהַתְּלוֹת:
 יא סוּרוּ מִנִּי-דֶרֶךְ הַטּוֹ מִנִּי-אֶרֶץ
 הַשְּׁבִיתוּ מִפְּנֵינוּ אֶת-קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל: {ס}
 יב לָכֵן כֹּה אָמַר קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל
 יֵעַן מֵאִסְכֶּם בַּדְּבָר הַזֶּה
 וְתַבְטְחוּ בַעֲשָׁק וְנָלוּז
 וְתִשָּׁעֲנוּ עָלָיו:
 יג לָכֵן יִהְיֶה לָכֶם הָעֹנֹן הַזֶּה
 כְּפֶרֶץ נֹפֵל נִבְעָה בַחֹמֶה נִשְׁגָּבָה
 אֲשֶׁר-פִּתְאֹם לִפְתָּע יָבֹא שְׁבָרָה:
 יד וְשְׁבָרָה כְּשֶׁבֶר נִבֵּל יוֹצְרִים
 כְּתוֹת לֹא יִחַמֵּל
 וְלֹא-יִמָּצֵא בְּמִכְתָּתוֹ חֶרֶשׁ
 לַחֲתוֹת אֵשׁ מִיָּקוֹד
 וְלַחֲשֹׁף מִיָּם מִגְבָּא: {ס}

- 10 To the seers they say, "See nothing;"
 and to the prophets, "Do not prophesy the truth to us,
 tell us flattering things, prophesy illusions.
 11 Turn aside from the way, leave the path;
 rid us of the Holy One of Israel."
 12 Therefore, the Holy One of Israel says this,
 "Since you reject this word
 and put your trust in fraud and disloyalty
 and rely on these,
 13 for you, this guilt will prove to be a breach in a high wall,
 bulging out and about to collapse,
 whose crash comes suddenly, in an instant.
 14 He will shatter it like an earthenware pot,
 ruthlessly knocking it to pieces,
 so that of the fragments not one shard can be found
 to take up fire from the hearth
 or scoop water from the cistern."

future will prove him right (v. 8). This seems to mark the beginning of a period of silence, from which the prophet emerged before Sennacherib's invasion. Another period of silence was perhaps marked by 8:16–18, after the Syro-Ephraimite War.

10 Literally translated, the 2nd line ends, "Do not see for us right things."

11 The imagery refers to the way or path of truth, as revealed by God to the prophet.

12 Vv. 12–14 should probably follow 15–17, since 'this word' is recorded in v. 15.

13 Their sin produces guilt and will result in judgment; like a wall that collapses, their fall will be swift and sudden.

14 In place of 'cistern' (גְּבָא), here following the NRSV & NETB, the NJB has 'storage well'.

טו כִּי כֹה־אָמַר אֲדֹנִי יְהוָה קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל
בְּשׁוּבָה וְנַחַת תּוֹשְׁעוֹן
בְּהַשְׁקֵט וּבְבִטְחָה
תִּהְיֶה גְבוּרַתְכֶם וְלֹא אֲבִיתֶם:
טז וְתֹאמְרוּ לֹא־כִי עַל־סוֹס נָנוּס
עַל־כֵּן תִּנּוֹסוּן
וְעַל־קֶל נִרְכָּב
עַל־כֵּן יִקְלוּ רֹדְפֵיכֶם:
יז אֵלֶּף אֶחָד מִפְּנֵי גְעֵרַת אֶחָד
מִפְּנֵי גְעֵרַת חֲמֹשֶׁה תִּנּוֹסוּ
עַד אֲסֻנוֹתֵרְתֶם
כְּתֵרֶן עַל־רֹאשׁ הָהָר
וּכְנֶס עַל־הַגְּבֵעָה:
יח וְלֹכֵן יַחֲכֶה יְהוָה לַחֲנֻנְכֶם
וְלֹכֵן יְרוֹם לְרַחֲמֵכֶם
כִּי־אֱלֹהֵי מִשְׁפַּט יְהוָה
אֲשֶׁר־י בְּל־חֹזֵי לוֹ: {פ}

יט כִּי־עַם בְּצִיּוֹן יֹשֵׁב בִּירוּשָׁלַם בָּכוּ לֹא־תִבְכֶּה חֲנָן
יְחִנֵּךְ לְקוֹל זַעֲקֶךָ כְּשִׁמְעָתוֹ עֲנֶךָ: כ וְנָתַן לָכֶם אֲדֹנִי

- 15 For Lord Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel, says this,
 "Your salvation lay in conversion and tranquillity,
 your strength in serenity and trust,
 and you would have none of it.
- 16 You said, "No, we shall flee on horses."
 Therefore, flee you will!
 Again, "We shall ride on swift steeds."
 Therefore, your pursuers will be swift!
- 17 A thousand will quake at the threat of one
 and when five threaten, you will flee,
 until what is left of you will be
 like a flagstaff on a mountain top,
 like a signal on a hill."
- 18 Therefore, Yahweh is waiting to be gracious to you,
 the Exalted One, to take pity on you;
 for, Yahweh is a God of fair judgement;
 blessed are all who hope in him.

19 Yes, people of Zion living in Jerusalem, you will weep no more. He
 will be gracious to you at the sound of your cry: when he hears it, he

15 What God demanded was trust in him (see 28:16) instead of recourse to a foreign alliance, in this case with Egypt.

16 The NRSV merges this verse with v. 15, of which the last line therein reads, "But you refused ¹⁶ and said."

17 'Quake' is a conjectural translation following the NJB (the NRSV has 'flee'); the MT has 'one'.

18 The connection between this verse and what precedes it is problematic: Judah's impending doom does not bring God joy.

19 The section of vv. 19–26 is of uncertain rhythm and here, following the NRSV, it is formatted as prose.

לֶחֶם צָר וּמִים לַחַץ וְלֹא־יִכְנַף עוֹד מוֹרִיד וְהִיוּ
עֵינֶיךָ רְאוּת אֶת־מוֹרִיד: ^{כא} וְאַזְנֶיךָ תִּשְׁמַעְנָה דְּבַר
מֵאַחֲרֶיךָ לֵאמֹר זֶה הַדֶּרֶךְ לָכֹן בּוֹ כִּי תֵאֱמִינוּ וְכִי
תִּשְׁמְאִילוּ: ^{כב} וְטִמַּאתֶם אֶת־צְפוּי פְּסִילֵי כֶסֶף
וְאֶת־אֲפֻדַּת מִסְכַּת זָהָב תִּזְרֹם כְּמוֹ דָּוָה צֹא
תֵאמֹר לוֹ: ^{כג} וְנָתַן מָטָר זֶרַע אֲשֶׁר־תִּזְרַע אֶת־
הָאֲדָמָה וְלֶחֶם תִּבּוֹאֵת הָאֲדָמָה וְהָיָה דֶּשֶׁן וְשִׁמֶן
יִרְעֶה מִקְנֶיךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא כָּר נֶרְחָב: ^{כד} וְהָאֱלָפִים
וְהָעִירִים עֲבְדֵי הָאֲדָמָה בְּלִיל חֲמִין יֹאכְלוּ אֲשֶׁר־
זָרָה בִּרְחַת וּבִמְזִרָה: ^{כה} וְהָיָה | עַל־כָּל־הָר גִּבָּה וְעַל
כָּל־גִּבְעָה נִשְׂאָה פִּלְגִּים יְבִלִי־מִים בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא רֹב
בְּנָפֶל מִגְדָּלִים: ^{כו} וְהָיָה אוֹר־הַלְּבָנָה כְּאוֹר הַחֲמָה
וְאוֹר הַחֲמָה יִהְיֶה שִׁבְעָתִים כְּאוֹר שִׁבְעַת הַיָּמִים
בַּיּוֹם חֲבַשׁ יִהְיֶה אֶת־שֶׁבַר עֲמוֹ וּמַחֵץ מִכָּתוּ
יִרְפָּא: {פ}

will answer you. ²⁰ When the Lord has given you the bread of suffering and the water of distress, your Teacher will hide no longer and you will see your Teacher with your own eyes. ²¹ You shall hear a word behind you, "This is the way, keep to it," whether you turn to right or left. ²² You shall defile your silver-plated idols and your gold-plated images. You will throw them away like filthy rags, saying to them, "Good riddance!" ²³ He will send rain for the seed you sow in the ground, and the bread that the ground provides will be rich and abundant. On that day, your cattle will graze in wide pastures. ²⁴ Oxen and donkeys that work the land will eat silage spread by the shovel and pitchfork. ²⁵ On every lofty mountain, on every high hill there will be streams and watercourses, on the day of the great slaughter when the towers fall. ²⁶ Moonlight will be bright as sunlight and sunlight will be sevenfold, like the light of seven days, on the day Yahweh dresses his people's injuries and heals the wounds inflicted by his blow.

²⁰ In place of 'Teacher', some MSS have the plural, meaning the prophets.

²¹ The literal translation of 'you shall hear' is 'your ears shall hear' (as NRSV).

²² NETB has 'a menstrual rag' in place of 'filthy rags', here following the NRSV.

²³ Literally translated, this verse opens, "and he will give rain for your seed which you plant in the ground, and food (will be) the produce of the ground, and it will be rich and abundant."

²⁴ Crops will be so abundant that even the work animals will eat well.

²⁵ The NJB has 'strongholds' in place of 'towers', here following the NRSV.

²⁶ Light here symbolises restoration of divine blessing and prosperity; the number 'seven' is used symbolically to indicate intensity (the exact meaning of the phrase, 'the light of seven days', is uncertain; it probably means seven times brighter). God is here compared to a physician setting a broken bone in a bandage or cast.

כז הנה שם־יהוה בא ממרחק

בער אפו וכבד משאה

שפתיו מלאו זעם

ולשונו כאש אכלת:

כח ורוחו כנחל שוטף עד־צואר יחצה

להנפה גוים בנפת שוא

ורסן מתעה על לחיי עמים:

כט השיר יהיה לכם כליל התקדש־חג ושמחת

לבב כהולך בחליל לבוא בהר־יהוה אל־צור

ישראל: ל והשמיע יהוה את־הוד קולו ונחת זרועו

יראה בזעף אף ולהב אש אוכלה נפץ וזרם ואבן

ברד: לא כי־מקול יהוה יחת אשור בשבט יפה:

לב והיה כל מעבר מטה מוסדה אשר יניח יהוה

עליו בתפים ובכנרות ובמלחמות תנופה נלחם־

בם בה: לג כי־ערוך מאתמול תפתה גם־היא הוא

למלך הוכן העמיק הרחב מדרתה אש ועצים

הרבה נשמת יהוה כנחל גפרית בערה בה: {פ}

²⁷ See, the name of Yahweh comes from afar,

blazing his anger, heavy his threat.

His lips are brimming over with fury;

his tongue is like a devouring fire.

²⁸ His breath is like a river in spate coming up to the neck,

to sift the nations with the sieve of destruction,

to harness the peoples in a bridle that will lead them astray.

²⁹ You will sing like on a festal night and will have joy of heart as when, playing a flute, one goes to the mountain of Yahweh, the Rock of Israel.

³⁰ Yahweh will make his majestic voice ring out; he will show the weight of his arm in furious anger and devouring fire, thunderstorm, and hail.

³¹ Yes, at Yahweh's voice, Assyria will be terrified; he will beat him with a rod. ³² Every stroke of the rod of punishment that Yahweh lays on him

will be to the sound of timbrels and lyres; battling with brandished arm he will fight with him. ³³ For, Topheth has been ready for a long time

now; he is ready for the king, deep and wide his pyre, fire, and wood in plenty. Yahweh's breath, like a stream of brimstone, will kindle it.

²⁷ The prophecy of vv. 27–33 was probably delivered when Sennacherib was threatening Jerusalem.

²⁸ 'Breath' probably stands metonymically for the word or battle cry that God expels from his mouth as he shouts.

²⁹ The image here is not a foundational rock, but a rocky cliff where people could hide for protection (for example, the fortress of Masada).

³⁰ Like an approaching thunderstorm, God's fury will burst over Judah's enemies.

³¹ A more literal translation of 'terrified' is 'shattered'.

³² 'Punishment' is conjectural, emending מוסדה ('founded') to מוסרה ('his discipline'). The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

³³ The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

ישעיהו פרק לא

א הִזֵּי הַיִּרְדִּים מִצְרַיִם לְעֶזְרָה
עַל־סוּסִים יִשְׁעֻנוּ
וַיִּבְטְחוּ עַל־רֶכֶב כִּי רַב
וְעַל פָּרָשִׁים כִּי־עֲצָמוּ מְאֹד
וְלֹא שָׁעוּ עַל־קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְאֶת־יְהוָה לֹא דָרְשׁוּ׃
ב וְגַם־הוּא חָכֵם וַיָּבֹא רָע
וְאֶת־דִּבְרֵיו לֹא הִסִּיר
וְקָם עַל־בֵּית מְרֹעִים
וְעַל־עֶזְרַת פֹּעֲלֵי אֱוֹן׃
ג וּמִצְרַיִם אָדָם וְלֹא־אֱלֹהִים
וְסוֹסֵיהֶם בָּשָׂר וְלֹא־רוּחַ
וַיִּהְיֶה יָטָה יָדוֹ
וְכָשַׁל עֹזֶר וְנָפַל עֶזֶר וַיִּחָדּוּ כֻלָּם יַכְלִיֹּן׃
{ס}

ד כִּי כֹה אָמַר־יְהוָה׃
אֲלֵי כַּאֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה הָאֲרִיָּה וְהִכְפִּיר עַל־טֶרְפוֹ

ISAIAH 31

- 1 Woe to those going down to Egypt for help,
who put their trust in horses,
who rely on the quantity of chariots
and on great strength of cavalrymen,
but do not look to the Holy One of Israel
or consult Yahweh.
- 2 Yet, he too is wise and brings disaster
and he does not go back on his word;
he will rise against the house of evildoers
and against those who help wrongdoers.
- 3 The Egyptian is human, not divine,
his horses are flesh, not spirit;
Yahweh will stretch out his hand:
the protector will stumble, the protected will fall
and all will perish together.
- 4 Yes, this is what Yahweh has said to me:
“As a lion or lion cub growls over its prey,

ISAIAH 31

- ¹ The prophecy of vv. 1–3, against Egypt, was probably delivered in the same circumstances as those of 30:1–5 and 30:6–7.
- ² The 1st line appears to have a sarcastic tone against the royal advisers who are advocating an alliance with Egypt.
- ³ This verse may perhaps be a reference to the crossing of the Sea of Reeds (Ex 14:26–31).
- ⁴ An alternative translation for the last line has ‘against’ in place of the 2 instances of ‘upon’, in which case it would be an independent prophecy against Jerusalem. What follows (v. 5), however, favours the translation adopted.

אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָא עָלָיו מְלֹא רָעִים
מְקוֹלָם לֹא יַחַת
וּמִהֲמוֹנָם לֹא יַעֲנֶה כֵּן
יֵרֵד יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
לְצַבֵּא עַל־הַר־צִיּוֹן וְעַל־גְּבַעְתָּהּ:
כַּצִּפֹּרִים עֹפּוֹת ^ה
כֵּן יִגֹּן יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת עַל־יְרוּשָׁלַם
גָּנוֹן וְהַצִּיל
פָּסַח וְהִמְלִיט:
שׁוּבוּ לְאֲשֶׁר הָעַמְּקוּ סָרָה ^ו
בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
כִּי בַיּוֹם הַהוּא ^ז
יִמְאַסּוּן אִישׁ אֱלִילִי בִסְפוֹ וְאֱלִילִי זָהָבוֹ
אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ לָכֶם יְדֵיכֶם חֲטָא:
וְנָפַל אֲשׁוּר בַּחֶרֶב לֹא־אִישׁ ^ח
וְחָרַב לֹא־אָדָם תֹּאכְלֵנוּ
וְנָס לוֹ מִפְּנֵי־חֶרֶב
וּבַחֲוָרָיו לָמָס יִהְיוּ:

when scores of shepherds are summoned to drive it off,
without being frightened by their shouting
or cowed by the noise they make,
just so will Yahweh Sabaoth descend
to fight upon Mount Zion and upon its hill.

- ⁵ Like hovering birds,
so will Yahweh Sabaoth protect Jerusalem;
by protecting it, he will save it,
by sparing it, he will deliver it.
⁶ Come back to the one whom you have so deeply betrayed,
O children of Israel!
⁷ For, on that day, all will reject
the idols of silver and the idols of gold,
which your own sinful hands have made.
⁸ Assyria will fall by the sword: not that of a man,
and a sword, of no human being, shall devour him;
he will flee before the sword
and his young warriors will be enslaved.

⁵ The only other occurrence of the verb translated 'spare' (פָּסַח) is in Ex 12:13, 23 & 27, where Yahweh 'passes over' (i.e., spares) the Israelite households as he comes to judge their Egyptian oppressors. The use of the verb in here is probably an intentional echo of the Exodus event.
⁶ The syntax of this verse is awkward here: a preposition is omitted by ellipsis after the verb and there is a shift from direct address (2nd person imperative, 'come back') to the 3rd person ('they made deep').
⁷ The noun חֲטָא ('sin') in the last line is understood as an adverbial accusative of manner.
⁸ God's 'sword' will destroy Assyria (Ezk 21).

ט וּסְלַעוּ מִמִּגְדָּר יַעֲבֹד
וַחֲתוּ מִנֵּס שָׂרָיו
נֹאמְרֵיהֶּהָ אֲשֶׁר־אֹר לֹו בְּצִיּוֹן
וַתִּנּוֹר לֹו בִירוּשָׁלַם: {פ}

⁹ In his terror, he will abandon his rock,
and his panic-stricken officers desert the standard”
declares Yahweh, whose fire is in Zion,
whose furnace is in Jerusalem.

⁹ ‘Fire’ and ‘furnace’ are references to the Temple altar and symbolise divine judgement.

ישעיהו פרק לב

א הֵן לְצַדִּיק יִמְלֹךְ-מֶלֶךְ
וְלְשָׂרִים לְמִשְׁפָּט יִשְׁרוּ:
ב וְהָיָה-אִישׁ כְּמַחְבֵּא-רוּחַ
וְסִתָּר זֶרֶם כַּפְלִי-מִים בְּצִיּוֹן
כְּצֵל סֶלַע-כֶּבֶד בָּאָרֶץ עֵיפָה:
ג וְלֹא תִשְׁעֶינָה עֵינֵי רְאִים
וְאָזְנֵי שֹׁמְעִים תִּקְשְׁבֶנָּה:
ד וְלִבֵּב גְּמָהֲרִים יִבִּין לְדַעַת
וְלִשְׁוֹן עֲלֻגִים תִּמְהַר לְדַבֵּר צְחוֹת:
ה לֹא-יִקְרָא עוֹד לְנָבֵל גְּדִיב
וְלִכְלִי לֹא יֵאמָר שׂוֹעַ:
ו כִּי נָבֵל נִבְלָה יִדְבֹר
וְלִבּוֹ יַעֲשֶׂה-אֲנוֹן לַעֲשׂוֹת חֲנָף
וְלִדְבַר אֱלֹהִים תִּזְעַק
לְהַרְיֵק נַפֶּשׁ רָעֵב
וּמִשְׁקָה צָמָא יִחְסִיר:

ISAIAH 32

- 1 See, a king will reign in righteousness and princes will rule with justice.
- 2 Each will be like a shelter from the wind, a refuge from the storm, like streams on arid ground, like the shade of a solid rock in a desolate land.
- 3 The eyes of seers will not be blind; the ears of hearers will be alert.
- 4 The heart of the hasty will learn to think things over and those who stammer will speak promptly and clearly.
- 5 The fool will no longer be called noble, not the rascal be styled bountiful.
- 6 For the fool speaks folly and his heart is set on villainy; he is godless in his actions and his words ascribe error to Yahweh; he starves the hungry of their food and refuses drink to the thirsty.

ISAIAH 32

- 1 Vv. 1–5 (possibly a later addition) describe ideal government in messianic terms (cf. 29:18, 35:5), though less pointedly than in 9:1–6, 11:1–9.
- 2 The literal translation of 'each' is 'a man' but אִישׁ probably refers here to each of the officials mentioned in the previous verse.
- 3 The MT as pointed (תִּשְׁעֶינָה) ends the 1st 'will not gaze' but this is contradictory to the context; the verb form should be re-pointed as תִּשְׁעֶינָה, from שָׁעַע ('be blinded'); see 6:10, 29:9.
- 4 Literally translated, the 1st line reads, "The heart of rashness will understand knowledge."
- 5 In place of 'noble', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'generous' (compare Pr 7:14 etc.).
- 6 The description of vv. 6–8 has much in common with passages in Proverbs.

ז	וְכָלִי כְּלִי רָעִים הוא זִמּוֹת יַעַן לְחַבֵּל עֲנוּיִם בְּאִמְרֵי־שָׁקֶר וּבְדִבַּר אֲבִיוֹן מִשְׁפָּט: ח וְנָדִיב נְדִיבוֹת יַעַן וְהוא עַל־נְדִיבוֹת יָקוּם: {ס}	7 Everything to do with the rascal is evil: he devises infamous plans to ruin the poor with lying words even when the needy have right on their side.
ט	נָשִׁים שְׂאֲנָנוֹת קִמְנָה שְׂמַעְנָה קוּלִי בָנוֹת בְּטָחוֹת הָאֲזָנָה אִמְרָתִי: י יָמִים עַל־שָׁנָה תִּרְגַּזְנָה בְּטָחוֹת כִּי כָלָה בָצִיר אֶסֶף בְּלִי יָבוֹא: יא חֲרָדוּ שְׂאֲנָנוֹת רָגְזָה בְּטָחוֹת פָּשְׁטָה וְעָרָה וַחֲגוּרָה עַל־חֻלְצִים: יב עַל־שָׁדַיִם סָפְדִים עַל־שָׁדַיִם־חֲמַד עַל־גֶּפֶן פְּרִיָּה:	8 But the noble man plans noble things, and by noble things he stands. 9 Stand up, you haughty women, listen to my words; you over-confident daughters, pay attention to what I say. 10 In little more than a year you will tremble, you over-confident women; the grape harvesting will fail, the fruit harvest will not come. 11 Shudder, you haughty women; tremble, you over-confident women: strip, undress, and put sackcloth round your waists. 12 Beat your breasts for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine,

⁷ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

⁸ *NETB* has 'honourable' in place of 'noble', here following the *NJB* & *NRSV*.

⁹ Vv. 9–14 give a warning for the women in the style of 3:16–24 but is probably later.

¹⁰ The time indicator (literally 'days upon a year') is reminiscent of 29:1; here perhaps too, it should be understood in a general sense.

¹¹ The imperatival forms in this verse are problematic: the 1st (חֲרָדוּ, 'shudder') is masculine plural in form, though spoken to a feminine plural addressee (שְׂאֲנָנוֹת, 'haughty ones'); the 4 forms that follow (רָגְזָה, 'tremble'; פָּשְׁטָה, 'strip'; עָרָה, 'undress' and חֲגוּרָה, 'put on') all appear to be lengthened (so-called 'emphatic') masculine singular forms, even though they too appear to be spoken to a feminine plural addressee.

¹² The reference to 'breasts' makes sense in light of v. 11, which refers to the practice of women baring their breasts as a sign of sorrow.

יג על אֲדָמַת עַמִּי קוֹץ שְׁמִיר תִּעֲלֶה
 בִּי עַל-כָּל-בֵּיתִי מְשׁוֹשׁ קְרִיָּה עֲלִיזָה:
 יד כִּי-אַרְמוֹן נָטָשׁ
 הַמּוֹן עִיר עֲזָב
 עָפֹל וּבַחֲן הִיא בְּעַד מְעֻרוֹת
 עַד-עוֹלָם מְשׁוֹשׁ פְּרָאִים
 מְרֻעָה עֲדָרִים:
 טו עַד-יֵעָרָה עָלֵינוּ רוּחַ מִמָּרוֹם
 וְהָיָה מִדְּבַר לַכַּרְמֶל וְכֶרֶם
 וְהַכַּרְמֶל לִיעֵר יִחְשָׁב:
 טז וְשֹׁכֵן בַּמִּדְבָּר מְשַׁפֵּט
 וְצִדְקָה בַּכַּרְמֶל תֵּשֵׁב:
 יז וְהָיָה מַעֲשֵׂה הַצִּדְקָה שָׁלוֹם
 וְעִבְדַּת הַצִּדְקָה הַשְׁקֵט וּבִטָּח עַד-עוֹלָם:
 יח וַיֵּשֶׁב עַמִּי בְּנוֹה שָׁלוֹם
 וּבְמִשְׁכָּנוֹת מִבְטָחִים וּבְמִנוּחַת שְׁאֲנָנוֹת:
 יט וּבְרֹד בְּרֹדֶת הַיַּעַר

- 13 for my people's soil where the bramble bush will be growing
 and for all the happy houses, for the rejoicing city.
 14 For, the citadel will be abandoned
 and the thronged city deserted,
 Ophel and the Keep will be denuded forever,
 the playground of wild donkeys
 and the pasture of flocks,
 15 until a spirit is poured out on us from above,
 and the desert becomes productive ground,
 so productive you might take it for a forest.
 16 Fair judgement will fix its home in the desert,
 and uprightness will live in the productive ground.
 17 The product of righteousness will be peace,
 the result of uprightness being quiet and security forever.
 18 My people will live in a peaceful home,
 in peaceful houses, in tranquil resting places.
 19 Should the forest be totally destroyed

13 It is not certain if the phrase 'happy houses' refers to individual homes or to places where parties and celebrations were held.

14 The 'Keep' (an uncertain translation of a word occurring only here) probably corresponded to the great tower of Ne 3:26-27.

15 The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

16 This new era of divine blessing will also include a moral transformation, as fairness replaces the social injustice so prevalent in Isaiah's time.

17 The NJB has 'effect' in place of 'result', here following the NRSV.

18 Other translations of 'tranquil' (here following the NJB) are 'quiet' (as NRSV) and 'safe'.

19 'Destroyed' is a conjectural translation: the MT has **וּבְרֹד**, often understood as an otherwise unattested denominative verb form meaning 'it will hail'; we prefer the emendation to **וַיֵּרֶד**, 'and it descends', which provides better, though not perfect, symmetry with the parallel line (cf. NJB,

וּבִשְׁפֹּלָה תִשְׁפָּל הָעִיר:
כ אֲשֶׁרֵיכֶם זֶרְעִי עַל-כָּל-מַיִם מְשַׁלְחֵי רֶגֶל-
הַשּׁוֹר וְהַחֲמֹר: {ס}

and the city gravely humiliated,
²⁰ you will be happy to sow wherever there is water
and to let the ox and donkey roam free.

NRSV, NAB). Perhaps וּבִרְדּוֹ should be dismissed as dittographic, in which case the statement (*'when the forest descends'*) lacks a finite verb and seems incomplete, but perhaps it is subordinate to v. 20.

²⁰ This verse seems to anticipate a time when fertile land is available to cultivate and crops are so abundant that the farm animals can be allowed to graze freely.

ישעיהו פרק לג

א הוי שׁוֹדֵד וְאַתָּה לֹא שׁוֹדֵד
וּבֹגֵד וְלֹא־בִגְדוּ בּוֹ
כְּהִתְמַךְ שׁוֹדֵד תּוֹשֵׁד
כְּנִלְתֵךְ לְבִגְד יִבְגְּדוּ־בְךָ: {ס}
ב יְהוָה חֲנֵנוּ לְךָ קִוִּינוּ
הִיָּה זִרְעֵם לְבִקְרִים
אֶף־יִשְׁוּעַתְנוּ בְּעֵת צָרָה:
ג מְקוֹל הַמִּזֶּן נִדְדוּ עַמִּים
מִרוֹמְמֹתֶיךָ נִפְצוּ גוֹיִם:
ד וְאַסְף שְׁלָלְכֶם אֲסָף הַחֲסִיל
כְּמִשַּׁק גְּבִים שֶׁקֶק בּוֹ:
ה נִשְׁגָּב יְהוָה כִּי שָׁכַן מְרוֹם
מִלֹּא צִיּוֹן מִשְׁפָּט וְצִדְקָה:
ו וְהָיָה אֱמוּנַת עֲתִיד
חֵסֶן יִשְׁוּעַת חֲכָמַת וְדַעַת
יִרְאַת יְהוָה הִיא אוֹצְרוֹ: {פ}

ISAIAH 33

- 1 Woe to you, destroying though not yourself destroyed,
betraying though not yourself betrayed;
when you have finished destroying, you will be destroyed;
when you have stopped betraying, you will be betrayed.
- 2 Yahweh, show us your mercy: we wait for you.
Be our arm every morning
and our salvation in time of distress.
- 3 At the sound of tumult, the peoples flee;
before your majesty, the nations scatter.
- 4 Your spoil is gathered in as a grasshopper gathers in;
like a swarm of locusts, people descend on it.
- 5 Yahweh is exalted, for he is enthroned above;
he has filled Zion with fair judgement and saving justice.
- 6 You can count on this all your days:
wisdom and knowledge are the riches that save;
the fear of Yahweh is his treasure.

ISAIAH 33

- 1 'Have stopped' follows 1QIsa^a (ככלתך); the MT has a form of an otherwise unattested verb (כְּנִלְתֵךְ).
- 2 'Our arm' follows the Peshitta; the MT has 'their arm'.
- 3 In place of 'before your majesty', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'when you stand up'.
- 4 The NRSV has 'caterpillar' in place of 'grasshopper', here following the NJB.
- 5 The NRSV has 'he dwells on high' in place of 'he is enthroned above', here following the NJB.
- 6 The NRSV has 'Zion's' in place of 'his', here following the MT (and NJB).

ז	הֵן אֲרָאִלִּים צָעֲקוּ חֲצָה מִלְּאֲבֵי שָׁלוֹם מֵרַיבִּיּוֹן: ח	7	Look, Ariel is lamenting on the streets; the ambassadors of peace are weeping bitterly.
ח	נִשְׁמּוּ מִסְּלוֹת שֶׁבֶת עֶבֶר אֶרֶח הַפֶּר בְּרִית מָאָס עָרִים לֹא חֲשָׁב אֲנוּשׁ: ט	8	The highways are deserted: no travellers any more on the roads. Agreements are broken, witnesses held in contempt; there is respect for no one.
ט	אֲבֵל אֲמִלְלָה אֶרֶץ הַחֲפִיר לִבְנוֹן קִמֵּל הִיָּה הַשָּׂרוֹן כְּעֶרְבָה וְנֹעַר בָּשָׁן וְכַרְמֵל: {ס}	9	The land pines away in mourning, the Lebanon is withering with shame, Sharon has become like the wasteland, and Bashan and Carmel are shuddering.
י	עַתָּה אֶקוּם יְהוָה עַתָּה אֲרוּמָם עַתָּה אֲנִשָּׂא: י	10	“Now I shall stand up,” says Yahweh, “Now I shall rise, now lift myself up.
יא	תִּהְיוּ חֲשֵׁשׁ תִּלְדוּ קֶשׁ רוּחֲכֶם אֲשׁ תֹּאכְלֶכֶם: יב	11	You conceive chaff, you give birth to straw: like fire, my breath will destroy you.
יב	וְהָיוּ עַמִּים מְשֻׁרְפוֹת שֵׁיד קוֹצִים כְּסוּחִים בְּאֵשׁ יִצְתּוּ: {פ}	12	The peoples will be as if burned by quicklime, like thorns cut down, that are burnt on the fire.
יג	שִׁמְעוּ רְחוֹקִים אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי וְדַעוּ קְרוֹבִים גְּבַרְתִּי:	13	“You who are far away, listen to what I have done, and you who are near, realise my strength.”

7 'Ariel' is conjectural, following the NJB (cf. 29:1); the MT (אַרְאִלִּים) is unintelligible; the NRSV has 'the valiant' & NETB has 'ambassadors'.

8 'Witnesses' follows 1QIsa^a (עֲדִים); the MT has 'towns' (עָרִים).

9 'Sharon' was a fertile plain along the Mediterranean coast (35:2); 'Bashan' & 'Carmel' were both known for their trees and vegetation (2:13, 35:2).

10 In place of 'lift myself up', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'draw myself up' and NETB has 'I will magnify myself'.

11 'My breath' follows the Tg (and NJB); the MT (and NRSV) has 'your breath'.

12 The literal translation of 'by quicklime' is 'to lime' (see Am 2:1)

13 In place of 'realise my strength', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'acknowledge my might'.

יד פָּחַדוּ בְּצִיּוֹן חַטָּאִים
 אַחֲזָה רַעְדָּה חֲנַפִּים
 מִי יִגֹּר לָנוּ אֵשׁ אוֹכֵלָה
 מִי־יִגֹּר לָנוּ מִזִּקְדֵי עוֹלָם:
 טו הֲלֹךְ צִדְקוֹת וְדִבֵּר מִיִּשְׁרָיִם
 מֵאֵס בְּבִצָּע מַעֲשֵׂקוֹת
 נֶעַר כַּפּוֹ מִתְּמִךְ בְּשֹׁחַד
 אֵטֵם אָזְנוֹ מִשְׁמַע דָּמִים
 וְעַצֵּם עֵינָיו מִרְאוֹת בְּרָע:
 טז הוּא מְרוֹמִים יִשְׁכֹּן
 מִצְדּוֹת סִלְעִים מְשֻׁגְבוֹ
 לַחֲמוֹ נָתַן מִימּוֹ נֶאֱמָנִים:
 יז מֶלֶךְ בִּיפּוֹ תַּחֲזִינָה עֵינֶיךָ
 תִּרְאִינָה אֶרֶץ מְרַחֲקִים:
 יח לִבְךָ יִהְיֶה אֵימָה
 אֵיךְ סִפֵּר אֵיךְ שָׁקַל
 אֵיךְ סִפֵּר אֶת־הַמִּגְדָּלִים:
 יט אֶת־עַם נֹעֵז לֹא תִרְאֶה

- 14 The sinners in Zion are panic-stricken
and fear seizes on the godless,
"Which of us can survive the devouring fire,
which of us survive everlasting burning?"
- 15 The one who lives righteously and speaks honestly,
who scorns to get rich by extortion,
who rejects bribes out of hand,
who refuses to listen to plans involving bloodshed
and shuts his eyes rather than countenance crime:
- 16 such a man will live on the heights,
the craggy rocks will be his refuge,
he will be fed; he will not want for water.
- 17 Your eyes will gaze on the king in his beauty;
they will look on a wide land.
- 18 Your heart will meditate on terror,
"Where is the one who counted, the one who weighed?"
"Where is the one who counted off the towers?"
- 19 No more will you see that defiant people,

14 Vv. 14–16 take the form of a dialogue liturgy of a type similar to Ps 15 & 24:3–5.

15 Another option for 'righteously' is 'justly'.

16 The literal translation of 'on the heights' is 'in the exalted places'.

17 The literal translation of 'a wide land' is 'a land of distances'.

18 The people refer to various officials who were responsible for determining the amount of tribute Judah must pay to the Assyrian king.

19 נֹעֵז ('defiant') is a Niphal participle derived from נָעַז (an otherwise unattested verb) or from עָזַז ('be strong', unattested elsewhere in the Niphal).

עַם עֲמֻקֵּי שִׁפְהָ מְשֻׁמוֹעַ
 נִלְעַג לְשׁוֹן אֵין בִּינָה:
 כ חֲזֵה צִיּוֹן קִרְיַת מוֹעֲדָנוּ
 עֵינֶיךָ תִּרְאֶינָה יְרוּשָׁלַם נוֹה שְׁאֲנָן
 אֶהֱל בַל־יִצְעַן בַּל־יִסָּע יִתְדֹתָיו לִנְצַח
 וְכָל־חֲבָלָיו בַּל־יִנָּתְקוּ:
 כא כִּי אִם־שֵׁם אֲדִיר יִהְיֶה לָנוּ
 מְקוֹם־נְהָרִים יְאָרִים רַחְבֵּי יָדַיִם
 בַּל־תֵּלֵךְ בּוֹ אֲנִי־שִׁיט
 וְצִי אֲדִיר לֹא יַעֲבֹרֵנוּ:
 כב כִּי יִהְיֶה שֹׁפֵטֵנוּ יִהְיֶה מַחְקָקֵנוּ
 יִהְיֶה מַלְכֵנוּ הוּא יוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ:
 כג נִטְשׁוּ חֲבָלֶיךָ
 בַּל־יַחֲזִקוּ כֹן־תִּרְנֵם
 בַּל־פָּרְשׁוּ נֵם
 אַז חֶלֶק עַד־שָׁלַל מְרֵבָה
 פְּסָחִים בָּזְזוּ בּוֹ:
 כד וּבַל־יֹאמַר שָׁכֵן חֲלִיתִי
 הָעָם הַיֹּשֵׁב בָּהּ נִשְׂא עוֹן: {ס}

that people of unintelligible speech,
 of barbarous and meaningless tongue.

- 20 Gaze at Zion, city of our feasts;
 your eyes will see Jerusalem as a home that is secure,
 an immovable tent, its pegs never to be pulled up,
 none of its guy-ropes ever to be broken.
- 21 There will Yahweh show us his power,
 a place of rivers and very wide canals
 on which will row no galley,
 over which will pass no majestic ship.
- 22 For Yahweh is our judge, Yahweh our lawgiver,
 Yahweh is our king and our Saviour.
- 23 Your tackle has given way,
 it cannot support the mast,
 and it cannot hoist the pennon.
 So there is much booty to be shared out;
 the lame fall to plundering.
- 24 And no one living there will say, "I am sickly;"
 the people living there will find their iniquity forgiven.

20 Alternative translations for 'an immovable tent' are: 'a tent that does not travel' or 'a tent that shall not be folded'.

21 For the last 2 lines, NETB has, "no war galley will enter; no large ships will sail through."

22 This verse, parenthesised in the NJB, may be additional.

23 The first part of the verse is addressed to Judah and contrasts the nation's present weakness with its future prosperity.

24 In place of 'iniquity', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'guilt' and NETB has 'sin'.

ישעיהו פרק לד

א קִרְבוּ גוֹיִם לִשְׁמָעַ
וּלְאֲמִים הִקְשִׁיבוּ
תִשְׁמַע הָאָרֶץ וּמְלֶאכֶה
תִּבְלַ וְכָל־צִאֲצָאֶיהָ:
ב כִּי קֶצֶף לִיהוָה עַל־כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם
וְחִמָּה עַל־כָּל־צְבָאָם
הַחֲרִימָם נָתַם לְטֶבַח:
ג וְחַלְלֵיהֶם יִשְׁלְכוּ
וּפְגִרֵיהֶם יַעֲלֶה בְּאֵשׁ
וְנִמְסוּ הָרִים מִדָּמָם:
ד וְנִמְקוּ כָל־צְבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם
וְנִגְלוּ כִסְפֵּי הַשָּׁמַיִם
וְכָל־צְבָאָם יִבּוֹל
כְּנִבְל עֵלֶה מִגֶּפֶן
וְכִנְבֹלֶת מִתְאֲנָה:
ה כִּי־רוּחָהּ בַּשָּׁמַיִם חָרְבִי
הִנֵּה עַל־אֶדוֹם תִּרְד

ISAIAH 34

- 1 Come near and listen, you nations;
pay attention, you peoples.
Let the earth and its contents listen,
the world and all that comes from it.
- 2 For Yahweh is enraged against all the nations,
furious with all their hordes.
He has doomed them, handed them over to slaughter.
- 3 Their dead will be thrown away,
the stench will rise from their corpses,
and the mountains will run with their blood.
- 4 The entire array of heaven will fall apart,
the heavens will be rolled up like a scroll,
and all their array will fade away,
like the leaves falling from the vine,
like fruit falling from the fig tree.
- 5 When my sword has drunk its fill in the heavens:
lo, it will fall on Edom,

ISAIAH 34

¹ Chs 34–35 are sometimes known as the ‘Little Apocalypse’.

² In place of ‘doomed them’, here following the NRSV, then NJB has ‘vowed them over to destruction’.

³ The literal translation of ‘run with’ is ‘dissolve in’.

⁴ At the end of the 1st line, 1QIsa^a inserts ‘and the valleys will be split open’ but this reading may be influenced by Mi 1:4.

⁵ At the time of the fall of Jerusalem, the Edomites were particularly hostile to the kingdom of Judah and took advantage of its misfortunes.

וְעַל־עַם חֲרָמִי לְמִשְׁפָּט:
חֲרֹב לַיהוָה מְלֵאָה דָם^ו
הַדְּשָׁנָה מִחֵלֶב
מִדָּם כְּרִים וְעִתּוּדִים
מִחֵלֶב כְּלִיֹּת אֵילִים
כִּי זָבַח לַיהוָה בְּבִצְרָה
וְטָבַח גְּדוֹל בְּאַרְץ אֱדוֹם:
וַיִּרְדּוּ רְאֵמִים עִמָּם^ז
וּפְרִים עִם־אֲבִירִים
וְרוֹתֵה אֶרֶץ מִדָּם
וַעֲפָרָם מִחֵלֶב יִדְשֹׁן:
כִּי יוֹם נָקָם לַיהוָה^ח
שָׁנַת שְׁלוֹמִים לְרִיב צִיּוֹן:
וְנִהַפְּכוּ נַחְלִיה לְזָפֶת^ט
וַעֲפָרָה לְגַפְרִית
וְהִיתָה אֶרֶץ לְזָפֶת בְּעֶרְהָ:
לֵילָה וַיּוֹמֶם לֹא תִכָּבֵּה^י
לְעוֹלָם יַעֲלֶה עֲשָׁנָה

on the people I have doomed to judgement.

⁶ Yahweh's sword is gorged with blood;
it is greasy with fat,
with the blood of lambs and goats,
with the fat of the kidneys of rams.

For, Yahweh has a sacrifice in Bozrah
and a great slaughter in the land of Edom.

⁷ The wild oxen will fall with them,
the young steers with the mighty bulls;
their land will be drenched with blood
and their dust will be rich with fat.

⁸ For this will be a day of vengeance for Yahweh,
the year of retribution in Zion's lawsuit.

⁹ Her streams will turn into pitch,
her dust into brimstone;
her country will turn into blazing pitch.

¹⁰ Night and day it shall not be quenched,
its smoke rising forever,

⁶ In place of 'Bozrah', here following the MT (בְּצִרָה) and NRSV, the NJB has 'Boaz'.

⁷ Perhaps the 'mighty bulls' represent the leaders.

⁸ Alternative readings for the 2nd line, here following the NRSV, are 'a year of vindication by Zion's cause' or 'a year of recompense by Zion's defender'; the takes רִיב as referring to Edom's hostility toward Zion but it could be understood as referring to the God's taking up of Zion's cause.

⁹ Vv. 9-10 give Edom the same punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah (13:19, Gn 19:24).

¹⁰ For the 1st line, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "Never quenched night or day."

מְדוֹר לְדוֹר תִּחְרַב
 לִנְצַח נִצְחִים אֵין עֶבֶר בָּהּ:
 יא וִירְשׁוּהָ קֶאֶת וְקִפּוֹד
 וַיִּנְשׂוּף וְעָרַב יִשְׁכְּנוּ-בָהּ
 וְנָטָה עָלֶיהָ קוֹתָהּ
 וְאַבְנֵי-בָהּ:
 יב חֲרִיָּה וְאַיִן-שֵׁם מְלוּכָה יִקְרָאוּ
 וְכָל-שָׂרֶיהָ יִהְיוּ אָפֶס:
 יג וְעַלְתָּה אֲרָמְנֶיהָ סִירִים
 קִמּוֹשׁ וְחוֹחַ בְּמִבְצָרֶיהָ
 וְהִיתָה נוֹה תַנִּים
 חֲצִיר לִבְנוֹת יַעֲנָה:
 יד וּפְגָשׁוּ צִיִּים אֶת-אַיִים
 וְשַׁעִיר עַל-רַעְהוּ יִקְרָא
 אֶדְ-שֵׁם הַרְגִיעָה לִילִית
 וּמִצָּאָה לָהּ מְנוּחַ:
 טו שָׂמָה קִנְנָה קִפּוֹז וְתַמְלִיט
 וּבִקְעָה וְדָגְרָה בַּצֶּלָה

it will lie waste age after age,
 no one will travel through it forever and ever.

- 11 It will be the haunt of owl and hedgehog,
the owl and the raven will live there;
over it, Yahweh will stretch the measuring line of chaos
and the plumb line of emptiness.
- 12 They shall name it 'No Kingdom There'
and there will be an end of all its princes.
- 13 Brambles will grow in its bastions,
nettles and thorn bushes in its fortresses;
it will be the lair of jackals,
an enclosure for ostriches.
- 14 Wild cats will meet hyenas there,
satyr will call to satyr;
there Lilith too will lurk
and find somewhere to rest.
- 15 The snake will nest and lay eggs there,
will hatch and gather its young into the shade;

11 The NRSV has 'hawk' in place of 'owl', and the NJB has 'pelican'; the identifications of the animals in this verse are uncertain.

12 The 1st line here follows the NRSV; the NJB has, "There will be no more nobles to proclaim the royal authority."

13 The translation of the 4th line assumes an emendation of חֲצִיר ('grass') to חֲצִר ('settlement'); 1QIsa^a supports this emendation.

14 An alternative translation for 'satyr' is 'he-goat' (cf. 13:21), but the parallel makes mythological beings preferable here (see #Lv 17:7). 'Lilith' was a female demon who haunted ruins; the WEBBE has 'the night creature'.

15 The word translated 'snake' (קִפּוֹז) occurs only here, and the precise meaning is uncertain (others have 'owl').

אֲדָשִׁים נִקְבְּצוּ דִּיּוֹת
אִשָּׁה רְעוּתָהּ:
טז דִּרְשׁוּ מֵעַל־סֵפֶר יְהוָה וְקִרְאוּ
אֶחָת מֵהֵנָּה לֹא נִעְדְּרָה
אִשָּׁה רְעוּתָהּ לֹא פָקְדוּ
כִּי־פִי הוּא צִוָּה
וְרוּחוֹ הוּא קִבְּצָן:
יז וְהוֹאֵה־פִיל לָהֶן גּוֹרֵל
וַיִּדּוּ חֶלְקָתָהּ לָהֶם בָּקוּ
עַד־עוֹלָם יִירָשׁוּהָ
לְדוֹר וָדוֹר יִשְׁכְּנוּ־בָהּ: {ס}

and there the vultures will assemble,
each one with its mate.

- 16 Search in Yahweh's book, and read,
not one of these will be missing,
not one of them lacking a mate;
for thus his mouth has ordained it,
and his spirit has brought them together.
- 17 He has thrown the lot for each,
his hand has measured out their share;
they will possess it forever
and live there age after age.

16 Some have seen 'Yahweh's book' as a reference to Isaiah's own book, or to a collection of prophecies attributed to him; the wild animals are indeed almost all the same as in 13:20-22. Alternatively, the reference may be to Yahweh's book of decrees concerning his creation (vv. 16-17, cf. Ps 139:16). 'His mouth' follows 1QIsa^a; the MT has 'my mouth'.

17 This verse refers to the wild animals of vv. 11-15.

ישעיהו פרק לה

א יִשְׁשׂוּם מִדְבָּר וְצִיָּה
וְתִגְלַע עֲרָבָה וְתִפְרַח כְּחַבְצֵלֶת:
ב פִּלַּח תִּפְרַח וְתִגְלַע
אֶף גִּילַת וְרִנָּן
כְּבוֹד הַלְבָּנוֹן נִתְּנָהּ
הַדֵּר הַכַּרְמֶל וְהַשְּׂרֹון
הִמָּה יֵרְאוּ כְבוֹד־יְהוָה
הַדֵּר אֱלֹהֵינוּ: {פ}
ג חֲזִקוּ יָדַיִם רַפּוֹת
וּבְרָכִים כְּשִׁלּוֹת אֲמָצוּ:
ד אֲמָרוּ לְנַמְהֲרֵי־לֵב חֲזִקוּ אֶל־תִּירָאוּ
הִנֵּה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם נָקָם יָבוֹא
גָּמוּל אֱלֹהִים הוּא יָבוֹא וְיִשְׁעֲכֶם:
ה אֲזִ תִּפְקַחְנָה עֵינֵי עֹרְרִים
וְאֲזִנֵּי חֲרָשִׁים תִּפְתַּחְנָה:
ו אֲזִ יִדְלַג כַּאֲיֵל פִּסְחַ

ISAIAH 35

- 1 Let the desert and the dry lands be glad,
let the wasteland rejoice and bloom like the crocus.
- 2 Let it burst into flower,
let it rejoice and sing for joy.
The glory of Lebanon is bestowed on it,
the splendour of Carmel and Sharon;
then they will see the glory of Yahweh,
the splendour of our God.
- 3 Strengthen all weary hands;
steady all trembling knees.
- 4 Say to the faint-hearted, "Be strong! Do not be afraid.
Here is your God, vengeance is coming,
divine retribution; he is coming to save you."
- 5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened
and the ears of the deaf unsealed.
- 6 Then the lame shall leap like a deer

ISAIAH 35

- 1 The final *mem* (ם) on the verb יִשְׁשׂוּם is dittographic (note the initial *mem* on the following noun, מִדְבָּר). The ambiguous verbal form is translated as a jussive because it is parallel to the jussive form תִּגְלַע in the next line; the jussive is used rhetorically here, not as a literal command or prayer.
- 2 גִּילַת ('joy') may be an archaic feminine nominal form.
- 3 The literal translation of 'trembling' is 'feeble'.
- 4 The literal translation of 'faint-hearted' is 'hasty of heart' (i.e., those whose hearts beat quickly from fear).
- 5 For this verse, NETB reads, "Then blind eyes will open, deaf ears will hear."
- 6 'Desert' (following the NRSV) translates עֲרָבָה ('Arabah'); the NJB has 'wastelands'.

	וְתָרֵן לְשׁוֹן אֱלֹם	and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy;
	כִּי־נִבְקְעוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר מַיִם	for, water will gush in the desert
	וְנַחֲלִים בָּעֲרָבָה:	and streams in the desert.
ז	וְהָיָה הַשָּׂרֵב לְאִגָּם	7 The parched ground will become a pool
	וְצִמְאֹן לְמִבּוּעֵי מַיִם	and the thirsty lands springs of water;
	בְּנוֹה תַנִּים רַבְצָה	the lairs where the jackals used to live
	חֲצִיר לִקְנֶה וְגִמְא:	will become plots of reed and papyrus.
ח	וְהָיָה־שָׁם מִסְלֹל וְדֶרֶךְ	8 Through it will run a road for them and a highway
	וְדֶרֶךְ הַקֹּדֶשׁ יִקְרָא לָהּ	the highway will be called the Sacred Way;
	לֹא־יַעֲבִרְנוּ טָמֵא וְהוּא־לִמּוֹ	the unclean will not be allowed to use it.
	הַלֵּךְ דֶּרֶךְ וְאֹיִלִים לֹא יִתְעוּ:	He will use this road; the fool will not stray along it.
ט	לֹא־יִהְיֶה שָׁם אֲרִיָּה	9 No lion will be there,
	וּפְרִיץ חִיּוֹת בַּל־יַעֲלֶנָּה	no ferocious beast set foot on it,
	לֹא תִמְצָא שָׁם	nothing of the sort to be found;
	וְהָלְכוּ גְּאוּלִּים:	it will be used by the redeemed.
י	וּפִדְוֵי יְהוָה יִשְׁבּוּן	10 For, those who Yahweh has ransomed shall return;
	וּבָאוּ צִיּוֹן בְּרִנָּה	they shall come to Zion shouting for joy,
	וְשִׂמְחַת עוֹלָם עַל־רֹאשָׁם	everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
	שִׂשׁוֹן וְשִׂמְחָה יִשְׁיִגּוּ	rejoicing and gladness shall escort them
	וְנִסּוּ יִגּוֹן וְאַנְחָה: {ס}	and sorrow and sighing shall take flight.

⁷ The NJB has 'marsh' in place of 'pool', here following the NRSV & NETB.

⁸ 'He' in the 4th line is God; the line interferes with the rhythm and may be a gloss. 1QIsa^a does not repeat the word וְדֶרֶךְ ('the highway').

⁹ The literal translation of 'set foot' is 'go up'.

¹⁰ The 3rd line may be an ironic twist on the idiom 'earth/dust on the head' (cf. 2S 1:2, 13:19, 15:32, Job 2:12), referring to a mourning practice.

ישעיהו פרק לו

^א וַיְהִי בְּאַרְבַּע עָשָׂר שָׁנָה לְמֶלֶךְ חִזְקִיָּהוּ עָלָה
סִנְחַרִּיב מֶלֶךְ-אַשּׁוּר עַל כָּל-עָרֵי יְהוּדָה הַבְּצֻרוֹת
וַיִּתְּפָשֶׂם: ^ב וַיִּשְׁלַח מֶלֶךְ-אַשּׁוּר אֶת-רַב־שָׁקָה
מֶלְכִישׁ יְרוּשָׁלַיִם אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ חִזְקִיָּהוּ בְּחֵיל כָּבֵד
וַיַּעֲמֵד בְּתַעֲלַת הַבֵּרֶכָה הָעֲלִיזָה בְּמִסְלַת שְׂדֵה
כּוֹבֵס: ^ג וַיֵּצֵא אֵלָיו אֱלִיאִקִים בֶּן-חִלְקִיָּהוּ אֲשֶׁר עַל-
הַבֵּית וְשִׁבְנָא הַסֹּפֵר וַיּוֹאֲח בֶן-אַסָּף הַמְזִכִּיר:
^ד וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם רַב־שָׁקָה אִמְרוּ-נָא אֶל-חִזְקִיָּהוּ
כֹּה-אָמַר הַמֶּלֶךְ הַגָּדוֹל מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר מָה הַבְּטַחּוֹן
הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר בַּטַּחַת: ^ה אֲמַרְתִּי אֶדְדִּבְרֵי-שִׁפְתַיִם
עֲצָה וּגְבוּרָה לְמַלְחָמָה עֲתָה עַל-מִי בַטַּחַת כִּי
מִרְדַּתָּ בִּי: ^ו הִנֵּה בַטַּחַת עַל-מִשְׁעָנֹת הַקֶּנֶה הַרְצוּן
הַזֶּה עַל-מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר יִסְמְךָ אִישׁ עָלָיו וּבֹא בְכַפּוֹ
וְנִקְבָה בֶן פֶּרַעַה מֶלֶךְ-מִצְרַיִם לְכָל-הַבְּטָחִים עָלָיו:
^ז וְכִי-תֹאמַר אֵלַי אֶל-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בַטַּחֲנוּ הֲלוֹא-

ISAIAH 36

¹ In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, King Sennacherib of Assyria marched up against all the fortified towns of Judah and captured them.
² The king of Assyria sent the cupbearer-in-chief from Lachish to King Hezekiah in Jerusalem, with a large force. The cupbearer-in-chief took up position near the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the Fuller's Field. ³ And there came out to him Eliakim son of Hilkiah, who was in charge of the palace, and Shebna the secretary, and Joah son of Asaph, the recorder. ⁴ The cupbearer-in-chief said to them, "Say to Hezekiah, "The great king, the king of Assyria, says this: On what do you base this confidence of yours? ⁵ Do you think empty words are as good as strategy and military strength? Whom are you relying on, to dare rebel against me? ⁶ There you are, relying on that broken reed of a staff, Egypt, which pricks and pierces the hand of the person who leans on it. That is what Pharaoh king of Egypt is like to all who rely on him.
⁷ But, if you say to me: "We rely on Yahweh our God," then haven't his

ISAIAH 36

- ¹ Chs 36–39 reproduce, with a few variants, 2K 18:13,17–20:19 (see the footnotes thereto). The chapters have been borrowed from 2K and put at the end of the first part of Isaiah to complete the collection of traditions relating to the prophet.
- ² Throughout this passage, the NRSV uses 'Rabshakeh' in place of 'cupbearer-in-chief'; this is an Assyrian title.
- ³ NETB has 'scribe' in place of 'secretary' and 'secretary' in place of 'recorder'; here, we follow the NRSV.
- ⁴ Literally translated, the cupbearer's question is, "What is this object of trust in which you are trusting?"
- ⁵ The literal translation of 'do you think' is 'I say' (following the MT) or 'you say' (following 2K 18:20).
- ⁶ The NRSV ends this verse, here following the NJB, with, "Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who rely on him."
- ⁷ This verse is a reference to Hezekiah's reform (2K 18:4).

הוא אשר הסיר חזקיהו את־במִתּוֹ ואת־
מִזְבַּח־תּוֹ ויאִמֹר ליהודה ולירושלם לִפְנֵי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
הַזֶּה תִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ: ^ח ועתה התערב נא את־אֲדָנִי
הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשׁוּר ואתָּנָה לָךְ אֲלָפִים סוּסִים אִם־תּוּכַל
לָתֵת לָךְ רֶכֶבִּים עֲלֵיהֶם: ^ט ואִידָּךְ תֵּשִׁיב אֶת פְּנֵי
פַּחַת אֶחָד עַבְדֵי אֲדָנִי הַקִּטָּנִים וּתְבַטֵּחַ לָךְ עַל־
מִצְרַיִם לָרֶכֶב וּלְפָרָשִׁים: ^י ועתה הַמַּבְלַעֲדֵי יְהוָה
עָלִיתִי עַל־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת לְהַשְׁחִיתָהּ יְהוָה אָמַר
אֵלֵי עֲלֵה אֶל־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וְהַשְׁחִיתָהּ: {ס}

^{יא} ויאִמֹר אֱלִיָּקִים וְשִׁבְנָא וַיֹּאחַז אֶל־רַב־שָׁקָה דְּבַר־
נָא אֶל־עַבְדֶּיךָ אַרְמִית כִּי שְׁמַעִים אֲנַחְנוּ וְאֵל־
תְּדַבֵּר אֵלֵינוּ יְהוּדִית בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם אֲשֶׁר עַל־
הַחוֹמָה: ^{יב} ויאִמֹר רַב־שָׁקָה הֲאֵל אֲדָנֶיךָ וְאֵלֶיךָ
שְׁלַחְנִי אֲדָנִי לְדַבֵּר אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה הֲלֹא עַל־
הָאֲנָשִׁים הַיֹּשְׁבִים עַל־הַחוֹמָה לֵאכֹל אֶת־צֹאֲתָם
חֲרָאֵיהֶם וּלְשִׁתּוֹת אֶת־[מִימֵי רַגְלֵיהֶם] שִׁינִיהֶם
עִמָּכֶם: ^{יג} וַיַּעֲמֵד רַב־שָׁקָה וַיִּקְרָא בְּקוֹל־גָּדוֹל

high places and altars been suppressed by Hezekiah, who told Judah and Jerusalem: “This is the altar before which you must worship?”

⁸ Very well, then, make a wager with my lord the king of Assyria: I will give you two thousand horses if you can find horsemen to ride them.

⁹ How could you repulse a single captain of the least of my master’s soldiers? Yet, you have relied on Egypt for chariots and horsemen;

¹⁰ and lastly, have I marched on this country to lay it waste without warrant from Yahweh? Yahweh himself has said to me: March on this country and lay it waste.””

¹¹ Then Eliakim, Shebna and Joah said to the cupbearer-in-chief, “Please speak to your servants in the Aramaic language; for, we understand it; do not speak to us in the Judaeen language within earshot of the people on the ramparts.” ¹² But the cupbearer-in-chief said, “Do you think my master sent me here to say these things to your master or to you? On the contrary, he sent me to the people who are sitting on the ramparts who, like you, are doomed to eat their own dung and drink their own urine.”

¹³ The cupbearer-in-chief then drew himself up and shouted loudly in

⁸ The cupbearer-in-chief here taunts Hezekiah for his lack of trained soldiers.

⁹ In place of ‘captain’ (here following the NRSV), the NJB has ‘one’; this is possibly a gloss or dittography.

¹⁰ In this verse, the cupbearer-in-chief develops further the argument begun in v. 7: he claims that Hezekiah has offended Yahweh and that Yahweh has commissioned Assyria as his instrument of discipline and judgment.

¹¹ ‘Aramaic’ was the diplomatic language of the times.

¹² The *Kethib*/*Qere* differences here would benefit from explanations.

¹³ The speech of vv. 13–20 was intended to demoralise Jerusalem’s defenders.

יְהוּדִית וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמָעוּ אֶת־דְּבַר הַמֶּלֶךְ הַגָּדוֹל מֶלֶךְ
 אַשּׁוּר: ^{יד} כֹּה אָמַר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל־יֵשָׁא לָכֶם חֲזַקְיָהוּ בִּי
 לֹא־יִכָּל לְהַצִּיל אֶתְכֶם: ^{טו} וְאֶל־יִבְטַח אֶתְכֶם
 חֲזַקְיָהוּ אֶל־יְהוָה לֵאמֹר הַצֵּל יַצִּילֵנוּ יְהוָה לֹא
 תִּנָּתֵן הָעִיר הַזֹּאת בְּיַד מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר: ^{טז} אֶל־תִּשְׁמָעוּ
 אֶל־חֲזַקְיָהוּ {פ}

כִּי כֹה אָמַר הַמֶּלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר עֲשׂוּ־אִתִּי בִּרְכָה וּצְאוּ
 אֵלַי וְאָכְלוּ אִישׁ־גִּפְנוֹ וְאִישׁ תְּאֲנָתוֹ וּשְׁתּוּ אִישׁ מִי־
 בּוֹרוֹ: ^{יז} עַד־בָּאִי וְלִקְחָתִי אֶתְכֶם אֶל־אֶרֶץ
 כְּאַרְצְכֶם אֶרֶץ דָּגָן וְתִירוֹשׁ אֶרֶץ לֶחֶם וְכִרְמִים:
^{יח} פְּנִי־יִסֵּית אֶתְכֶם חֲזַקְיָהוּ לֵאמֹר יְהוָה יַצִּילֵנוּ
 הַהֲצִילוּ אֱלֹהֵי הַגּוֹיִם אִישׁ אֶת־אַרְצוֹ מִיַּד מֶלֶךְ
 אַשּׁוּר: ^{יט} אֵיָּה אֱלֹהֵי חֲמַת וְאַרְפָּד אֵיָּה אֱלֹהֵי
 סַפְרַוַיִּם וְכִי־הֲצִילוּ אֶת־שֹׁמְרוֹן מִיָּדִי: ^כ מִי בְּכָל־
 אֱלֹהֵי הָאָרְצוֹת הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר־הֲצִילוּ אֶת־אַרְצָם
 מִיָּדִי כִי־יַצִּיל יְהוָה אֶת־יְרוּשָׁלַם מִיָּדִי: ^{כא} וַיַּחֲרִישׁוּ

the Judaeen language, “Listen to the words of the great king, the king of Assyria. ¹⁴ The king says this, “Do not let Hezekiah delude you! For, he will be powerless to save you. ¹⁵ And do not let Hezekiah persuade you to rely on Yahweh by saying: Yahweh is sure to save us; this city will not fall into the king of Assyria’s clutches. ¹⁶ Do not listen to Hezekiah!

“For, the king of Assyria says this: Make peace with me, surrender to me, and each one of will eat from his own vine and his own fig tree and drink the water of his own cistern ¹⁷ until I come and take you away to a country like your own, a land of corn and good wine, a land of bread and vineyards. ¹⁸ Do not let Hezekiah delude you by saying: Yahweh will save us. Has any god of any nation saved his country from the king of Assyria’s hands? ¹⁹ Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Did they save Samaria from my hands? ²⁰ Who of all the national gods have saved their countries from my hands, that Yahweh should be able to save Jerusalem from my hands?””

¹⁴ In place of ‘save’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘deliver’ and NETB has ‘rescue’.

¹⁵ The cupbearer-in-chief here reasserts his claim of v. 10.

¹⁶ The literal translation of ‘make peace with me, surrender to me’ is ‘make with me a blessing and come out to me’.

¹⁷ Sennacherib seems here to be offering a new ‘Promised Land’.

¹⁸ The rhetorical question expects the answer, “Of course not!”

¹⁹ ‘Sepharvaim’ (‘Sibraim’ in Ezk 47:16) was a town between Hamath and Damascus, near Homs. Before the last question, the NJB adds, ‘Where are the national gods of Samaria?’ – a conjectural interpretation in line with 2K 18:34, the LXX and the *Vetus Latina*.

²⁰ The logic runs as follows: Since no god has ever been able to withstand the Assyrian onslaught, how can the people of Jerusalem possibly think Yahweh will rescue them?

וְלֹא־עָנוּ אֹתוֹ דָּבָר כִּי־מִצְוַת הַמֶּלֶךְ הִיא לֵאמֹר לֹא
תַעֲנֶהוּ: ^{כב} וַיָּבֹא אֱלִיָּקִים בֶּן־חִלְקִיָּהוּ אֲשֶׁר־עַל־
הַבֵּית וְשִׁבְנָא הַסֵּפֶר וַיּוֹאֵחַ בֶּן־אַסָּף הַמִּזְכִּיר אֶל־
חִזְקִיָּהוּ קְרוּעֵי בְגָדִים וַיַּגִּידוּ לּוֹ אֵת דְּבָרֵי
רַב־שָׂקָה: {ס}

²¹ But they kept quiet and said nothing in reply, since the king had given the order, "Do not answer him." ²² The master of the palace, Eliakim son of Hilkiah, Shebna the secretary and the herald Joah son of Asaph, with their clothes torn, went to Hezekiah and reported what the cupbearer-in-chief had said.

²¹ For the king's command, here following the *NRSV*, the *NJB* reads, "You are not to answer him."

²² *NETB* places this verse in the 1st paragraph of Ch. 37.

ISAIAH 37

ישעיהו פרק לז

א ויהי כשמע המלך חזקיהו ויקרע את בגדיו
ויתכס בשק ויבא בית יהוה: ב וישלח את אליקים
אשר-עלה בית ואת שבנא הסופר ואת זקני
הכהנים מתכסים בשקים אל-ישעיהו בן-אמוץ
הנביא: ג ויאמרו אליו כה אמר חזקיהו יום-צרה
ותוכחה ונאצה היום הזה כי באו בנים עד-משבר
וכח אין ללדה: ד אולי ישמע יהוה אלהיך את
דברי רבשקה אשר שלחו מלך-אשור. אדניו
לחרף אלהים חי והולכי בדברים אשר שמע
יהוה אלהיך ונשאת תפלה בעד השארית
הנמצאה: ה ויבאו עבדי המלך חזקיהו אל-
ישעיהו: ו ויאמר אליהם ישעיהו כה תאמרון אל-
אדניכם כה אמר יהוה אל-תירא מפני הדברים
אשר שמעת אשר גדפו נערי מלך-אשור אותי:
ז הנני נותן בו רוח ושמע שמועה ושב אל-ארצו

¹ On hearing this, King Hezekiah tore his clothes, put on sackcloth, and went to the Temple of Yahweh. ² He sent Eliakim, master of the palace, Shebna the secretary and the senior priests, wearing sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. ³ They said to him, "This is what Hezekiah says, "Today is a day of suffering, of rebuke, of disgrace. Sons come to birth and there is no strength to bring them forth. ⁴ It may be that Yahweh your God heard the words of the cupbearer-in-chief, whom his master, the king of Assyria, has sent to mock the living God, and may rebuke the words that Yahweh your God has heard; so, offer your prayer for the remnant still left."" ⁵ When King Hezekiah's ministers came to Isaiah, ⁶ Isaiah said to them, "Say to your master, "Yahweh says this: Do not be afraid of the words that you have heard, with which the king of Assyria's minions have insulted me. ⁷ Look, I am going to put a spirit in him and, on the strength of a rumour, he will go back to his own country and, in that country, I shall make him fall by the sword."" ⁸ The

ISAIAH 37

¹ Hezekiah's actions are signs of mourning and despair (15:3, Jl 2:12). For recourse to the Temple in times of crisis, see Ne 9, Jl 1:13-14.

² The delegation to Isaiah recalls the consultation of prophets by earlier kings (1K 22:8-28, 2K 1:9-17, 3:11-27).

³ Literally translated, the last sentence reads, "*when sons come to the cervical opening and there is no strength to give birth.*"

⁴ Alternative translations for 'mock' (following the NRSV) are 'insult' (as NJB) and 'taunt' (as NETB).

⁵ Isaiah's reply reassures Hezekiah.

⁶ The NJB ends this verse, "... or the blasphemies the king of Assyria's minions have uttered against me."

⁷ The 'rumour' was of internal problems at home. The precise sense of רִיחַ ('spirit') is uncertain in this context: it may refer to a spiritual being who will take control of his mind (see 1K 22:19), or it could refer to a disposition of concern and fear.

⁸ 'Libnah' is 16 Km north of 'Lachish'.

והַפִּלְתִּיו בַּחֶרֶב בְּאַרְצוֹ: ^ח וַיֵּשֶׁב רַב־שָׁקָה וַיִּמָּצֵא
 אֶת־מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר נֶלְחָם עַל־לִבְנָה כִּי שָׁמַע כִּי נָסַע
 מֶלֶכִּישׁ: ^ט וַיִּשְׁמַע עַל־תִּרְהַקָּה מֶלֶךְ־כּוּשׁ לֵאמֹר
 יֵצֵא לְהִלָּחֵם אִתָּךְ וַיִּשְׁמַע וַיִּשְׁלַח מַלְאָכִים אֶל־
 חֲזַקְיָהוּ לֵאמֹר: ^י כֹּה תֹאמְרוּן אֶל־חֲזַקְיָהוּ מֶלֶךְ־
 יְהוּדָה לֵאמֹר אֶל־יִשְׂאָךְ אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה בֹטָח
 בּוֹ לֵאמֹר לֹא תִנָּתֵן יְרוּשָׁלַם בְּיַד מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר:
^{יא} הִנֵּה | אַתָּה שֹׁמֵעַתָּ אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ מֶלְכֵי אַשּׁוּר לְכָל־
 הָאֲרָצוֹת לְהַחְרִימָם וְאַתָּה תִּנָּצֵל: ^{יב} הֲהִצִּילוּ אוֹתָם
 אֱלֹהֵי הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר הִשְׁחִיתוּ אֲבוֹתַי אֶת־גּוֹזָן וְאֶת־
 חֶרֶן וְרֶצֶף וּבְנֵי־עֵדֶן אֲשֶׁר בַּת־לֶשֶׁר: ^{יג} אֵיךְ מֶלֶךְ־
 חֲמַת וּמֶלֶךְ אַרְפָּד וּמֶלֶךְ לַעִיר סַפְרַיִם הֵנֵעַ וְעוֹהָ:
^{יד} וַיִּקַּח חֲזַקְיָהוּ אֶת־הַסִּפְרָיִם מִיַּד הַמַּלְאָכִים
 וַיִּקְרָאֵהוּ וַיַּעַל בֵּית יְהוָה וַיִּפְרֹשֵׁהוּ חֲזַקְיָהוּ לִפְנֵי
 יְהוָה: {ס}

cupbearer-in-chief returned and found the king of Assyria attacking Libnah, the cupbearer-in-chief having learnt that the king had already left Lachish. ⁹ On hearing that Tirhakah king of Cush was on his way to attack him, Sennacherib again sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, ¹⁰ “Tell Hezekiah king of Judah this, “Do not let your God on whom you are relying deceive you with the promise: Jerusalem will not be given into the king of Assyria’s hands. ¹¹ You have learnt by now what the kings of Assyria have done to all the other countries, putting them under the curse of destruction. Are you likely to be saved? ¹² Did the gods of the nations whom my ancestors devastated save them – Gozan, Haran, Rezeph and the Edenites who were in Telassar? ¹³ Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the kings of Lair, Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah?”” ¹⁴ Hezekiah took the letter from the messenger’s hands and read it; he then went up to the Temple of Yahweh and spread it out before Yahweh.

⁹ ‘Again’ follows 2K 19:19 and 1QIsa^a; the MT omits the word.

¹⁰ In place of ‘given into ... hands’, here following the NRSV, the NJB has ‘fall into ... clutches’.

¹¹ The rhetorical question expects the answer, “No, of course not!”

¹² In place of ‘Telassar’, here following the MT (תִּלְשָׁר) and NRSV, the NJB has the conjectural ‘Tel Basar’. The places listed are in Mesopotamia: ‘Gozan’ is on the west tributary of the Khabur River, east of ‘Haran’, on the upper Balikh River (Gn 11:27–32); ‘Rezeph’ was between Nineveh and the northern Khabur and the ‘Edenites’ were from Bit Adini, on the Middle Euphrates (Ezk 27:23), in the same area as ‘Telassar’.

¹³ In place of ‘the kings of Lair, Sepharvaim’, here following the MT (& NETB), the NJB & NRSV have ‘the king of the city of Sepharvaim.’ ‘Lair’ (לַעִיר) was a city in north-eastern Babylon.

¹⁴ In place of ‘letter’, the MT has the plural, but the final *mem* (ם) may be dittographic (note the initial *mem* on the form that immediately follows). Some Greek and Aramaic witnesses have the singular, but one still has to deal with the *yod* (י) that is part of the plural ending (ים-).

^{טו} וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל חִזְקִיָּהוּ אֶל־יְהוָה לֵאמֹר: ^{טז} יְהוָה
צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יֹשֵׁב הַכְרֻבִּים אַתָּה־הוּא
הָאֱלֹהִים לְבַדְּךָ לְכֹל מַמְלָכוֹת הָאָרֶץ אַתָּה עֹשֵׂת
אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ: ^{יז} הִטָּה יְהוָה | אֲזַנְךָ
וּשְׁמֹעַ פִּקְחַת יְהוָה עֵינֶיךָ וּרְאָה וּשְׁמַע אֶת כָּל־דִּבְרֵי
סַנְחֶרִיב אֲשֶׁר שָׁלַח לְחַרְף אֱלֹהִים חַי: ^{יח} אֲמַנָּם
יְהוָה הַחֲרִיבוּ מַלְכֵי אַשּׁוּר אֶת־כָּל־הָאֲרָצוֹת וְאֶת־
אֲרָצָם: ^{יט} וְנָתַן אֶת־אֱלֹהֵיהֶם בָּאֵשׁ כִּי לֹא אֱלֹהִים
הֵמָּה כִּי אִם־מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי־אָדָם עֵץ וָאֲבֶן וַיַּאֲבֹדוּם:
^כ וְעַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ הוֹשִׁיעֵנו מִיָּדוֹ וּיְדַעוּ כָּל־
מַמְלָכוֹת הָאָרֶץ כִּי־אַתָּה יְהוָה לְבַדְּךָ: ^{כא} וַיִּשְׁלַח
יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ בֶן־אֲמוּזָן אֶל־חִזְקִיָּהוּ לֵאמֹר כֹּה־אָמַר
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר הִתְפַּלַּלְתָּ אֵלַי אֶל־
סַנְחֶרִיב מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר: ^{כב} זֶה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר יְהוָה
עָלָיו

בָּזָה לְךָ לַעֲגָה לְךָ
בַּת־וֹלַת בֵּת־צִיּוֹן

¹⁵ Hezekiah prayed in the presence of Yahweh, saying, ¹⁶ “Yahweh Sabaoth, God of Israel, enthroned on the cherubim, you alone are God of all the kingdoms of the world, and you made heaven and earth. ¹⁷ Give ear, Yahweh, and listen; open your eyes, Yahweh, and see! Hear the words of Sennacherib, who has sent to insult the living God. ¹⁸ It is true, Yahweh, that the kings of Assyria have destroyed all the nations and their countries; ¹⁹ they have thrown their gods on the fire, for these were not gods but human artefacts – wood and stone – and hence they have destroyed them. ²⁰ So now, Yahweh our God, save us from his hands, I beg you, and let all the kingdoms of the world know that you alone are God, Yahweh.” ²¹ Isaiah son of Amoz then sent the following message to Hezekiah, “Yahweh, God of Israel, says this, “In answer to the prayer that you have addressed to me about Sennacherib king of Assyria: ²² Here is the pronouncement that Yahweh has made about him:

“ She despises you, she scorns you,
the virgin daughter of Zion;

¹⁵ NETB has ‘before’ in place of ‘in the presence of’, here following the NJB (the NRSV has simply ‘to’).

¹⁶ ‘Cherubim’ refers to the images of winged angelic creatures that were above the Ark of the Covenant.

¹⁷ Literally translated, this verse ends, “Hear all the words of Sennacherib, which he sent to mock the living God.”

¹⁸ The MT has ‘all the lands’ in place of ‘all the nations’, here following the parallel text in 2K 19:17. The NJB parenthesises ‘and their countries’.

¹⁹ Hezekiah here refutes the value of alien, idolatrous false gods.

²⁰ The parallel text in 2K 19:19 ends, “that you, Yahweh, are the only God.”

²¹ The parallel 2K 19:20 adds, “I have heard;” the verb ‘I have heard’ does not appear here, where אֲשֶׁר probably has a causal sense (‘because’).

²² Zion (Jerusalem) is pictured here as a young, vulnerable daughter whose purity is being threatened by the would-be Assyrian rapist.

אַחֲרֵיךָ רֹאשׁ הַנִּיעָה
 בֵּת יְרוּשָׁלַם:
 כג אֶת־מִי חֲרַפְתָּ וְגִדַּפְתָּ
 וְעַל־מִי הִרִימוּתָה קוֹל
 וַתִּשָּׂא מְרוֹם עֵינֶיךָ
 אֶל־קִדּוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל:
 כד בֶּיַד עֲבָדֶיךָ חֲרַפְתָּ | אֲדֹנִי
 וַתֹּאמֶר בְּרַב רֶכֶב־יָנִי עָלִיתִי מְרוֹם הָרִים
 יִרְכַּתִּי לְבָנוֹן
 וְאֶכְרַת קוֹמַת אֲרָזָיו
 מִבְּחַר בְּרָשָׁיו
 וְאֶבּוֹא מְרוֹם קִצּוֹ
 יַעַר בְּרָמְלוֹ:
 כה אֲנִי קִרְתִּי וְשָׁתִיתִי מִיָּם
 וְאֶחָרֵב בְּכַף־פָּעָמִי
 כו כָּל יְאֵרֵי מִצְרָיִם:
 הֲלוֹא־שָׁמַעְתָּ לְמַרְחֹק אוֹתָה עָשִׂיתִי
 מִיָּמֵי קֶדֶם וַיִּצְרַתִּיהָ

she tosses her head at you,
 the daughter of Jerusalem!

23 Whom have you insulted, whom did you blaspheme?

Against whom have you raised your voice
 and lifted you haughty eyes?

Against the Holy One of Israel!

24 Though your minions have insulted the Lord,
 saying, "With many chariots I have climbed the mountain tops,
 the utmost peaks of Lebanon.

I have felled many cedars,
 its finest cypresses;

I have reached its furthest peak,
 its forest garden.

25 Yes, I have dug and drunk of foreign waters;
 under the soles of my feet

I have dried up all Egypt's rivers."

26 Have you not heard? Long ago I prepared this;
 from days of old, I actually planned it,

23 'Holy One of Israel' is one of Isaiah's favourite divine titles for God.

24 The term here translated 'the Lord' is אֲדֹנִי.

25 'Foreign' follows 2K 19:24; the MT omits the word: זָרִים may have accidentally dropped out of the text – note that the preceding word, מִיָּם ('water') also ends in *mem* (ם). 1QIsa^a has 'foreign waters' for this line; however, in several other passages, this scroll harmonises with 2K 19 against the MT (36:5, 37:9, 20).

26 Having quoted the Assyrian king's arrogant words in vv. 23–24, God now speaks to Hezekiah.

עֲתָה הִבֵּאתִיהָ
 וְתִהְיֶה לְהִשָּׁאוֹת גְּלִים נָצִים
 עָרִים בְּצָרוֹת:
 כו וְיֹשְׁבֵיהֶן קִצְרֵי יָד חֲתוּ וּבָשׁוּ
 הָיוּ עֲשָׂב שָׂדֶה
 וַיִּרְקוּ דָּשָׁא
 חֲצִיר גִּגּוֹת
 וְשָׁדְמָה לִפְנֵי קָמָה:
 כח וְשִׁבְתָּ וְצֵאתָ וּבֹאֲךָ יִדְעָתִי
 וְאֵת הַתְּרַגְּזוֹךָ אֵלַי:
 כט יַעַן הַתְּרַגְּזוֹךָ אֵלַי
 וְשִׁאֲנִנְךָ עָלַה בְּאָזְנִי
 וְשִׁמְתִּי חֲחִי בְּאַפִּיךָ
 וּמִתְּגִל בְּשִׁפְתֶיךָ וְהִשִּׁיבְתִּיךָ
 בְּדֶרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר-בָּאתָ בָּהּ:

ל וְזֶה-לָּךְ הָאוֹת אֲכֹל הַשָּׁנָה סָפִיחַ וּבִשְׁנָה הַשְּׁנִית
 שְׂחִים וּבִשְׁנָה הַשְּׁלִישִׁית זֶרְעוּ וְקָצְרוּ וְנִטְעוּ
 כִּרְמִים וְאֲכֹלוּ וְאֲכָלוּ פְּרִיָם: לא וְיִסְפָּה פְּלִיטַת בֵּית-

and now I carry it out.

You were to lay walled cities
in heaps of ruins.

27 Their inhabitants, feeble of hand, are dismayed and ashamed,
 are weak as grass,
 are frail as plants,
 are like grass on the housetops
 under the east wind.

28 I know your sitting down, your going out, your coming in,
and how you rave against me.

29 Because you have raved against me
 and your arrogance has reached my ears,
 I shall put a hook in your nose
 and a bit in your mouth,
 and make you return by the road by which you came.

30 "And this will be the sign for you: this year eat what grows of itself,
 next year what springs from that; but in the third year sow and reap,
 plant vineyards, and eat their fruit. 31 The surviving remnant of the

27 'Under the east wind' follows 1QIsa^a; the MT (and the NRSV) has 'before it is grown' and omits 'whether you stand up' from the beginning of v. 28.

28 The last line, omitted by the LXX and parenthesised in the NJB, is probably a doublet of the first line of v. 29 (which is itself omitted by 1QIsa^a).

29 The parallelism of the 2nd line is improved if שִׁאֲנִנְךָ ('your arrogance') is emended to שִׁאֲנִינְךָ ('your uproar').

30 Vv. 30–32 probably belong between v. 35 and 36: at this point, the word concerning the king of Assyria (vv. 22–29) ends and God again addresses Hezekiah and the people directly (see v. 21). The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

31 Literally translated, this verse reads, "The remnant of the house of Judah that is left will add roots below and produce fruit above."

יְהוּדָה הַנְּשֹׂאֲרָה שְׂרֵשׁ לְמֹטֶה וְעֵשֶׂה פְּרִי לְמַעְלָה:
לִבְּכִי מִירוּשָׁלַם תֵּצֵא שְׂאֲרִית וּפְלִיטָה מֵהָר צִיּוֹן
קִנְיַת יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת תַּעֲשֶׂה-זֹאת: {ס}

לֹא לָכֵן כֹּה-אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי מֶלֶךְ אֲשׁוּר לֹא יָבֹא אֶל-
הָעִיר הַזֹּאת וְלֹא-יִזְרֶה שֵׁם חָץ וְלֹא-יִקְדֹּמְנָה מִגֶּן
וְלֹא-יִשְׁפֹךְ עָלֶיהָ סִלְלָה: ^{לד} בַּדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר-בָּא בָּהּ
יָשׁוּב וְאֶל-הָעִיר הַזֹּאת לֹא יָבֹא נְאֻם-יְהוָה:
^{לה} וְגִנֹּתִי עַל-הָעִיר הַזֹּאת לְהוֹשִׁיעָהּ לְמַעַנִי וּלְמַעַן
דָּוִד עַבְדִּי: {ס}

^{לו} וַיֵּצֵא מֶלֶךְ אֲשׁוּר מֵאֶחָד מֵעֲבָדָיו וַיִּשְׁלַח
וַיִּשְׁכְּמוּ אֶלָּה וַיִּשְׁכְּמוּ בַּבֹּקֶר וַהֲגִה כָלִם
פְּגָרִים מֵתִים: ^{לי} וַיִּסַּע וַיֵּלֶךְ וַיָּשָׁב סְנַחֲרִיב מֶלֶךְ-
אֲשׁוּר וַיָּשָׁב בְּנִינֹה: ^{לח} וַיְהִי הוּא מִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה בֵּית
נִסְרֹךְ אֱלֹהָיו וְאַדְרַמֶּלֶךְ וְשַׂרְאֲצַר בְּנָיו הִכְּהוּ בַחֲרֹב
וְהָמָּה נִמְלְטוּ אֶרֶץ אֲרָרַט וַיִּמְלֹךְ אֶסְרַחְדֹּן בֶּן
תַּחֲתִיו: {ס}

House of Judah will bring forth new roots below and fruits above. ³² For a remnant will issue from Jerusalem, and survivors from Mount Zion. Yahweh Sabaoth's zeal will accomplish this."

³³ "This, then, is what Yahweh says about the king of Assyria: He will not enter this city, will shoot no arrow at it, confront it with no shield, nor throw up earthwork against it. ³⁴ By the road by which he came, by the same, he will return; he will not enter this city, declares Yahweh. ³⁵ I shall protect this city and save it for my sake and my servant David's sake."

³⁶ Then the angel of Yahweh went out and struck down a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp. When they rose in the early morning, there they lay, so many corpses. ³⁷ King Sennacherib of Assyria left, returned home, and stayed in Nineveh. ³⁸ As he was worshipping in the temple of his god Nisroch, his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword and escaped into the land of Ararat. His son Esarhaddon succeeded him.

³² In this context, God's 'zeal' refers to his intense devotion to and love for his people, which prompts him to protect and restore them.

³³ The literal translation of 'at it' is 'there', but this is a bit confusing in contemporary English.

³⁴ NETB opens this verse, here following the MT, NJB & NRSV, with, "He will go back the way he came."

³⁵ This verse recalls Nathan's words to David (2S 7:12-17).

³⁶ In place of 'then', here following the MT (and NRSV), the NJB, following 2K 19:35, opens with 'that same night'.

³⁷ The NJB has simply 'Sennacherib', omitting the title 'King of Assyria'.

³⁸ The assassination of Sennacherib probably took place in 681 BCE; some extra-Biblical sources mention it, though they refer to only one assassin.

ישעיהו פרק לח

א¹ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם חָלָה חֶזְקִיָּהוּ לְמוֹת וַיָּבֹא אֵלָיו
יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ בֶן-אֲמוֹץ הַנָּבִיא וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו כֹּה-אָמַר
יְהוָה צֹו לְבִיתְךָ כִּי מָת אַתָּה וְלֹא תַחֲיָה: ב² וַיִּסָּב
חֶזְקִיָּהוּ פָנָיו אֶל-הַקִּיר וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל אֶל-יְהוָה: ג³ וַיֹּאמֶר
אָנָּה יְהוָה זְכַר-נָא אֶת אֲשֶׁר הִתְהַלַּכְתִּי לִפְנֶיךָ
בְּאֵמֶת וּבְלֵב שָׁלֵם וְהֵטוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ עָשִׂיתִי וַיִּבֶךְ
חֶזְקִיָּהוּ בְּכִי גָדוֹל: {ס}

ד⁴ וַיְהִי דְבַר-יְהוָה אֶל-יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ לֵאמֹר: ה⁵ הֲלוֹךְ
וְאָמַרְתָּ אֶל-חֶזְקִיָּהוּ כֹה-אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי דָוִד
אָבִיךָ שָׁמַעְתִּי אֶת-תְּפִלָּתְךָ רָאִיתִי אֶת-דַּמְעֹתֶיךָ
הַנְּגִיל יוֹסֵף עַל-יָמָיךָ חֲמֵשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה: ו⁶ וּמִכָּף
מֶלֶךְ-אַשּׁוּר אֶצִּילְךָ וְאֶת הָעִיר הַזֹּאת וְגִנּוֹתַי עַל-
הָעִיר הַזֹּאת: ז⁷ וְזֶה-לָּךְ הָאוֹת מֵאֵת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר
יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה אֶת-הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר: ח⁸ הַנְּגִיל

ISAIAH 38

¹ About then, Hezekiah fell ill to the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz came and said to him, "Yahweh says this, "Put your affairs in order, for you are going to die, you will not live."" ² Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and addressed this prayer to Yahweh. ³ "Ah, Yahweh, remember, I beg you, that I have behaved faithfully and with a sincere heart in your presence and done what you regarded as right." And Hezekiah shed many tears.

⁴ Then the word of Yahweh came to Isaiah, ⁵ "Go and say to Hezekiah, "Yahweh, the God of your ancestor David, says this: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears. I shall cure you in three days' time and you will go up to the Temple of Yahweh. I shall add fifteen years to your life. ⁶ I shall save you and this city from the king of Assyria's clutches and defend this city for my sake and my servant David's sake. ⁷ Here is the sign from Yahweh that he will do what he has said. ⁸ Look, I shall make

ISAIAH 38

¹ Literally translated, this verse opens, "In those days..."

² Hezekiah faced the wall so that it would be clear he was not speaking to any person but to God.

³ The form of Hezekiah's prayer for recovery is found in the Psalms (compare Ps 6).

⁴ The word 'saying', at the end of this verse, is omitted for stylistic reasons.

⁵ 'Fifteen years' of life, in the context of the times, is a truly wonderful gift.

⁶ The NJB & NETB insert vv. 21-22 after v. 6 (see #21).

⁷ For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV has, "This is the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing that he has promised."

⁸ 'The declining sun' follows the LXX, Peshitta and Tg; the MT has 'with the sun' misplaced after 'steps'. 'The steps to Ahaz's roof room' follows 1QIsa^a (and the NJB); the MT (and NRSV) has 'the steps of Ahaz'.

מִשִּׁיב אֶת־צֶל הַמַּעֲלֹת אֲשֶׁר יֵרְדֶּה בַּמַּעֲלֹת אַחַז
בְּשֶׁמֶשׁ אַחֲרָנִית עָשָׂר מַעֲלֹת וַתָּשָׁב הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ עָשָׂר
מַעֲלֹת בַּמַּעֲלֹת אֲשֶׁר יֵרְדֶּה: {ס}

ט מִכְתָּב לְחִזְקִיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה בַּחֲלָתּוֹ וַיְחִי מִחֲלָיו:

י אֲנִי אֲמַרְתִּי בְדָמִי יָמִי אֵלֶכָה
בְּשַׁעְרֵי שְׁאוֹל פִּקְדָתִי יֵתֶר שְׁנוֹתַי:
יא אֲמַרְתִּי לֹא־אֶרְאֶה יָהּ
יָהּ בְּאֶרֶץ הַחַיִּים
לֹא־אֶבִּיט אָדָם עוֹד
עַם־יוֹשְׁבֵי חָדָל:
יב דּוֹרֵי נֶסֶע וְנִגְלָה מִנִּי
כְּאֶהֱל רַעִי
קִפְדָתִי כְּאֶרֶג חֵיל מִדְּלָה יִבְצַעֲנִי
מִיּוֹם עַד־לַיְלָה תִּשְׁלִימָנִי:
יג שׁוֹיִתִּי עַד־בֹּקֶר כְּאֶרֶי
בֶּן יִשְׁבֵּר כָּל־עַצְמוֹתַי
מִיּוֹם עַד־לַיְלָה תִּשְׁלִימָנִי:

the shadow cast by the declining sun on the steps – the steps to Ahaz’s roof room – go back ten steps.” And the sun went back the ten steps by which it had declined.

⁹ A letter of Hezekiah king of Judah when he was sick and recovered:

- ¹⁰ I thought: In the noon of my life, I am to depart.
At the gates of Sheol, I shall be held for the rest of my days.
- ¹¹ I thought: I shall never see Yah again,
Yah in the land of the living;
I shall never see again any one
of those who live on earth.
- ¹² My home has been pulled up and thrown away
like a shepherd’s tent;
like a weaver, I rolled up my life; he cuts me from the loom.
From dawn to dark, you have been making an end of me.
- ¹³ I cry out until daybreak;
like a lion, he has crushed all my bones.
From dawn to dark, you have been making an end of me.

⁹ In place of ‘letter’, here following the MT (מִכְתָּב) and NRSV, the NJB has the conjectural ‘canticle’. There is nothing in the text to connect this ‘canticle’ with Hezekiah and it does not occur in the parallel narrative of 2K 20. It is a post-Exilic psalm representing the complaint of a devout believer stricken with a serious and sudden illness (compare Ps 32, 1S 2:1–10, Jon 2:2–9). The text is in a poor state of preservation.

¹⁰ The precise meaning of the phrase בְּדָמִי יָמִי (‘in the noon of my days’) is uncertain.

¹¹ In place of ‘on earth’ (חֲדָל), attested in a few medieval MSS, the MT has חָדָל, which appears to be derived from a verbal root meaning ‘to cease’.

¹² The meaning of the Hebrew for the last line is uncertain (as in v. 13).

¹³ ‘I cry out’ is a conjectural translation (שׁוֹיִתִּי); the MT has ‘I soothed’ (שׁוֹיִתִּי).

יד כָּסוּס עָגוּר בֶּן אֶצְפָּצֵף
 אֶהְגֶּה כִּיּוֹנָה
 דָּלוּ עֵינַי לַמָּרוֹם
 אֲדַנִּי עֲשָׂה־לִּי עֲרֹבָנִי:
 טו מֶה־אֲדַבֵּר וְאֶמְרֶלִי
 וְהוּא עָשָׂה
 אֲדַדָּה כָּל־שְׁנוֹתַי
 עַל־מַר נַפְשִׁי:
 טז אֲדַנִּי עָלֵיהֶם יַחֲיוּ
 וּלְכָל־בָּהֶן חַיִּי רוּחִי
 וְתַחֲלִימֵנִי וְהַחְיֵנִי:
 יז הִנֵּה לְשָׁלוֹם מִרְלִי מָר
 וְאַתָּה חֲשַׁקְתָּ נַפְשִׁי
 מִשַּׁחַת בָּלִי
 כִּי הִשְׁלַכְתָּ אַחֲרַי גֹּךְ כָּל־חַטָּאִי:
 יח כִּי לֹא שְׂאוֹל תּוֹדֶךָ
 מוֹת יִהְלָךְ
 לֹא־יִשְׁבְּרוּ יוֹרְדֵי־בּוֹר

- 14 I twitter like a swallow,
 I moan like a dove,
 and my eyes have grown dim from looking up.
 Lord, I am overwhelmed, come to my help.
- 15 How can I speak and what can I say to him?
 He is the one to act.
 He must eke out the rest of my years
 in bitterness of soul.
- 16 The Lord is over them; they live,
 and everything in them lives by his spirit.
 You will cure me. Restore me to life.
- 17 Surely, it was for my welfare that I had great bitterness,
 but you have held back my soul
 from the pit of nothingness,
 you have thrust all my sins behind you.
- 18 For, Sheol cannot praise you,
 nor Death celebrate you;
 those who go down to the pit cannot hope

14 The term here translated 'Lord' (and also in v. 16) is אֲדַנִּי.

15 'What can I say to him' follows the Tg (and NJB); the MT (and NRSV) has 'for he has spoken to me'. The translation of the last 2 lines (here following the NJB) is purely speculative; the NRSV has, "All my sleep has fled because of the bitterness of my soul."

16 The text of the first 2 lines is corrupt; one could emend to read, "Oh Lord, with you are the days of my life; yours alone is the life of my spirit."

17 'Held back' follows the LXX and NRSV; the MT has 'loved' and the NJB has 'preserved'.

18 The negative particle is understood by ellipsis in the 2nd line. 'Sheol' is the place of the dead.

אֶל-אַמְתָּךְ:

יט חי חי הוא יודך

כְּמוֹנִי הַיּוֹם

אב לְבָנִים יוֹדִיעַ אֶל-אַמְתָּךְ:

כ יהוה להושיעני

וְנִגְנוֹתַי נִגְנָן כָּל-יְמֵי חַיֵּינוּ

עַל-בֵּית יְהוָה:

כא וַיֹּאמֶר יִשְׁעִיהוּ יִשְׂאוּ דִבְלַת תַּאֲנִים וַיִּמָּרְחוּ עַל-

הַשָּׁחִין וַיְחִי: כב וַיֹּאמֶר חֲזַקִּיהוּ מָה אֹת כִּי אָעִלָּה

בֵּית יְהוָה: {ס}

for your faithfulness.

¹⁹ The living, the living, they praise you,
as I do today.

Fathers tell their sons about your constancy.

²⁰ Yahweh will come to my help
and we will make our harps resound all the days of our life
in the Temple of Yahweh.

²¹ Now Isaiah had said, "Bring a fig poultice and apply it to the ulcer
and he will recover." ²² Hezekiah said, "What is the sign to tell me that
I shall be going up to the Temple of Yahweh?"

¹⁹ The NRSV has 'thank' in place of 'praise', here following the NJB.

²⁰ The infinitive construct is used in the 1st line to indicate that an action is imminent.

²¹ Vv. 21-22 were misplaced when the letter of vv. 9-20 was inserted (in the NJB & NETB, they are placed between vv. 6 and 7, where they properly belong). Another possibility is that these verses were not in the original account, and a scribe, familiar with the 2K version of the story, appended this text to the end of the account in Isaiah 38. The parallel in 2K 20 gives a more complete account and possibly witnesses to the existence of two recensions.

²² The NRSV adds 'also had' before 'said'.

ISAIAH 39

ישעיהו פרק לט

^א בַּעַת הַהִיא שָׁלַח מֶרֶדַךְ בֶּלְאָדָן בֶּן־בִּלְאָדָן מֶלֶךְ־בָּבֶל סִפְרִים וּמִנְחָה אֶל־חֲזַקְיָהוּ וַיִּשְׁמַע כִּי חָלָה וַיַּחְזֹק: ^ב וַיִּשְׁמַח עָלֵיהֶם חֲזַקְיָהוּ וַיֵּרְאֵם אֶת־בֵּית נִכְתָּה אֶת־הַכֶּסֶף וְאֶת־הַזָּהָב וְאֶת־הַבְּשָׂמִים וְאֶת־הַשֶּׁמֶן הַטּוֹב וְאֶת כָּל־בֵּית כְּלָיו וְאֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר נִמְצָא בְּאֶצְרָתוֹ לֹא־הָיָה דָּבָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יֵרְאֶם חֲזַקְיָהוּ בְּבֵיתוֹ וּבְכָל־מִמְשַׁלְתּוֹ: {ס}

^ג וַיָּבֹא יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ הַנָּבִיא אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ חֲזַקְיָהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו מָה אָמְרוּ | הָאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה וּמֵאֵין יָבֹאוּ אֵלֶיךָ וַיֹּאמֶר חֲזַקְיָהוּ מֵאַרְץ רְחוֹקָה בָּאוּ אֵלַי מִבָּבֶל: ^ד וַיֹּאמֶר מָה רָאוּ בְּבֵיתְךָ וַיֹּאמֶר חֲזַקְיָהוּ אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵיתִי רָאוּ לֹא־הָיָה דָּבָר אֲשֶׁר לֹא־הָיָה בְּאֶצְרָתִי: ^ה וַיֹּאמֶר יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ אֶל־חֲזַקְיָהוּ שִׁמְעַתְּ דְּבַר־יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת: ^ו הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים וְנִשְׁאָא כָּל־אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵיתְךָ וְאֲשֶׁר אֶצְרוּ אֲבֹתֶיךָ עַד־הַיּוֹם

¹ At that time, the king of Babylon, Merodach-Baladan son of Baladan, sent envoys with letters and a gift to Hezekiah, for he had heard of his illness and his recovery. ² Hezekiah was delighted at this and showed the ambassadors the entire treasury, the silver, gold, spices, precious oils, his armoury too, and everything to be seen in his storehouses. There was nothing in his palace or in his whole domain that Hezekiah did not show them.

³ The prophet Isaiah then came to Hezekiah and asked him, “What did these men say and whence have they come to you?” Hezekiah replied, “They have come from a far country, from Babylon.” ⁴ He said, “What have they seen in your palace?” Hezekiah answered, “They have seen everything in my palace; there is nothing in my storehouses I have not shown them.” ⁵ Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Listen to the word of Yahweh Sabaoth, ⁶ “The days are coming when everything in your palace, everything that your fathers have amassed until now, will be

ISAIAH 39

¹ The NJB lacks ‘envoys with’, here following the NRSV.

² The tribute paid to Sennacherib (701 BCE) depleted Hezekiah’s treasury (2K 18:14–16), much of which had been derived from Arabian trade (2Ch 32:27–29).

³ This seems to be Hezekiah’s first encounter with Babylon.

⁴ Isaiah suspected intrigue with the Babylonian revolutionary.

⁵ The description of vv. 5–7 fits the events of 597 BCE (see 2K 24:10–17).

⁶ The NJB & NRSV have ‘ancestors’ in place of ‘fathers’, here following the MT.

הַזֶּה בָּבֶל לֹא־יִתָּר דָּבָר אֲמַר יְהוָה: ^ז וּמִבְּנֵיךָ אֲשֶׁר
יֵצְאוּ מִמֶּךָ אֲשֶׁר תּוֹלִיד יִקְחוּ וְהָיוּ סָרִיסִים בְּהִיכַל
מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל: ^ח וַיֹּאמֶר חֲזַקִּיהוּ אֶל־יִשְׁעֵיהוּ טוֹב דְּבַר־
יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּרְתָּ וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי יִהְיֶה שָׁלוֹם וְאַמֶּת
בִּימֵי: {פ}

carried off to Babylon. Not a thing will be left,” Yahweh says. ⁷ “Some of your own sons, born to you, will be abducted to be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.”” ⁸ Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “This word of Yahweh that you announce is reassuring.” For, he was thinking, “There will be peace and security during my lifetime.”

⁷ The NJB opens this verse, here following the MT & NRSV, with, “Sons sprung from you.”

⁸ With this postponement of punishment, compare 1K 21:27–29.

ישעיהו פרק מ

א נַחֲמוּ נַחֲמוּ עַמִּי
יֹאמֶר אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:
ב דַּבְּרוּ עַל־לֵב יְרוּשָׁלַם
וְקִרְאוּ אֵלֶיהָ
כִּי מִלָּאָה צָבָאָה
כִּי נִרְצָה עֲוֹנָהּ
כִּי לִקְחָהּ מִיַּד יְהוָה
כַּפָּלִים בְּכָל־חַטָּאתֶיהָ: {ס}
ג קוֹל קוֹרֵא בַּמִּדְבָּר
פָּנוּ דֶרֶךְ יְהוָה
יִשְׁרוּ בַּעֲרָבָה
מְסֻלָּה לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ:
ד כָּל־גֵּיא יִנָּשָׂא
וְכָל־הָר וְגִבְעָה יִשְׁפָּלוּ

ISAIAH 40

- 1 "Console my people, console them,"
says your God.
- 2 "Speak to the heart of Jerusalem
and cry to her
that her period of warfare is ended,
that her guilt has been atoned for,
that, from the hand of Yahweh, she has received
double punishment for all her sins."
- 3 A voice cries, "Prepare in the desert
a way for Yahweh.
Make a straight highway for our God
across the wastelands.
- 4 Let every valley be lifted up,
every mountain and hill be levelled,

ISAIAH 40

This second part of the Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–55, is traditionally known as the 'Book of the Consolation of Israel', from the opening verses. The author is often called 'Second Isaiah' – an anonymous prophet active at the end of the Exile.

- 1 The pronominal suffix '(your)' is 2MP; the identity of the addressee is uncertain: **1** God's people may be addressed; or **2** the identified heralds commanded to comfort Jerusalem.
- 2 In place of 'warfare' (צבא), here following the MT, the NJB has 'service'.
- 3 The identity of the 'voice', obeying the order of v. 2, has been deliberately left mysterious by the prophet. The evangelists (Mt 3:3, Mk 1:3, Lk 3:4–6, Jn 1:23) quote this text in its LXX form, φωνῇ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ Ἐτοιμάσατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου – "A voice of one who cries in the wilderness: Prepare a way for the Lord..."
- 4 In place of 'lifted up', here following the MT (& NRSV), the NJB, following the LXX (πληρωθήσεται), has 'filled in'.

וְהָיָה הָעֵקֶב לְמִישׁוֹר וְהָרָכְסִים לְבִקְעָה: וְנִגְלָה כְבוֹד יְהוָה וְרָאוּ כָל-בָּשָׂר יַחְדָּו כִּי פִי יְהוָה דִּבֶּר: {פ}		every cliff become a plateau, every escarpment a plain.
קוֹל אָמַר קְרֹא וְאָמַר מָה אֶקְרֹא כָל-הַבָּשָׂר חֲצִיר וְכָל-חֲסִדּוֹ כָצִיץ הַשָּׂדֶה: יִבֶּשׂ חֲצִיר נֶבֶל-צִיץ כִּי רוּחַ יְהוָה נֹשֶׁבֶת בּוֹ אֲכֹן חֲצִיר הָעֵם: יִבֶּשׂ חֲצִיר נֶבֶל צִיץ וְדִבְר־אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִקּוּם לְעוֹלָם: {ס}	ה ו ז ח	5 Then the glory of Yahweh will be revealed and all humanity will see it together, for the mouth of Yahweh has spoken.” 6 A voice said, “Cry aloud,” and I said, “What shall I cry for?” All humanity is grass and all its beauty like the flowers of the field. 7 The grass withers, the flowers fade when the breath of Yahweh blows on them. The grass is surely the people. 8 The grass withers, the flowers fade, but the word of our God remains forever.
עַל הַר-גְּבוּהָ עֲלִי-לָךְ מִבְּשֶׁרֶת צִיּוֹן הֲרִימִי בַכַּח קוֹלְךָ מִבְּשֶׁרֶת יְרוּשָׁלַם	ט	9 Go up to a high mountain, messenger of Zion. Shout as loud as you can, messenger of Jerusalem!

- ⁵ On the return of ‘the glory of Yahweh’, see Ezk 1:28, 10:18–19, 43:1–5). The literal translation of ‘humanity’ is ‘flesh’.
- ⁶ The celestial voice replaces the theophanies of prophetic call (6:8–13, Jr 1:4–10, Ezk 1–2), indicating a more lively awareness of God’s transcendence. The prophet asks for and receives clear directions for the mission entrusted to him. Vv. 6^b–8 are quoted in 1P 1:24–25.
- ⁷ The name **רוּחַ יְהוָה** does not here refer to Yahweh’s Spirit but his rule over nature, including the hot, drying winds (cf. 59:19, Ps 147:18).
- ⁸ Here, the divine ‘word’ is God’s decreed promise assuring Jerusalem that her suffering is over and his glorious return imminent (vv. 1–5).
- ⁹ In place of ‘messenger of Zion’, here following the NJB, the NRSV has ‘O Zion, herald of good tidings’, and likewise with the 4th line.

הָרִמִּי אֶל־תִּירְאִי
אֲמַרְי לְעָרֵי יְהוּדָה
הִנֵּה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:
י הִנֵּה אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה בַּחֲזֹק יָבוֹא
וְזָרְעוּ מִשְׁלָה לּוֹ
הִנֵּה שָׂכְרוֹ אִתּוֹ
וּפְעֻלָּתוֹ לִפְנָיו:
יא כָּרְעָה עֲדָרֻו יִרְעָה
בְּזָרְעוֹ יִקְבֹּץ טְלָאִים
וּבְחִיקוֹ יִשָּׂא
עֲלֹזֹת יִנְהַל: {ס}
יב מִי־מָדַד בְּשַׁעֲלוֹ מַיִם
וְשָׁמַיִם בַּזָּרֶת תִּכְּנֹן
וְכָל בִּשְׁלֹשׁ עֶפְרַר הָאָרֶץ
וְשָׁקַל בַּפֶּלֶס הָרִים
וּגְבַעוֹת בְּמֶאזְנִים:
יג מִי־תִכְּנֵן אֶת־רוּחַ יְהוָה וְאִישׁ
עֲצָתוֹ יוֹדִיעֵנּוּ:
יד אֶת־מִי נֹעֵץ וַיְבִינֶהוּ

Shout fearlessly;
say to the towns of Judah,
"Here is your God."

- 10 Here is Lord Yahweh coming with power,
his arm maintains his authority,
his reward is with him
and his prize preceded him.
- 11 He is like a shepherd feeding his flock,
gathering lambs in his arms,
holding them against his breast
and leading to their rest the mother ewes.
- 12 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand
and calculated the heavens to the nearest inch,
gauged the dust of the earth to the nearest bushel,
weighed the mountains in scales
and the hills in a balance?
- 13 Who directed the spirit of Yahweh,
what counsellor could have instructed him?
- 14 Whom has he consulted to enlighten him,

10 The preposition בְּ ('with') carries the nuance 'in the capacity of', indicating Yahweh has the quality expressed by the noun (חֲזִק - 'power').

11 The theme of the Good Shepherd is also stated by Jr 23:1-6, elaborated by Ezk 34 and further developed by Jesus (Mt 18:12-14, Jn 10:11-18).

12 The NJB, following 1QIsa^a, has 'waters of the seas' in place of 'waters'; here, we follow the MT (& NRSV).

13 In this context, רוּחַ ('spirit') likely refers to Yahweh's mind, or mental faculties, rather than his personal Spirit.

14 The phrase אֶת־מִי נֹעֵץ וַיְבִינֶהוּ ('path of judgement') could be translated, in this context, as 'the way that is proper or fitting'.

וּלְמַדְהוּ בְּאַרְחַּ מִשְׁפָּט
וּלְמַדְהוּ דַּעַת
וְדַרְךְ תְּבוּנוֹת יוֹדִיעֵנִי:
הֵן גּוֹיִם כְּמַר מִדְּלִי טו
וּכְשֶׁחַק מֵאֲזָנִים נִחְשְׁבוּ
הֵן אֲיִים כְּדָק יִטּוֹל:
וּלְבָנוֹן אֵין דֵּי בַעַר טז
וְחֵיתוֹ אֵין דֵּי עוֹלָה: {פ}
כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם כְּאֵין נִגְדּוּ יז
מֵאַפָּס וְתֵהוּ נִחְשְׁבוּ־לֹו:
וְאַל־מִי תִדְמִיּוֹן יח
אֵל וּמַה־דְּמוּת תַּעֲרֹכוּ לֹו:
הַפֶּסֶל נִסְדָּךְ חָרָשׁ יט
וְצֹרֶף בְּזָהָב יִרְקַעֵנּוּ
וְרִתְקוֹת כֶּסֶף צוֹרֶף:
הַמֶּסֶכֶן תְּרוּמָה כ
עַץ לֹא־יִרְקַב יִבְחַר

- to instruct him in the path of judgement,
to teach him knowledge
and show him how to understand?
- 15 See, the nations are like a drop in a bucket,
they count as a grain of dust on the scales.
See, coasts and islands weigh no more than fine powder.
- 16 The Lebanon is not enough for the burning fires,
nor are its animals enough for the burnt offering.
- 17 All the nations are as nothing before him,
for him they count as nothingness and emptiness.
- 18 To whom can you compare God?
What image can you contrive of him?
- 19 The craftsman casts an idol,
a goldsmith overlays it with gold
and casts silver chains for it.
- 20 Someone too poor to afford a sacrifice
chooses a piece of wood that will not rot;

15 The 'islands', frequently mentioned in the Book of Consolation, are the archipelagos and distant coasts of the Mediterranean.

16 The point here is that not even the Lebanon forest could supply enough wood and animals for an adequate sacrifice to Yahweh.

17 'As nothingness' follows 1QIsa^a (and the NJB); the MT (and NRSV) has 'less than nothing'.

18 This verse expresses the incomparability of the true God (cf. 25:1), which forms the basis for the prohibition of images in the Decalogue.

19 The literal translation of 'casts' is 'pours out'.

20 The translation of the first line is uncertain; the NRSV reads, "As a gift, one chooses mulberry wood." The first two words are problematic; here (as NJB), we take מִסְכֵּן as an otherwise unattested Pual participle from סָכַן, 'to be poor', and translate 'the one who is poor'. תְּרוּמָה ('sacrifice'), are then taken as an adverbial accusative, 'with respect to a sacrifice'.

חֲרַשׁ חָכֵם יִבְקֹשׁ-לוֹ
 לַהֲכִין פֶּסֶל לֹא יִמוּט: {ס}
 כֹּא הֲלוֹא תִדְעוּ הֲלוֹא תִשְׁמְעוּ
 הֲלוֹא הִגַּד מֶרֶאשׁ לָכֶם
 הֲלוֹא הִבִּינוּתֶם מוֹסְדוֹת הָאָרֶץ:
 כִּב הַיֹּשֵׁב עַל-חֻג הָאָרֶץ
 וַיֵּשְׁבֶיהָ כַּחֲגָבִים
 הַנּוֹטָה כְּדֶק שָׁמַיִם
 וַיִּמְתְּחֶם כְּאַהֲל לַשָּׁבֶת:
 כִּג הַנּוֹתֵן רוֹזְנִים לְאֵין
 שְׁפָטִי אָרֶץ כִּתְּהוּ עֲשֵׂה:
 כִּד אֵף בַּל-נִטְעוּ אֵף בַּל-זָרְעוּ
 אֵף בַּל-שָׂרַשׁ בָּאָרֶץ גִּזְעָם
 וְגַם-נִשֹּׁף בָּהֶם וַיִּבָּשׁוּ
 וַיִּסְעֶרָה כְּקַשׁ תִּשָּׂאֵם: {ס}
 כֵּה וְאֵל-מִי תִדְמִיוֹנִי וְאִשׁוּהָ
 יֹאמַר קְדוֹשׁ:

he then seeks out a skilled craftsman
 to set up an idol that will not totter.

- 21 Did you not know? Have you not heard?
 Was it not told you from the beginning?
 Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?
 22 He who sits enthroned above the circle of the earth,
 the inhabitants of which are like grasshoppers,
 stretches out the heavens like a curtain,
 spreads them out like a tent to live in.
 23 He reduces princes to nothing,
 the rulers of the world to mere emptiness.
 24 Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown,
 scarcely has their stem taken root in the soil,
 than he blows on them and they wither
 and the storm carries them away like chaff.
 25 "To whom can you compare me,
 or who is my equal?" says the Holy One.

21 For the last line, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "Have you not understood how the earth was set on its foundations?"

22 The otherwise unattested noun דֶּק, translated here 'curtain' (following the NRSV – the NJB has 'cloth'), is apparently derived from the verbal root דִּקַּק, ('to crush'), from which is derived the adjective דָּק, ('thin'); the nuance 'curtain' is implied from the parallelism (see 'tent' in the next line). The meaning of the otherwise unattested verb וַיִּמְתְּחֶם ('spreads ... out') is determined from the parallelism (note the corresponding verb 'stretches ... out' in the previous line) and supported by later Hebrew and Aramaic cognates.

23 For this verse, here following the NJB, the NRSV reads: "who brings princes to naught, and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing."

24 The NRSV has 'earth', 'tempest' and 'stubble' in place, respectively, of 'soil', 'storm' and 'chaff' (here following the NJB).

25 'Second Isaiah' adopts the same title (see 41:14, *et cetera*) by which Isaiah chose to refer to the God of Israel (see #6:3).

כו שְׂאוּ-מַרוֹם עֵינֵיכֶם וּרְאוּ מִי-בָרָא אֱלֹהִים
 הַמוֹצִיא בַמִּסְפָּר צְבָאָם
 לְכֹל בְּשֵׁם יְקָרָא
 מְרַב אוֹנִים וְאִמִּין כָּח
 אִישׁ לֹא נֶעְדָּר: {ס}
 כז לְמָה תֹאמַר יַעֲקֹב וּתְדַבֵּר יִשְׂרָאֵל
 נִסְתָּרָה דַּרְכִּי מִיְהוָה
 וּמֵאֱלֹהֵי מִשְׁפָּטֵי יַעֲבֹר:
 כח הֲלוֹא יָדַעְתָּ אִם-לֹא שָׁמַעְתָּ
 אֱלֹהֵי עוֹלָם | יְהוָה
 בּוֹרֵא קְצוֹת הָאָרֶץ לֹא
 יִיָּעַף וְלֹא יִיָּגַע אֵין חֶקֶר לְתַבּוּנָתוֹ:
 כט נָתַן לִיָּעַף כָּח
 וּלְאֵין אוֹנִים עֲצָמָה יִרְבֶּה:
 ל וַיַּעֲפוּ נְעָרִים וַיִּגְעוּ
 וּבַחֲוָרִים כָּשׁוּל יִכָּשְׁלוּ:
 לא וְקוֹי יְהוָה יַחֲלִיפוּ כָח
 יַעֲלוּ אֶבֶר כַּנְּשָׁרִים

- 26 Lift your eyes and look: he who created these things
 leads out their army in order,
 summoning each of them by name.
 Because his power is so mighty, his strength so great,
 not one fails to answer.
- 27 How can you say, Jacob, how can you repeat, Israel,
 "My way is hidden from Yahweh,
 my rights are ignored by my God?"
- 28 Didn't you know? Haven't you heard that the everlasting God,
 Yahweh, created the remotest parts of the earth.
 He does not grow tired or weary;
 his understanding is beyond fathoming.
- 29 He gives strength to the weary
 and he strengthens the powerless.
- 30 Youths grow tired and weary,
 the young stumble and fall.
- 31 But those who hope in Yahweh will regain their strength,
 they will rise up on wings like eagles,

26 In Babylon, where this proclamation was probably written, the stars were regarded as deities.

27 Jacob-Israel represents the chosen people, here the Babylonian Exiles, asking if Yahweh has forgotten his people (cf., earlier, Ezk 37:11).

28 Exiled Israel's complaint (v. 27) implies that God might be limited in some way.

29 For the 2nd line, here following NJB & NRSV, NETB reads, "to the ones who lack power, he gives renewed energy."

30 The literal translation of 'stumble and fall' is 'stumbling they stumble'; the verbal idea is emphasised by the infinitive absolute.

31 In place of 'rise up on', here following the MT, the NJB has 'sprout'.

יְרוּצוּ וְלֹא יִיָּגְעוּ
יֵלְכוּ וְלֹא יִיָּעֲפוּ: {ס}

though they run, they will not grow weary,
though they walk, they will never tire.

ישעיהו פרק מא

א הִחְרִישׁוּ אֵלַי אַיִם
וְלֹאֲמִים יִחְלִיפוּ כֹחַ
יָגִשׁוּ אֶזְיָדְבְּרוּ
יִחְדּוּ לְמִשְׁפָּט נִקְרְבָה:
ב מִי הָעִיר מִמִּזְרָח
צֶדֶק יִקְרָאֶהוּ לְרִגְלוֹ
יִתֵּן לִפְנֵי גוֹיִם
וּמַלְכִים יִרְדֹּךְ
יִתֵּן כַּעֲפָר חֲרִבּוֹ
כֶּקֶשׁ נִדְף קִשְׁתּוֹ:
ג יִרְדָּפֵם יַעֲבֹר שְׁלוֹם
אֲרַח בְּרִגְלָיו לֹא יָבוֹא:
ד מִי־פָעַל וַעֲשָׂה
קָרָא הַדְּרוֹת מֶרֶאשׁ
אֲנִי יְהוָה רִאשׁוֹן
וְאַת־אַחֲרָיִם אֲנִי־הוּא:
ה רְאוּ אַיִם וַיִּרְאוּ

ISAIAH 41

- 1 Listen to me in silence, O coastlands,
and let the peoples renew their strength;
let them come forward and speak;
let us assemble for judgement.
- 2 "Who stirs up this one from the east?
Who officially commissions him for service?
He hands nations over to him,
and tramples kings under foot;
he makes them like dust with his sword,
like driven stubble with his bow.
- 3 He pursues them and advances unhindered,
his feet scarcely touching the road.
- 4 Who has acted thus, who has done this?
He who calls each generation from the beginning:
I, Yahweh, who am the first
and until the last I shall still be there."
- 5 The coastlands have seen and taken fright;

ISAIAH 41

- 1 In response to the people's doubts (see 40:27), this great poem foretells the coming of a liberator (Cyrus).
- 2 For this verse, here following the NRSV/NETB, the NJB reads, "Who has raised from the east, him whom saving justice summons in its train, him to whom Yahweh delivers up the nations and subjects kings, him who reduces them to dust with his sword, and to driven stubble with his bow."
- 3 'Scarcely touching' (literally 'with his feet he does not touch') is a conjectural translation; the MT has 'he does not come' (יָבוֹא).
- 4 For further use of the expression used here for the eternal nature of Yahweh, see Rv 1:8,17, 21:6, 22:13.
- 5 Another translation for 'coastlands' is 'islands'.

קְצוֹת הָאָרֶץ יִחְרְדוּ
 קִרְבוּ וַיֵּאָתִיוּ:
 אִישׁ אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ יַעֲזֹרוּ ^ו
 וְלֹא־חִיו יֹאמַר חֲזֹק:
 וַיְחַזֵּק חֲרָשׁ אֶת־צֹרֶף ^ז
 מַחְלִיק פִּטִּישׁ אֶת־הוֹלֵם פֶּעַם
 אָמַר לְדַבֵּק טוֹב הוּא
 וַיַּחְזִקְהוּ בַּמַּסְמָרִים לֹא יִמוּט: {ס}
 וְאַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל עַבְדִּי ^ח
 יַעֲקֹב אֲשֶׁר בָּחַרְתִּיךָ
 זֶרַע אַבְרָהָם אֱהָבִי:
 אֲשֶׁר הִחְזַקְתִּיךָ מִקְצוֹת הָאָרֶץ ^ט
 וּמֵאַצִּילֶיָּה קָרָאתִיךָ
 וְאָמַר לְךָ עַבְדִּי־אַתָּה
 בָּחַרְתִּיךָ וְלֹא מֵאֲסַתִּיךָ:
 אֶל־תִּירָא כִּי עִמָּךְ־אֲנִי ^י
 אֶל־תִּשְׁתַּע כִּי־אֲנִי אֱלֹהֶיךָ

the remotest parts of the earth are trembling:
 they are approaching; they are here!
 6 People help one another;
 they say to each other, "Take heart!"
 7 The woodworker encourages the smelter,
 the polisher encourages the hammerer,
 saying of the soldering, "It is sound;"
 and he fastens it with nails to keep it steady.
 8 But you, Israel, my servant,
 Jacob whom I have chosen,
 descendant of Abraham my friend;
 9 you whom I took, from the ends of the earth
 and summoned from countries far away,
 to whom I have said, "You are my servant,
 I have chosen you; I have not rejected you."
 10 Do not fear; for, I am with you.
 Do not be afraid; for, I am your God.

⁶ Vv. 6–7 are an interpolation belonging to 40:19–20 (see #40:18).

⁷ The word 'encourages' in the 2nd line is understood by ellipsis.

⁸ Rather than the relationship between master and slave, the notion of 'servant' here implies a relationship of trust and love.

⁹ A more literal translation of 'took' is 'took hold of'.

¹⁰ The verb תִּשְׁתַּע may be a Hitpael from the root שָׁעָה ('gaze') with metathesis of the stem prefix and the 1st root letter; one may then translate 'do not anxiously look about'. But this alleged Hitpael occurs only here and v. 23 and some take the verb as a Qal from the root שָׁתַע ('fear'). The poetic structure of the verse also supports the latter proposal; for, the form in question is parallel to יִרָא ('fear') in the 1st line.

אֶמְצִיךָ אֶף־עֲזֹרָתִיךָ
אֶף־תִּמְכָּתִיךָ בְּיָמִין צִדְקִי:
יֵא הֵן יִבְשׁוּ וַיִּכְלְמוּ
כָּל הַנִּחָרִים בָּךְ
יִהְיוּ כְּאֵין וַיֵּאבְדוּ
אֲנָשֵׁי רִיבָךְ:
יב תִּבְקֶשׂם וְלֹא תִמְצָאֵם
אֲנָשֵׁי מִצֵּתָךְ
יִהְיוּ כְּאֵין וּכְאֶפֶס
אֲנָשֵׁי מִלְחָמָתְךָ:
יג כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
מַחֲזִיק יְמִינְךָ
הָאֵמֶר לָךְ אֶל־תִּירָא
אֲנִי עֲזֹרָתִיךָ: {ס}
יד אֶל־תִּירָאִי תוֹלַעַת יַעֲקֹב
מִתִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל
אֲנִי עֲזֹרָתִיךָ נֶאֱמַר־יְהוָה
וְגֹאֲלֶךָ קָדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל:
טו הִנֵּה שֹׁמְרֶיךָ לְמוֹרֵג חֲרוּץ חֶדֶשׁ

- I give you strength, truly, I help you,
and truly, I hold you firm with my saving right hand.
- 11 Look, all those who rage against you
shall be put to shame and humiliated;
those who strive against you shall be as nothing
and shall perish.
- 12 You will look for those who fight you
but will not find them;
those who made war on you
shall be destroyed and brought to nothing.
- 13 For I, Yahweh, your God,
hold your right hand;
it is I who say to you, "Do not fear,
I shall help you."
- 14 Do not be afraid, Jacob, you worm,
you insect Israel!
I shall help you, declares Yahweh;
your redeemer is the Holy One of Israel.
- 15 Look, I am making you into a threshing-sledge,

11 In place of 'strive against', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'pick quarrels with'.

12 The NJB transposes the order of the last 2 lines; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

13 In place of 'it is I who say to you', here following the NRSV, the NJB has simply 'I tell you'.

14 The 'redeemer' (גֹּאֵל) is primarily the nearest male relative (see #Nb 35:19), who pays off debt and frees the debtor from prison.

15 The 'mountains' and 'hills' are possibly allusions to Mesopotamian ziggurats.

בֶּעַל פִּיפּוֹת
 תְּדוֹשׁ הָרִים וְתִדְק
 וְגִבְעוֹת כַּמָּץ תִּשִּׂים:
 תִּזְרֹם רוּחַ תִּשָּׂאם טז
 וְסַעְרָה תִּפּוֹץ אוֹתָם
 וְאַתָּה תִּגְלֵל בִּיהוָה
 בְּקִדּוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל תִּתְהַלֵּל: {ס}

יז הָעֲנִיִּים וְהָאֲבִיּוֹנִים מִבְּקָשִׁים מַיִם וְאֵין
 לְשׁוֹנָם בַּצֵּמָא נִשְׁתָּה
 אֲנִי יְהוָה אֶעֱנֶם
 אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא אֶעֱזֹבָם:
 יח אֶפְתָּח עַל־שְׂפֵי־נְהֹרוֹת
 וּבְתוֹךְ בְּקָעוֹת מַעֲיֵנוֹת
 אֲשִׁים מִדְּבַר לְאֲגַם־מַיִם
 וְאֶרֶץ צִיָּה לְמוֹצְאֵי מַיִם:
 יט אֶתֵּן בַּמִּדְבָּר אֲרוֹז שֹׁטֶה
 וְהִדְּס וְעֵץ שֶׁמֶן
 אֲשִׁים בְּעֶרְבָה
 בְּרוֹשׁ תִּדְהֹר וּתְאֻשׁוֹר יַחְדָּו:

new, with double teeth;
 you will thresh and beat the mountains to dust
 and reduce the hills to straw.

16 You will winnow them and the wind will carry them off,
 the gale will scatter them;
 whereas you will rejoice in Yahweh,
 will glory in the Holy One of Israel.

17 The oppressed and needy search for water, and there is none,
 their tongues are parched with thirst.
 I, Yahweh, shall answer them;
 I, the God of Israel, shall not abandon them.

18 I shall open rivers on barren heights
 and water holes down in the ravines;
 I shall turn the desert into a lake
 and dry ground into springs of water.

19 I shall plant the desert with cedar trees,
 acacias, myrtles, and olives;
 in the wastelands, I shall put cypresses,
 plane trees and pines side by side.

16 In place of 'gale', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'tempest' and NETB repeats 'wind'.

17 NETB has 'respond to their prayers' in place of 'answer them', here following the MT, NJB & NRSV.

18 Through the wonders attending the return from Exile, the prophet foresees features of the Messianic age (see 11:6, Ezk 47:1-12).

19 The NJB has 'box trees' in place of 'pines', here following the NRSV, and NETB has 'evergreens, firs and cypresses'.

כ לִמְעַן יֵרְאוּ וַיֵּדְעוּ
 וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ וַיִּשְׁכַּלּוּ יַחְדָּו
 כִּי יַד־יְהוָה עָשְׂתָה זֹאת
 וּקְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּרָאָה: {פ}
 כא קָרְבוּ רִיבְכֶם יֵהוּה
 הִגִּישׁוּ עֲצֻמוֹתֵיכֶם יֹאמֶר מֶלֶךְ יַעֲקֹב:
 כב יִגִּישׁוּ וַיִּגִּדּוּ לָנוּ
 אֵת אֲשֶׁר תִּקְרִינָה
 הָרָאשֹׁנוֹת | מָה הָנָה
 הִגִּידוּ וְנִשְׁמָעָה לְבָנָו וְנִדְעָה אַחֲרֵיתָן
 אוּ הַבָּאוֹת הַשְּׁמִיעֵנוּ:
 כג הִגִּידוּ הָאֱתִיוֹת לְאַחֹר
 וְנִדְעָה כִּי אֱלֹהִים אַתֶּם
 אֶף־תִּיטִּיבוּ וְתִרְעוּ
 וְנִשְׁתַּעֲה וְנִרְאָ וְנִרְאָה יַחְדָּו:
 כד הִנֵּ־אַתֶּם מֵאֵין
 וּפְעֻלְכֶם מֵאַפֵּעַ
 תּוֹעֲבָה יִבְחַר בְּכֶם: {פ}

- 20 Thus, people may see and know;
 they may all observe and understand
 that the hand of Yahweh has done this,
 that the Holy One of Israel has created it.
 21 “Present your case,” says Yahweh,
 “Produce your evidence,” says Jacob’s king.
 22 “Let them produce and tell us what is to happen.
 Tell us the former things, what they are,
 so that we may consider them,
 and know what the outcome will be,
 or declare to us the things to come.
 23 Reveal what is to happen next,
 and then we shall know that you are gods.
 At least, do something, be it good or bad,
 so that we may feel alarm and be afraid.
 24 Look, you are less than nothingness,
 and your work is nothing;
 to choose you is an outrage.”

20 The literal translation of ‘people’ is ‘they’.

21 As Yahweh had put the nations on trial (v. 1), so now he summons the false gods to appear before him; their inability to predict the future and to act on world events is the proof of their vacuity.

22 For the 2nd line, here following the NRSV, the NJB has, “What happened in the past?”

23 In place of ‘be afraid’, here following the Qere (וְנִרְאָה), the Kethib has וְנִרְאָה.

24 ‘Nothing’ is a conjectural translation; the MT (מֵאַפֵּעַ) is unintelligible.

כה הַעִירוֹתִי מִצָּפוֹן וַיָּאֵת
 מִמְּזֶרֶחַ שָׁמַיִשׁ יִקְרָא בְּשֵׁמִי
 וַיִּבֹּא סִגְנִים כְּמֹחַמֶר
 וַיִּכְמוּ יוֹצֵר יִרְמִס־טִיט:
 כו מִי־הִגִּיד מֶרֶאֱשׁ וַנִּדְעָה
 וּמִלִּפְנִים וְנֹאמַר צָדִיק
 אֶף אֵין־מְגִיד אֶף אֵין מְשִׁמֵּעַ
 אֶף אֵין־שֹׁמֵעַ אִמְרֵיכֶם:
 כז רֹאשׁוֹן לְצִיּוֹן הִנֵּה הֵנָּה
 וּלִירוּשָׁלַם מְבֹשֶׁר אֶתָּן:
 כח וְאַרְאֵה וְאַיֵּן אִישׁ
 וּמֵאַלֶּה וְאַיֵּן יוֹעֵץ
 וְאַשְׁאַלֵם וַיִּשִּׁיבוּ דָבָר:
 כט הֵן כֻּלָּם אֲוֵן
 אִפֹּס מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם
 רוּחַ וְתֵהוּ נִסְפִּיהֶם: {פ}

- 25 I have raised him from the north and he has come,
from the east, he has been summoned by name.
He tramples on rulers like mud,
like a potter treading clay.
- 26 Who revealed this from the beginning for us to know,
and in the past for us to say, "That is right"?
No one in fact revealed it, no one proclaimed it,
and no one has heard you speak.
- 27 First fruits of Zion, look, here they come!
I send a messenger to Jerusalem.
- 28 But when I look – no one,
not a single counsellor among them
who, if I asked, could give an answer.
- 29 Look: all of them are nothing;
what they do is nothing;
their statues are empty wind.

25 'He has been summoned by name' is a conjectural translation, in line with the LXX (κληθήσονται τῷ ὀνόματί μου) and 1QIsa^a; the MT has 'he calls on (or proclaims) my name'. 'Tramples on' is a conjectural translation (וַיִּבֹּא); the MT has 'he comes' (וַיִּבֹּא).

26 The interrogative particle and verb in the 2nd line are understood by ellipsis (from the 1st line).

27 For the 1st line, here following the MT (and NJB), the NRSV has the conjectural, "I first have declared it to Zion." This verse is a literal translation of a corrupt text; presumably, as in v. 25, it alludes to God's announcement of deliverance by Cyrus, while the false gods remain dumb (v. 28).

28 The NJB includes the 1st line as part of the same sentence as the last line of v. 27: "and look – no one."

29 'Nothing' in the 1st line follows 1QIsa^a (אֵין) and the Tg; the MT has 'false' (אֲוֵן).

ישעיהו פרק מב

א הֵן עֲבָדִי אֶתְמַדְּבֹוּ
בְּחִירִי רָצָתָה נַפְשִׁי
נָתַתִּי רוּחִי עָלָיו
מִשְׁפָּט לְגוֹיִם יוֹצִיא:
ב לֹא יִצְעַק וְלֹא יִשָּׂא
וְלֹא יִשְׁמִיעַ בַּחוּץ קוֹלוֹ:
ג קִנָּה רָצוֹן לֹא יִשְׁבֹּר
וּפְשֵׁתָה כִּהֵּה לֹא יִכְבֶּנָּה
לְאַמַּת יוֹצִיא מִשְׁפָּט:
ד לֹא יִכְהֶה וְלֹא יִרְוץ
עַד־יֵשִׁים בְּאֶרֶץ מִשְׁפָּט
וּלְתוֹרָתוֹ אֵיִם יִיחַלוּ: {פ}
ה כֹּה־אָמַר הָאֵל | יְהוָה
בּוֹרֵא הַשָּׁמַיִם וְנוֹטִיָּהֶם
רֹקַע הָאָרֶץ וְצֹאֲצָאֶיהָ
נֹתֵן נְשָׁמָה לָעָם עָלֶיהָ
וְרוּחַ לַהֲלֻכִים בָּהּ:

ISAIAH 42

- 1 Here is my servant whom I uphold,
my chosen one in whom my soul delights.
I have sent my spirit upon him;
he will bring fair judgement to the nations.
- 2 He does not cry out or raise his voice;
his voice is not heard in the street.
- 3 He does not break the crushed reed
or snuff the faltering wick.
Faithfully, he presents judgement.
- 4 He will not grow faint, he will not be crushed,
until he has established fair judgement on earth,
and the coastlands are waiting for his instruction.
- 5 Thus says God, Yahweh,
who created the heavens and spread them out,
who hammered into shape the earth and what comes from it,
who gave breath to the people on it,
and spirit to those who walk on it.

ISAIAH 42

- 1 By specifying 'Jacob, my servant ... Israel, my chosen one', the LXX bears witness, as does the gloss on 49:3, to a Jewish tradition identifying the servant with the community of Israel, thus designated in other passages of 'Second Isaiah' (see #41:8).
- 2 The literal translation of the 2nd line is, "he will not cause his voice to be heard in the streets."
- 3 The 'crushed reed' and 'faltering wick' symbolise the weak and oppressed who are on the verge of extinction.
- 4 'Be crushed' follows the LXX (*ῥαυσθήσεται*) and Tg; the MT has 'run'.
- 5 The word 'God' is here preceded by the definite article (הָאֵל), indicating uniqueness – the 'one true God'.

אֲנִי יְהוָה קָרָאתִיךָ בַצֶּדֶק וְאַחֲזַק בְּיָדְךָ וְאַצְרֶךָ וְאַתָּנֶנֶךָ לְבְרִית עַם לְאֹר גּוֹיִם:	1	6	I, Yahweh, have called you in saving justice, I have grasped you by the hand and shaped you, I have made you a covenant of the people and light to the nations,
לִפְקַח עֵינַיִם עֲוֹרוֹת לְהוֹצִיא מִמִּסְגַּר אֲסִיר מִבֵּית כְּלָא יוֹשְׁבֵי חֹשֶׁךְ:	2	7	to open the eyes of the blind, to free captives from prison, and those who live in darkness from the dungeon.
אֲנִי יְהוָה הוּא שְׁמִי וְכִבְדֹּדִי לֹא אֶחָד לֹא-אֶתֵּן וְתִהְיֶה לִּי לְפָסִילִים:	ח	8	I am Yahweh: that is my name! I shall not yield my glory to another, nor my honour to idols.
הָרָאשֹׁנוֹת הֵנָּה-בָּאוּ וְחִדָּשׁוֹת אֲנִי מְגִיד בְּטֶרֶם תִּצְמַחְנָה אֲשֶׁמִּיעַ אֶתְכֶם: {פ}	ט	9	See how the former predictions have come true. Fresh things, I now reveal; before they appear, I tell you of them.
שִׁירוּ לַיהוָה שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ תְּהַלְלוּ מִקְצֵה הָאָרֶץ	י	10	Sing a new song to Yahweh! Sing his praise from the remotest parts of the earth!

⁶ The meaning of the MT for the 3rd line is uncertain.

⁷ 'Captives' does not refer to hardened, dangerous criminals, who would have been executed for their crimes in ancient Near Eastern society: this verse refers to political prisoners or victims of social injustice.

⁸ 'Yahweh' is the name revealed to Moses (Ex 3:13–14) of the one whom alone exists. There is no other God (cf. 40:25, 43:10–12, 44:6–8, 45:3, 5–6, 14–15, 18, 20–22, 46:5, 9, 48:11).

⁹ The pronoun 'you' in the 3rd line is plural, referring to the people of Israel; in this verse, 'the former predictions' are Yahweh's earlier predictive oracles which have come to pass (such as the Exodus – see 43:16–18), while the 'fresh things' are predicted events that have not yet begun to take place, and may include Cyrus' conquests (41:25–27).

¹⁰ This 'new song' (vv. 10–17, cf. Ps 96:1, 98:1, 149:1) is a lyrical celebration of Yahweh's victory, in which the whole world is invited to take part. For the third line, the NRSV reads, "Let the sea roar and all that fills it."

יוֹרְדֵי הַיָּם וּמִלְאֹ
 אֲיִים וְיֹשְׁבֵיהֶם:
 יִשְׁאוּ מִדְּבַר וְעָרֹו יא
 חֲצֵרִים תֵּשֵׁב קֶדָר
 יִרְנֹו יֹשְׁבֵי סֶלַע
 מִרְאֵשׁ הָרִים יִצְוּחוּ:
 יִשִּׁימוּ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד יב
 וְתִהְלְתוּ בְּאֵיִם יִגִּידוּ:
 יְהוָה כַּגִּבּוֹר יֵצֵא יג
 כְּאִישׁ מִלְחָמוֹת יַעִיר קִנְאָה
 יִרְעֵל אֶף־יִצְרִיחַ
 עַל־אִיְּבוֹ יתְגַבֵּר: {ס}
 הֶחֱשִׁיתִי מְעוֹלָם יד
 אַחֲרִישׁ אֶת־אִפְקִי
 כִּי־לִדְהָ אֶפְעָה
 אֶשֶׁם וְאֶשְׁאַף יַחַד:
 אַחֲרִיב הָרִים וְגִבְעוֹת טו
 וְכָל־עֵשְׂבָם אוֹבִישׁ
 וְשִׁמְתִי נְהָרוֹת לָאֵיִם וְאֲגַמִּים אוֹבִישׁ:

- Let those who sail the sea, and everything in it,
the coasts and islands, and those who inhabit them sing.
- 11 Let the desert and its cities raise their voices,
the encampments where Kedar lives.
Let the inhabitants of the Rock cry for joy
and shout from the mountaintops.
- 12 Let them give glory to Yahweh
and, in the coasts and islands, let them voice his praise.
- 13 Yahweh advances like a hero,
like a warrior, he rouses his fire.
He shouts, he raises the war cry;
he shows his might against his foes.
- 14 "From long ago I have been silent,
I have kept quiet, held myself in check,
groaning like a woman in labour,
panting and gasping for air.
- 15 I shall ravage mountain and hill,
shall wither all their vegetation;
I shall turn the torrents into islands and dry up the marshes.

11 'Kedar' was a nomadic tribe (cf. 21:16–17, Jr 49:28–29); the 'Rock' (סֶלַע) was a desert city in Edom (cf. 16:1, 2K 14:7, Jr 49:20).

12 Literally translated, the 1st line reads, "Let them ascribe to Yahweh glory."

13 An alternative reading of the last line is, "he triumphs over his enemies."

14 The imagery of this verse depicts Yahweh as a warrior who is eager to fight and can no longer hold himself back from the attack.

15 In place of 'islands', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'firm ground'.

טז וְהוֹלַכְתִּי עֲוִירִים בְּדֶרֶךְ לֹא יָדְעוּ
 בְּנִתְיָבוֹת לֹא-יָדְעוּ אֲדָרִיכֶם
 אֲשִׁים מִחֹשֶׁךְ לִפְנֵיהֶם לְאוֹר
 וּמַעֲקָשִׁים לְמִישׁוֹר אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים
 עָשִׂיתִם וְלֹא עֲזַבְתִּים:
 יז נִסְגּוּ אַחֲזֹר יִבְשׁוּ בִשֶׁת
 הַבְּטָחִים בַּפֶּסֶל הָאֲמָרִים לְמַסְכָּה
 אַתֶּם אֱלֹהֵינוּ: {פ}
 יח הַחֲרָשִׁים שָׁמְעוּ
 וְהָעֲוִירִים הִבִּיטוּ לִרְאוֹת:
 יט מִי עֹר כִּי אִם-עֶבְדִּי
 וְחָרֵשׁ כְּמִלְאָכִי אֲשַׁלַּח
 מִי עֹר כְּמִשְׁלָם
 וְעֹר כְּעֶבֶד יְהוָה:
 כ רֹאיתָ רְאוֹת רַבּוֹת וְלֹא תִשְׁמַר
 פְּקוּחַ אָזְנוֹתֶיךָ וְלֹא יִשְׁמַע:

- 16 I shall lead the blind by a road they do not know;
by paths they do not know, I shall conduct them.
I shall turn the darkness into light before them
and the quagmires into solid ground.
This I shall do – without fail!”
- 17 Those who trust in idols will recoil;
they will blush for shame, who say to metal images,
“You are our gods.”
- 18 Listen, you that are deaf;
and you that are blind, look up and see!
- 19 Who is so blind as my servant,
so deaf as the messenger I send?
Who is so blind as the friend I have taken to myself,
so deaf as Yahweh’s servant?
- 20 You have seen many things but have not observed them;
your ears are open but you do not hear.

16 Literally translated, the 4th line reads, “and the rough ground into a level place.”

17 The literal translation of ‘blush with shame’ is ‘be ashamed with shame’.

18 It is not God who, deaf and blind to Israel’s fate, draws down disaster on him, but Israel who is deaf and blind; he understands neither what is happening to him nor why it happens to him. This prophecy is parallel to the instructions given to Isaiah at the time of his calling (see #6:10).

19 The precise meaning of מִשְׁלָם (‘friend I have taken to myself’, here following the NJB; the NRSV has ‘my dedicated one’) is unclear; in later Biblical Hebrew, the word appears as a proper name (‘Meshullam’). Being blind to God’s will and way is, for ‘Second Isaiah’, Israel’s greatest sin (cf. 6:9–10). The NJB parenthesises the last two lines, which are probably a gloss.

20 ‘You do not’ is a conjectural translation; the MT has ‘he does not’. In place of ‘you have seen’ (רְאוֹת) – an infinitive absolute functioning as a finite verb), here following the Qere, the Ketiv has רֹאיתָ (perfect 2MS).

כא יִהְיֶה חֲפֵץ לְמַעַן צִדְקוֹ
 יִגְדִּיל תּוֹרָה וַיֹּאדִיר:
 כב וְהוּא עַם־בָּזוּז וְשֹׁסוּי
 הִפָּח בַּחֲוָרִים כְּלָם
 וּבִבְתֵּי כְלָאִים הִחְבְּאוּ
 הָיוּ לִבּוֹ וְאֵין מַצִּיל
 מִשָּׁסָה וְאֵין־אֹמֵר הָשֵׁב:
 כג מִי בָכֶם יִאֲזִין זֹאת
 יִקְשֹׁב וְיִשְׁמַע לְאַחֲזֹר:
 כד מִי־נָתַן לְמִשּׁוּסָה לְמִשָּׁסָה יַעֲקֹב
 וְיִשְׂרָאֵל לְבָזִים
 הֲלוֹא יִהְיֶה זֶה חֲטָאֵנוּ לָזֶה
 וְלֹא־אָבוּ בְדַרְכֵּי הַלּוֹךְ
 וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ בְּתוֹרָתוֹ:
 כה וַיִּשְׁפֹּךְ עָלָיו חֲמָה אֲפֹ
 וַעֲזֹז מִלְחָמָה
 וַתִּלְהַטְהוּ מִסָּבִיב וְלֹא יָדַע
 וַתִּבְעֶרְבוּ וְלֹא־יָשִׁים עַל־לֵב:

- 21 Yahweh wished, because of his saving justice,
to make the Law great and glorious.
- 22 Yet here is a people pillaged and plundered,
all of them shut up in holes,
imprisoned in dungeons.
They have been pillaged, with no one to rescue them,
plundered, with no one to say, "Give it back!"
- 23 Which of you will listen to this,
who will pay attention and listen in future?
- 24 Who surrendered Jacob to the plunderer
and Israel to the plunderers?
Was it not Yahweh, against whom we had sinned,
in whose ways they would not walk
and whose Law they would not obey?
- 25 On him, he poured out his blazing anger
and the fury of war;
it blazed against him all around yet he did not understand;
it burned him up but he did not learn a lesson.

21 God contrasts his good intentions for the people with their present crisis (v. 22); to demonstrate his just character and attract the nations, he wanted to showcase his Law among and through Israel (Dt 4:5–8), but Israel disobeyed (v. 24) and failed to carry out their commission.

22 'In holes' is a conjectural translation (בַּחֲוָרִים); the MT has 'young men' (בַּחֲוָרִים).

23 The interrogative particle is understood in the 2nd line by ellipsis (note the preceding line).

24 In place the Qere reading of לְמִשָּׁסָה (a noun, 'plunder'), the Ketiv has לְמִשּׁוּסָה, (a participle from the verb 'to plunder').

25 The subject of the 3FS verb 'blazed' is the divine, 'fury' (חֲמָה), mentioned in the previous line.

ישעיהו פרק מג

א ועתה כה־אמר יהוה
בראך יעקב ויצרך ישראל
אל־תירא כי גאלתיך
קראתי בשמך לי־אתה:
ב כי־תעבר במים אתך־אני
ובנהרות לא ישטפוך
כי־תלך במו־אש לא תכוה
ולֹהֶבֶה לא תבער־בך:
ג כי אני יהוה אלהיך
קדוש ישראל מושיעך
נתתי כפרך מצרים
כוש וסבא תחת־יך:
ד מאשר יקרת בעיני נכבדת
ואני אהבתיך
ואתן אדם תחת־יך
ולא־מים תחת נפשך:
ה אל־תירא כי אתך־אני

ISAIAH 43

- 1 And now, thus says Yahweh,
he who created you, Jacob, who formed you, Israel:
Do not fear! For, I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.
- 2 When you pass through the waters, I shall be with you;
or through the rivers, they will not swallow you up.
When you walk through fire, you will burn,
and the flames will not harm you.
- 3 For, I am Yahweh, your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.
I have given Egypt for your ransom,
Cush and Seba in exchange for you.
- 4 Because you are precious in my sight and honoured,
and I love you,
I give people in exchange for you,
nations in exchange for your life.
- 5 Do not fear! For, I am with you.

ISAIAH 43

- 1 Israel has nothing to fear (vv. 1 & 5), since the choice by Yahweh long ago is a guarantee of approaching deliverance.
- 2 Through all dangers, God is with his people (Ps 66:12).
- 3 'Cush' and 'Seba' (as distinct from Saba in northern Arabia) are two regions in Africa south of Egypt (see 45:14).
- 4 The NJB & NRSV include 'and honoured' as part of the 2nd line; here, we follow NETB.
- 5 NETB has 'descendants' in place of 'offspring', here following the NJB & NRSV.

מִמְזֶרֶחַ אָבִיָּא זְרַעְדָּ
וּמִמְעַרְבַּ אֶקְבְּצֶדָּ:
אֶמַר לְצָפוֹן תָּנִי ^ו
וּלְתֵימָן אֲלִתְכַלְאִי
הִבִּיֵאִי בְנֵי מְרָחוֹק
וּבְנוֹתֵי מִקְצֵה הָאָרֶץ:
כָּל הַנִּקְרָא בִשְׁמִי ^ז
וּלְכַבֹּדִי בְרֹאֲתִיו
יִצְרָתִיו אֶפְעִשִׁיתִיו:
הוֹצִיָא עִם־עוֹר וְעֵינַיִם יֵשׁ ^ח
וְחֹרְשִׁים וְאָזְנִים לָמוֹ:
כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם נִקְבְּצוּ יַחְדָּו ^ט
וַיֵּאסְפוּ לְאַמִּים
מִי בָהֶם יִגִּיד זֹאת
וְרֹאשֹׁנוֹת יִשְׁמִיעֵנוּ
יִתְּנוּ עֲדִיהֶם וַיִּצְדְּקוּ
וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִמֶּת:
אַתֶּם עֲדֵי נְאֻם־יְהוָה ^י
וְעַבְדִּי אֲשֶׁר בָּחַרְתִּי

I shall bring your offspring from the east,
and gather you from the west.
⁶ To the north I shall say, "Give them up,"
and, to the south, "Do not withhold!"
Bring back my sons from far away
and my daughters from the remotest part of the earth:
⁷ Everyone who bears my name,
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed and made.
⁸ Bring forward the people who are blind, yet have eyes,
that are deaf and yet have ears.
⁹ Let all the nations assemble;
let the peoples gather here!
Which of them has proclaimed this
and revealed things to us in the past?
Let them bring their witnesses to justify themselves,
let others hear and say, "It is true."
¹⁰ You are my witnesses, declares Yahweh,
and the servant whom I have chosen,

⁶ The NJB has 'hold them back' in place of 'withhold', here following the NRSV.

⁷ The phrase 'who bears my name' means 'who belongs to me'.

⁸ Israel, though deaf and blind to the events of its own history, serves by this very history as witness to God against the nations and their gods.

⁹ Literally translated, the 4th line reads, "and the former things was causing us to hear."

¹⁰ An alternative reading for 'know' in the 3rd line (here following the NJB & NRSV) is 'consider' (as NETB).

לִמְעַן תִּדְעוּ וְתֵאֱמִינוּ לִי וְתִבְיֵנוּ
 כִּי־אֲנִי הוּא
 לִפְנֵי לֹא־נֻצַּר אֵל
 וְאַחֲרַי לֹא יִהְיֶה: {ס}

אֲנֹכִי אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה יא
 וְאֵין מִבִּלְעָדִי מוֹשִׁיעַ:
 אֲנֹכִי הִגַּדְתִּי וְהוֹשַׁעְתִּי יב
 וְהִשְׁמַעְתִּי וְאֵין בְּכֶם זֶר
 וְאַתֶּם עֲדֵי נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְאֲנִי־אֵל:
 גַּם־מִיּוֹם אֲנִי הוּא יג
 וְאֵין מִיָּדִי מַצִּיל
 אֲפַעַל וּמִי יִשְׁיבֶנָּה: {ס}
 כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה גְּאֻלְכֶם יד
 קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל
 לִמְעַנְכֶם שְׁלַחְתִּי בָבֶלָה
 וְהוֹרַדְתִּי בְּרִיחִים כְּלָם
 וְכַשְׂדִּים בְּאֲנִיּוֹת רִנָּתָם:

so that you may know and believe me
 and understand that I am he.
 No god was formed before me,
 nor will be after me.

- 11 I, I am Yahweh,
 and there is no other saviour but me.
 12 I have revealed, saved, and proclaimed,
 when there was no strange god among you.
 You are my witnesses, declares Yahweh.
 13 I am God, and henceforth I am he.
 No one can deliver from my hand;
 when I act, who can thwart me?
 14 Thus says Yahweh, your Redeemer,
 the Holy One of Israel:
 For your sake, I will send to Babylon,
 I shall knock down all the bars,
 and the Chaldeans' shouts will turn to lamentations.

11 NETB has 'deliverer' in place of 'saviour', here following the NRSV and NJB.

12 For the 2nd line, here following the NRSV, the NJB has, "not some foreigner among you."

13 The 1st line here follows the MT & NRSV; the NJB, following the LXX (ἐγὼ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς) & Peshitta, ends it with, 'from eternity I am'. This verse may be the continuation of vv. 1-7.

14 'Bars' is a conjectural translation following the Vg (*vectes*) & NRSV; the MT has 'fugitives' (בְּרִיחִים). 'To lamentations' is a conjectural translation; the MT has 'on ships'. The apposition of 'Redeemer' (v. 1, 54:5, 59:20, Jr 50:34) and 'Holy One' (41:14, 47:4, 48:17) is noteworthy: Isaiah refers to God as 'Redeemer' more often than do other Old Testament writers.

טו	אֲנִי יְהוָה קְדוֹשְׁכֶם בּוֹרֵא יִשְׂרָאֵל מֶלֶכְכֶּם: {ס}	15	I am Yahweh, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your king.
טז	כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה הַנוֹתֵן בַּיָּם דֶּרֶךְ וּבַמַּיִם עָזִים נִתְּיָבָה: יז הַמוֹצִיא רֶכֶב-וּסוּס חֵיל וְעֶזְזוֹ יַחֲדוּ יִשְׁכְּבוּ בְלִי-קוּמוֹ דַּעְכוּ כַּפְשָׁתָה כָּבוֹ: יח אֶל-תִּזְכְּרוּ רֵאשִׁיטוֹת וְקִדְמָנוֹת אֶל-תִּתְּפַנְּנוּ: יט הִנְנִי עֹשֶׂה חֲדָשָׁה עִתָּהּ תִּצְמַח הֲלוֹא תִדְעוּהָ אֶף אֲשִׁים בַּמִּדְבָּר דֶּרֶךְ בִּישְׁמוֹן נְהָרוֹת: כ תִּכְבַּדְנִי חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה תַּנִּים וּבָנֹת יַעֲנָה כִּי-נָתַתִּי בַּמִּדְבָּר מַיִם	16	Thus says Yahweh, who made a way through the sea, a path in the surging waters, 17 who led out chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lay down never to rise again; they were snuffed out, put out like a wick. 18 No need to remember past events; no need to think about what was done before. 19 Look, I am doing something new: now it emerges; can you not see it? Yes, I am making a road in the desert and paths in the wastelands. 20 The wild animals will honour me, the jackals and the ostriches, for bestowing water in the desert

¹⁵ See #14 on Isaiah's frequent use of the term 'Holy One'.

¹⁶ Vv. 16-17 refer to the crossing of the Sea of Reeds during the Exodus.

¹⁷ The NRSV has the present tense, 'lie', in place of 'lay', here following the NJB.

¹⁸ The crossing of the Sea and the destruction of the Egyptian army will be eclipsed by the greater wonders that God is about to perform.

¹⁹ 'Paths' follows 1QIsa^a (נְתִיבוֹת) and NETB; the MT has 'streams' (נְהָרוֹת), possibly under the influence of v. 20.

²⁰ After 'wild animals', NETB adds 'of the desert'; here, following the NJB & NRSV, the phrase 'of the field' is taken to mean 'wild'.

נְהָרוֹת בְּיַשִּׁימֹן
 לְהַשְׁקוֹת עַמִּי בְּחִירִי:
 כֹּא עַם־זוֹ יִצְרַתִּי לִי
 תְהַלְתִּי יִסְפְּרוּ: {ס}
 כִּב וְלֹא־אֲתִי קָרַאתָ יַעֲקֹב
 כִּי־יִגַּעַת בִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
 כִּג לֹא־הֵבִיאתָ לִי שֶׁה עֹלֹתֶיךָ
 וְזִבְחֶיךָ לֹא כִבַּדְתָּנִי
 לֹא הֶעֱבַדְתִּיךָ בַּמִּנְחָה
 וְלֹא הוֹגַעְתִּיךָ בַּלְבֹּנָה:
 כִּד לֹא־קָנִיתָ לִי בַכֶּסֶף קִנְיָה
 וְחָלַב זִבְחֶיךָ לֹא הִרִוּתָנִי
 אֲךָ הֶעֱבַדְתָּנִי בַחֲטָאוֹתֶיךָ
 הוֹגַעְתָּנִי בַעֲוֹנוֹתֶיךָ:
 כֵּה אֲנֹכִי אֲנִכִּי הוּא מַחֶה פֶשְׁעֶיךָ לְמַעַנִּי
 וְחֲטָאתֶיךָ לֹא אֶזְכֹּר:
 כֻּו הַזְכִּירָנִי נִשְׁפָּטָה יַחַד
 סַפֵּר אֶתָּה לְמַעַן תִּצְדָּק:

- and streams in the wastelands
 for my people, my chosen ones, to drink.
 21 The people I have shaped for myself
 will broadcast my praises.
 22 Yet, Jacob, you have not invoked me;
 no, Israel, you have grown weary of me.
 23 You have not brought me lambs as your burnt offerings
 and have not honoured me with your sacrifices.
 I have not burdened you with offerings,
 or wearied you by demanding incense.
 24 You have not brought expensive reed for me
 or sated me with the fat of your sacrifices.
 Instead, you have subjected me with your sins;
 you have wearied me with your crimes.
 25 I, I am he who blots out your acts of revolt for my own sake,
 and shall not call your sins to mind.
 26 Remind me, and we will judge this together;
 set forth your case, so that you may be proved right.

21 The NRSV & NETB include this verse as a part of the same sentence as v. 20; here, we follow the NJB.

22 This prophecy of blame (vv. 22–28), exceptional in ‘Second Isaiah’, plays on the words ‘to make weary’ and ‘to subject’.

23 The words ‘by demanding’ are supplied in the translation for clarification; the MT has simply ‘with’.

24 The 1st line refers to an aromatic reed prized for its scent, in secular and religious use (Sg 4:14, Ezk 27:19, Ex 30:23, Jr 6:20).

25 God redeems Israel not for its merits but because of his covenant relationship.

26 The literal translation of the 2nd line (here following the NRSV) is, “you, tell in order that you may be right.”

כז אֲבִיךָ הִרְאָשׁוֹן חָטָא
 וּמְלִיצִיךָ פָּשְׁעוּ בִּי:
 כח וְאַחֲלִיל שָׂרֵי קֹדֶשׁ
 וְאַתְנֶה לַחֲרָם יַעֲקֹב
 וְיִשְׂרָאֵל לְגְדוּפִים: {פ}

27 Your first ancestor sinned,
 your interpreters revolted against me.
 28 Therefore, I deposed the princes of my sanctuary;
 I put Jacob under the curse of destruction
 and subjected Israel to insult.

27 The 'first ancestor' is clearly Jacob (see v. 22), regarded unfavourably here, following a tradition alien to Genesis but found in Ho 12:3–4. The 'interpreters' are the prophets (see, for instance, 1K 13:11–32, 19:2–4) and the false prophets to whom the people listened.

28 The 'princes' are here the Levitical priests.

ישעיהו פרק מד

א ועתה שמע יַעֲקֹב עַבְדִּי
וְיִשְׂרָאֵל בַּחֲרָתִי בּוֹ:
ב כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה עֹשֶׂה
וַיֵּצְרֶךָ מִבֶּטֶן יְעֻזְרָךְ
אֶל־תִּירָא עַבְדִּי יַעֲקֹב
וַיִּשְׁרוּן בַּחֲרָתִי בּוֹ:
ג כִּי אֶצְק־מַיִם עַל־צִמָּא
וְנִזְלִים עַל־יִבְשָׁה
אֶצְק רֹוחִי עַל־זֶרְעֶךָ
וּבִרְכָתִי עַל־צֹאצְאֶיךָ:
ד וְצִמְחוּ בֵּין חֲצִיר
כַּעֲרָבִים עַל־יְבֵל־מַיִם:
ה זֶה יֹאמַר לַיהוָה אֲנִי
זֶה יִקְרָא בְשֵׁם־יַעֲקֹב
זֶה יִכְתֹּב יָדוֹ לַיהוָה
וּבְשֵׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל יִכְנֶה: {פ}

ISAIAH 44

- 1 And now listen, Jacob my servant,
Israel whom I have chosen.
- 2 Thus says Yahweh who made you,
who formed you in the womb; he will help you.
Do not be afraid, Jacob, my servant,
Jeshurun whom I have chosen.
- 3 For I will pour out water on the thirsty soil
and streams on the dry ground.
I will pour out my spirit on your descendants,
my blessing on your offspring.
- 4 They shall spring up like a green tamarisk,
like willows on the banks of a stream.
- 5 One person shall say, "I belong to Yahweh,"
another shall call himself by Jacob's name.
On his hand, another shall write, "Yahweh's,"
and be surnamed 'Israel'.

ISAIAH 44

- 1 The speech continues directly from 43:28.
- 2 'Jeshurun' is a poetic name for Israel, found only here, Dt 32:15, 33:5, 26 and Si 37:25 (Hebrew); it is of uncertain meaning.
- 3 The word 'soil' in the 1st line is not in the MT but is implied.
- 4 The term בֵּין is usually taken as a preposition, in which case one might translate the end of the 1st line, 'among the grass' (as NJB); however, בֵּין is probably the name of a tree and, if one alters the preposition בֵּין to כִּי, one can then read, 'like a ??? tree' ('green tamarisk' follows the NRSV). 1QIsa^a supports this reading, which nicely parallels 'like willows' in the next line; חֲצִיר functions as an adverbial accusative of location.
- 5 Writing 'Yahweh's' on one's hand is a sign of belonging to Yahweh, like the name of the Beast marked on its devotees in Rv 13:16-17.

1 כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְגֹאֲלֹ
 יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת
 אֲנִי רִאשׁוֹן וְאֲנִי אַחֲרֹן
 וּמִבְלַעְדֵּי אֵין אֱלֹהִים:
 2 וּמִי־כִמּוֹנִי יִקְרָא
 וַיַּגִּידָהּ וַיַּעֲרֹכָהּ לִי
 מִשׁוּמֵי עַם־עוֹלָם
 וְאֲתִיּוֹת וְאֲשֶׁר תִּבְאֶנָּה יַגִּידוּ לָמוֹ:
 ח אֶל־תִּפְחָדוּ וְאֶל־תִּרְהוּ
 הֲלֹא מֵאִזְּהֵם הִשְׁמַעְתִּיךָ וְהִגַּדְתִּי
 וְאַתֶּם עַדִּי
 הִישׁ אֱלֹהִים מִבְלַעְדֵּי
 וְאֵין צוּר בַּל־יִדְעָתִי:

ט יַעֲרִי־פֶסֶל כָּל־מִן וְחִמּוּדֵיהֶם בַּל־יִזְעִילוּ
 וְעֵדֵיהֶם הֵמָּה בַל־יִרְאוּ וּבַל־יִדְעוּ לְמַעַן יִבְשׁוּ: י מִי־
 יַצֵּר אֵל וּפֶסֶל נֹסֵף לְבִלְתִּי הוֹעִיל: יא הֵן כָּל־חֲבָרִיו

6 Thus says Yahweh, Israel's king, his redeemer
 Yahweh Sabaoth;
 I am the first and I am the last;
 there is no God except me.
 7 Who is like me? Let him call out,
 let him affirm it and convince me it is so –
 since I instituted an eternal people –
 let them predict what will happen next!
 8 Have no fear, do not be afraid:
 have I not told you and revealed it long ago?
 You are my witnesses.
 Is there any God except me?
 There is no Rock; I know of none.

9 All who make idols are nothing and the works they delight are worth-
 less; their witnesses neither see nor know, so they will be put to shame.
 10 Who forms a god or casts an image that can do no good? 11 Look, all

6 A גֹּאֲלֹ ('redeemer') was a protector of the extended family's interests.

7 For the last 2 lines, the MT reads, "from (the time) I established an ancient people, and the coming things;" various emendations have been proposed, including the reading מִשְׁמִיעִים מְעוֹלָם אוֹתִיּוֹת (literally, 'the ones causing to hear from antiquity coming things' but more idiomatically 'as for those who predict from antiquity what will happen', cf. NAB, NEB, REB). But, since the versions support the MT, the emendations should be set aside.

8 The form תִּרְהוּ ('be afraid', from an otherwise unattested root) is likely a corruption of תִּירָאוּ, the reading attested in 1QIsa^a.

9 This satire on the makers of idols (vv. 9–20), in which neither God nor Israel is mentioned, is an addition from the same hand as 42:6–7.

10 The rhetorical question is sarcastic: the sense is, "Who is foolish enough...?"

11 The point seems to be this: if the idols are the mere products of human hands, then those who trust in them will be disappointed; for, man-made gods are incapable of helping their 'creators'.

יִבְשׁוּ וְחָרְשִׁים הֵמָּה מֵאָדָם יִתְקַבְּצוּ כָּל־ם יַעֲמִדוּ
 יִפְתְּחוּ יִבְשׁוּ יַחַד: יִבְחַרְשׁ בְּרוֹזֶל מַעֲצָד וּפְעֹל
 בַּפֶּחֶם וּבִמְקַבּוֹת יִצְרֶהוּ וַיַּפְעִלְהוּ בְּזֹרֹעַ כָּחוֹ גַּם-
 רָעַב וְאֵין כָּח לֹא-שָׁתָה מִיָּם וַיֵּעָף: יִבְחַרְשׁ עֵצִים
 נָטָה קוֹ יִתְאַרְהוּ בְּשֶׁרֶד יַעֲשֶׂהוּ בִּמְקַצְעוֹת
 וּבִמְחֻנָּה יִתְאַרְהוּ וַיַּעֲשֶׂהוּ כְּתַבְנִית אִישׁ
 כְּתַפְאֶרֶת אָדָם לְשִׁבְתָּ בֵּית: יִבְכָּרֶת-לוֹ אֲרָזִים
 וַיִּקַּח תְּרֹזָה וְאַלּוֹן וַיֹּאמֶץ-לוֹ בַּעֲצֵי-יַעַר נָטַע
 אֲרֹן וְגִשְׁם יִגְדֵּל: יִוְהִי לְאָדָם לְבָעַר וַיִּקַּח מֵהֶם
 וַיַּחֵם אֶף-יִשְׁקִי וְאָפָה לֶחֶם אֶף-יַפְעֹל-אֵל וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה
 עָשָׂהוּ פֶסֶל וַיִּסְגֹּד-לָמוֹ: יִחֲצִיז שֶׁרֶף בְּמוֹ-אֵשׁ עַל-
 חֲצִיז בְּשֶׁר יֹאכֵל יִצְלָה צֹלִי וַיִּשְׁבַּע אֶף-יַחֵם וַיֹּאמֶר
 הָאֵח חֲמוּתִי רָאִיתִי אֹר: יִשְׁאֲרִיתוֹ לְאֵל עֲשֵׂה
 לְפֶסֶל יִסְגֹּד יִסְגֹּד-לוֹ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל אֵלָיו
 וַיֹּאמֶר הַצִּילֵנִי כִּי אֵלִי אַתָּה: יִי לֹא יָדְעוּ וְלֹא יִבְיִנוּ
 כִּי טָח מִרְאוֹת עֵינֵיהֶם מִהֲשָׁכִיל לְבָתָּם: יִי וְלֹא-
 יֵשִׁיב אֶל-לִבּוֹ וְלֹא דַעַת וְלֹא-תְבוּנָה לֵאמֹר חֲצִיז

its devotees will be put to shame; the artisans, too, are only human. Let them all assemble; let them stand up and feel both fear and shame! ¹² A blacksmith makes an axe over the coals, shapes it with hammers and working it with his strong arm; he feels hungry and his strength fails; having drunk no water, he is faint. ¹³ A carpenter takes stretches a line, marks it with chalk, fashions it with a chisel and marks it with a compass. He makes it in human form, with beauty, and puts it in a shrine. ¹⁴ He cuts down cedars or chooses a cypress or oak that grows among the trees in the forest; he plants a cedar that the rain nourishes. ¹⁵ Once it can be burnt, he takes some to warm himself; he kindles it and bakes bread. Then he makes a god and worships it; he makes an idol and bows down to it. ¹⁶ Half, he burns on the fire; over this half he roasts meat, eats it, and is replete; he warms himself and says, "Ah, I am warm, watching the fire!" ¹⁷ The rest he makes into a god, his idol, bows down to it, worships it and prays to it: "Save me: you are my god." ¹⁸ They do not know or understand, since their eyes are shut and their minds closed. ¹⁹ None of them considers, none has the wit to think, "I burned

¹² The noun מַעֲצָד ('axe'), which refers to some type of tool used for cutting, occurs only here and in Jr 10:3.

¹³ The literal translation of 'shrine' is 'house'.

¹⁴ The translation 'cypress' (following NETB) is uncertain; the NJB has 'terebinth' and the NRSV has 'holm-tree'.

¹⁵ It is possible to read the final pronoun as a plural form ('them').

¹⁶ 'He roasts meat, eats it' follows the LXX; the MT inverts the two verbs.

¹⁷ The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

¹⁸ Literally translated, this verse ends, "their hearts cannot be wise."

¹⁹ There is no formal interrogative sign at the end of this verse but the context seems to indicate these are rhetorical questions.

שֶׁרַפְתִּי בְּמוֹאֵשׁ וְאֶף אֶפִּיתִי עַל־גַּחְלִיו לֶחֶם
 אֲצִלָּה בָּשָׂר וְאֹכֵל וַיִּתְּרוּ לְתוֹעֵבָה אֲעֲשֶׂה לְבֹול עֵץ
 אֶסְגֹּד: ^כ רָעָה אֶפֶר לֵב הוֹתֵל הִטָּהוּ וְלֹא־יִצִּיל
 אֶת־נַפְשׁוֹ וְלֹא יֹאמֶר הֲלוֹא שָׁקַר בִּימִינִי: {ס}

^{כא} זְכַר־אֱלֹה יַעֲקֹב
 וְיִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי עַבְדִּי־אָתָּה
 יִצְרָתִיךָ עֲבַד־לִי אֶתָּה
 יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא תִשְׁכַּח:
^{כב} מַחֲתִיתִי כַעֲב פִּשְׁעֶיךָ
 וְכַעֲנַן חַטָּאוֹתֶיךָ
 שׁוּבָה אֵלַי כִּי גִאֲלִיתֶיךָ:
^{כג} רְנוּ שָׁמַיִם כִּי־עָשָׂה יְהוָה
 הֲרִיעוּ תַּחְתִּיּוֹת אָרֶץ
 פָּצְחוּ הָרִים רִנָּה
 יַעַר וְכָל־עֵץ בּוֹ

half of it on the fire and cooked food over the embers. Shall I make an abomination from what is left? Shall I bow down to a block of wood?"

²⁰ He feeds on ashes; a deluded mind has led him astray; he will not save himself or say, "What I have in my right hand is a lie!"

²¹ Remember these things, Jacob,
 and Israel, since you are my servant.
 I formed you, you are my servant;
 Israel, I shall not forget you.

²² I have dispelled your transgressions like a cloud
 and your sins like a cloud.
 Come back to me, for I have redeemed you.

²³ Heavens, shout for joy, for Yahweh has acted!
 Underworld, shout aloud!
 Shout for joy, you mountains,
 forests and all your trees!

²⁰ In place of 'lie', here following *NETB*, the *NRSV* has 'fraud'.

²¹ The verb in the last line is a Niphal imperfect with a pronominal suffix; although the Niphal ordinarily has the passive sense, it can have a reflexive nuance as well. Some have suggested an emendation to a Qal form ('do not forget me', which would make a good parallel with 'remember these things' in the 1st line. However, since the *MT* is the harder reading and fits with Israel's complaint that God had forgotten her (40:27), the original reading should be retained (cf. *NRSV* – 'you will not be forgotten by me'): the passive has been rendered here as an active in the translation (following the *NJB* & *NETB*) in keeping with contemporary English style.

²² It is tempting for stylistic purposes to translate the 2nd occurrence of 'cloud' with 'fog' or 'mist' (cf. *NJB*, *NRSV*, *NIV*, *NLT*) but this distinction between the synonyms (עָנָן & עָב) is unwarranted here. The point of the simile seems to be this: God forgives their sins, causing them to vanish just as clouds disappear from the sky (see Job 7:9; 30:15).

²³ 'Underworld' refers to Sheol and form a merism with 'heavens' in the 1st line.

כִּי־גָאֹל יְהוָה יַעֲקֹב
 וּבִישְׂרָאֵל יִתְפָּאֵר: {ס}
 כד כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה גִּאֲלֶךָ
 וַיַּצְרֶךָ מִבֶּטֶן
 אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה עָשִׂה כָּל
 נֹטֶה שָׁמַיִם לְבַדִּי
 רָקַע הָאָרֶץ מִי אֵתִי [מֵאֵתִי]:
 כה מִפֶּלֶא אֲתוֹת בְּדִים
 וְקִסְמִים יְהוֹלֵל
 מְשִׁיב חַכְמִים אַחֲזֹר
 וְדַעְתָּם יִסְכָּל:
 כו מְקִים דְּבַר עַבְדּוֹ
 וַעֲצַת מְלֹאכָיו יִשְׁלֹם
 הָאָמַר לִירוּשָׁלַם תּוֹשֵׁב
 וְלָעָרִי יְהוּדָה תִּבְנֶינָה
 וְחָרְבוֹתֶיהָ אֶקְוִמָם:
 כז הָאָמַר לַצּוֹלָה חֲרָבִי
 וְנַהֲרַתִּיךָ אוֹבִישׁ:

For, Yahweh has redeemed Jacob
 and displayed his glory in Israel.
 24 Thus says Yahweh, your redeemer,
 he who formed you in the womb:
 I, Yahweh, have made all things;
 I alone spread out the heavens.
 When I hammered the earth into shape, who was with me?
 25 I, who foil the omens of liars
 and make fools of diviners,
 who confound sages,
 turning their knowledge into folly,
 26 who confirm the word of my servant
 and make the plans of my envoys succeed;
 who say to Jerusalem, "You will be inhabited,"
 and to the towns of Judah, "You will be rebuilt
 and I shall restore the ruins of Jerusalem;"
 27 who say to the ocean, "Be dry –
 I will dry up your rivers;"

²⁴ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

²⁵ In the 4 other occurrences of בְּדִים ('liars': Job 11:3, Is 16:6; Jr 48:30, 50:36), the context does not make the meaning of the term very clear; its primary point appears to be that the words spoken are meaningless or false. In the light of its parallelism with 'diviners', some have proposed an emendation to בָּרִים ('seers'). However, rather than supporting an emendation, we should perhaps accept that the prophet used בְּדִים purposively as a derisive wordplay on the Accadian word for those 'seers' (in light of the close similarity of dalet and resh).

²⁶ The context makes it clear that 'my servant' refers here to the prophet(s).

²⁷ NETB has 'sea currents' in place of 'rivers', here following the MT, NJB & NRSV.

כח האמר לְבוֹרֵשׁ רָעִי
וְכָל־חֶפְצֵי יִשְׁלֵם
וְלֹא־אֶמַר לִירוּשָׁלַם תִּבְנֶה
וְהִכָּל תִּוָּסַד: {פ}

²⁸ who say to Cyrus, "My shepherd."
He will perform my entire will
by saying to Jerusalem, "You will be rebuilt,"
and to the Temple, "Your foundation will be laid."

²⁸ The 2nd part of this verse is perhaps an addition; it repeats v. 26^c and mentions the rebuilding of the Temple, which does not occur elsewhere in 'Second Isaiah'. Nevertheless, the addition is an ancient one and the versions have been confused by the attribution of these words to Cyrus, instead rendering, "*I it is who say...*"

ישעיהו פרק מה

א כה־אָמַר יְהוָה לְמָשִׁיחוֹ
לְכוֹרֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר־הִחֲזַקְתִּי
בְיָמֵינוּ לְרַד־לְפָנָיו גּוֹיִם
וּמַתְנֵי מַלְכִּים אֶפְתַּח
לְפִתָּח לְפָנָיו דְּלָתִים
וְשַׁעֲרִים לֹא יִסְגְּרוּ:
ב אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ אֵלֶיךָ
וְהַדּוּרִים אוֹשֵׁר אֲיַשֵּׁר
דְּלָתוֹת נְחוֹשֶׁה אֲשַׁבֵּר
וּבְרִיחֵי בְרָזֶל אֲגַדֵּעַ:
ג וְנָתַתִּי לְךָ אוֹצְרוֹת חֹשֶׁךְ וּמִטְמְנֵי מִסְתָּרִים
לְמַעַן תֵּדַע
כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה הַקּוֹרֵא בְּשִׁמְךָ
אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:
ד לְמַעַן עֲבַדִּי יַעֲקֹב
וְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּחִירִי
וְאֶקְרָא לְךָ בְּשִׁמְךָ

ISAIAH 45

- 1 Thus says Yahweh to his anointed one,
to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped,
to make the nations bow before him
and to loosen the belts of kings,
to open gateways before him
so that their gates be closed no more.
- 2 I myself will go before you,
I will level the heights,
I will shatter the bronze gateways,
and I will smash the iron bars.
- 3 I will give you secret treasures and hidden hoards of wealth,
so that you will know
that it is I, Yahweh, who calls you by your name,
the God of Israel.
- 4 It is for the sake of my servant Jacob
and of Israel my chosen one,
that I have called you by your name,

ISAIAH 45

- ¹ The prophecy of vv. 1–7 is curiously similar to a Babylonian text, the ‘Cyrus Cylinder’, in which Marduk, who was not a Persian god, ‘named the name of Cyrus and summoned him to rule the whole world’. The latter text, drawn up by the priests of Babylon, was written, like the prophecy of ‘Second Isaiah’, at the moment of Cyrus’ victorious advance in 539 BCE.
- ² The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation. The literal translation of וְהַדּוּרִים (*‘heights’*) is *‘swellings’*.
- ³ A more literal translation of *‘secret treasures’* is *‘treasures of darkness’*.
- ⁴ In place of *‘know’*, here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has *‘recognise’* and the NIV has *‘acknowledge’*.

אֲכַנֶּךָ וְלֹא יִדְעֶתָנִי:
ה אֲנִי יְהוָה וְאֵין עוֹד
וּלְתִי אֵין אֱלֹהִים
אֲאַזְרְךָ וְלֹא יִדְעֶתָנִי:
ו לְמַעַן יִדְעוּ מִמִּזְרַח-שֶׁמֶשׁ וּמִמַּעַרְבָּה
כִּי־אֵפֶס בְּלֹעַדִּי
אֲנִי יְהוָה וְאֵין עוֹד:
ז יוֹצֵר אֹר וּבוֹרֵא חָשֶׁךְ
עֹשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם וּבוֹרֵא רָע
אֲנִי יְהוָה עֹשֶׂה כָּל־אֱלֹהִים: {פ}
ח הֲרַעִיפוּ שָׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל
וּשְׁחַקִּים יִזְלוּ־צֶדֶק
תִּפְתַּח־אָרֶץ וַיִּפְרוּ־יֵשַׁע
וּצְדָקָה תִּצְמַיֵּחַ יַחַד
אֲנִי יְהוָה בְּרֹאֲתִיו: {ס}
ט הֲוֵי רֵב אֶת־יִצְרוֹ חֶרֶשׁ
אֶת־חֶרְשֵׁי אֲדָמָה
הֲיֹאמַר חָמֵר לִי־צֹר מִה־תַּעֲשֶׂה
וּפְעֻלָּךְ אֵין־יָדַיִם לוֹ: {ס}

have given you a title though you do not know me.
5 I am Yahweh, and there is no other;
there is no other God except me.
Though you do not know me, I have armed you
6 so that it may be known from east to west
that there is no one except me.
I am Yahweh and there is no other.
7 I form the light and I create the darkness;
I make wellbeing and I create evil;
I, Yahweh, do all these things.
8 Rain down, you heavens, from above,
and let the clouds pour down saving justice;
let the earth open up and blossom with salvation,
and let justice spout up with it;
I, Yahweh, have created it!
9 Woe to anyone who argues with his Maker,
one earthenware pot among many!
Does the clay say to its potter, "What are you doing?
Your work has no hands!"

5 NETB has 'I have no peer' in place of 'there is no other', here following the MT, NJB & NRSV.

6 The literal translation of 'east' is 'the rising of the sun'.

7 The participle at the beginning of this verse stands in apposition to 'Yahweh' in v. 6.

8 By substituting 'upright one' and 'Saviour' for the abstract Hebrew terms, Jerome (in the Vg) emphasised the messianic import of this prophecy.

9 For the 2nd line, here following the NJB (and MT), the NRSV has the conjectural, 'earthen vessels with the potter'.

<p>י הוֹי אָמַר לְאָב מִה־תּוֹלִיד וּלְאִשָּׁה מִה־תַּחֲלִילִין: {ס}</p>	<p>10 Woe to anyone who asks a father, “What are you begetting?” and a woman, “Why are you giving birth?”</p>
<p>יא כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיַצְרוֹ הָאֲתִיּוֹת שְׂאֲלוֹנִי עַל־בְּנֵי וְעַל־פֶּעַל יְדֵי תַצֹּנִי:</p>	<p>11 Thus says Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel, his Maker: will you ask me of things to come regarding my sons, or command me concerning the work I do.</p>
<p>יב אֲנֹכִי עָשִׂיתִי אֶרֶץ וָאָדָם עָלֶיהָ בִּרְאִיתִי אֲנִי יְדִי נָטוּ שָׁמַיִם וְכָל־צְבָאָם צוִּיתִי:</p>	<p>12 I made the earth and created human beings on it; it was my hands that spread out the heavens and I commanded all their host.</p>
<p>יג אֲנֹכִי הֶעִרְתִּהוּ בַצֶּדֶק וְכָל־דֶּרֶכָיו אִישׁוֹר הוּא־יִבְנֶה עִירִי וְגָלוּתִי יִשְׁלַח לֹא בַמַּחִיר וְלֹא בַשְּׁחָד אָמַר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת: {ס}</p>	<p>13 I myself have raised him in righteousness and I shall make all paths level for him. He will rebuild my city and bring my exiles home without ransom or indemnity, says Yahweh Sabaoth.</p>
<p>יד כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה יָגִיעַ מִצְרַיִם וְסַחֲר־כּוֹשׁ וְסַבְּאִים אֲנָשֵׁי מִדְּבָר עַלֶיךָ יַעֲבֹרוּ וְלָךְ יִהְיוּ</p>	<p>14 Thus says Yahweh: The work of Egypt, the revenue of Cush, and the Sabaeans, tall of stature, will come over to you and belong to you.</p>

¹⁰ Vv. 9–10 form the only invective in ‘Second Isaiah’; it is directed against those questioning the propriety of Cyrus’s mission (29:16).

¹¹ The literal translation of ‘Maker’ is ‘fashioner’ (cf. Gn 2:7–8). Some emend יַצְרוֹ (‘the one who formed him’) to יַצֵּר (‘the one who forms’).

¹² Literally translated, the 3rd line opens, “I, even my hands...”

¹³ In place of ‘him’ (here following the MT), the NRSV has ‘Cyrus’ (cf. 41:2).

¹⁴ The universalism of vv. 14–19 is also found in 2:2–4 (= Mi 4:1–3), Jr 12:15–16, 16:19–21, Zp 3:9–10.

אֲחֲרֶיךָ יֵלְכוּ בַּזָּקִים יַעֲבֹרוּ
וְאֵלֶיךָ יִשְׁתַּחֲווּ אֵלֶיךָ יִתְפַּלְּלוּ
אֲדָּךְ בָּדָּךְ אֵל וְאֵין עוֹד אֶפֶס אֱלֹהִים:
טו אֲכֵן אַתָּה אֵל מְסֻתָּתָר
אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מוֹשִׁיעַ:
טז בּוֹשׁוּ וְגַם־נִכְלְמוּ כָלֶם
יַחֲדוֹ הִלְכוּ בַּכְלָמָה חֲרָשֵׁי צִירִים:
יז יִשְׂרָאֵל נֹשָׁע בִּיהוָה
תִּשְׁוֶעַת עוֹלָמִים
לֹא־תִבָּשׂוּ וְלֹא־תִכְלָמוּ
עַד־עוֹלָמִי עַד: {פ}
יח כִּי כֹה אָמַר־יְהוָה בּוֹרֵא הַשָּׁמַיִם הוּא
הָאֱלֹהִים
יֵצֵר הָאָרֶץ וְעָשָׂה הוּא כּוֹנֵן
לֹא־תֵהוּ בְּרָאָה
לִשְׁבֹּת יִצְרָה
אֲנִי יְהוָה וְאֵין עוֹד:
יט לֹא בִסְתֵר דִּבַּרְתִּי
בְּמָקוֹם אֶרֶץ חֹשֶׁךְ

They will follow you, walking in chains, they will bow to you, they will pray to you, "Truly God is with you, and there is no other! The gods do not exist."

15 Truly, you are a God who conceals himself, God of Israel, Saviour!

16 All of them are put to shame and confounded; the makers of idols go in confusion together.

17 Israel will be saved by Yahweh, saved everlastingly. You will never be ashamed or humiliated forever and ever.

18 For, thus says Yahweh, the Creator of the heavens – he is God, who shaped the earth and made it, who set its form; he did not create it to be chaos, he formed it to be lived in: I am Yahweh, and there is no other.

19 I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness.

15 This isolated verse points a theological lesson: God no longer acts directly in history as formerly; he hides behind the instruments (Cyrus).

16 Literally translated, the 2nd line reads, "together they will walk in humiliation, the makers of images."

17 Literally translated, this verse ends, "you will not be ashamed and you will not be humiliated for ages of future time."

18 The literal translation of 'he is God' is 'he is the God' – the article indicates uniqueness.

19 'In vain' translates תֵּהוּ, used here as an adverbial accusative: 'for nothing'.

לֹא אִמַּרְתִּי לְזֶרַע יַעֲקֹב
 תִּהְיוּ בִקְשׁוֹנִי
 אֲנִי יְהוָה דִּבֵּר צֶדֶק
 מִגִּיד מִישָׁרִים:
 כּ הַקִּבְצוּ וּבֹאוּ הַתְּנַגְּשׁוּ יַחְדָּו
 פְּלִיטֵי הַגּוֹיִם
 לֹא יָדְעוּ
 הַנְּשָׂאִים אֶת־עֵץ פֶּסֶלִם
 וּמִתְפַּלְלִים אֶל־אֵל לֹא יוֹשִׁיעַ:
 כֹּא הִגִּידוּ וְהִגִּישׁוּ
 אֶף יוֹעֲצוּ יַחְדָּו
 מִי הַשְׁמִיעַ זֹאת מִקֶּדֶם מֵאִזְ הִגִּידָהָ
 הֲלוֹא אֲנִי יְהוָה וְאֵין־עוֹד אֱלֹהִים מִבְּלַעֲדִי
 אֶל־צַדִּיק וּמוֹשִׁיעַ אֵין זֹלָתָה:
 כִּב פְּנוּ־אֵלַי וְהוֹשָׁעוּ
 כָּל־אֲפִסִּי־אֶרֶץ
 כִּי אֲנִי־אֵל וְאֵין עוֹד:
 כִּג בִּי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי יֵצֵא מִפִּי צֶדֶקָה דָּבָר
 וְלֹא יָשׁוּב

I did not say, "Offspring of Jacob,
 Seek me in vain!"

I am Yahweh: I proclaim saving justice,
 I say what is true.

20 Assemble yourselves and come together;
 draw near, you survivors of the nations.

They have no knowledge,
 those who parade their wooden idols
 and pray to a god that cannot save.

21 Speak up, present your case,
 and let them put their heads together!
 Who foretold this in the past; who revealed it long ago?
 Was it not I, Yahweh? There is no other god except me;
 no saving God, no Saviour except me!

22 Turn to me and you will be saved,
 all you ends of the earth,
 for I am God and there is no other.

23 By my own self, I swear it; what comes from my mouth is true,
 it is an irrevocable word:

20 This polemic against false gods (vv. 20–25), already spoken several times (40:12–31,18), affirms a universalism not so clear heretofore (#14).

21 The literal translation of the 1st line is, "Declare! Bring near!"

22 The Niphal imperative with prefixed *vav* (וְהוֹשָׁעוּ, in the 1st line) indicates purpose after the preceding imperative; here, it probably has a sense of tolerance: 'allow yourselves to be delivered, accept help'.

23 Literally translated, the first 2 lines read, "I swear by myself; a word goes out from my mouth (in) truth and will not return."

כִּי־לִי תִכְרַע כָּל־בָּרָךְ
 תִּשָּׁבַע כָּל־לִשׁוֹן:
 כִּד אֶךְ בִּיהוָה לִי אִמָּר
 צְדָקוֹת וְעֹז
 עָדִיו יָבֹא וַיִּבְשׁוּ
 כָּל הַנִּחָרִים בּוֹ:
 כֵּה בִיהוָה יִצְדָּקוּ וַיִּתְהַלָּלוּ
 כָּל־זֶרַע יִשְׂרָאֵל:

All shall bend the knee to me;
 by me, every tongue shall swear.

24 "In Yahweh alone," he told me,
 "are deliverance and strength,"
 until all those who used to rage at him
 come to him in shame.

25 In Yahweh, all the offspring of Israel
 finds justice and glory.

24 In place of 'deliverance', the NJB has 'saving justice' and the NRSV has 'righteousness'.

25 The NJB has 'the whole race' in place of 'all the offspring', here following the NRSV.

ישעיהו פרק מו

א פָּרַע בֵּל קָרַס נְבוֹ
הָיוּ עֲצִבֵיהֶם לַחִיָּה וּלְבִהֶמָּה
נִשְׂאֲתֵיכֶם עֲמוּסוֹת
מִשָּׂא לַעֲיִיפָה:
ב קָרְסוּ כָרְעוּ יַחְדָּו
לֹא יִכְלוּ מִלֵּט מִשָּׂא
וְנַפְשָׁם בִּשְׂבִי הַלֶּכָּה: {פ}
ג שִׁמְעוּ אֵלַי בֵּית יַעֲקֹב
וְכָל־שְׂאֲרֵית בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
הַעֲמָסִים מִנִּי־בֶטֶן
הַנְּשֹׂאִים מִנִּי־רֶחֶם:
ד וְעַד־זָקְנָה אֲנִי הוּא
וְעַד־שִׁיבָה אֲנִי אֶסְבֹּל
אֲנִי עָשִׂיתִי וְאֲנִי אֶשָּׂא
וְאֲנִי אֶסְבֹּל וְאֶמְלֹט: {ס}
ה לְמִי תִדְּמִינִי וְתִשְׁווּ
וְתִמְשְׁלוּנִי וְנִדְּמָה:

ISAIAH 46

- 1 Bel is crouching, Nebo cowering,
their idols are being put on animals, on beasts of burden;
the loads you have been carrying
are a burden to a weary beast.
- 2 They cower and crouch together,
no one can save this burden,
and they themselves have gone into captivity.
- 3 Listen to me, House of Jacob,
all who remain of the House of Israel,
whom I have carried since the womb,
whom I have supported since you were conceived.
- 4 Until your old age, I am he;
until your hair is grey, I shall carry you.
As I have done, so I shall support you;
I myself shall carry and shall save you.
- 5 With whom can you liken me, equate me,
and compare me, making equals of us?

ISAIAH 46

- 1 The prophet foresees the capture of Babylon by Cyrus. The gods of the Assyro-Babylonian pantheon, Bel-Marduk, god of the sky, and Nebo (or Nabu, the son of Marduk, Jr 50:2), god of wisdom, are crushed. The Babylonians flee, carrying their gods (i.e. the idols representing them).
- 2 נַפְשָׁם ('they themselves') is equivalent to a 3MP suffix but the 3FS verb הִלְכָה ('they have gone') agrees with the feminine noun נַפֶּשׁ ('soul').
- 3 Unlike the idolaters carrying their gods as they flee, Yahweh has carried Israel from the beginning.
- 4 In place of 'I am he', here following the MT & NRSV, the NJB has 'I shall be the same' and NETB has 'I will take care of you'.
- 5 The prophet resumes his theme of the true God's incomparable power (cf. 41:21-29, 42:8, 43:8-13, 44:7).

1 הִזְלִים זָהָב מִכֵּיס
 וַכֹּסֶף בִּקְנָה יִשְׁקְלוּ
 יִשְׁכְּרוּ צוּרָף וַיַּעֲשֶׂהוּ אֵל
 יִסְגְּדוּ אַף־יִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ:
 2 יִשְׁאַהוּ עַל־כִּתְּף יִסְבְּלֶהוּ וַיִּנְיַחֶהוּ תַּחְתָּיו
 וַיַּעֲמֵד מִמְּקוֹמוֹ לֹא יִמִּישׁ
 אַף־יִצְעַק אֵלָיו וְלֹא יַעֲנֶה
 מִצָּרָתוֹ לֹא יוֹשִׁיעֵנּוּ: {ס}
 ח זְכֹרוּ־זֹאת וְהִתְאַשְׁשׁוּ
 הַשִּׁיבוּ פִּוְשָׁעִים עַל־לֵב:
 ט זְכֹרוּ רֵאשִׁיטוֹת מַעֲוָלָם
 כִּי אֲנֹכִי אֵל וְאֵין עוֹד
 אֱלֹהִים וְאֶפֶס כְּמוֹנִי:
 י מִגִּיד מְרֵאשִׁית אַחֲרִית
 וּמִקֶּדֶם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־נֶעֱשָׂה
 אֲמַר עֲצָתִי תִקּוֹם
 וְכָל־חֲפָצִי אֶעֱשֶׂה:

- 6 They lavish gold from their purses
 and weigh out silver on the scales.
 They engage a goldsmith to make a god;
 then they bow low and worship.
 7 They put it on their shoulders and carry it,
 they set it in its place, and it stands there;
 it does not move from its place.
 If you cry out to it, it does not reply or save anyone in trouble.
 8 Remember this and stand firm;
 rebels, look into your hearts.
 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.
 10 From the beginning, I revealed the future,
 from long ago, what has not yet occurred.
 I say: My purpose will come about;
 I shall do whatever I please.

6 The literal translation of 'scales' is 'reed' (i.e. the arm of the balance).

7 An alternative reading for 'does not' is 'cannot' (in the last 2 lines): imperfect forms can indicate capability.

8 The translation and meaning of this verse are uncertain; the NRSV reads, "Remember this and consider, recall it to mind, you transgressors." The meaning of הִתְאַשְׁשׁוּ ('stand firm' – a verb in the Hitpoel stem) is uncertain; some relate it to a root meaning 'found' or 'establish' in Arabic, while others give the meaning 'pluck up courage'. The NRSV has 'consider'; here, we follow the NJB.

9 For the 1st line, here following the NRSV, the NJB has, "Remember the things that happened long ago."

10 The NJB has 'in advance' in place of 'from long ago', here following NETB; the NRSV has 'from ancient times'.

יא קרא מִמְזֶרֶחַ עֵיט
 מֵאֶרֶץ מְרֹחֶק אִישׁ עֲצָתוֹ עֲצָתִי
 אֶף־דִּבַּרְתִּי אֶף־אֲבִיאָנָה
 יֵצְרָתִי אֶף־אֶעֱשֶׂנָּה: {ס}
 יב שִׁמְעוּ אֵלַי אֲבִירֵי לֵב
 הֲרֹחוּקִים מִצְדָּקָה:
 יג קִרְבָּתִי צְדָקָתִי לֹא תִרְחָק
 וְתִשׁוּעָתִי לֹא תֵאָחֵר
 וְנִתַּתִּי בְצִיּוֹן תִּשׁוּעָה
 לְיִשְׂרָאֵל תִּפְאָרְתִּי: {ס}

- 11 I call a bird of prey from the east,
 my man predestined, from a distant land.
 What I have said, I shall do;
 what I have planned, I shall perform.
- 12 Listen to me, you stubborn of heart,
 far removed from deliverance.
- 13 I am bringing my deliverance nearer, it is not far away,
 and my salvation will not delay.
 I shall place my salvation in Zion
 and my glory in Israel.

11 The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

12 Only God can save: unbelievers take note!

13 The literal translation of the last line is 'to Israel my glory'.

ישעיהו פרק מז

א רְדִי וּשְׁבִי עַל-עָפָר
בְּתוֹלַת בֵּת-בָּבֶל
שְׁבִי-לָאָרֶץ אֵין-כִּסֵּא
בֵּת-כְּשָׁדִים
כִּי לֹא תוֹסִיפִי יִקְרְאוּלָךְ
רַכָּה וְעִנְיָנָה:
ב קְחִי רַחִים וְטַחֲנִי קֶמֶחַ
גְּלִי צִמְתְּךָ חֲשָׁפִי-שֶׁבֶל גְּלִי-שׁוֹק
עֲבְרִי נְהָרוֹת:
ג תְּגַלִּי עֲרוֹתֶךָ
גַּם תִּרְאֶה חֲרָפְתְּךָ
נָקֵם אֶקַּח
וְלֹא אֶפְגַּע אָדָם: {פ}
ד גְּאֻלֵּנוּ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ
קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל:

ISAIAH 47

- 1 Step down! Sit in the dust,
virgin daughter Babylon.
Sit on the ground, no throne,
daughter of the Chaldeans,
for never again will you be called
tender and delicate.
- 2 Take the grinding mill, crush up the meal.
Remove your veil, tie up your skirt, bare your legs,
cross the rivers.
- 3 Let your nakedness be displayed
and your shame exposed.
I am going to take vengeance
and I will spare no one.
- 4 Our redeemer, Yahweh Sabaoth is his name,
the Holy One of Israel, says:

ISAIAH 47

- 1 This chapter is in the form of poem known as *qinah* – a lament with uneven lines. The word בְּתוֹלַת often refers to a virgin, but the phrase ‘*virgin daughter*’ is apparently stylized for an unconquered town or country (see also 23:12, 37:22 = 2K 19:21, Jr 14:17, 46:11, Lm 1:15 & 2:13).
- 2 Grinding up meal was the work of slaves.
- 3 The last line here follows the MT (and NRSV); the NJB has the conjectural, “and no one will stand in my way;” the literal translation is “I will not meet a man,” but the verb אֶפְגַּע apparently carries the nuance ‘meet with kindness’ here.
- 4 In the MT (and NRSV), this verse has no verb: the LXX (and NJB), followed here, has ‘says’; אָמַר may have accidentally dropped from the beginning of the verse by virtual haplography (note that the preceding word, אָדָם, is graphically similar).

ה	שְׁבִי דוּמָם וּבְאֵי בַחֲשָׁד בַּת-כַּשְׂדִּים כִּי לֹא תוֹסִיפִי יִקְרְאוּלָךְ גְּבֵרַת מַמְלָכוֹת: ו	5	Sit in silence, bury yourself in darkness, daughter Chaldaea, for never again will you be called the mistress of kingdoms.
ו	קִצַּפְתִּי עַל-עַמִּי חָלַלְתִּי נַחֲלָתִי וְאַתָּנָם בְּיָדְךָ לֹא-שָׁמַתָּ לָהֶם רַחֲמִים עַל-זִקְנֵי הַכְּבֹדֶת עֲלֶיךָ מְאֹד: ז	6	Being angry with my people, I rejected my heritage, surrendering them into your clutches. You showed them no mercy; you made your yoke heavy on the aged.
ז	וְתֹאמְרִי לְעוֹלָם אֶהְיֶה גְבֵרַת עַד לֹא-שָׁמַתָּ אֱלֹהִים עַל-לִבְּךָ לֹא זָכַרְתָּ אַחֲרִיתָהּ: {פ}	7	You said, "I shall be a queen forever." You did not reflect on these matters or think about the future.
ח	וְעַתָּה שְׁמַעִי-זֹאת עַדִּינָה הַיּוֹשֶׁבֶת לְבֶטַח הָאֹמְרָה בַּלְבָּבָהּ אֲנִי וְאִפְסִי עוֹד לֹא אֶשָּׁב אֶלְמָנָה וְלֹא אֶדַע שָׂכוֹל: ט	8	Now listen to this, voluptuous woman, sitting securely and saying in your heart, "I am the only one who matters. I shall never be widowed, never know bereavement."
ט	וְתִבְאֲנָה לְךָ שְׁתֵּי-אֵלֹהִים רַגַע בְּיוֹם אֶחָד	9	Yet, both these things will befall you, suddenly, in one day.

⁵ 'Darkness' probably refers here to a hiding place where a fugitive would seek refuge and shelter.

⁶ Another possible translation for 'mercy' is 'compassion'.

⁷ Literally translated, the 2nd line (here following the NJB) reads, "You did not set these things upon your heart."

⁸ Babylon is apparently trying to rival Yahweh (cf. 42:8, 45:14, 46:9); she will be punished for her pride.

⁹ Reference is made to 'incantations' and 'amulets', both of which were used in Mesopotamian religion to ward off danger and demons.

שְׂכֹל וְאַלְמָן
 כְּתָמָם בָּאוּ עָלֶיךָ
 בְּרַב כְּשָׁפֶיךָ
 בְּעֶצְמַת חֲבֵרֶיךָ מֵאֵד:
 וְתִבְטַחִי בִרְעִיתֶךָ י
 אֲמַרְתָּ אֵין רֹאֲנִי
 חֲכַמְתֶּךָ וְדַעְתֶּךָ
 הִיא שׁוֹבֶבֶתֶךָ
 וְתֹאמְרִי בִלְבָבֶךָ
 אֲנִי וְאַפְסִי עוֹד:
 וְבָא עָלֶיךָ רָעָה יא
 לֹא תִדְעִי שְׁחָרָה
 וְתִפֹּל עָלֶיךָ הָוָה
 לֹא תוּכְלִי כִפְרָה
 וְתִבָּא עָלֶיךָ פְּתָאֵם שְׂאָה
 לֹא תִדְעִי:
 עֲמִדִי־נָא בַחֲבֵרֶיךָ יב
 וּבְרַב כְּשָׁפֶיךָ
 בְּאֲשֶׁר יִגְעַת מִנְעוּרֶיךָ

Bereavement and widowhood
 will suddenly befall you
 in spite of all your incantations
 and your numerous amulets.

- 10 Confident in your wickedness,
 you thought, "No one can see me."
 Your wishes and your knowledge
 were what deluded you,
 as you said in your heart,
 "I am the only one who matters."
- 11 Hence, disaster will befall you,
 which you will not know how to charm away;
 calamity will overtake you,
 which you will not be able to avert;
 ruination will suddenly befall you,
 such as you have never known.
- 12 Keep to your amulets, then,
 and all your incantations,
 at which you have laboured since your youth.

¹⁰ Divination, astrology, and magic (see vv. 12–13) fail to reveal Babylon's approaching fall.

¹¹ 'Charm away' translates שְׁחָרָה, which is either a suffixed noun ('its dawning') or infinitive ('to look early for it'); some have suggested an emendation to שְׁחָדָה, a suffixed infinitive from שָׁחַד ('to buy it off'), which would form a nice parallel with the following couplet. The above translation (following the NRSV, NJB & NETB) is based on a different etymology of the verb in question.

¹² For the last line, here following the NJB (& NRSV), NETB has, "maybe you will scare away disaster."

אולי תוכלי הועיל
 אולי תערוצי:
 יג נלאית ברב עצתיך
 יעמדו־נא ויושיעך הברו הברי שמים
 החזים בפוכבים
 מודעים לחדשים
 מאשר יבאו עליך:
 יד הנה היו כקש אש שרפתם
 לא־יצילו את־נפשם מיד להבה
 אין־גחלת לחמם
 אור לשבת נגדו:
 טו בן היו־לך אשר יגעת
 סחריך מנעוריוך
 איש לעברו תעו
 אין מושיעך: {ס}

Perhaps you will succeed;
 perhaps you will strike terror!

- 13 You have had many tiring consultations:
 let the astrologers come forward now and save you,
 the stargazers
 who announce at each New Moon
 what will happen to you next.
- 14 Look, they are like stubble: the fire consumes them.
 They cannot deliver themselves from the power of the flame.
 No coal for keeping warm is this,
 no fire to sit beside!
- 15 Such will your wizards prove to be for you,
 who have traded with you from your youth;
 each wandering his own way,
 none of them can save you.

13 The meaning of the word here translated as 'astrologers' is uncertain; the NRSV has 'those who study the heavens'. The last line here follows the LXX (τί μέλλει ἐπὶ σὲ ἔρχεσθαι) and Peshitta: the MT opens with 'from what'. The Kethib/ Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

14 Like stubble in a fire, so Babylon will be consumed; both vassals and allies will desert her (Jr 51:58). For the last 2 lines, the MT reads literally, "there is no coal (for) their food, light to sit before it;" some emend לַחֲמָם ('their food') to לְחַמָּם ('to warm them'). This statement may allude to 44:16, where idolaters are depicted warming themselves over a fire made from wood, part of which was used to form idols; the fire of divine judgment will be no such campfire: its flames will devour and destroy.

15 The term here translated as 'wizards' normally means 'merchants' (etymologically, 'those who come and go') but, in the light of an identical word in Accadian, it can be taken to mean 'magician' (see vv.9, 12–13).

ישעיהו פרק מח

א שְׁמַעו־זֹאת בֵּית־יַעֲקֹב
הַנִּקְרָאִים בְּשֵׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל
וּמִמִּי יְהוּדָה יֵצְאוּ
הַנִּשְׁבָּעִים בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה
וּבֵאלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יִזְכִּירוּ
לֹא בֶאֱמֶת וְלֹא בַצְדָקָה:
ב כִּי־מַעִיר הַקֹּדֶשׁ נִקְרָאוּ
וְעַל־אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל נִסְמְכוּ
יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ: {ס}
ג הָרֵאשֵׁנוֹת מֵאִזְ הַגְּדֹתַי
וּמִפִּי יֵצְאוּ וְאֲשַׁמִּיעֵם
פֶּתְאִם עָשִׂיתִי וְתִבְאֲנָה:
ד מִדַּעְתִּי כִּי קָשָׁה אֶתָּה
וְגִיד בְּרִזְלִי עֲרִפְךָ
וּמִצְחֶךָ נְחוּשָׁה:
ה וְאֶגִּיד לְךָ מֵאִז

ISAIAH 48

- 1 Listen to this, House of Jacob,
you who are called by the name of Israel
and issued from the waters of Judah,
who swear by the name of Yahweh
and invoke the God of Israel,
though not in good faith or uprightness.
- 2 For they call themselves after the holy city
and lean on the God of Israel,
Yahweh Sabaoth is his name.
- 3 Things now past I revealed long ago,
they issued from my mouth, I proclaimed them;
suddenly I acted and the happened.
- 4 For I knew you to be obstinate,
your neck an iron sinew
and your forehead bronze.
- 5 As I told you about it long before,

ISAIAH 48

- 1 The imagery of the 3rd line is obscure – the Tg understands it as ‘of the seed of Judah’ and the LXX has merely ‘and issued from Judah’ (*καὶ οἱ ἐξ Ἰουδα ἐξεληλύθες*); the NRSV (cf. NASB, NIV & NLT) has ‘loins’ in place of ‘waters’, assuming מִמִּי is a corruption of מִמַּעַי.
- 2 The precise meaning of the phrase ‘call themselves after’ is uncertain; the Niphal of קָרָא is combined with the preposition מִן only here.
- 3 Literally translated, the first 2 lines read, “the former things beforehand I declared, and from my mouth they came forth and I caused them to be heard.”
- 4 Israel’s obstinacy is a familiar theme of the prophets and the historical books.
- 5 God’s prophets announced future events to preclude Israel’s wrongly ascribing them to other forces.

בְּטֶרֶם תָּבוֹא הַשְׁמַעְתִּיךָ
פֶּן־תֹּאמַר עֲצָבִי עָשָׂם
וּפִסְלִי וְנִסְכִּי צִוָּם:
שָׁמַעַתָּ חִזָּה כֻּלָּהּ ^ו
וְאַתֶּם הֲלֹוא תִּגִּידוּ
הַשְׁמַעְתִּיךָ חֲדָשׁוֹת מֵעַתָּה
וְנִצְרוֹת וְלֹא יִדְעֶתֶם:
עַתָּה נִבְרָאוּ וְלֹא מֵאֶז
וְלִפְנֵי־יָוֶם וְלֹא שָׁמַעְתֶּם
פֶּן־תֹּאמַר הִנֵּה יִדְעִיתִין:
גַּם לֹא־שָׁמַעְתָּ גַּם לֹא יִדְעָתָּ ^ח
גַּם מֵאֶז לֹא־פִתַּחְהָ אָזְנוֹךָ
כִּי יִדְעָתִי בְּגֹד תִּבְגְּדוּ
וּפִשְׁעִי מִבֶּטֶן קָרָא לְךָ:
לְמַעַן שְׁמִי אֶאֱרִיךְ אִפִּי ^ט
וְתִהְיֶה אֲחִטָּם־לְךָ
לְבַלְתִּי הַכְרִיתֶךָ:
הִנֵּה צִרְפָּתִיךָ וְלֹא בַכֶּסֶף ^י
בְּחִרְתִּיךָ בְּכוֹר עֲנִי:

before it happened I revealed it to you,
so that you could not say, "My statue did it,
my idol, my metal image, ordained this."

- ⁶ You have heard and seen all this:
why will you not admit it?
Now I am going to reveal new things to you,
secrets that you do not know.
- ⁷ They have just been created, not long ago
and, until today, you have heard nothing about them,
so that you cannot say, "Yes, I knew about this."
- ⁸ No, you have not heard, you have not known,
for a long time, your ear has not been attentive;
for, I knew you were very deceitful;
you have been called a rebel since the womb.
- ⁹ For the sake of my name, I shall defer my anger,
for the sake of my honour, I shall be patient with you,
rather than destroy you.
- ¹⁰ Look, I have purchased you, but not for silver;
I have chosen you out of the cauldron of affliction.

⁶ The literal translation of 'secrets' (following the NJB) is 'hidden things' (as NRSV).

⁷ The word here translated as 'yes' is more often used in the sense, 'look' or 'behold'.

⁸ The phrase, 'very deceitful' translates בְּגֹד תִּבְגְּדוּ ('deceiving, you deceive'); the infinitive absolute precedes the finite verb for emphasis.

⁹ The literal translation of 'destroy you' is 'cut you off'.

¹⁰ The 1st line follows the LXX (ἰδοὺ πέπρακά σε οὐχ ἔνεκεν ἀργυρίου) and NJB; the MT (and NRSV) has, "See, I have refined you, but not like silver."

יא	לְמַעַנִי לְמַעַנִי אַעֲשֶׂה כִּי אֵיךְ יִחַל וּכְבוֹדִי לְאַחֵר לֹא-אַתֵּן: {פ}	11	For my sake and my sake only shall I act; for, why should my name be profaned? I will not yield my glory to another.
יב	שְׁמַע אֵלַי יַעֲקֹב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל מִקְרָאִי אֲנִי-הוּא אֲנִי רִאשׁוֹן אֲף אֲנִי אַחֲרֹון:	12	Listen to me, Jacob, Israel, whom I have called: I am He; I am the first; and I am the last.
יג	אֶף-יְדִי יִסְדָּה אֶרֶץ וַיְמִינִי טִפְחָה שָׁמַיִם קְרָא אֲנִי אֱלֹהִים יַעֲמְדוּ יַחְדָּו:	13	My hand laid the foundations of earth and my right hand spread out the heavens. When I summon them, they stand together.
יד	הִקְבְּצוּ כָלְכֶם וּשְׁמָעוּ מִי בָהֶם הִגִּיד אֶת-אַלֹּהַ יְהוָה אֲהַבּוּ יַעֲשֶׂה חֶפְצוֹ בְּבָבֶל וְזָרְעוּ בְשָׂדִים:	14	Assemble, all of you, and listen; which of them has revealed this? Yahweh loves him; he will do his pleasure against Babylon and the race of the Chaldaeans.
טו	אֲנִי אֲנִי דִבַּרְתִּי אֶף-קִרְאתִיו הִבֵּאתִיו וְהִצְלִיחַ דְּרָכּוֹ:	15	I, I have spoken, yes, I have summoned him; I have brought him, and he will succeed.
טז	קִרְבוּ אֵלַי שְׁמַעוּ-זֹאת	16	Come near and listen to this:

¹¹ 'My name' follows the LXX (ἐμὸν ὄνομα) and Vetus Latina; the MT has 'it'.

¹² For the last 2 lines, here following the MT & NRSV, NETB has, "I am present at the very beginning and at the very end."

¹³ For the last line, here following NETB, the NJB has "they all present themselves together" and the NRSV has "they stand at attention."

¹⁴ The last line here follows the LXX (ἐπὶ Βαβυλῶνα τοῦ ἄραι σπέρμα Χαλδαίων) and NJB; the MT (and NRSV) has, "... and his arm (shall be) against the Chaldaeans." Yahweh's beloved is either Israel or Cyrus, who is certainly referred to in v. 15 but the text is perhaps corrupt.

¹⁵ The literal translation of 'he will succeed' is 'his way will be prosperous'.

¹⁶ The prophet now utters a new prophecy (vv. 17-19), a meditation on what the destiny of Israel would have been, if Israel had been faithful.

לֹא מֵרֵאשִׁית בִּסְתֵר דִּבַּרְתִּי
 מֵעַתָּה הִיְתָה שְׁם אֲנִי
 וְעַתָּה אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה שְׁלַחֲנִי וְרוּחוֹ: {פ}
 כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה גֹּאֲלֶךָ יי
 קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל
 אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִלְמַדְךָ לְהוֹעִיל
 מִדְרִיכְךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ תִּלְךָ:
 לֹא הַקְשַׁבְתָּ לְמִצְוֹתַי יח
 וַיְהִי כְנֶהֱרָ שְׁלוֹמֶךָ
 וַצִּדְקַתְךָ כְּגַלֵּי הַיָּם:
 וַיְהִי כַחֲוֵל זֶרַעַךָ יט
 וַצִּאֲצָאִי מֵעֵיד כְּמַעַתְיוֹ
 לֹא־יִכָּרֵת וְלֹא־יִשָּׁמַד שְׁמוֹ מִלִּפְנֵי: {ס}
 צֵאוּ מִבָּבֶל בְּרָחוּ מִכַּשְׂדִּים כ
 בְּקוֹל רִנָּה הִגִּידוּ הַשְּׁמִיעוּ זֹאת
 הוֹצִיאוּהָ עַד־קֶצֶה הָאָרֶץ
 אָמְרוּ גֹאֲלִי יְהוָה עֲבָדוֹ יַעֲקֹב:
 וְלֹא צִמְאוּ בַּחֲרָבוֹת הוֹלִיכֵם כא

from the first, I never spoke obscurely;
 when it happened, I was there,
 and now Lord Yahweh has set me with his spirit.

- 17 Thus says Yahweh, your Redeemer,
 the Holy One of Israel:
 I am Yahweh your God and teach you for your own good;
 I lead you in the way you ought to go.
- 18 If only you had listened to my commandments!
 Your prosperity would have been like a river
 and deliverance justice like the waves of the sea.
- 19 Your offspring would have been like the sand,
 and your descendants like its grains;
 their name would not be cut off or destroyed from before me.
- 20 Come out from Babylon! Flee from the Chaldeans!
 Declare this with cries of joy, proclaim it,
 carry it to the remotest parts of earth,
 and say, "Yahweh has redeemed his servant Jacob."
- 21 Those he led through the arid country never went thirsty;

17 In place of 'Redeemer', here following the NRSV & NJB (the latter does not capitalise the word), NETB has 'protector'.

18 The NJB has 'saving justice' in place of 'deliverance' (here following NETB), and the NRSV has 'success'; the word (צִדְקָתְךָ) probably refers here to divine deliverance from enemies.

19 The opening pronoun of the 3rd line is singular ('his') in the MT.

20 The day of deliverance has come! This triumph song (vv. 20–22) concludes the section 47–48.

21 The prophet sees Israel's deliverance as a new Exodus (Ex 17:1–7, Jr 31:10).

מִים מַצֹּר הִזִּיל לָמוֹ
וַיִּבְקַע-צֹר וַיִּזְבוּ מִים:
בב אין שָׁלוֹם אָמַר יְהוָה לְרָשָׁעִים: {פ}

he made water flow for them from the rock,
he split the rock and out streamed the water.

²² There is no peace, says Yahweh, for the wicked.

²² NETB has 'prosperity' in place of 'peace', here following the NJB & NRSV.

ישעיהו פרק מט

א שִׁמְעוּ אֵימָּם אֵלַי
וְהִקְשִׁיבוּ לְאֲמִים מְרֻחָק
יְהוָה מִבֶּטֶן קָרָאֲנִי
מִמַּעַי אֲמִי הִזְכִּיר שְׁמִי:
ב וַיֵּשֶׁם פִּי כַחֲרֵב חֶדֶה
בְּצֵל יָדוֹ הִחְבִּיאֲנִי
וַיְשִׁימֵנִי לַחֵץ בְּרוּר
בְּאִשְׁפָּתוֹ הִסְתִּירֵנִי:
ג וַיֹּאמֶר לִי עַבְדִּי-אַתָּה
יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר-בָּךְ אֶתְפָּאֵר:
ד וָאֲנִי אֲמַרְתִּי לְרִיק יִנְעָתִי
לְתֹהוּ וְהִבֵּל כְּחִי כְלִיתִי
אֲכֹל מִשְׁפָּטִי אֶת-יְהוָה
וּפְעַלְתִּי אֶת-אֱלֹהִי: {ס}
ה וַעֲתָה | אָמַר יְהוָה
יוֹצְרִי מִבֶּטֶן לְעַבְדִּי לוֹ

ISAIAH 49

- 1 Coasts and islands listen to me;
pay attention, distant peoples.
Yahweh called me from the womb;
before my birth, he had pronounced my name.
- 2 He made my mouth like a sharp sword;
he hid me in the shadow of his hand.
He made me into a sharpened arrow
and concealed me in his quiver.
- 3 He said to me, "You are my servant,
Israel, in whom I will be glorified."
- 4 But I said, "I have laboured in vain,
I have exhausted myself for absolutely nothing."
Yet, all the while, my cause was with Yahweh
and my reward with my God.
- 5 Now Yahweh has spoken,
who formed me in the womb to be his servant,

ISAIAH 49

- ¹ Scholars disagree over the length of this song, some believing that it ends at v.6, while others include vv. 7-9.
- ² The figurative language emphasizes the servant's importance as Yahweh's effective instrument.
- ³ 'Israel' is generally considered to be a gloss inspired by 44:21 and incompatible with vv. 5 - 6, which make a distinction between the servant and Jacob/Israel. However, the word appears in all witnesses to the text.
- ⁴ The literal translation of 'absolutely nothing' is 'nothing and emptiness'; synonyms are combined to emphasise the common idea.
- ⁵ 'And to re-unite Israel' follows 1QIsa^a; the MT has 'not to re-unite Israel'. The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

לְשׁוּבָב יַעֲקֹב אֵלָיו
 וְיִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא לוֹ יֹאסֶף
 וְאֶכְבֵּד בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה
 וְאֱלֹהֵי הָיָה עִזִּי:
 וַיֹּאמֶר נָקֹל מִהֵיּוֹתָךְ לִי עֶבֶד¹
 לְהָקִים אֶת־שִׁבְטֵי יַעֲקֹב
 וּנְצִירֵי וּנְצוּרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְהָשִׁיב
 וּנְתַתִּיךָ לְאֹר גּוֹיִם
 לְהֵיזֹת יְשׁוּעָתִי עַד־קֶצֶה הָאָרֶץ: {ס}
 כֹּה אָמַר־יְהוָה גֹּאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל קְדוֹשׁ²
 לְבִזְהָ־נַפֶּשׁ לְמַתְעֵב גּוֹי לְעֶבֶד מַשְׁלִים
 מַלְכִּים יִרְאוּ וְקָמוּ
 שָׂרִים וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ
 לְמַעַן יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר נֶאֱמָן
 קֹדֶשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּבְחָרֶךָ: {ס}
 כֹּה | אָמַר יְהוָה³
 בָּעֵת רָצוֹן עָנִיתִיךָ
 וּבְיוֹם יְשׁוּעָה עֲזַרְתִּיךָ
 וְאַצְרַךְ וְאַתָּנָךְ
 לְבְרִית עָם

to bring Jacob back to him

and to re-unite Israel to him;

I shall be honoured in Yahweh's eyes,

and my God has been my strength.

⁶ He said, "It is not enough for you to be my servant,

to restore the tribes of Jacob

and bring back the survivors of Israel;

I shall make you a light to the nations

so that my salvation may reach the end of the earth."

⁷ Thus says Yahweh, the redeemer, the Holy One of Israel,

the one who is despised, detested by the nation,

to the slave of despots:

Kings see and stand up, princes will see and bow low,

because of Yahweh who is faithful,

the Holy One of Israel who has chosen you.

⁸ Thus says Yahweh:

At the time of my favour, I have answered you;

on the day of salvation, I have helped you.

I have formed you and have appointed you

to be the covenant for a people,

⁶ The literal translation of 'survivors' is 'protected ones'. The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

⁷ 'Despised' and 'detested' (passive participles) follow 1QIsa^a; the MT has active participles.

⁸ The meaning of the Hebrew for the 5th line is uncertain, reading literally 'a covenant of people'.

לְהַקִּים אֶרֶץ
 לְהַנְחִיל נַחֲלוֹת שְׁמֹמֹת:
 ט לֵאמֹר לַאֲסוּרִים צֵאוּ
 לַאֲשֶׁר בַּחֹשֶׁךְ הָגְלוּ
 עַל־דַּרְכֵּי יָרְעוּ
 וּבְכָל־שִׁפְיֵי מַרְעִיתָם:
 י לֹא יִרְעָבוּ וְלֹא יִצְמָאוּ
 וְלֹא־יִכָּם שָׂרֵב וְשֹׁמֵשׁ
 כִּי־מִרְחָמָם יִנְהֹגֵם
 וְעַל־מְבוּעֵי מַיִם יִנְהַלֵּם:
 יא וְשִׁמַּתִּי כָל־הָרִי לְדֶרֶךְ
 וּמִסְלָתִי יִרְמֹז:
 יב הִנֵּה־אֵלֶּה מִרְחוֹק יָבֹאוּ
 וְהִנֵּה־אֵלֶּה מִצָּפוֹן וּמִמֵּי
 וְאֵלֶּה מֵאֶרֶץ סִינִים:
 יג רְנוּ שָׁמַיִם וְגִילִי אֶרֶץ
 יִפְצְחוּ וּפִצְחוּ הָרִים רְנֵה
 כִּי־נָחַם יְהוָה עַמּוֹ
 וַעֲנִיּוֹ יִרְחַם: {ס}

to restore the land,
 to return ravaged properties,
 9 to say to prisoners, "Come out,"
 to those who are in darkness, "Show yourselves."
 Along the roadway, they will graze,
 and any bare height will be their pasture.
 10 They will never hunger or thirst;
 the sun's oppressive heat will never plague them;
 for he who pities them will lead them,
 will guide them to springs of water.
 11 I shall turn all my mountains into a road
 and my highways will be raised up.
 12 Look! Here they come from far away,
 look, there from the north and the west,
 those from the land of Sinim.
 13 Shout for joy, you heavens; earth, exult!
 Break into joyful cries, O mountains!
 For, Yahweh has consoled his people,
 is taking pity on his afflicted ones.

⁹ An alternative translation for 'bare height' is 'trail'.

¹⁰ In its only other occurrence in the OT (35:7, 'oppressive heat') שָׂרֵב parallels 'parched ground'; in later Hebrew, it refers to 'dry heat'.

¹¹ For the 2nd line, here following the NRSV (and NJB), NETB has, "I will construct my roadways."

¹² 'Sinim' (סִינִים) is probably Syene (as in the NRSV, following 1QIsa^a), known as Elephantine to the Greeks, the modern Aswan.

¹³ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

יד וַתֹּאמֶר צִיּוֹן עֲזָבַנִי יְהוָה
 וַאֲדֹנָי שָׁכַחַנִי:
 טו הֲתִשְׁכַּח אִשָּׁה עוֹלָה
 מִרַּחֵם בֶּן-בֶּטְנָהּ
 גַּם-אֵלֶּה תִשְׁכַּחַנָּה
 וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא אֶשְׁכַּחֲךָ:
 טז הֵן עַל-כַּפַּיִם חֲקַתִּיךָ
 חֹמֹתֶיךָ נִגְדִי תָמִיד:
 יז מְהֵרָה בָנֶיךָ
 מְהַרְסִיךָ וּמַחְרִיבֶיךָ מִמֶּךָ יֵצְאוּ:
 יח שְׂאֵי-סָבִיב עֵינֶיךָ וּרְאֵי
 כָּל־נִקְבְּצוּ בְּאוּלֶיךָ
 חֵי-אֲנִי נֹאֵם-יְהוָה
 כִּי כָל־כְּעָדִי תִלְבָּשִׁי
 וְתִקְשְׁרִים כַּכֶּלֶה:
 יט כִּי חֲרַבְתִּיךָ וְשִׁמְמַתִּיךָ
 וְאַרְץ הִרְסַתְךָ
 כִּי עַתָּה תִּצְרִי מִיּוֹשֵׁב

- 14 Zion was saying, "Yahweh has abandoned me,
the Lord has forgotten me."
- 15 Can a woman forget her baby at the breast;
feel no pity for the child she has borne?
Even if these were to forget,
I shall not forget you.
- 16 Look, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands;
your ramparts are ever before me.
- 17 Your builders are hurrying;
your destroyers and despoilers will soon go away.
- 18 Raise your eyes and look around you:
all are assembling, coming to you.
By my life, declares Yahweh,
you will put them all on like jewels;
like a bride, you will fasten them on.
- 19 For, your desolate places, your ruins
and your devastated country
from now on will be too crowded for your inhabitants,

14 The word translated in the 2nd line as 'the Lord' is אֲדֹנָי.

15 These verses are reminiscent of the message of Hosea and Jeremiah.

16 In the 1st line, 'you' is a metonym for 'your name'.

17 'Builders' follows 1QIsa^a; the MT has 'sons'.

18 The literal translation of the 1st line is, "Lift up around your eyes and see."

19 'Will be too crowded' follows the LXX (στενοχωρήσει) and Peshitta; the MT has 'you are too crowded'.

וְרַחֲקוּ מִבְּלַעֲיָךְ:
 כ עוד יאמרו באזניך
 בְּנֵי שְׂכָלֶיךָ
 צֶרְלִי הַמָּקוֹם
 גְּשָׁה־לִּי וְאַשְׁבָּה:
 כא וְאָמַרְתָּ בִּלְבָבְךָ
 מִי יִלְד־לִי אֶת־אֵלֶּה
 וְאֲנִי שְׂכוּלָה וְגִלְמוּדָה
 גְּלָהּ | וְסוּרָה
 וְאֵלֶּה מִי גִדֵּל
 הֵן אֲנִי נִשְׁאַרְתִּי לְבַדִּי
 אֵלֶּה אֵיפָה הֵם: {פ}
 כב כֹּה־אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוֹה
 הִנֵּה אֲשָׂא אֶל־גּוֹיִם יָדַי
 וְאֶל־עַמִּים אָרִים נְסִי
 וְהִבִּיאוּ בְנֶיךָ בְּחֶצֶן
 וּבְנִתֶיךָ עַל־כַּתְּף תִּנְשָׂאנָה:
 כג וְהָיוּ מְלָכִים אִמְנֶיךָ
 וּשְׂרוּתֵיהֶם מִיְּנִיקֶתֶיךָ

and your devourers will be far away.

- 20 Once more, the children of your bereavement will say in your hearing,
 "The place is too crowded for me,
 make room for me to live."
- 21 Then you say in your heart,
 "Who has borne me these?
 I was bereft and barren,
 exiled and put away;
 who has reared these?
 I was left all alone,
 so where have these come from?"
- 22 Thus says Lord Yahweh:
 Look, I am beckoning to the nations
 and hoisting a signal to the peoples:
 they will bring your sons in their arms
 and your daughters will be carried on their shoulders.
- 23 Kings will be your foster fathers
 and their queens, your foster mothers.

20 Zion, who had no hope for children, will have more inhabitants than room for them (Jr 31:15-17); the 'children' are those born during the Exile.

21 For the 4th line, here following the NRSV (the NJB is similar), NETB has 'dismissed and divorced' and the NIV has 'exiled and rejected'.

22 The literal translation for 'in their arms' is 'on their breast' (the NRSV has 'in their bosom'), a particularly affectionate way of carrying children.

23 The NJB & NETB have 'princesses' in place of 'queens', here following the NRSV. The NJB has 'disappointed' in place of 'put to shame', here following the NRSV & NETB.

אֲפִים אֶרֶץ יִשְׁתַּחֲווּ לָךְ
וְעָפָר רִגְלֶיךָ יִלְחָכוּ
וְיָדַעְתָּ כִּי־אֲנִי יְהוָה
אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִבְשׁוּ קוֹי: {ס}
כד הִיָּקַח מִגְבוֹר מִלְּקֹחַ
וְאִם־שָׁבִי צָדִיק יִמְלֹט: {ס}
כה כִּי־כֹה | אָמַר יְהוָה
גַּם־שָׁבִי גִבּוֹר יִקַּח
וּמִלְּקֹחַ עָרִיץ יִמְלֹט
וְאֶת־יָרִיבֶךָ אֲנֹכִי אֶרִיב
וְאֶת־בְּנֶיךָ אֲנֹכִי אוֹשִׁיעַ:
כו וְהֵאֲכַלְתִּי אֶת־מוֹנֶיךָ
אֶת־בָּשָׂרָם וְכַעֲסִים דָּמָם יִשְׁכְּרוּן
וְיָדְעוּ כָּל־בָּשָׂר
כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה מוֹשִׁיעֶךָ
וְגֹאֲלֶךָ אֲבִיר יַעֲקֹב: {ס}

They will fall prostrate before you, faces to the ground,
and lick the dust at your feet.

Then you will know that I am Yahweh:
those who hope in me will not be put to shame.

24 Can the body be snatched from the warrior?
Can the tyrant's captive be set free?

25 But thus says Yahweh:

The warrior's captive shall be taken away
and the tyrant's booty shall be set free;
for, I will fight those who fight you
and I will save your children.

26 I shall make your oppressors eat their own flesh:
they will be as drunk on their own blood as on new wine.
Then all humanity will know
that I am Yahweh, your Saviour,
your redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

²⁴ 'Tyrant' follows 1QIsa^a (עריץ) and Peshitta; the MT has 'upright man' (צָדִיק), but this makes no sense in the parallelism. The liberation appears impossible but God will accomplish it (cf. v. 22).

²⁵ For the 2nd line, here following the NJB, the NRSV has, "Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken."

²⁶ The first part of the verse depicts siege warfare and bloody defeat: the besieged enemy will be so starved they will their own flesh, and the blood-stained bodies lying on the blood-soaked battlefield will look as if they collapsed in drunkenness.

ישעיהו פרק נ

א פֹה | אָמַר יְהוָה
אִי זֶה סֵפֶר כְּרִיתוֹת אִמְכֶם אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַחְתִּיהָ
אוֹ מִי מְנוּשִׁי
אֲשֶׁר־מָכַרְתִּי אֶתְכֶם לוֹ
הֵן בַּעֲוֹנֹתֵיכֶם נִמְכַּרְתֶּם
וּבִפְשָׁעֵיכֶם שְׁלַחַה אִמְכֶם:
ב מְדוּעַ בָּאתִי וְאֵין אִישׁ
קָרָאתִי וְאֵין עֹנֶה
הַקְצֹר קְצָרָה יָדִי מִפְדּוֹת
וְאִם־אֵין־בִּי כֹחַ לְהַצִּיל
הֵן בְּגַעַרְתִּי אֲחֲרִיב יָם
אֲשִׁים נְהָרוֹת מְדַבֵּר
תִּבְאֵשׁ דְּגָתָם מֵאֵין מַיִם
וְתָמָת בַּצְמָא:
ג אֲלֹבִישׁ שָׁמַיִם קִדְרוֹת
וְשָׁק אֲשִׁים כְּסוּתָם: {פ}

ISAIAH 50

- 1 Thus says Yahweh:
Where is your mother's writ of divorce
by which I repudiated her?
Or to which of my creditors have I sold you?
Look, you have been sold for your own misdeeds;
your mother was repudiated for your acts of rebellion.
- 2 Why was there no one there when I came?
Why did no one answer when I called?
Is my hand too short to redeem?
Have I not strength to save?
Look, with a threat I can dry the sea
and turn rivers to desert;
the fish in them stink for lack of water
and die of thirst.
- 3 I dress the heavens in black;
I cover them in sackcloth.

ISAIAH 50

- ¹ Vv. 1-3 comprise a difficult and perhaps incomplete poem. It is not clear whether it is a continuation of the previous one, though it seems to be on the same theme as 49:24-26; it is a reply to those Israelites who refuse to believe on the coming deliverance. Exiled Israel is not 'divorced' (Dt 24:1-4) nor irretrievably sold into slavery (52:3, Ex 21:7) but punished for her unfaithfulness (Ho 2:4 - 9, Jr 3, Ezk 16).
- ² When God appeared in his mighty acts or spoke through his prophets, no one responded. The literal translation of the last line is, "and die on thirsty ground."
- ³ A desolated countryside (cf. 42:15, 44:27) and stormy sky (cf. Ex 13:22, 19:16) announce that God is coming to judge mankind.

ד	אֲדֹנִי יְהוָה נָתַן לִי לְשׁוֹן לְמוֹדִים לְדַעַת לַעוֹת אֶת־יֵעָף דָּבָר יַעִיר בִּבְקָר בִּבְקָר יַעִיר לִי אֹזֶן לִשְׁמֹעַ כְּלַמוּדִים:	4	Lord Yahweh has given me a disciple's tongue, for me to know how to give a word of comfort to the weary. Morning by morning, he makes my ear alert to listen like a disciple.
ה	אֲדֹנִי יְהוָה פָּתַח־לִי אֹזֶן וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא מָרִיתִי אֲחוּר לֹא נִסּוּגָתִי: גּוֹי נָתַתִּי לַמַּכִּים וְלִחִי לַמֵּרְטִים פָּנִי לֹא הִסְתַּרְתִּי מִכְלָמוֹת וָרֶק:	5	Lord Yahweh has opened my ear and I have not resisted, I have not turned away.
ו	וְאֲדֹנִי יְהוָה יַעֲזֹר־לִי עַל־כֵּן לֹא נִכְלַמְתִּי עַל־כֵּן שָׁמַתִּי פָנִי כַּחֲלָמִישׁ וְאִדַּע כִּי־לֹא אִבּוֹשׁ: קָרוֹב מִצְדִּיקִי מִי־יִרִיב אִתִּי נִעְמְדָה יַחַד מִי־בַעַל מִשְׁפָּטִי	6	I have offered my back to those who struck me, my cheeks to those who plucked my beard; I have not turned my face away from insulting and spitting.
ז		7	Lord Yahweh comes to my help, this is why insult has not touched me, this is why I have set my face like flint and know that I shall not be put to shame.
ח		8	He who vindicates me is near! Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together! Who is my adversary?

⁴ In this third song, the servant appears less like a prophet and more like a sage, a faithful 'disciple' (the NRSV has 'teacher').

⁵ The title, 'Lord Yahweh' (אֲדֹנִי יְהוָה) is traditionally shown in English translations as 'The Lord GOD'.

⁶ This description of the servant's suffering is further developed in the fourth song (52:13–53:12, cf. Mt 26:67, 27:30ff, Lk 2:32, Ac 13:47, 26:23).

⁷ Using the terminology of the law-court, the servant expresses unshakable confidence that God will vindicate him.

⁸ The literal translation of the 4th line is, "Who is the master of my judgement?"

יִגַּשׁ אֵלַי: ט
 הֵן אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה יַעֲזֹר-לִי
 מִי־הוּא יִרְשִׁיעֵנִי
 הֵן כָּל־כְּבִגְדֵי יָבֵלוּ
 עַשׂ יֹאכְלֵם: {ס}
 מִי בָכֶם יֵרָא יְהוָה י
 שֹׁמֵעַ בְּקוֹל עַבְדּוֹ
 אֲשֶׁר הֵלֵךְ חֹשֶׁכִים
 וְאֵין נֹגֵה לוֹ
 יִבְטַח בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה
 וַיִּשְׁעַן בְּאֱלֹהָיו: {ס}
 הֵן כָּל־כֶּם קִדְחִי אֵשׁ יא
 מֵאֲזִירֵי זִיקוֹת
 לָכוּן בְּאֹר אֶשְׁכֶּם
 וּבְזִיקוֹת בְּעֵרְתֶּם
 מִיָּדִי הִיתָה-זֹּאת לָכֶם
 לְמַעַצְבָּה תִּשְׁכַּבּוּן: {ס}

Let him approach me!

9 Look, Lord Yahweh is coming to my help!

Who dares condemn me?

Look, they will all wear out like clothes;
a moth will eat them!

10 Which of you fears Yahweh
and listens to his servant's voice?

Which of you walks in darkness
and sees no light?

Let him trust in the name of Yahweh
and lean on his God.

11 Look, all you who light a fire
and put on firebrands,
walk by the light of your fire
and the firebrands you have kindled!
This is what you will get from me:
you will lie down in torment!

9 The NJB modifies the last 2 lines slightly, reading, "Look at them, they will all fall apart, like moth-eaten clothes!"

10 At this point, the prophet speaks again, inviting the Israelites and perhaps the unenlightened nations (those who 'walk in darkness', cf. 49:6) to put their hope in God; he then condemns those who 'stoke the fire' (v. 11), perhaps those who sow discord.

11 Some, following the *Peshitta*, suggest an emendation of מֵאֲזִירֵי ('put on') to מֵאֲזִירֵי ('light'); however, 1QIsa^a supports the MT reading.

ישעיהו פרק נא

א שִׁמְעוּ אֵלַי רְדָפִי צֶדֶק
מִבְקֹשֵׁי יְהוָה
הַבֵּיטוּ אֶל־צוּר חֲצֵבְתָם
וְאֶל־מִקְבֵּת בּוֹר נִקְרְתָם:
ב הַבֵּיטוּ אֶל־אַבְרָהָם אָבִיכֶם
וְאֶל־שָׂרָה תְּחוּלְלֵכֶם
כִּי־אֶחָד קָרָאתִיו
וְאַבְרָכָהוּ וְאַרְבֵּהוּ:
ג כִּי־נָחַם יְהוָה צִיּוֹן
נָחַם כָּל־חֲרֻבֶתֶיהָ
וַיֵּשֶׁם מִדְבָּרָהּ כְּעֵדֶן
וְעֲרֻבֶתָהּ כְּגִן־יְהוָה
שִׂשׁוֹן וְשִׂמְחָה יִמָּצֵא בָּהּ
תּוֹדָה וְקוֹל זִמְרָה: {ס}
ד הִקְשִׁיבוּ אֵלַי עַמִּי
וְלְאוֹמֵי אֱלִי הֶאֱזִינוּ

ISAIAH 51

- 1 Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness,
you who seek Yahweh.
Consider the rock from which you were hewn,
the quarry from which you were dug.
- 2 Consider Abraham your father
and Sarah who gave you birth.
He was but one when I called him,
but I blessed him and made him numerous.
- 3 Yes, Yahweh has pity on Zion,
has pity on all her ruins;
he will turn her desert into an Eden
and her wastelands into the garden of Yahweh.
Joy and gladness will be found in her,
thanksgiving and the sound of music.
- 4 Pay attention to me, my people;
listen to me, my nation,

ISAIAH 51

- ¹ The 'rock' and the 'quarry' are symbols of Israel's solidarity.
- ² This is the only reference to 'Sarah' in the Old Testament outside Genesis.
- ³ The symbolism of creation appears often in biblical pictures of the New Age; (cf. Ezk 36:35, 47:1-12).
- ⁴ It is difficult not to see a connexion between this programme and the work attributed to the servant, particularly in the first two songs. The servant, too, will be 'the light of nations' (cf. 49:6) and he will establish law and salvation (cf. 42:1,4, 49:6); in short, it will be the servant who establishes the kingship of God on earth.

כִּי תוֹרָה מֵאִתִּי תֵצֵא
וּמִשְׁפָּטִי לְאֹר עַמִּים אֲרַגִּיעַ:

ה קָרוֹב צִדְקִי יֵצֵא יִשְׁעִי

וְזִרְעִי עַמִּים יִשְׁפֹּטוּ

אֶלֵּי אֲיִים יָקוּוּ

וְאֶל־זִרְעִי יִיחַלּוּ:

ו שְׂאוּ לְשָׁמַיִם עֵינֵיכֶם וְהִבִּיטוּ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ

מִתַּחַת

כִּי־שָׁמַיִם כְּעָשָׁן נִמְלָחוּ וְהָאָרֶץ כַּבֶּגֶד תִּבְלֶה

וְיִשְׁבִּיהָ כַּמּוֹכֵן יָמוּתוּן

וְיִשׁוּעָתִי לְעוֹלָם תִּהְיֶה

וְצִדְקָתִי לֹא תִחַת: {פ}

ז שִׁמְעוּ אֵלַי יְדַעֵי צֶדֶק

עִם תּוֹרָתִי בִלְבָב

אֶל־תִּירְאוּ חֲרַפַּת אֲנוּשׁ

וּמִגִּדְפָתָם אֶל־תִּחַתוּ:

ח כִּי כַּבֶּגֶד יֹאכְלֵם עֵשׂ

וּכְצֹמֶר יֹאכְלֵם סֹס

וְצִדְקָתִי לְעוֹלָם תִּהְיֶה

וְיִשׁוּעָתִי לְדוֹר דּוֹרִים: {ס}

for a law will come from me,

and I shall make my saving justice the light of peoples.

5 My deliverance is approaching, my salvation goes forth,

and my arm judges the peoples.

The coastlands wait for me

and put their hope in my arm.

6 Raise your eyes to the heavens, look down at the earth;

for, the sky will vanish like smoke

and the earth will wear out like clothes;

and its inhabitants will die like vermin

but my salvation will last forever

and my deliverance remain inviolable.

7 Listen to me, you who know righteousness,

a people who take my law to heart:

do not fear people's taunts

and do not be alarmed by their insults.

8 For, the moth will eat them like clothing,

the grub will devour them like wool,

but my deliverance will be forever

and my salvation for all generations.

5 Another translation for 'coastlands' (here following the NRSV) is 'islands'; the NJB has 'coats and islands'.

6 In place of 'vermin', the NRSV has 'gnats'; a footnote gives 'in like manner' as an alternative translation.

7 Another possible reading for 'who know righteousness' (here following the NRSV) is 'who know what is right' (as NETB).

8 In place of 'forever', here following the NRSV, NETB has 'permanent'.

ט עוֹרִי עוֹרִי לְבָשִׁיעֵז
 זְרוּעַ יְהוָה
 עוֹרִי כִּימֵי קֶדֶם
 דְּרוֹת עוֹלָמִים
 הֲלוֹא אַתָּה־הִיא הַמַּחְצֶבֶת רַהַב
 מַחֲלִילֶת תַּנִּין:
 י הֲלוֹא אַתָּה־הִיא הַמַּחְרַבֶּת יָם
 מִי תְהוֹם רַבָּה
 הַשְׁמָה מַעֲמִקֵּי־יָם דֶּרֶךְ
 לַעֲבֹר גְּאוּלִּים:
 יא וּפְדוּלֵי יְהוָה יִשׁוּבוּן
 וּבָאוּ צִיּוֹן בְּרִנָּה
 וְשִׂמְחַת עוֹלָם עַל־רֹאשָׁם
 שִׂשׂוֹן וְשִׂמְחָה יִשְׁיִגּוּן
 נִסּוּ יִגּוֹן וְאַנְחָה: {ס}
 יב אֲנֹכִי אֲנֹכִי הוּא מְנַחֲמֶכֶם
 מִי־אַתָּה וּתִירָאִי מֵאֲנוּשׁ יָמוּת
 וּמִבְּנֵי־אָדָם חֲצִיר יִנָּתֵן:

- 9 Awake, awake: clothe yourself in strength,
 arm of Yahweh.
 Awake, as in days of old,
 generations long ago!
 Was it not you who smashed Rahab,
 who pierced the Dragon?
- 10 Was it not you who dried up the sea,
 the waters of the great Abyss;
 who made the seabed into a road
 for the redeemed to go across?
- 11 For those who Yahweh has ransomed shall return;
 they shall come to Zion shouting for joy,
 everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
 rejoicing and gladness shall escort them
 and sorrow and sighing shall take flight.
- 12 I, I am your consoler.
 Why then should you fear mortal men who die,
 whose fate is that of the grass?

⁹ Middle Eastern cosmologies represented the creation as the victory of the Creator-God over the monsters of chaos, called 'Rahab' (Job 9:13, 26:12, Ps 89:10), the 'Dragon' (Tannin or Leviathan, Is 27:1, Job 7:12, Ps 74:14, Ezk 29:3) and the 'Abyss' (v. 10, cf. Gn 1:2, Ps 104:7-9, Hab 3:10).

¹⁰ The text reads literally, "Are you not the one who dried up the sea, the waters of the great Abyss, who made...?"

¹¹ This verse exactly reproduces 35:10 but is reused here as the climax to vv. 9-10.

¹² Yahweh speaks again, to comfort Israel (cf. 40:1). The latter need fear no mortal, however strong, since Yahweh, the Lord of Creation, protects his people.

יג וַתִּשְׁכַּח יְהוָה עֲשֵׂךְ
 נֹטָה שָׁמַיִם וַיִּסַּד אֲרֶץ
 וַתִּפְחַד תָּמִיד כָּל־הַיּוֹם מִפְּנֵי חֲמַת הַמַּצִּיק
 כַּאֲשֶׁר כּוֹנֵן לַהֲשָׁחִית
 וְאַיֶּה חֲמַת הַמַּצִּיק:
 יד מִהֵר צֵעָה לְהִפָּתַח
 וְלֹא־יָמוּת לַשַּׁחַת
 וְלֹא יִחְסַר לַחֲמוֹ:
 טו וְאַנְכִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 רֹגַע הַיָּם וַיִּהְיוּ גִלְיוֹ
 יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ:
 טז וְאִשָּׁם דְּבָרִי בְּפִיךָ
 וּבִצֵּל יָדִי כִּסִּיתִיךָ
 לִנְטֹעַ שָׁמַיִם וַיִּסַּד אֲרֶץ
 וְלֹאמַר לְצִיּוֹן עַמִּי־אַתָּה: {ס}
 זז הַתְּעוֹרְרִי הַתְּעוֹרְרִי קוֹמִי יְרוּשָׁלַם
 אֲשֶׁר שָׁתִית מִיַּד יְהוָה

- 13 You forget Yahweh your Creator
who spread out the heavens and laid the earth's foundations,
and have never stopped trembling all day long
before the fury of the oppressor who is bent on destruction.
Where is the oppressor's fury now?
- 14 The oppressed is soon to be set free;
he will not die in the pit,
nor will his food run out.
- 15 I am Yahweh your God,
who stirs up the sea, making its waves roar:
Yahweh Sabaoth is my name.
- 16 I put my words into your mouth,
I hid you in the shadow of my hand,
planting the heavens and laying the earth's foundations
and say to Zion, "You are my people."
- 17 Rouse yourself, rouse yourself; to your feet, Jerusalem!
You who from Yahweh's hand

13 The question of the last line anticipates the answer, "Ready to disappear!" (See v. 14).

14 In place of 'pit', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'dungeon'.

15 The name, 'Yahweh Sabaoth' (יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת) is more traditionally translated in English as 'the LORD of Hosts'.

16 Many scholars (including the translators of the NJB & NRSV) emend לִנְטֹעַ ('planting') to לִנְטֹחַ ('stretching out'); however, 1QIsa^a, the LXX (ἐστρεψα), and the Vg (plantas) support the MT reading. The interpretation is clear enough: Yahweh fixed the sky in its place.

17 The imagery of the 'cup of wrath' to be handed to the persecutors (v. 22) is also found in Ps 75:8, Jr 13:13, 25:15-18, 48:26, 49:12, 51:7, Lm 4:21, Ezk 23:32-34, Ob 16, Hab 2:15-16, Zc 12:2.

אֶת־כּוֹס חֲמָתוֹ
 אֶת־קִבְעַת כּוֹס הַתְּרַעְלָה
 שָׁתִית מִצִּית׃
 יח אֵין־מְנַהֵל לָהּ
 מִכָּל־בָּנִים יִלְדָהּ
 וְאֵין מַחֲזִיק בְּיָדָהּ
 מִכָּל־בָּנִים גָּדְלָהּ׃
 יט שְׁתֵּים הִנֵּה קָרָאתִיךְ
 מִי יְגִיד לָךְ
 הַשֹּׁד וְהַשֹּׁבֵר וְהָרָעָב וְהַחֲרָב
 מִי אֲנַחֲמֶךָ׃
 כ בְּנִיךְ עֲלָפוּ שָׁכְבוּ
 בְּרֹאשׁ כָּל־חוּצוֹת
 כְּתוֹא מְכָמָר
 הַמִּלֵּאִים חֲמַת־יְהוָה
 גָּעַרְתָּ אֱלֹהֶיךָ׃
 כא לֹכֵן שְׁמַעֲיָנָא זֹאת עֲנִיָּה
 וְשִׁכַּרְתָּ וְלֹא מִיּוֹן׃
 {פ}

have drunk the cup of his wrath.
 The chalice, the stupefying cup,
 you have drained to the dregs.
 18 There is no one to guide her
 of all the children she has borne,
 no one to grasp her hand
 of all the children she has reared.
 19 Double disaster has befallen you –
 who is there to sympathise?
 Pillage and ruin, famine and sword –
 who is there to console you?
 20 Your children are lying helpless
 at the end of every street
 like an antelope trapped in a net;
 they are filled to the brim with Yahweh's wrath,
 with the rebuke of your God.
 21 So, listen to this, you who are wounded,
 who are drunk, but not with wine.

18 The days of Babylon's glory have long since disappeared!

19 'Double disaster' is either in the sense of exceptional punishment, or the plagues in the second half of the verse, taken two by two. The last line follows 1QIsa^a (יִנְחֶמְךָ), LXX and Peshitta; the MT has 'who I shall console you' (אֲנַחֲמֶךָ).

20 Literally translated, the last 2 lines read, "those who are full of the anger of Yahweh, the shout of your God."

21 Alternative translations for 'wounded' are 'humbled' or 'afflicted'.

כב כה־אֹמַר אֲדֹנָיִךְ יְהוָה
 וְאֱלֹהֶיךָ יִרְיֵב עִמּוֹ
 הִנֵּה לִקְחָתִי מִיָּדְךָ
 אֶת־כּוֹס הַתַּרְעֵלָה
 אֶת־קִבְעַת כּוֹס חֲמָתִי
 לֹא־תוֹסִיפִי לְשָׁתוֹתָהּ עוֹד:
 כג וְשִׁמְתִּיהָ בְּיַד־מוֹגִילֶיךָ
 אֲשֶׁר־אָמְרוּ לְנַפְשְׁךָ שְׁחִי וְנַעֲבֹרָה
 וְתַשִּׁימֵי כָאָרֶץ גִּזּוֹךְ
 וְכַחוּץ לַעֲבָרִים: {פ}

- 22 Thus says your Lord Yahweh,
 you God, defender of your people:
 Look, I am taking
 the stupefying cup from your hand;
 the chalice, the cup of my wrath,
 you will not have to drink again.
- 23 I shall hand it to your tormentors
 who said, "On the ground, so that we can walk over you!"
 Then you would flatten your back like the ground,
 like a street for them to walk on.

22 The literal translation of 'stupefying cup' is 'cup of staggering'.

23 This humiliation was often imposed on conquered peoples.

ישעיהו פרק נב

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א עוֹרִי עוֹרִי לְבָשִׁי עֲזֹךְ צִיּוֹן

לְבָשִׁי בְּגָדֵי תִפְאַרְתְּךָ

יְרוּשָׁלַם עִיר הַקֹּדֶשׁ

כִּי לֹא יוֹסִיף יְבֹאֲבֶךָ עוֹד

עָרְלִי וְטָמֵא:

ב הַתְנַעֲרִי מֵעָפָר קוֹמִי שְׁבִי יְרוּשָׁלַם

הַתַּפְתָּחוּ הַתַּפְתָּחִי מוֹסְרֵי צוּאֲרְךָ

שְׁבִיָּה בַת־צִיּוֹן: {ס}

ג כִּי־כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה חֲנָם נִמְכַּרְתֶּם וְלֹא בְכֶסֶף

תִּגְאָלוּ: {ס}

ד כִּי כֹה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה מִצְרַיִם יִרְדֵּ־עַמִּי

בְּרֹאשֹׁנָה לְגוֹר שָׁם וְאַשׁוּר בְּאַפִּס עֲשָׂקוֹ: ה וְעַתָּה

מֶה־לִּי־פֶלֶא נֶאֱסִי־יְהוָה כִּי־לָקַח עַמִּי חֲנָם מִשָּׁלוֹ

¹ Awake, awake, and clothe yourself in strength, Zion!

Put on your finest clothes,

Jerusalem, Holy City;

for the uncircumcised and the unclean

will enter you no more.

² Shake off your dust; get up, captive Jerusalem!

The chains have fallen from your neck,

captive daughter of Jerusalem.

³ For, Yahweh says this, "You were sold for nothing; you will be redeemed without money."

⁴ For, the Lord Yahweh says this, "Long ago, my people went to Egypt to reside there as aliens; Assyria, too, oppressed them for no reason. ⁵ So now, what is to be done," says Yahweh, "since my people are carried off

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¹ The 'uncircumcised and the unclean' refers to foreigners (33:19) and ritually unclean Jews.

² 'Captive' is a conjectural translation (שְׁבִיָּה), based on the 3rd line; the MT has 'sit' (שָׁבִי), which is supported by 1QIsa^a, the LXX (κάθισον), Peshitta & Tg. In place of 'the chains have fallen', here following the MT and 1QIsa^a, the LXX (ἔκλυσται τὸν δεσμὸν) and Peshitta have 'drop the chains'. The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

³ Vv. 3–6 are often regarded as a prose addition.

⁴ In place of 'for no reason', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'without cause'.

⁵ An alternative translation of the opening, is, "Who is on my side here?" In either case, there is doubt over what is meant: it seems that God is insisting on the gratuitousness of the salvation that he is bringing to his people. The latter have drawn no profit from their ordeal and have not been converted; hence, their oppressors are triumphant and Yahweh's name is dishonoured (cf. 48:11, Ezk 20:9, 14, 36:20). By freely granting salvation, however, Yahweh will lead Israel to being converted and so save the honour of his name (v. 6).

יְהִלִּילוּ נְאֻם־יְהוָה וְתָמִיד כָּל־הַיּוֹם שְׁמִי מְנַאֵץ:
 לָכֵן יֵדַע עַמִּי שְׁמִי לָכֵן בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא כִּי־אֲנִי־הוּא
 הַמְדַּבֵּר הַנֶּנִּי: {ס}

ז מה־נָּאוּ עַל־הַהָרִים רַגְלֵי מְבַשֵּׁר
 מְשַׁמֵּעַ שְׁלוֹם מְבַשֵּׁר טוֹב
 מְשַׁמֵּעַ יְשׁוּעָה
 אֹמֵר לְצִיּוֹן
 מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהֶיךָ:
 ח קוֹל צִפְיֶךָ נִשְׁאֹו קוֹל
 יַחַדְו יִרְנְנוּ
 כִּי עֵין בְּעֵין יִרְאוּ
 בְּשׁוֹב יְהוָה צִיּוֹן:
 ט פָּצְחוּ רַנְנוּ יַחַדְו
 חֲרָבוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם
 כִּי־נָחַם יְהוָה עַמּוֹ
 גָּאֵל יְרוּשָׁלַם:
 י חֲשֹׁף יְהוָה אֶת־זְרוֹעַ קִדְשׁוֹ
 לַעֲיִנֵי כָל־הַגּוֹיִם

for nothing. Their masters howl continually,” says Yahweh, “and my name is despised all day long? ⁶ So, my people will know my name; so, they will know on that day that it is I saying: Here I am!”

- ⁷ How beautiful on the mountains are the feet
 of the messenger announcing peace,
 of the messenger of good news, who proclaims salvation
 and says to Zion,
 “Your God is king!”
- ⁸ Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices,
 shouting for joy together,
 for, with their own eyes, they have seen
 Yahweh returning to Zion.
- ⁹ Break into shouts together,
 you ruins of Jerusalem;
 for Yahweh consoles his people,
 he redeems Jerusalem.
- ¹⁰ Yahweh bares his holy arm
 for all the nations to see,

⁶ The verb ‘will know’ is understood by ellipsis.

⁷ The messengers returning to the country, and the watchmen who see them coming, announce joy, that is to say, the inauguration of Yahweh’s personal reign, celebrated in the ‘Psalms of the Reign of Yahweh’ (Ps 47, 93, 96, 97, 98, 99, 145 & 146).

⁸ The NJB splits the 1st line in two: “Listen to the voices of your watchmen! Now they raise their voices...” Here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

⁹ At the beginning of the 2nd line, the NJB inserts ‘shouts of joy’.

¹⁰ The NJB has the verbs in this verse in the past (perfect) tense (as also in v. 9).

וְרָאוּ כָּל־אַפְסֵי־אָרֶץ
אֶת־יְשׁוּעַת אֱלֹהֵינוּ: {ס}
י^א סֹרוּ סֹרוּ צֵאוּ מִשָּׁם
טָמֵא אֶל־תִּגְעוּ
צֵאוּ מִתּוֹכָהּ הַבָּרוּ
נִשְׂאֵי כָּלִי יְהוָה:
י^ב כִּי לֹא בַחֲפֹזוֹן תֵּצְאוּ
וּבְמִנוּסָה לֹא תִלְכוּ
כִּי־הִלָּךְ לִפְנֵיכֶם יְהוָה
וּמֵאַסְפֵּיכֶם אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: {ס}
י^ג הִנֵּה יִשְׁכֵּל עַבְדִּי
יָרוֹם וְנִשְׂא וְגָבַהּ מְאֹד:
י^ד כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁמְמוּ עָלָיָהּ רַבִּים
כִּן־מִשְׁחַת מְאִישׁ מֵרָאֵהוּ
וְתֹארוּ מִבְּנֵי אָדָם:

and all the ends of the earth
shall see the salvation of our God.

- ¹¹ Go away, go away, leave that place;
do not touch anything unclean.
Get out of her; purify yourselves,
you who carry Yahweh's vessels!
¹² For you are not to hurry away,
you are not to leave like fugitives.
No, Yahweh marches at your head
and the God of Israel is your rear-guard.
¹³ Look, my servant will prosper,
will grow great, and will rise to great heights.
¹⁴ As many people were aghast at you
– he was so inhumanly disfigured
that he no longer looked like a man –

¹¹ 'Yahweh's vessels' is a reference to the sacred vessels of the Temple.

¹² The New Exodus takes place under God's protection, like the first (Ex 14:19).

¹³ The fourth song of the servant again takes up the theme of suffering (compare Ps 22). The persecutions that the servant will very patiently endure (53:7) scandalise the spectators (52:14–15, 53:2–3, 7–9) but are, in fact, an intercession and an atonement of sins (53:4–12). The song appears to be in dialogue form: Yahweh utters a prophecy (vv. 13–15) and the kings or the peoples then reply (53:1–10), describing the sufferings of the servant and possibly excusing themselves for not having understood their meaning; finally, God proclaims an outcome favourable to the servant (53:11–12).

¹⁴ In place of 'you' at the end of the 1st line (here following the MT & NETB), the NJB & NRSV, following the Peshitta & Tg, read 'him', which is more consistent with the context, where the servant is spoken about, not addressed. However, it is possible that God briefly addresses the servant here.

טו בֶּן יִזְהַר גּוֹיִם רַבִּים
 עָלָיו יִקְפְּצוּ מְלָכִים פִּיהֶם
 כִּי אֲשֶׁר לֹא-סִפֵּר לָהֶם
 רָאוּ וְאֲשֶׁר לֹא-שָׁמְעוּ הִתְבּוֹנְנוּ: {ס}

15 So he shall startle many nations;
 kings will stay tight-lipped before him,
 seeing what had never been told them,
 learning what they had not heard before.

15 Traditionally, the verb יִזְהַר ('startle') has been understood as a causative of נִזַּח ('spatter') and translated 'sprinkle'; in this case, picturing the servant as a priest who spiritually cleanses the nations. Though the verb נִזַּח does occur in the Hiphil with this meaning, in all other instances where the object or person sprinkled is indicated, the verb is combined with a preposition. This is not the case here, unless one takes the following עָלָיו ('on him') with the preceding line.

ישעיהו פרק נג

א מי האמין לשמענו
וזרוע יהוה על-מי נגלתה:
ב ויעל כיוצק לפניו
וכשרש מארץ ציה
לא-תאר לו ולא הדר
ונראהו ולא-מראה ונחמדהו:
ג נבזה וחדל אישים
איש מכאבות וידוע חלי
וכמסתר פנים ממנו
נבזה ולא חשבנהו:
ד אבן חלינו הוא נשא
ומכאבינו סבלם
ואנחנו חשבנהו
נגוע מכה אלהים ומענה:
ה והוא מחלל מפשענו
מדבא מעונותינו

ISAIAH 53

- 1 Who has given credence to what we have heard
and who has seen in it a revelation of Yahweh's arm?
- 2 Like a sapling, he grew up before him,
like a root in arid ground.
He had no form or charm to attract us,
no beauty to win our hearts.
- 3 He was despised, the lowest of men,
a man of sorrows, familiar with suffering,
one from whom, as it were, we averted our gaze,
despised, for whom we had no regard.
- 4 Yet ours were the sufferings he was bearing,
ours the sorrows he was carrying,
while we thought of him as someone being punished
and struck with affliction by God.
- 5 Whereas he was being wounded for our rebellions,
crushed because of our guilt;

ISAIAH 53

- 1 The community speaks, announcing the fate of the servant: a new and almost incredible revelation.
- 2 In 11:1, 10, the images of sapling and root accompanied the joyful prediction of the Davidic Messiah. Here, however, they evoke only the humble and wretched aspect of the servant's existence.
- 3 For the 2nd line, the NRSV has, "a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity."
- 4 By the servant's vicarious sufferings, he restores all peoples to God (Mt 8:17, 1Pt 2:24-25).
- 5 The group acknowledges that the servant's willingness to carry their illnesses (v. 4) resulted in their being healed (or forgiven).

מוֹסֵר שְׁלוֹמֵנוּ עָלָיו
 וּבְחִבְרָתוֹ נִרְפָּא-לָנוּ:
 כָּלֵנוּ כַּצֹּאן תָּעִינוּ ^ו
 אִישׁ לְדַרְכּוֹ פָּנִינוּ
 וַיהוָה הִפְגִּיעַ בּוֹ
 אֶת עֶזְוֹן כָּלֵנוּ:
 נָגַשׁ וְהוּא נִעְנָה ^ז
 וְלֹא יִפְתַּח-פִּיו
 כַּשֶּׁה לַטֶּבַח יוֹבֵל
 וּכְרֹחֶל לִפְנֵי גֹזְזֵיהָ נֶאֱלָמָה
 וְלֹא יִפְתַּח פִּיו:
 מֵעֶצֶר וּמִמִּשְׁפָּט לִקָּח ^ח
 וְאֶת-דֹּרוֹ מִי יְשׁוּחַח
 כִּי נִגְזַר מֵאֶרֶץ חַיִּים
 מִפֶּשַׁע עַמִּי נִגַּע לָמוֹ:

the punishment reconciling us fell on him,
 and we have been healed by his bruises.

⁶ We had all gone astray like sheep,
 each taking his own way,
 and Yahweh brought the acts of rebellion
 of all of us to bear on him.

⁷ Ill-treated and afflicted,
 he never opened his mouth,
 like a lamb led to the slaughterhouse,
 like a sheep dumb before its shearers,
 he never opened his mouth.

⁸ Forcibly, after sentence, he was taken.
 Which of his contemporaries was concerned
 at his having been cut off from the land of the living,
 at his having been struck dead for his people's rebellion?

⁶ Elsewhere, the Hiphil of פָּגַע ('to bear on') means 'to intercede verbally' (Jr 15:11, 36:25) or 'to intervene militarily' (Is 59:16), but neither nuance fits here. Apparently, here the Hiphil is the causative of the normal Qal meaning, 'encounter', 'meet', or 'touch'. The Qal sometimes refers to a hostile encounter or attack; here, the causative Hiphil has a double object – Yahweh makes sin attack him (note that the object attacked is introduced by the preposition בְּ).

⁷ Sheep were slaughtered for food as well as for sacrificial rituals and לַטֶּבַח need not refer to sacrificial slaughter (see Gn 43:16, Pr 7:22, 9:2, Jr 50:27; note also the use of the related verb in Ex 21:37, Dt 28:31, 1S 25:11).

⁸ The word here translated as 'contemporaries' means 'generations' in the sense of life span and, by extension, those who are alive during this period. The meaning suggested the LXX (τῇ γενεᾷ αὐτοῦ τίς διηγήσεται) and Vg (generationem ejus quis enarrabit) translations, 'who can relate his generations' is not an accurate translation of the Hebrew. 'Been struck' is a conjectural translation; the MT has 'a stroke' (נִגַּע). 'His people' (עַמִּי) follows 1QIsa^a (and the NJB); the MT (and NRSV) has 'my people' (עַמִּי).

ט וַיִּתֵּן אֶת־רָשָׁעִים קִבְרוֹ
וְאֶת־עֲשִׂיר בְּמָתוֹ
עַל לֹא־חָמָס עָשָׂה
וְלֹא מְרֵמָה בִּפְּוֹ:
י וַיְהִי חֶפֶץ דָּכְאוֹ הַחֲלִי
אֶם־תָּשִׂים אִשָּׁם נַפְשׁוֹ
יִרְאֶה זֶרַע יֶאֱרִיךְ יָמִים
וְחֶפֶץ יִהְיֶה בִידּוֹ יִצְלַח:
יא מִעֲמַל נַפְשׁוֹ
יִרְאֶה יִשְׁבַּע
בְּדַעְתּוֹ יִצְדִּיק צְדִיק עֲבָדֵי לְרַבִּים
וְעֹנֹתָם הוּא יִסְבֹּל:
יב לִכֹּן אֶחְלֹק־לוֹ בְּרַבִּים
וְאֶת־עֲצוּמִים יַחְלֹק שָׁלָל־
תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר הֵעִרָה לַמּוֹת נַפְשׁוֹ
וְאֶת־פְּשָׁעִים נִמְנָה
וְהוּא חֲטָא־רַבִּים נִשָּׂא
וּלְפָשָׁעִים יִפְגִּיעַ: {פ}

- 9 He was given a grave with the wicked,
and his tomb is with the rich,
although he had done no violence,
had spoken no deceit.
- 10 It was Yahweh's good pleasure to crush him with pain;
if you give his life as a sin offering,
he will see his offspring and prolong his life
and, through him, Yahweh's good pleasure will be done.
- 11 After the ordeal he has endured,
he will see the light when he understands what he has done.
The upright one, my servant will justify many
by taking their guilt on himself.
- 12 Hence, I shall give him a portion with the many,
and he will share the beauty with the mighty,
for having exposed himself to death
and for being counted as one of the rebellious,
whereas he was bearing the sin of many
and interceding for the rebellious.

9 'His tomb' (במתו) follows 1QIsa^a; the MT has 'in his death' (בְּמָתוֹ). Christian teaching interprets this as a prophecy of the burial of Jesus in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathaea, a 'rich man' (Mt 27:27–60); the text is difficult, however, and many emend 'rich' (עֲשִׂיר) to 'evildoers' (שְׁעִירִים).
10 The translation here follows the MT (and NRSV); the NJB, following the Vg (*si posuerit*), has 'if he gives' in place of 'if you give' (אֶם־תָּשִׂים).
11 'The light' follows the LXX (φῶς) and 1QIsa^a; it is not present in the MT.
12 Scholars debate the meaning of רַבִּים ('the many') that occurs 5 times in this passage (52:14, 15, 53:11, 12). Its two broad categories of translation are 'much/many' and 'great'. In all 16 uses outside Isaiah 52:13–53:12, it signifies an inclusive meaning: 'the majority' or 'the multitude'.

ישעיהו פרק נד

א רְנִי עֲקָרָה לֹא יִלְדָּה
פָּצְחִי רִנָּה וְצִהְלִי לֹא-חָלָה
כִּי-רַבִּים בְּנֵי-שׁוֹמְמָה
מִבְּנֵי בְעוּלָה אָמַר יְהוָה:
ב הֲרַחֲבִי מְקוֹם אֹהֶלְךָ
וִירִיעוֹת מִשְׁכְּנוֹתֶיךָ יִטּוּ אֶל-תַּחֲשֹׁבֶיךָ
הָאֲרִיכִי מִיתְרֶיךָ וִיתַדְתֶּיךָ תִּזְקִי:
ג כִּי-יֵמִין וּשְׂמֹאל תִּפְרָצִי
וְזָרַעְךָ גּוֹיִם יִירָשׁ
וְעָרִים נְשָׁמוֹת יוֹשִׁיבוּ:
ד אֶל-תִּירְאִי כִי-לֹא תִבּוֹשִׁי
וְאֶל-תִּפְלֹמִי כִי לֹא תִחְפֹּי
כִּי בִשֶׁת עָלֹמְךָ תִּשְׁכַּחִי
וְחִרְפַּת אֲלֻמְנוֹתֶיךָ לֹא תִזְכְּרִי-עוֹד:
ה כִּי בַעֲלֶיךָ עָשִׂיךָ
יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ

ISAIAH 54

- 1 Shout for joy, barren one, who has borne no children!
Burst into song and shout, you who were never in labour!
For the children of the forsaken one are more in number
than the children of the wedded wife, says Yahweh.
- 2 Widen the space of your tent,
extend the curtains of your home, do not hold back!
Lengthen your ropes, make your tent-pegs firm,
- 3 for you will burst out to the right and to the left,
your race will take possession of the nations
and repopulate deserted towns.
- 4 Do not fear, you will not be put to shame again;
do not worry, you will not be disgraced again;
for you will forget the shame of your youth
and no longer remember the disgrace of your abandonment.
- 5 For your Creator is your husband,
Yahweh Sabaoth is his name;

ISAIAH 54

- 1 To describe the contrast between Jerusalem's past ordeals and approaching re-establishment, the prophet uses traditional imagery: of the barren wife who becomes fertile (cf. 1S 2:5, Ps 113:9) and of the repudiated wife who is taken back (cf. Ho 1:16-17).
- 2 'Extend' follows the LXX and Peshitta; the MT has 'be extended'.
- 3 In place of 'take possession of', the NJB has 'dispossess', the NRSV has simply 'possess', while NETB has 'conquer'.
- 4 The NRSV & NJB have 'widowhood' in place of 'abandonment', here following NETB; the following context (vv. 6-7) refers to Zion's husband, Yahweh, abandoning her, not dying, suggesting that an אֲלֻמָּנָה was a woman who had lost her husband, whether by death or abandonment.
- 5 The NRSV and NETB do not capitalise 'Earth', and the NJB has 'world'.

וְגֹאֲלְךָ קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל
אֱלֹהֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ יִקְרָא:
כִּי־כָאִשָּׁה עֲזוּבָה וְעֶצְוֹבַת רוּחַ 1
קָרָאךָ יְהוָה
וְאִשְׁתׁ נְעוּרִים כִּי תִמָּאֵס
אָמַר אֱלֹהֶיךָ:
בְּרִגְעַ קָטָן עֲזַבְתִּיךָ 2
וּבְרַחֲמִים גְּדֹלִים אֶקְבָּצֶךָ:
בְּשֹׁצֵף קֶצֶף 3
הִסְתַּרְתִּי פָנַי רָגַע מִמֶּךָ
וּבְחֶסֶד עוֹלָם רַחֲמֶיךָ
אָמַר גֹּאֲלְךָ יְהוָה: {ס}
כִּי־יָמֵי נָח זֹאת לִי 4
אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי מֵעַבְרׁ מִי־נָח עוֹד
עַל־הָאָרֶץ
כִּן נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי מִקֶּצֶף עֲלֶיךָ
וּמִגֶּעַר־בָּדָד:
כִּי הֶהָרִים יִמוּשׁוּ 5

the Holy One of Israel is your redeemer,
he is called God of the whole Earth.
6 Yes, like a forsaken, grief-stricken wife,
Yahweh has called you back,
like the repudiated wife of his youth,
says your God.
7 I did abandon you for a brief moment,
but, in great compassion, I shall take you back.
8 In a flood of anger, for a moment,
I hid my face from you,
but in everlasting love I have taken pity on you,
says Yahweh, your redeemer.
9 For me, it will be as in the days of Noah,
when I swore that Noah's waters
should never flood the world again.
So now, I swear never to be angry with you
and never to rebuke you again.
10 For, the mountains may go away

6 A more literal translation of the 2nd line is "like a woman abandoned and grieved in spirit."

7 The NJB has 'forsake' in place of 'abandon', here following the NRSV & NETB.

8 'In a flood of anger' follows the NJB (cf. v. 9): the NRSV has 'in overflowing wrath' and NETB has 'in a burst of anger'; the noun שֹׁצֵף here is taken as an alternate form of שָׁטַף ('flood') – some relate the word to an alleged Accadian cognate meaning 'strength'.

9 The 1st line reads literally, "For the waters of Noah (is) this to me; כִּי־יָמֵי ('for the waters of') should be emended to כְּיָמֵי ('like the days of'), which is supported by 1QIsa^a and all the ancient versions except the LXX. On the promise made to Noah, see Gn 8:21–22.

10 In place of 'covenant of peace', here following the NJB & NRSV, NETB has 'covenant of friendship'.

וְהִגְבַּעוֹת תִּמוּטִינָה וְחִסְדִּי מֵאַתָּד לֹא־יִמוּשׁ וּבְרִית שְׁלוֹמִי לֹא תִמוֹט אָמַר מֵרַחֲמֶיךָ יְהוָה: {ס}	and the hills may totter, but my faithful love will never leave you, my covenant of peace will never totter, says Yahweh who takes pity on you.
יא עֲנִיָּה סַעֲרָה לֹא נַחֲמָה הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי מִרְבִּיץ בַּפּוֹד אֲבִנֶיךָ וַיִּסְדְּתֶיךָ בַּסַּפִּירִים:	11 Unhappy creature, storm-tossed, uncomforted, look, I shall lay your stones on agates and your foundations on sapphires.
יב וְשִׁמְתִּי בְּדָכָד שְׁמִשְׁתֶּיךָ וְשַׁעֲרֶיךָ לְאַבְנֵי אֶקֶדָח וְכָל־גְּבוּלְךָ לְאַבְנֵי־חֶפֶץ:	12 I shall make your battlements of rubies, your gateways jewels and your wall precious stones.
יג וְכָל־בְּנֶיךָ לְמוֹדֵי יְהוָה וְרַב שְׁלוֹם בְּנֶיךָ:	13 All your children will be taught by Yahweh and great will be your children's prosperity.
יד בַּצִּדְקָה תִּכּוֹנְנִי רַחֲקִי מֵעֲשָׁק כִּי־לֹא תִירָאִי וּמִמַּחְתָּה כִּי לֹא־תִקְרַב אֵלֶיךָ:	14 In deliverance, you will be made firm, free from oppression: you will have nothing to fear; free from terror: it will not approach you.
טו הֵן גֹּזֵר יְגֹר אֶפֶס מֵאוֹתֶי מִי־גֵר אֶתָּד עֲלֶיךָ יִפּוֹל:	15 Should anyone attack you, that will not be my doing, and whoever does attack you, for your fall before you.
טז הֵן הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי בִרְאִיתִי חֲרָשׁ	16 I created the smith

11 Unlike the description of Ezk 40–48, the prophet offers a vision of future splendours, a theme further developed later (60, 62, 65:16–25).

12 In place of 'jewels', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'firestone' and NETB has 'beryl'.

13 The literal translation of 'your children's prosperity' is 'peace of your sons'.

14 The precise meaning of צִדְקָה here is uncertain: it could mean 'righteousness', indicating that the city will be a centre for justice.

15 This verse is a commentary on the previous one.

16 The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.

נִפַּח בְּאֵשׁ פַּחֲם
וּמוֹצִיא כָּלִי לְמַעֲשָׂהוּ
וְאַנְכִי בִּרְאִיתִי מִשְׁחִית לְחַבֵּל:
כָּל-כֹּלֵי יוֹצֵר עָלֶיךָ לֹא יִצְלַח יי
וְכָל-לְשׁוֹן תִּקְוֵם-אֶתְּךָ לְמִשְׁפָּט תִּרְשִׁיעֵי
זֹאת נִחְלַת עַבְדֵי יְהוָה וְצִדְקָתָם
מֵאֵתִי נֶאֱמַר-יְהוָה: {ס}

who blows on the charcoal fire
to produce a weapon for his use;
I also created the destroyer to ruin it.

¹⁷ No weapon forged against you will succeed.
Any voice raised against you in court, you will refute.
Such is the lot of the servants of Yahweh,
the saving justice I assure them, declares Yahweh.

¹⁷ No one can assault God's chosen people with impunity.

ישעיהו פרק נה

א הוֹי כָּל-צֹמָא לֵכוּ לַמַּיִם
וְאֲשֶׁר אֵין-לּוֹ כֶּסֶף
לֵכוּ שִׁבְרוּ וְאָכְלוּ
וּלְכוּ שִׁבְרוּ בְּלוֹא-כֶּסֶף וּבְלוֹא
מַחִיר יֵין וְחֶלֶב:
ב לָמָּה תִשְׁקְלוּ-כֶּסֶף בְּלוֹא-לֶחֶם
וְיִגְיַעְכֶּם בְּלוֹא לִשְׂבֻעָה
שִׁמְעוּ שְׁמוֹעַ אֵלַי וְאֶכְלוּ-טוֹב
וְתִתְעַנֵּג בְּדָשָׁן נַפְשְׁכֶם:
ג הִטּוּ אָזְנוֹכֶם וּלְכוּ אֵלַי
שִׁמְעוּ וְתַחֲי נַפְשְׁכֶם
וְאֶכְרַתָּה לָכֶם בְּרִית עוֹלָם
חֶסֶדִי דָּוִד הַנֶּאֱמָנִים:
ד הֵן עַד לְאוֹמִים נִתְּתִיו
נָגִיד וּמִצְוָה לְאֻמִּים:
ה הֵן גּוֹי לֹא-תִדְעַתְּ קִרְאָה
וְגוֹי לֹא-יִדְעוּךָ אֲלֵיכָּה יִרְוּצוּ

ISAIAH 55

- 1 Hoy! Come to the water
all you who are thirsty;
though you have no money, come!
Buy and eat; come, buy wine and milk
without money, free!
- 2 Why spend money on what cannot nourish
and your wages on what fails to satisfy?
Listen carefully to me, and you will have good things to eat
and rich food to enjoy.
- 3 Pay attention, come to me;
listen and you will live.
I shall make an Everlasting Covenant with you
my steadfast, sure love for David.
- 4 Look, I have made him a witness to peoples,
a leader and lawgiver to peoples.
- 5 Look, you will summon nations unto you
and nations unknown to you will hurry to you

ISAIAH 55

- 1 The term הוֹי ('Hoy!') was used in funeral laments and is often prefixed to judgment oracles for rhetorical effect.
- 2 'Listen carefully' translates שִׁמְעוּ שְׁמוֹעַ: the infinitive absolute follows the imperative and lends emphasis to the exhortation.
- 3 On this 'Everlasting Covenant' (59:21, 61:8), which is also the New Covenant, see #Jr 31:31.
- 4 Ideally, the Davidic king was to testify to the nations of God's greatness (cf. Ps 18:50, 22:28).
- 5 'Nations' in the 1st & 2nd lines is a collective singular.

לְמַעַן יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 וְלִקְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי פִאֲרָךְ: {ס}
 דְּרָשׁוּ יְהוָה בְּהִמָּצְאוֹ ^ו
 קְרָאֵהוּ בְּהִיּוֹתוֹ קְרוֹב:
 יַעֲזֹב רָשָׁע דַּרְכּוֹ ^ז
 וְאִישׁ אֲנוֹן מִחֲשַׁבְתּוֹ
 וַיָּשֹׁב אֶל־יְהוָה וַיִּרְחַמֵּהוּ
 וְאֶל־אֱלֹהֵינוּ כִּי־יִרְבֶּה לְסֻלּוֹחַ:
 כִּי לֹא מַחְשְׁבוֹתַי מַחְשְׁבוֹתֶיכֶם ^ח
 וְלֹא דַרְכֵיכֶם דַּרְכֵּי
 נְאֻם יְהוָה:
 כִּי־גִבְהוּ שָׁמַיִם מֵאָרֶץ ^ט
 כֵּן גִּבְהוּ דַּרְכֵי מִדְּרָכֵיכֶם
 וּמִחֲשַׁבְתִּי מִמִּחֲשַׁבְתֵּיכֶם:
 כִּי כַּאֲשֶׁר יֵרֵד הַגֶּשֶׁם וְהַשֶּׁלֶג מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם ^י
 וְשָׁמָּה לֹא יָשׁוּב
 כִּי אִם־הִרְוָה אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וְהוֹלִידָהּ וְהִצְמִיחָהּ
 וְנָתַן זֶרַע לְזֹרַע וְלֶחֶם לֶאֱכֹל:

for the sake of Yahweh your God,
 because the Holy One of Israel has glorified you.
⁶ Seek out Yahweh while he may be found,
 call to him while he is near.
⁷ Let the wicked abandon their way
 and the unrighteous their thoughts.
 Let him turn back to Yahweh, who will take pity on him,
 to our God, for he is rich in forgiveness.
⁸ For, my thoughts are not your thoughts
 and your ways are not my ways,
 declares Yahweh.
⁹ For, the heavens are as high above the earth
 as my ways are above your ways,
 my thoughts above your thoughts.
¹⁰ For, just as the rain and the snow come down from the sky
 and do not return before having watered the earth,
 fertilising it and making it germinate
 to provide seed for the sower and food to eat,

⁶ Literally translated, the 1st line ends, “while he allows himself to be found;” the Niphal form has a force of tolerance here.

⁷ Although the pronouns, ‘their’, translate singular forms, the singular is collective. The imperfect with *vav* conjunctive after the jussive (‘will take pity’) indicates purpose/result.

⁸ NETB has ‘plans’ in place of ‘thoughts’, here following the NRSV & NJB.

⁹ The term שָׁמַיִם may be translated ‘heavens’ or ‘sky’, depending on the context.

¹⁰ This verse begins with כִּי כַּאֲשֶׁר (‘for, just as’), which is completed by כֵּן (‘so it is’) at the beginning of v. 11.

יא בֶּן יִהְיֶה דְבַרִּי אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא מִפִּי
 לֹא-יָשׁוּב אֵלַי רִיקָם
 כִּי אִם-עָשָׂה אֶת-אֲשֶׁר חָפְצָתִי
 וְהִצְלִיחַ אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַחְתִּיו:
 יב כִּי-בִשְׂמֵחָה תֵּצֵאוּ
 וּבִשְׁלוֹם תִּוָּבְלוּ
 הָהָרִים וְהַגְּבְעוֹת יִפְצְחוּ לִפְנֵיכֶם רִנָּה
 וְכָל-עֵצֵי הַשָּׂדֶה יִמְחֲאוּ-כָף:
 יג תַּחַת הַנֶּעְצוּץ יִעֲלֶה בְרוֹשׁ
 תַּחַת וְתַחַת הַסְּרָפֵד יִעֲלֶה הָדָס
 וְהָיָה לִיהוָה לְשֵׁם
 לְאֹזֶת עוֹלָם לֹא יִכָּרֵת:
 {פ}

- 11 so it is with the word that goes from my mouth:
it will not return to me unfulfilled
or before having carried out my good pleasure
and having achieved what it was sent to do.
- 12 Yes, you will go out with joy
and be led away in safety.
Mountains and hills will break into joyful cries before you
and all the trees of the countryside clap their hands.
- 13 Cypress will grow instead of thorns,
myrtle instead of nettles;
and this will a monument for Yahweh,
an everlasting sign never to be effaced.

¹¹ The word of Yahweh is like a messenger who does not return until he has discharged his mission.

¹² Vv. 12–13 form the conclusion to the Book of Consolation, reverting to the theme of the New Exodus: the joy of homecoming and the transformation of desert into fertile soil (cf. 43:19, 44:3–4).

¹³ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation. For נֶשֶׁם used in the sense of ‘monument’, see also 56:5, where it stands parallel to יָד.

ישעיהו פרק נו

א כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
שִׁמְרוּ מִשְׁפָּט וַעֲשׂוּ צְדָקָה
כִּי־קְרוֹבָה יְשׁוּעָתִי לָבוֹא
וְצִדְקָתִי לְהַגָּלוֹת:
ב אֲשֶׁרִי אֲנוּשׁ יַעֲשֶׂה־זֹאת
וּבֶן־אָדָם יִחְזִיק בָּהּ
שֹׁמֵר שַׁבָּת מִחֻלּוֹ
וְשֹׁמֵר יָדָיו מִמַּעֲשׂוֹת כָּל־רָע: {ס}
ג וְאֶל־יֹאמֵר בֶּן־הַנֶּכֶד הַנִּלְוֶה אֶל־יְהוָה לֵאמֹר
הַבְדֵּל יַבְדִּילֵנִי יְהוָה מֵעַל עַמּוֹ
וְאֶל־יֹאמֵר הַסְּרִיס
הֵן אֲנִי עֵץ יָבֵשׁ: {פ}
ד כִּי־כֹה | אָמַר יְהוָה
לְסָרִיסִים אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁמְרוּ אֶת־שַׁבָּתוֹתַי
וּבָחֲרוּ בְּאֲשֶׁר חָפְצָתִי
וּמְחַזְּקִים בְּבְרִיתִי:
ה וְנָתַתִּי לָהֶם בְּבֵיתִי וּבְחוֹמֹתַי

ISAIAH 56

- 1 Thus says Yahweh:
Make fair judgement your concern, act with justice;
for, soon my salvation will come
and my saving justice be revealed.
- 2 Blessed is anyone who does this,
anyone who clings to it,
observing the Sabbath, not profaning it,
and abstaining from every evil deed.
- 3 No foreigner adhering to Yahweh should say,
"Yahweh will utterly exclude me from his people."
No eunuch should say,
"Look, I am a dried-up tree."
- 4 For, Yahweh says this:
To the eunuchs, who observe my Sabbaths
and choose to do my good pleasure
and cling to my Covenant,
- 5 I shall give them in my house and within my walls

ISAIAH 56

- 1 Literally translated, the last 2 lines read, "for near is my deliverance to enter, and my vindication to be revealed."
- 2 The literal translation of 'anyone' (וּבֶן־אָדָם) is 'the son of man'.
- 3 In place of 'adhering', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'joined' and NETB has 'who follows'.
- 4 In place of 'cling to', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'hold fast' and NETB has 'are faithful to'.
- 5 'To them' in the 3rd line follows the LXX (αὐτοῖς), Peshitta and 1QIsa^a; the MT has 'to him'.

יָד וְשֵׁם טוֹב מִבָּנִים וּמִבָּנוֹת
 שֵׁם עוֹלָם אֶתֶּן-לָו
 אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִכָּרֵת: {ס}
 וּבְנֵי הַנֹּכַר הַגֵּלִים עַל-יְהוָה לְשָׂרְתוּ^ו
 וְלֹא־הִבָּה אֶת-שֵׁם יְהוָה לְהִזּוֹת לוֹ לַעֲבָדִים
 כָּל-שֹׁמֵר שַׁבַּת מִחֻלּוֹ
 וּמִחֲזִיקִים בְּבְרִיתִי:
 וְהִבִּיאֹתִים אֶל-הָר קֹדְשִׁי^ז
 וְשִׂמְחָתִים בְּבֵית תְּפִלָּתִי
 עוֹלֹתֵיהֶם וְזִבְחֵיהֶם לְרָצוֹן
 עַל-מִזְבְּחִי
 כִּי בֵיתִי בֵּית-תְּפִלָּה יִקְרָא לְכָל-הָעַמִּים:
 נָאֻם אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה מִקֶּבֶץ נִדְחֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל^ח
 עוֹד אֶקְבֹּץ עָלָיו לְנִקְבְּצָיו:
 כָּל חִיתוֹ שָׂדֵי^ט
 אֲתִיו לֶאֱכֹל כָּל-חִיתוֹ בִּיעֵר: {פ}
 צִפּוֹ עוֹרִים כָּלֵם לֹא יֵדְעוּ^י
 כָּלֵם כָּלָבִים אֱלֵמִים

a monument and a name better than sons and daughters;
 I shall give them an everlasting name
 that will never be effaced.

- 6 As for the foreigners who adhere to Yahweh to serve him,
 to love Yahweh's name and become his servants,
 all who observe the Sabbath, not profaning it,
 and cling to my Covenant:
 7 These I shall lead to my Holy Mountain
 and make them joyful in my house of prayer.
 Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted
 on my altar;
 for, my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.
 8 Lord Yahweh who gathers the exiles of Israel declares:
 I shall gather others besides those already gathered.
 9 All you wild beasts,
 all you beasts of the forest, come and gorge!
 10 Its watchmen are all blind;
 they know nothing.

⁶ On the phrases 'adhere to' and 'cling to', see #3 & #4.

⁷ Prayer is more important than sacrifice, even in the Temple, and all peoples are invited to take part. The last line is quoted by Jesus in Mt 21:13.

⁸ The prophecy of vv. 8–9 confirms the previous one: the 'others' are proselytes and eunuchs, not members of the non-Babylonian dispersion.

⁹ The NJB places the phrase 'come and gorge' at the beginning of this verse; here, we follow the MT & NRSV.

¹⁰ Note that the צִפּוֹ in צִפּוֹ is presented as an enlarged letter, just as it appears in almost all *Hebrew MSS*. The prophet draws a distinction here between the national leaders (the 'watchmen' who are like lazy dogs) and their subalterns (the 'dogs' who are like real shepherds, but greedy

לֹא יוֹכְלוּ לִנְבֹּחַ
 הַזֵּים שֹׁכְבִים אֹהֲבֵי לָנוּם:
 וְהַכֹּלְבִּים עַז־נֶפֶשׁ לֹא יָדְעוּ שְׂבָעָה יא
 וְהֵמָּה רָעִים לֹא יָדְעוּ הַבֵּין
 כֹּלֶם לְדַרְכֵּם פָּנוּ
 אִישׁ לְבַצְעוֹ מִקְצָהוּ:
 אֲתִיו אֶקְחָה־יַיִן יב
 וְנִסְבָּאָה שָׂכָר
 וְהָיָה כְּזֶה יוֹם מִחֹר גָּדוֹל יֵתֶר מְאֹד:

Dumb watchdogs all, unable to bark,
 they dream, lie down, and love to sleep.

11 Greedy dogs, never satisfied, such are the shepherds,
 who understand nothing;
 they all go their own way,
 each to the last man after his own interest.

12 “Come, let me fetch wine;
 we will get drunk on strong drink;
 tomorrow will be like today and even more so!”

and selfish). This prophecy, possibly pre-Exilic, enlarges on a favourite theme of Jeremiah (Jr 2:8, 26–27, 5:4–5, 21, 10:21, 23:1–2, 11) and of Ezekiel (Ezk 8:11, 34), namely, the unworthiness of the leaders of Judah in the years before the Exile.

¹¹ The literal translation of ‘*after his own interest*’ is ‘*for his gain from his end*’.

¹² Literally translated, ‘*and even more so*’ reads ‘*great*’, ‘*in abundance*’ or ‘*very much*’.

ישעיהו פרק נז

א הַצְדִּיק אָבָד וְאֵין אִישׁ שֶׁם עַל־לֵב
וְאֲנָשֵׁי־חֶסֶד נֶאֱסָפִים בְּאֵין מִבֵּין
כִּי־מִפְּנֵי הָרָעָה נֶאֱסָף הַצְדִּיק:
ב יָבוֹא שָׁלוֹם
יָנוּחוּ עַל־מִשְׁכְּבוֹתָם
הַלֵּךְ נִכְחוֹ: {ס}
ג וְאַתֶּם קְרִבּוֹתֶהֶן בְּנֵי עֲנָנָה
זֶרַע מְנַאֲף וְתִזְנֶה:
ד עַל־מִי תִתְעַנְּגוּ
עַל־מִי תִרְחִיבוּ פֶה
תֹּאדְרִיכוּ לְשׁוֹן
הֲלוֹא־אַתֶּם יְלָדֵי־פֶשַׁע
זֶרַע שָׁקֶר:
ה הַנְּחָמִים בְּאֵלִים תַּחַת
כָּל־עֵץ רֹעֵן
שֹׁחֲטֵי הַיָּלָדִים בְּנַחְלִים

ISAIAH 57

- 1 The righteous perish and no one cares.
The faithful are taken off and no one takes it to heart.
Yes, because of the evil times the righteous are taken off.
- 2 He will enter peace,
and those who follow the right way
will find rest on their beds.
- 3 But you, you children of a witch, come here,
adulterous race prostituting yourselves!
- 4 At whom are you jeering,
at whom are you making faces
and sticking out your tongue?
Are you not the spawn of rebellion,
a lying race?
- 5 Lusting among the terebinths,
and under every spreading tree,
sacrificing children in the ravines,

ISAIAH 57

- 1 The righteous die unnoticed by their hedonistic religious leaders.
- 2 'Those who follow' is a conjectural translation; the MT has the singular pronoun. 'Beds' here is a euphemism for graves.
- 3 The 2nd line reads literally, "offspring of an adulterer (masculine) and (one who) has committed adultery;" perhaps מְנַאֲף וְתִזְנֶה should be emended to מְנַאֲפָת וְזִנָּה ('an adulteress and a prostitute').
- 4 The literal translation of 'making faces' is 'opening your mouth wide'.
- 5 It is uncertain whether these child sacrifices were identical with the sacrifices to Molech (on which see #Lv 18:21).

תַּחַת סַעְפֵּי הַסְּלָעִים:
 בַּחֲלָקִי-נָחַל חֲלָקָךְ^ו
 הֵם הֵם גּוֹרְלֶךְ
 גַּם-לָהֶם שָׁפַכְתָּ נֶסֶךְ
 הֶעַלִית מִנְחָה
 הֶעַל אֱלֹהִים אֲנַחֵם:
 עַל הַר-גְּבוּהָ וְנִשְׂא^ז
 שִׁמְתָּ מִשְׁכַּבְּךָ
 גַּם-שָׁם עָלִית
 לִזְבַּח זִבְחִי:
 וְאַחֲרֵי הַדֹּלֶת וְהַמְּזוּזָה^ח
 שִׁמְתָּ זִכְרוֹנֶךְ
 כִּי מֵאִתִּי גָלִית וְתַעֲלִי
 הִרְחַבְתָּ מִשְׁכַּבְּךָ וְתִכְרַת-לֶךְ מֵהֶם
 אֶהְבַּת מִשְׁכַּבָּם יָד חֲזִית:
 וְתִשְׂרִי לַמֶּלֶךְ בְּשֶׁמֶן^ט
 וְתִרְבִּי רִקְחִיךָ
 וְתִשְׁלַחִי צְרִיךְ עַד-מֶרְחָק
 וְתִשְׁפִּילִי עַד-שְׂאוּל:

below the clefts in the rocks.

⁶ The smooth stones of the ravines will be your portion;
yes, these will be your lot.

To these, you have poured libations
and have brought your cereal offering.

Can all this appease me?

⁷ On a mountain high and lofty,
you have put your bed.

Thither, too, you have climbed
to offer sacrifice.

⁸ Behind door and doorpost, you have set your reminder.
Yes, far from me, you exposed yourself,

climbed onto your bed, and made the most of it.

You bought favours from those whose bed you love,
whoring with them often, with your eyes on their parts.

⁹ You went to Molech with oil,
you were prodigal with your perfumes;

you sent your envoys far afield,
down to Sheol itself.

⁶ The 3rd line indicates that the 'smooth stones' are idols.

⁷ This verse alludes to sacred prostitution as practised in Canaanite nature cults (Nb 25) and sometimes practised in Israel as well (1K 14:24, 22:47, 2K 23:7, Ho 4:14), although forbidden (Dt 23:18-19).

⁸ The 'reminder' or 'monument' seems to have been a cult symbol, but the sense of the entire verse is obscure.

⁹ The name, 'Molech', means 'the king', a title given to many Semitic deities; here, it may refer to Melkart of Tyre, god of the underworld.

י בָּרַב דִּרְכָּךְ יִגְעַת
 לֹא אָמַרְתָּ נֹאֵשׁ
 חַיִּית יִדְדְךָ מִצָּאת
 עַל־כֵּן לֹא חָלִית:
 יא וְאַת־מִי דָאֲגַת וּתִירָאִי
 כִּי תִכְזָּבִי וְאוֹתִי לֹא
 זָכַרְתָּ לֹא־שָׁמַתָּ עַל־לִבִּי
 הֲלֹא אָנִי מַחֲשֶׁה וּמַעֲלֵם
 וְאוֹתִי לֹא תִירָאִי:
 יב אָנִי אֶגִּיד צְדָקָתְךָ
 וְאַת־מַעֲשֶׂיךָ וְלֹא יוֹעִילוּךָ:
 יג בְּזַעֲקֶךָ יִצִּילְךָ קְבוּצֶיךָ
 וְאַת־כָּל־יִשְׂאֲרוּחַ יִקַּח־הֶבֶל
 וְהַחוּסָה בִּי יִנְחַל־אָרֶץ
 וַיִּירֶשׁ הַר־קֹדֶשׁ:
 יד וְאָמַר
 סִלּוּ־סִלּוּ פָנֹי־דֶרֶךְ
 הֲרִימוּ מִכְשׁוֹל מִדֶּרֶךְ עַמִּי: {ס}

- 10 Though tired by so much travelling,
you never said, "It is no use."
Finding your strength rekindled,
you never gave up.
- 11 Who was it you dreaded, and feared,
that you should betray me, no longer remember me
and not spare a thought for me?
Was I not silent for a long time?
Therefore, you cannot have been afraid of me.
- 12 I will concede your righteousness and deeds,
but they will not help.
- 13 When you cry for help, let your idols save you!
The wind will carry them all away, one puff will take them off;
but, whoever trusts in me will inherit the country,
he will own my Holy Mountain.
- 14 And it will be said:
"Level up, level up, clear the way,
remove the obstacle from my people's way."

10 The term חַיִּית (literally, 'life') is here used in the sense of 'renewal', while יִדְדְךָ is used of 'strength'.

11 God rebukes the idol worshippers: their gods are impotent (42:17, Jr 2:20–28).

12 For this verse, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, "Now I shall expose this uprightness of yours, and little good it did you."

13 'Your idols' translates קְבוּצֶיךָ (literally, 'your gatherings'), an otherwise unattested noun from the verbal root קָבַץ ('to gather').

14 Vv. 14–21 (compare 40:1–4) comprise a post-Exilic poem showing Yahweh as caring for the poor and oppressed. On the spirituality of 'Yahweh's poor', see #Zp 2:3.

טו כִּי כֹה אָמַר רַם וְנִשְׂא
 שֹׁכֵן עַד וְקָדוֹשׁ שְׁמוֹ
 מְרוֹם וְקָדוֹשׁ אֶשְׁכֹּן
 וְאֶת־דַּכָּא וּשְׁפַל־רוּחַ
 לְהַחְיֹת רוּחַ שְׁפָלִים
 וּלְהַחְיֹת לֵב נִדְכָּאִים:
 טז כִּי לֹא לְעוֹלָם אֲרִיב
 וְלֹא לִנְצַח אֶקְצוֹף
 כִּי־רוּחַ מִלִּפְנֵי יַעֲטוֹף
 וְנִשְׁמוֹת אֲנִי עֹשִׂיתִי:
 יז בַּעֲוֹן בָּצְעוּ קִצְפָּתִי וְאִכְהוּ
 הַסֵּתֶר וְאֶקְצֹף
 וַיֵּלֶךְ שׁוֹבֵב בְּדֶרֶךְ לְבוֹ:
 יח דִּרְכֵּיו רָאִיתִי וְאֶרְפָּאֵהוּ
 וְאֶנְחָהוּ וְאֶשְׁלֵם
 נַחֲמִים לוֹ וְלֹאֲבָלָיו:
 יט בּוֹרָא נּוֹב נִיב שְׁפָתַיִם
 שָׁלוֹם | שָׁלוֹם לָרְחוֹק וּלְקָרוֹב
 אָמַר יְהוָה וּרְפָאתָיו:

- 15 For, thus says the High and Exalted One,
 the one who rules forever and whose name is holy,
 "I live in the holy heights
 but I am with the contrite and humble,
 to rekindle the spirit of the humble,
 to revive the heart of the contrite.
- 16 For I do not want to be forever accusing,
 nor always to be angry,
 or the spirit would fail under my onslaught,
 the souls that I myself have made.
- 17 Angered by his wicked cupidity,
 I hid and struck him in anger,
 but he rebelliously went the way of his choice.
- 18 I saw how he behaved, but I shall heal him;
 I shall lead him, fill him with consolation,
 him and those who mourn for him,
 bringing praise to their lips.
- 19 Peace! Peace to those far and near, Yahweh says,
 and I shall heal him."

15 The phrase, שֹׁכֵן עַד ('the one who rules forever'), is often translated 'the one who lives forever' and taken as a reference to God's eternal existence.

16 God's justifiable wrath is not unending.

17 'Hid' could mean either 'hid my face' (an expression of divine disapproval), or 'did not intervene'.

18 The literal translation of 'how he behaved' is 'his ways'.

19 The Kethib/Qere difference here would benefit from an explanation.

כ וְהָרָשָׁעִים כִּי־מִיָּם נִגְרָשׁ
 כִּי הַשִּׁקֵּט לֹא יוֹכֵל
 וַיִּגְרָשׁוּ מִיָּמָיו רֶפֶשׁ וְטִיט:
 כא אֵין שְׁלוֹם אָמַר אֱלֹהֵי לְרָשָׁעִים: {פ}

20 But the wicked are like the restless sea
 that cannot be still,
 whose waters throw up mud and dirt.

21 "No peace," says my God, "for the wicked."

20 In place of 'restless', here following the *NJB*, the *NRSV* has 'tossing' and *NETB* has 'surging'.

21 The *NJB* has the Divine Name in place of 'my God' but the Tetragrammaton is not used here in the *MT*.

ישעיהו פרק נח

א קרא בגרון אל־תחשך
בשופר הרם קולך
והגד לעמי פשעם
ולבית יעקב חטאתם:
ב ואותי יום יום ידרשון
ודעת דרכי יחפצון
בגוי אשר־צדקה עשה
ומשפט אלהיו לא עזב
ישאלוני משפטי־צדק
קרבת אלהים יחפצון:
ג למה צמנו ולא ראית
ענינו נפשנו ולא תדע
הן ביום צמכם תמצאו־חפץ
וכל־עצביכם תנגשו:
ד הן לריב ומצה תצומו
ולהכות באגרף רשע
לא־תצומו כיום
להשמיע במרום קולכם:

ISAIAH 58

- 1 Shout loudly, do not hold back;
raise your voice like a trumpet.
To my people proclaim their rebellious acts,
to the House of Jacob, their sins.
- 2 They seek for me day after day,
they long to know my ways,
like a nation that has acted righteously
and not forsaken the Law of its God.
They ask of me righteous judgements;
they long to be near God:
- 3 "Why have we fasted, if you do not see,
why mortify ourselves if you never notice?"
Look, you seek your own pleasure on your fast days
and you exploit all your workmen.
- 4 Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight,
and to strike with a wicked fist.
Such fasting as you do today
will never make your voice heard on high.

ISAIAH 58

- 1 This post-Exilic prophecy in the spirit of the Great Prophets, insists that inward religion must accompany outward observance.
- 2 For the 3rd line, here (loosely) following the *NJB*, the *NRSV* reads, "as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness."
- 3 The only fast prescribed by the Law was for the Day of Atonement (Lv 23:26–32).
- 4 For the 2nd line, here following the *NRSV*, the *NJB* has, "and strike viciously with your fist."

ה הַכֹּזֵה יִהְיֶה צוֹם אֲבַחְרֶהוּ
 יוֹם עֲנוּת אָדָם נִפְשׁוֹ
 הַלֵּכְךָ כְּאֶגְמוֹן רֹאשׁוֹ
 וְשָׁק וְאַפֵּר יָצִיעַ
 הַלֵּזָה תִּקְרָא-צוֹם
 וַיּוֹם רָצוֹן לַיהוָה:
 ו' הֲלוֹא זֶה צוֹם אֲבַחְרֶהוּ
 פִּתְחַ חֲרָצְבוֹת רָשָׁע
 הֲתֵר אֲגִדּוֹת מוֹטָה
 וְשַׁלַּח רְצוּצִים חֲפָשִׁים
 וְכָל-מוֹטָה תִּנְתְּקוּ:
 ז' הֲלוֹא פָרַס לָרֵעִב לַחֲמֶךָ
 וְעֲנִיִּים מְרוּדִים תָּבִיא בֵּית
 כִּי-תִרְאֶה עָרֹם וְכִסְיֹתוֹ
 וּמִבְשָׂרְךָ לֹא תִתְעַלֵּם:
 ח אֲזִי יִבְקַע כְּשַׁחַר אוֹרְךָ
 וְאַרְכָּתְךָ מִהֵרָה תִּצְמַח
 וְהַלֵּךְ לִפְנֶיךָ צִדְקָךָ
 כְּבוֹד יְהוָה יֵאֲסֹפֶךָ:

- 5 Is that the sort of fast that pleases me,
 a day when a man humbles himself?
 Hanging your head like a reed,
 spreading out sackcloth and ashes?
 Is that what you call fasting,
 a day acceptable to Yahweh?
- 6 Is not this the sort of fast that pleases me:
 to break unjust fetters,
 to undo the thongs of the yoke,
 to let the oppressed go free,
 and to break all yokes?
- 7 Is it not sharing your food with the hungry,
 and sheltering the homeless poor;
 if you see someone lacking clothes, to clothe him,
 and not to turn away from your own kin?
- 8 Then your light shall blaze out like the dawn
 and your healing shall spring up quickly.
 Vindication shall go before you
 and Yahweh's glory shall be your rear-guard.

5 The NRSV somewhat shortens the 2nd line to, "a day to humble oneself?"

6 When appropriate 'fruits' are present (social justice, mercy, sharing, Lk 3:8), God will hear (1:10–20, Mt 25:34–40).

7 'Homeless' here translates מְרוּדִים.

8 The NRSV has 'vindicator' in place of 'vindication' and the NJB has 'saving justice'. 'Light' here symbolises God's favour and restored blessing, as the immediately following context makes clear.

ט אז תקרא ויהוה יענה
 תשוע ויאמר הנני
 אס־תסיר מתוכך מוטה
 שלח אצבע ודבר־און:
 י ותפק לרעב נפשך
 ונפש נענה תשביע
 וזרח בחשך אורך
 ואפלתך כצהרים:
 יא ונחך יהוה תמיד
 והשביע בצחצחות נפשך
 ועצמתיך יחליץ
 והיית כגן רוה
 וכמוצא מים
 אשר לא־יבזבו מימיו:
 יב ובנו ממך חרבות עולם
 מוסדי דור־ודור תקומם

- 9 Then you will cry for help and Yahweh will answer;
 you will call and he will say, "I am here."
 If you do away with the yoke,
 the clenched fist and malicious words,
 10 if you deprive yourself for the hungry
 and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
 your light will rise in the darkness,
 and your darkest hour will be like noon.
 11 Yahweh will always guide you,
 will satisfy your needs in the scorched land;
 he will give strength to your bones
 and you will be like a watered garden,
 like a flowing spring
 whose waters never run dry.
 12 Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
 you shall bring on age-old foundations.

⁹ For the long, conditional sentence of vv. 9^b–10, the protasis ('if' clauses) appears in vv. 9^b & 10^a, with the apodosis ('then' clause) appearing in v. 10^b.

¹⁰ The literal translation of the first 2 lines is, "if you give (the bread of) your soul to the hungry and satisfy the soul of the afflicted." However, the word נפש, normally translated as 'soul' also means 'desire', 'appetite', hence several shades of meaning are possible here, between which it is hard to choose. The NRSV opens with, "If you offer your food to the hungry..."

¹¹ The meaning of the 3rd line is uncertain: the verb used here seems to be related to the noun 'warrior', but there are other possibilities, not to mention suggested emendations.

¹² The passage dates from the beginning of the Restoration in the Persian period, certainly before Nehemiah had rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem and perhaps even before the rebuilding of the Temple, which is not mentioned. The literal translation of the last line is, "the one who restores

וְקָרָא לְךָ גֹּדֶר פָּרֶץ
 מְשַׁבֵּב נְתִיבוֹת לַשַּׁבָּת:
 אִם-תִּשְׁיֵב מִשַּׁבַּת רַגְלֶךָ י^ג
 עֲשׂוֹת חֲפָצֶךָ בַּיּוֹם קִדְשִׁי
 וְקָרָאתָ לַשַּׁבָּת עֲנֹג
 לְקֹדֶשׁ יְהוָה מְכַבֵּד
 וְכִבְדָּתוֹ מַעֲשׂוֹת דְּרָכֶיךָ
 מִמְצֹא חֲפָצֶךָ וּדְבַר דְּבָר:
 אֲזִי תִתְעַנֵּג עַל-יְהוָה י^ד
 וְהִרְכַּבְתִּיךָ עַל-בָּמֹתַי בְּמוֹתַי אֶרֶץ
 וְהֵאכְלֵתִיךָ נַחֲלַת יַעֲקֹב אָבִיךָ
 כִּי פִי יְהוָה דִּבֶּר: {פ}

You shall be called 'Breach-Mender',
 'Restorer of streets to be lived in'.

- ¹³ If you refrain from breaking the Sabbath,
 from taking your own pleasure on my holy day,
 if you call the Sabbath 'Delightful',
 and the day sacred to Yahweh 'Honourable',
 if you honour it by abstaining from travel,
 from seeking your own pleasure and from too much talk,
¹⁴ then you will find true happiness in Yahweh,
 and I shall lead you in triumph over the heights of the land.
 I shall feed you on the heritage of your father Jacob,
 for the mouth of Yahweh has spoken.

paths for dwelling;" but the idea of 'paths to dwell in' is not a common notion, and some have proposed emending נְתִיבוֹת ('paths') to נְתִיצוֹת ('ruins'), for tighter parallelism with the preceding line. However, none of the MSS support this emendation.

¹³ Vv. 13–14 seem to have been added to the foregoing prophecy. On the Sabbath, see #Ex 20:8; strict observance was increasingly emphasised in post-Exilic Judaism (56:2, Mt 12:1–8). It is unlikely that the last phrase (literally, 'speaking a word') is a prohibition against talking on the Sabbath; instead, it probably refers to making transactions or plans (see Ho 10:4), and some see here a reference to idle talk (cf. S 19:30).

¹⁴ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation. The term נַחֲלַת ('heritage') likely stands by metonymy for the crops that grow on Jacob's inheritance (i.e., the land he inherited as a result of God's promise).

ישעיהו פרק נט

א הֵן לֹא־קִצְרָה יְד־יְהוָה מִהוֹשִׁיעַ
וְלֹא־כִבְדָּה אָזְנוֹ מִשְׁמֹעַ:
ב כִּי אִם־עוֹנֹתֵיכֶם הָיוּ מִבְדִּלִים
בֵּינְכֶם לְבֵין אֱלֹהֵיכֶם
וְחַטָּאוֹתֵיכֶם הִסְתִּירוּ פָנִים מִכֶּם מִשְׁמֹעַ:
ג כִּי כַפֵּיכֶם נִגְאָלוּ בַדָּם
וְאֶצְבְּעוֹתֵיכֶם בַּעֲוֹן
שִׁפְתוֹתֵיכֶם דְּבַרוּ־שָׁקֶר
לְשׁוֹנְכֶם עוֹלָה תְּהַגֶּה:
ד אִין־קָרָא בַצֶּדֶק
וְאִין נִשְׁפָּט בְּאִמּוֹנָה
בְּטוֹחַ עַל־תְּהוֹ וְדִבֶּר־שׁוֹא
הָרוּ עֵמֶל וְהוֹלִיד אָנוֹן:
ה בִּיצֵי צִפְעוֹנִי בִקְעוֹ
וְקוֹרֵי עַכְבֵּישׁ יֹאֲרִגּוּ
הָאֵכֵל מִבִּיצֵיהֶם יָמוּת
וְהַזּוֹרֶה תִּבְקַע אֶפְעָה:

ISAIAH 59

- 1 See, the arm of Yahweh is not too short to save,
nor his ear too dull to hear.
- 2 But your iniquities have alienated you from your God.
Your sins have made him hide his face from you
so as not to hear you.
- 3 For your hands are stained with blood
and your fingers with guilt;
your lips utter lies,
your tongues murmur wickedness.
- 4 No one makes just accusations
or pleads his case sincerely.
All rely on empty words, utter falsehood,
conceive trouble and give birth to evil.
- 5 They are hatching adders' eggs
and weaving a spider's web;
whoever eats their eggs dies:
crush one and a viper hatches.

ISAIAH 59

- 1 Vv. 1–20 comprise a penitential liturgy in the same spirit as the preceding chapter and possibly dating from the same period.
- 2 The literal translation of 'alienated' is 'made a barrier'.
- 3 In place of 'guilt', here following the NJB, the NRSV has 'iniquity' and NETB has 'sin'.
- 4 The literal translation of 'empty words' is 'nothing'.
- 5 Vv. 5–8 form a graphic continuation of vv. 3–4. The whole community is contaminated.

<p> ^ו קוֹרֵיהֶם לֹא־יִהְיוּ לְבָגָד וְלֹא יִתְכַסּוּ בַּמַּעֲשִׂיָּהֶם מַעֲשִׂיהֶם מַעֲשֵׂי־אֶוֹן וּפְעֵל חָמֶס בְּכַפֵּיהֶם: ^ז רַגְלֵיהֶם לָרַע יִרְצוּ וַיִּמְהָרוּ לְשַׁפֵּךְ דָּם נָקִי מַחְשַׁבְתֵּיהֶם מַחֲשַׁבוֹת אֶוֹן שָׂד וְשֹׁבֵר בְּמַסְלֹוֹתָם: ^ח דֶּרֶךְ שָׁלוֹם לֹא יָדְעוּ וְאֵין מִשְׁפָּט בַּמַּעֲגָלוֹתָם נִתְיַבּוֹתֵיהֶם עֲקָשׁוּ לָהֶם כָּל דֶּרֶךְ בָּהּ לֹא יָדַע שָׁלוֹם: ^ט עַל־כֵּן רָחַק מִשְׁפָּט מִמֶּנּוּ וְלֹא תִשְׁיָגְנוּ צְדָקָה נִקְוָה לְאוֹר וְהִנֵּה־חֹשֶׁךְ לְנִגְהוֹת בְּאַפְלוֹת נְהִלָּה: ^י נִגְשָׁשָׁה כְּעוֹרִים קִיר </p>	<p> ⁶ Their webs are useless for clothing, their deeds are useless for wearing; their deeds are deeds of guilt and deeds of violence fill their hands. ⁷ Their feet run to do evil; they are quick to shed innocent blood. Their thoughts are thoughts of guilt; desolation and destruction are in their highways. ⁸ They do not know the way of peace, there is no fair judgement in their course, they have made their roads paths, and no one walking them knows peace. ⁹ Thus, vindication is remote from us and righteousness cannot reach us. We looked for light and all is darkness, for brightness and we walk in gloom. ¹⁰ Like the blind, we feel our way along walls; </p>
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⁶ The NJB lacks 'and deeds of', here following the NRSV.

⁷ The literal translation of the last line (here following the NRSV) is, "their thoughts are thoughts of sin, destruction and crushing in their roadways;" the NJB has, "wherever they go, there is havoc and ruin" and NETB has simply, "they crush and destroy."

⁸ Literally translated, the last 2 lines read, "their paths they make crooked, everyone who walks in it does not know peace."

⁹ מִשְׁפָּט ('vindication'), which refers to 'justice' elsewhere, here refers to 'justice from God'.

¹⁰ The meaning of the last line is uncertain; the word translated as 'robust' (the NRSV has 'vigorous') seems to be derived from the word שָׁמֵן ('fat') but many translators prefer to emend the text; the LXX omits the word.

וְכַאֲזֵן עֵינַיִם נִגְשָׁשָׁה
 כְּשָׁלְנוּ בַצְהָרִים כְּנֹשֶׁף
 בְּאַשְׁמָנִים כַּמְתִּים:
 יא נְהִמָּה כְּדָבִים כְּלָנוּ
 וְכִזְנוֹנִים הָגָה נְהִגָּה
 נִקְוָה לְמִשְׁפָּט וְאֵין
 לִישׁוּעָה רַחֲקָה מִמֶּנּוּ:
 יב כִּי־רַבּוּ פִשְׁעֵינוּ נִגְדָּךְ
 וְחַטֹּאתֵינוּ עֲנָתָה בָנוּ
 כִּי־פִשְׁעֵינוּ אִתָּנוּ
 וְעֹנֹתֵינוּ יִדְעֻנוּם:
 יג פֶּשַׁע וְכִחַשׁ בִּיהוָה
 וְנִסְוֹג מֵאַחֵר אֱלֹהֵינוּ
 דְּבַר־עֶשֶׂק וְסָרָה
 הָרוּ וְהָגוּ מִלֵּב דְּבַר־שָׁקֶר:
 יד וְהִסָּג אַחֹר מִשְׁפָּט
 וְצִדְקָה מִרְחוֹק תַּעֲמֹד
 כִּי־כִשְׁלָה בְּרָחוּב אֱמֶת
 וְנִכְחָה לֹא־תוּכַל לָבוֹא: {ס}

we grope our way like people without eyes.
 We stumble as though noon were twilight;
 among the robust, we are like the dead.

- 11 We growl, all of us, like bears;
 like doves, we make no sound but moaning,
 waiting for the vindication that never comes,
 for salvation, but that is far away.
- 12 How often we have rebelled against you
 and our sins bear witness against us.
 Our rebellious acts are indeed with us,
 we are well aware of our guilt:
- 13 Rebellion and denial of Yahweh,
 turning our back on our God,
 talking violence and revolt,
 conceiving and uttering lies from the heart.
- 14 Justice is driven away,
 righteousness stands aloof,
 for good faith has stumbled in the street
 and sincerity cannot enter.

11 On the use of the word 'vindication', see #9.

12 Literally translated, the last 2 lines read, "For our rebellious deeds (are) with us, and our sins, we know them."

13 The last line here loosely follows the NRSV; the NJB has, "murmuring lies in our heart."

14 The NJB has, respectively, 'fair judgement' and 'saving justice' in place of 'justice' and 'righteousness', here following the NRSV; for the latter, NETB has 'godliness'.

טו וַתֵּהִי הָאֱמֶת נֶעְדָּרַת
וְסָר מִרַע מִשְׁתּוֹלָל
וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה וַיֵּרַע בְּעֵינָיו
כִּי־אֵין מִשְׁפָּט:
טז וַיֵּרָא כִּי־אֵין אִישׁ
וַיִּשְׁתּוֹמֵם כִּי אֵין מַפְגִּיעַ
וַתּוֹשַׁע־לוֹ זְרַעוֹ
וַצִּדְקָתוֹ הִיא סִמְכָתָהּ:
יז וַיִּלְבַּשׂ צִדְקָה כַּשְׂרִיץ
וְכֹבֵעַ יְשׁוּעָה בְּרֹאשׁוֹ
וַיִּלְבַּשׂ בְּגָדֵי נָקֵם תְּלַבֶּשֶׁת
וַיַּעַט כַּמְעִיל קִנְאָה:
יח כָּעַל גְּמִלוֹת כָּעַל יִשְׁלָם
חֲמָה לְצִרְיָו גְּמוּלָ לְאִיְבָיו
לְאֵיִים גְּמוּלָ יִשְׁלָם:
יט וַיֵּרָאוּ מִמַּעַרְב אֶת־שֵׁם יְהוָה
וּמִמִּזְרַח־שֶׁמֶשׁ אֶת־כְּבוֹדוֹ
כִּי־יָבֹא כְנָהָר צָר
רוּחַ יְהוָה נֹסֶסָה בּוֹ:

- 15 Good faith has vanished:
anyone abstaining from evil is victimised.
Yahweh saw this and was displeased
that there was no fair judgement.
- 16 He saw there was no one
and wondered there was no one to intervene.
So he made his own arm his mainstay,
his own righteousness his support.
- 17 He put on righteousness like a breastplate,
and a helmet of salvation on the head.
He put on the clothes of vengeance like a tunic
and wrapped himself in fury like a cloak.
- 18 To each he repays his due:
retribution to his enemies, reprisals on his foes,
to the coastlands he will repay their due.
- 19 From the west, Yahweh's name will be feared,
and from the east, his glory,
for he will come like a pent-up stream
impelled by the breath of Yahweh.

15 In vv. 15^b–20, Yahweh comes as judge and redeemer. The passage has elements in common with the apocalypse of Chs 24–27.

16 The 1st line speaks of the lack of an advocate, as *NETB* states explicitly.

17 In place of 'fury', here following the *NRSV*, *NETB* has 'zeal' and the *NJB* has 'jealousy'.

18 An alternative reading for 'coastlands' is 'islands'; the *NJB* has 'coasts and islands'.

19 The word רוּחַ ('breath', here following the *NJB*) can also be translated as 'wind' (as *NRSV* & *NETB*).

כּ וּבֹא לְצִיּוֹן גּוֹאֵל
וְלֹשְׁבֵי פֶשַׁע בִּיעָקֵב
נְאֻם יְהוָה:

²⁰ And he will come to Zion as Redeemer,
for those who stop rebelling in Jacob,
declares Yahweh.

כֹּא וְאֲנִי זֹאת בְּרִיתִי אִתָּם אָמַר יְהוָה רוּחִי אֲשֶׁר
עָלֶיךָ וּדְבָרֵי אֲשֶׁר-שָׁמַתִּי בְּפִיךָ לֹא-יִמּוּשׁוּ מִפִּיךָ
וּמִפִּי זֶרַעְךָ וּמִפִּי זֶרַע זֶרַעְךָ אָמַר יְהוָה מֵעַתָּה
וְעַד-עוֹלָם: {ס}

²¹ “As for me, this is my Covenant with them, says Yahweh. My spirit
that is upon you, and my words, which I have put in your mouth, will
not leave your mouth, or the mouths of your seed, or the mouths of your
seed’s seed, says Yahweh, henceforth and forever.”

²⁰ For the 1st line, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, “Then for Zion will come a redeemer.”

²¹ The verse is a prose prophecy announcing the eternal nature of Yahweh’s Covenant with Israel, characterised by the outpouring of the Spirit and prophetic activity (cf. 40:7–8, 51:16, 61:1, Jr 1–9). Coming after the concluding formula of v. 20, it is an addition.

ישעיהו פרק ס

א קוּמִי אֲוִרִי כִּי בָא אֹרֶךְ
וּכְבוֹד יְהוָה עָלֶיךָ זָרַח:
ב כִּי־הִנֵּה הַחֹשֶׁךְ יִכְסֶה־אֶרֶץ
וְעֶרְפָּל לְאֻמִּים
וְעָלֶיךָ יִזְרַח יְהוָה
וּכְבוֹדוֹ עָלֶיךָ יֵרָאֶה:
ג וְהָלְכוּ גוֹיִם לְאוֹרֶךְ
וּמַלְכִּים לְנֹגַהּ זֶרְחֶךָ:
ד שְׂאִי־סְבִיב עֵינֶיךָ וּרְאִי
כָּל־שֶׁנִּקְבְּצוּ בְּאוֹלֶךְ
בְּנֵיךָ מֵרְחוֹק יָבֹאוּ
וּבְנוֹתֶיךָ עַל־צֵד תֵּאֱמָנָה:
ה אַז תֵּרְאִי וְנִהְרַתְּ
וּפָתַח וּרְחַב לִבְּךָ
כִּי־יִהְיֶה עָלֶיךָ הַמֶּזֶן יָם
חֵיל גוֹיִם יָבֹאוּ לָךְ:

ISAIAH 60

- 1 Arise, shine out, for your light has come,
and the glory of Yahweh has risen on you.
- 2 Look, night still covers the earth
and darkness the peoples,
but on you, Yahweh is rising
and over you his glory can be seen.
- 3 The nations shall come to your light
and kings to your dawning brightness.
- 4 Lift up your eyes and look around:
all are assembling and coming towards you,
your sons coming from far away
and your daughters being carried in the hip.
- 5 At this sight, you will grow radiant,
your heart will throb and rejoice;
since the riches of the sea will flow to you,
the wealth of the nations will come to you.

ISAIAH 60

- 1 Chs 60–62 form a whole in content and style and are related to Chs 40–55. If not composed by ('Second') Isaiah, they are at least the work of one of his disciples, re-telling the master's message of consolation to the post-Exilic community, whose hopes and faith require support.
- 2 The NJB adds 'though' before 'night' in the 1st line and omits 'but' from the 3rd.
- 3 NETB has the verb in the present tense ('the nations come'); here, we follow the NJB & NRSV.
- 4 Risen Zion welcomes her children home; her poverty is replaced by wealth.
- 5 The NJB has 'dilate' in place of 'rejoice'.

1 שִׁפְעֹת גַּמְלִים תִּכְסֹּךְ
 בְּכָרֵי מִדְיָן וְעִיפָה
 כָּל־מִשְׁבָּא יָבֹאוּ
 זָהָב וְלִבְנָה יִשְׂאוּ
 וְתִהְיֶה יְהוָה יְבָשָׁרוּ:
 2 כָּל־צֹאן קֶדָר יִקְבְּצוּ לָךְ
 אֵילֵי נְבִיאוֹת יִשְׁרְתּוּנָךְ
 יַעֲלוּ עַל־רִצּוֹן מִזְבְּחִי
 וּבֵית תִּפְאָרְתִּי אֶפְאֵר:
 3 מִי־אֵלֶּה כְּעָב תַּעֲוִפִּינָה
 וְכִיּוֹנִים אֶל־אַרְבְּתֵיהֶם:
 4 כִּי־לִי אֲיִים יִקְוּ
 וְאֲנִיּוֹת תַּרְשִׁישׁ בְּרֹאשָׁנָה
 לְהָבִיא בְנִיךָ מֵרָחוֹק
 כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב אִתָּם
 לְשֵׁם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 וְלִקְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי פֶאֶרְךָ:
 5 וּבָנוּ בְּנֵי־נֹכַח חֲמֹתֶיךָ
 וּמַלְכֵיהֶם יִשְׁרְתּוּנָךְ

- 6 A multitude of camels will throng your streets,
 the young camels of Midian and Ephah;
 everyone in Saba will come,
 bringing gold and incense
 and proclaiming Yahweh's praises.
 7 All the flocks of Kedar will gather inside you,
 the rams of Nebaioth will be at your service
 as acceptable victims on my altar,
 and I shall glorify my glorious house.
 8 Who are these flying like a cloud,
 like doves to their dovecote?
 9 Why, the coastlands put their hopes in me
 and the vessels of Tarshish take the lead
 in bringing your children from far away,
 and their silver and gold with them,
 for the sake of the name of Yahweh your God,
 of the Holy One of Israel who has made you glorious.
 10 Foreigners will rebuild your walls
 and their kings will serve you.

6 'Midian', 'Ephah' and 'Saba' (the NRSV has 'Sheba') are peoples of Arabia (cf. 45:14, Gn 25:1-4).

7 For 'Kedar', see #21:13 and 16-17; 'Nebaioth' was an Arabian people (see Gn 25:13, 28:9, 36:3).

8 Some returning exiles and wealth from the west arrive by ship.

9 Another reading of the 1st line, by emendation, is, "The ships are assembling and put their hopes in me," improving the parallelism with the 2nd.

10 Literally translated, the last line reads, "In my favour I will have compassion on you."

כִּי בִקְצָפִי הִכִּיתִּיךָ
 וּבְרַצוֹנִי רַחֲמֵתִיךָ:
 יא וּפְתָחוּ שַׁעְרֶיךָ תָּמִיד יוֹמָם וּלְיָלָה
 לֹא יִסָּגְרוּ
 לְהָבִיא אֵלֶיךָ חֵיל גּוֹיִם
 וּמַלְכֵיהֶם נְהוּגִים:
 יב כִּי־הִגְזִי וְהַמְּלָכָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יַעֲבֹדוךָ יֵאָבְדוּ
 וְהַגּוֹיִם חָרֵב יִחְרְבוּ:
 יג כְּבוֹד הַלְבָּנוֹן אֵלֶיךָ יָבוֹא
 בְּרוֹשׁ תְּדַהֵר וּתְאֻשׁוֹר יִחְדּוּ
 לְפָאֵל מְקוֹם מְקֻדָּשִׁי
 וּמְקוֹם רַגְלִי אֲכַבֵּד:
 יד וְהָלְכוּ אֵלֶיךָ שְׁחוֹחַ בְּנֵי מַעֲנִיךָ
 וְהִשְׁתַּחֲווּ עַל־כַּפּוֹת רַגְלֶיךָ כָּל־מְנַאֲצֶיךָ
 וְקִרְאוּ לָךְ עִיר יְהוָה
 צִיּוֹן קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל:
 טו תַּחַת הַיּוֹתֶךָ עֲזוּבָה וּשְׁנוּאַה
 וְאִין עוֹבֵר
 וּשְׁמִתִּיךָ לְגֵאוֹן עוֹלָם

For, though I struck you in anger,
 in mercy I will pity you.

- 11 Your gates will always be open, never closed,
 either day or night,
 for the riches of the nations to be brought you
 and their kings to be let in.
 12 For the nation and kingdom that will not serve you will perish,
 and the nations will be utterly destroyed.
 13 The glory of the Lebanon will come to you,
 cypress, plane tree, and box-tree, one and all,
 to adorn the site of my Sanctuary,
 for me to honour the place where I stand.
 14 Your oppressors' children will humbly approach you;
 at your feet, all who despised you will fall,
 addressing you as "City of Yahweh,"
 "Zion of the Holy One of Israel."
 15 Instead of your being forsaken and hated,
 avoided by everyone,
 I will make you an object of eternal pride,

11 The 1st line here follows the LXX (ἀνοιχθήσονται αἱ πύλαι σου) & Peshitta (as also the NJB & NRSV); the MT has, "Always open your gates."

12 This verse, interrupting the continuity, is very probably an addition.

13 The 'glory of Lebanon' refers to the cedars, which will be used to build the New Jerusalem.

14 A new name and, like the ones given to Jerusalem by Isaiah (see #1:26), a symbolic one.

15 The literal translation of the 2nd line is, "with no one passing through."

מְשׁוֹשׁ דָּוָר וּדָוָר:
 וַיִּנְקֹתָ חֶלֶב גּוֹיִם טז
 וְשָׁד מַלְכִּים תִּינָקִי
 וַיֵּדַעַת כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה מוֹשִׁיעֶיךָ
 וְגֹאֲלֶיךָ אֲבִיר יַעֲקֹב:
 יז תַּחַת הַנְּחֹשֶׁת אָבִיא זָהָב
 וְתַחַת הַבְּרֹזֶל אָבִיא כֶּסֶף
 וְתַחַת הָעֵצִים נְחֹשֶׁת
 וְתַחַת הָאֲבָנִים בְּרֹזֶל
 וְשָׁמְתִי פְקֻדָּתְךָ שְׁלוֹם
 וְנִגְשִׁיךָ צְדָקָה:
 יח לֹא-יִשְׁמַע עוֹד חֲמָס בְּאַרְצֶיךָ
 שָׁד וְשֹׁבֵר בְּגִבּוֹלֶיךָ
 וְקִרְאֹת יְשׁוּעָה חֹמֹתֶיךָ
 וְשַׁעְרֶיךָ תִּהְיֶה:
 יט לֹא-יִהְיֶה-לָּךְ עוֹד הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ
 לְאֹזֶר יוֹמָם וּלְנֶגַהּ הַיָּרֵחַ לֹא-יֵאִיר לָךְ
 וְהָיָה-לָּךְ יְהוָה לְאֹזֶר עוֹלָם
 וְאֱלֹהֶיךָ לְתִפְאֲרֶתְךָ:

a source of joy from age to age.

- 16 You will suck the milk of nations,
 you will suck the wealth of kings,
 and you will know that I, Yahweh, am your Saviour,
 that your redeemer is the Mighty One of Jacob.
- 17 For bronze, I shall bring gold
 and, for iron, I shall bring silver,
 and, for wood, bronze,
 and, for stone, iron;
 I shall make Peace your administration
 and Righteousness your government.
- 18 Violence will no longer be heard of in your country,
 nor devastation and ruin within your frontiers.
 You will call your walls, ‘Salvation,’
 and your gates, ‘Praise.’
- 19 No more will the sun give you daylight
 nor moonlight shine on you by night,
 but Yahweh will be your everlasting light,
 your God will be your splendour.

16 The NRSV, following the MT, has ‘breasts’ in place of ‘wealth’, here following the LXX (πλοῦτον) and NJB.

17 The language of the last 2 lines is ironic: in the past Zion, was ruled by oppressive tyrants, but now personified prosperity and vindication will be the only things that will ‘dominate’ the city.

18 The walls and gates of Jerusalem had names (see Ne 2:13–15); here, new names are given, which are symbolic (see v. 14, and #1:26).

19 ‘By night’ follows the LXX (τῇ νύκτι), Tg, *Vetus Latina* and 1QIsa^a (and the NRSV); the NJB, following the MT, lacks the phrase.

כ לא־יָבוֹא עוֹד שֶׁמֶשׁךָ
 וירָחְךָ לֹא יֵאָסֵף
 כִּי יִהְיֶה יְהוָה־לְךָ לְאֹזֶר עוֹלָם
 וּשְׁלָמוֹ יָמֵי אֲבִלְךָ:
 כא וְעַמְּךָ כָּל־צַדִּיקִים
 לְעוֹלָם יִירְשׁוּ אֶרֶץ
 גִּצְרֵי מִטְעוֹ מִטְעֵי מַעֲשֵׂה יָדַי
 לְהִתְפָּאֵר:
 כב הַקָּטָן יִהְיֶה לְאַלֵּף
 וְהַצָּעִיר לְגוֹי עֲצוֹם
 אֲנִי יְהוָה בְּעֵתָהּ אֲחִישָׁנָה: {ס}

- 20 Your sun will set no more
 nor will your moon wane,
 for Yahweh will be your everlasting light
 and your days of mourning will be over.
 21 Your people, all of the upright,
 will possess the country forever,
 the shoot I myself have planted, my handiwork,
 for my own glory.
 22 The least will grow into a thousand,
 the smallest into a mighty nation.
 I am Yahweh; in its time, I will accomplish it quickly.

20 In this verse, 'sun' and 'moon' refer to Yahweh's light, which will replace the sun and moon (see v. 19). Light here symbolises the restoration of divine blessing and prosperity in conjunction with Yahweh's presence; see 30:26.

21 'I have planted' follows the LXX (φύτευμα) and Peshitta; the Ketiv has 'He has planted' (מטעו), the Qere מטעי, and 1QIsa^a has 'Yahweh has planted'.

22 Literally translated, the last line (here following the NRSV) reads, "I, Yahweh, in its time, I will quickly do it."

ישעיהו פרק סא

א רִיחַ אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָה עָלַי
יֵעַן מָשַׁח יְהוָה אֹתִי לְבֶשֶׁר עֲנָוִים
שְׁלַחְנִי לְחִבְשׁ לְנִשְׁבְּרֵי-לֵב
לְקַרְא לְשִׁבּוּיִם דְּרוּר
וּלְאַסּוּרִים פְּקַח-קוֹחַ:
ב לְקַרְא שְׁנַת-רְצוֹן לַיהוָה
וַיּוֹם נָקָם לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ
לְנַחֵם כָּל-אֲבֵלִים:
ג לְשׁוֹם | לְאֲבֵלֵי צִיּוֹן
לְתֵת לָהֶם פֶּאֶר תַּחַת
אֲפֹר שֶׁמֶן שִׁשׁוֹן תַּחַת אֲבֵל
מַעֲטָה תְּהִלָּה תַּחַת רוּחַ כְּהָה
וְקַרְא לָהֶם אֵילֵי הַצִּדֵּק
מִטֵּעַ יְהוָה לְהַתְּפָאֵר:
ד וּבְנוּ חֲרָבוֹת עוֹלָם
שְׁמֹמֹת רֹאשֵׁנִים יְקוֹמְמוּ

ISAIAH 61

- 1 The spirit of Lord Yahweh is on me;
for, Yahweh has anointed me. He has sent me
to bring the news to the afflicted, to soothe the broken-hearted,
to proclaim liberty to captives,
release to those in prison.
- 2 To proclaim a year of favour from Yahweh
and a day of vengeance for our God,
to comfort all who mourn.
- 3 To give to Zion's mourners,
to give them for ashes a garland,
for mounting-dress, the oil of gladness,
for despondency, festal attire;
and they will be called, "Oaks of Righteousness,"
planted by Yahweh to glorify him.
- 4 They will rebuild the ancient ruins,
they will rise what has long laid waste,

ISAIAH 61

- ¹ The prophet announces that he has received a message of consolation from God (vv. 1-3); all will be rebuilt (v. 4); foreigners will assure the material needs of Israel, now a nation of priests and crowned with glory (vv. 5-7); God speaks to institute an everlasting covenant (vv. 8-9). At the end of the verse, the LXX & 1QIsa^a add 'and recovery of sight'. Vv. 10-11 are the prophet's thanksgiving, spoken on Zion's behalf.
- ² The NJB includes the last 2 lines of v. 1 in this verse.
- ³ The NJB parenthesises the 1st line; the last line, apparently a doublet of 60:21^b, seems to have been introduced as an explanatory gloss.
- ⁴ NETB has 'perpetual' in place of 'ancient', here following the NJB & NRSV.

וַחֲדָשׁוּ עָרֵי חָרֵב
שְׁמָמוֹת דָּוָר וְדָוָר:
וְעַמְּדוּ זָרִים וְרָעוּ צֹאנֵכֶם
וּבְנֵי נֹכַר אֲכָרִיכֶם וְכֹרְמֵיכֶם:
וְאַתֶּם כֹּהֲנֵי יְהוָה תִּקְרְאוּ
מִשְׁרָתֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ יֹאמְרוּ לָכֶם
חֵיל גּוֹיִם תֹּאכְלוּ
וּבִכְבוֹדָם תִּתְיַמְרוּ:
תַּחַת בְּשִׁתְּכֶם מִשְׁנֶה
וְכִלְמָה יִרְנוּ חִלָּקִים
לִכְן בְּאַרְצָם מִשְׁנֶה יִירָשׁוּ
שְׂמֵחַת עוֹלָם תִּהְיֶה לָהֶם:
כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה אֹהֵב מִשְׁפָּט
שֹׂנֵא גָזֹל בְּעוֹלָה
וְנָתַתִּי פְעֻלָּתָם בְּאַמֶּת
וּבְרִית עוֹלָם אֲכַרֹּת לָהֶם:
וְנוֹדַע בְּגוֹיִם זִרְעָם
וְצִאצְאֵיהֶם בְּתוֹךְ

they will restore the ruined cities,
all that has laid waste for ages past.
5 "Strangers will come forward to feed your flocks,
foreigners be your ploughmen and vinedressers.
6 However, you will be called, "Priests of Yahweh,"
and be addressed as, "Ministers of our God."
You will feed on the wealth of nations
and in their riches you shall glory.
7 To make up for your shame, you will receive double;
instead of disgrace, shouts of joy will be their lot;
yes, they will have a double portion in their country
and everlasting joy will be theirs.
8 For I am Yahweh: I love fair judgement,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing,
and I shall reward them faithfully
and make an everlasting covenant with them.
9 Their race will be famous throughout the nations
and their offspring throughout the peoples.

-
- 5 God speaks in vv. 7–8/9; perhaps the direct address to the people signals the beginning of Yahweh's speech and the end of the servant's.
6 The verb translated 'you shall glory' (תִּתְיַמְרוּ) is probably a corruption of יִתְאַמְרוּ, a Hitpa'el from אָמַר, meaning 'boast about'.
7 Another interpretation (in line with the NRSV) adds 'shame' to the end of the 1st line, corresponding to the 'double portion' of the 3rd line and echoing the 'double punishment' of 40:2; but the text is uncertain.
8 'Wrongdoing' follows the LXX (ἀδικίας) and Peshitta; the MT has 'burnt offerings'.
9 Literally translated, this verse ends, "... all who see them will recognise them, that they (are) descendants (whom) Yahweh has blessed."

הַעַמִּים כָּל־רְאִיֵּהֶם
יִפְרֹחַ כִּי הֵם זֶרַע בְּרַךְ יְהוָה: {פ}
שׁוֹשׁ אֲשִׁישׁ בַּיהוָה י
תִּגַּל נַפְשִׁי בֵּאלֹהֵי
כִּי הִלְבִּישָׁנִי בְּגָדֵי־יִשְׁעַ
מֵעֵל צְדָקָה יַעֲטֵנִי
כַּחֲתָן יִכְהֶן פָּאֵר
וְכַכְלָה תַעֲדָה כְּלִיהָ:
כִּי כְאֶרֶץ תּוֹצִיא צִמְחָה יא
וְכִגְנָה זֵרועֶיהָ תַצְמִיחַ
בְּן־אָדָם יְהוָה יַצְמִיחַ צְדָקָה וְתִהְיֶה
נִגִּיד כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם:

All who see them will admit
that they are a race whom Yahweh has blessed."

- ¹⁰ I exult for joy in Yahweh,
my soul rejoices in my God,
for he has clothed me in garments of salvation,
he has wrapped me in a cloak of saving justice,
like a bridegroom wearing his garland,
like a bride adorned in her jewels.
¹¹ For, as the earth sends up its shoots
and a garden makes seeds sprout,
so Lord Yahweh makes deliverance and praise
spring up in the sight of all nations.

¹⁰ 'Wearing his garland' is a conjectural translation; the MT has 'doing duty as a priest' (יִכְהֶן). The prophet identifies himself with Zion and rejoices in her salvation (compare vv. 1 - 3), which is as certain as the earth's producing vegetation.

¹¹ In place of 'deliverance' (here following NETB), the NJB has 'saving justice' and the NRSV has 'righteousness' (which is the more usual translation for this word); however, the context seems to emphasise deliverance and restoration.

ישעיהו פרק סב

א לִמְעַן צִיּוֹן לֹא אֶחְשֶׁה
וּלְמְעַן יְרוּשָׁלַם לֹא אֶשְׁקוּט
עַד־יֵצֵא כְנֹגֶה צְדָקָה
וְיִשׁוּעַתָּה כָּל־פֶּיַד יִבְעֹר:
ב וְרָאוּ גוֹיִם צְדָקָתְךָ
וְכָל־מְלָכִים
כְּבוֹדְךָ וְקָרָא לְךָ שֵׁם
חֲדָשׁ אֲשֶׁר פִּי יְהוָה יִקְבְּנוּ:
ג וְהָיִית עֲטֹרַת תְּפָאֶרֶת בְּיַד־יְהוָה
וְצִנּוֹף וְצִנִּיף מְלוּכָה בְּכַף־אֱלֹהֶיךָ:
ד לֹא־יֵאמָר לְךָ עוֹד עֲזוּבָה
וְלֹא־רָצָךְ לֹא־יֵאמָר עוֹד שְׁמָמָה
כִּי לְךָ יִקְרָא חֲפְצִי־בָהּ
וְלֹא־רָצָךְ בְּעוֹלָה
כִּי־חֲפֵץ יְהוָה בָּךְ
וְאַרְצְךָ תִּבְעֵל:

ISAIAH 62

- 1 For Zion's sake, I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake, I will not rest,
until saving justice dawns for her like a bright light
and her salvation like a blazing torch.
- 2 The nation will then see your saving justice
and all kings your glory,
and you will be called a new name,
which Yahweh's mouth will reveal.
- 3 You will be a crown of splendour in Yahweh's hand,
a princely diadem in the hand of your God.
- 4 No more will you be known as 'Forsaken'
or your country be known as 'Desolation';
instead, you will be called 'My Delight is in her'
and your country 'The Wedded';
for, Yahweh will take delight in you
and your country will have its wedding.

ISAIAH 62

- 1 The triumph of Jerusalem and the country in which it stands is to become Yahweh's bride (cf. 50:1, 54:6-7).
- 2 The prophet continues to proclaim Zion's approaching vindication.
- 3 The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.
- 4 The names 'Forsaken' (עֲזוּבָה) and 'My Delight is in her' (חֲפְצִי־בָהּ), as well as 'Desolate' (שְׁמָמָה) and 'The Wedded' (בְּעוֹלָה), conferred on Jerusalem and Judah because of their meaning, are real names attested elsewhere in the Bible (see 1K 22:42, 2K 21:1). In this conferring of new names, we recognise the prophetic usage instituted by Ho 2:25, cf. Is 1:26, 60:14, 62:12.

ה כִּי־יִבְעַל בַּחֹר בְּתוּלָה
 יִבְעֻלוּ בְנֶיהָ
 וּמִשׁוֹשׁ חֲתָן עַל־כַּלָּה
 יִשֵּׁשׁ עָלֶיהָ אֱלֹהֶיהָ:
 ו עַל־חוֹמֹתֶיהָ יְרוּשָׁלַם הִפְקַדְתִּי שָׁמָרִים
 כָּל־הַיּוֹם וְכָל־הַלַּיְלָה תָּמִיד לֹא יִחָשׂוּ
 הַמְּזַכְּרִים אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי דָמִי לָכֶם:
 ז וְאַל־תִּתְּנוּ דָּמִי לוֹ
 עַד־יָבוֹא וְעַד־יִשִּׂים אֶת־יְרוּשָׁלַם
 תְּהִלָּה בָּאָרֶץ:
 ח נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה בְּיָמִינוּ
 וּבְזִרְעֵ עֹז
 אִם־אֶתֵּן אֶת־דִּגְנוֹךָ עוֹד מֵאֲכָלִי
 לְאִיבִיד וְאִם־יִשְׁתּוּ בְנֵי־נֹכַר תִּירוּשָׁךָ
 אֲשֶׁר יַגְעֶת בּוֹ:
 ט כִּי מֵאֲסָפִיו יֵאָכְלוּ

- 5 Like a young man marrying a virgin,
 your sons will marry you,
 and as the bridegroom rejoices in his bride,
 so will your God rejoice in you.
 6 On your walls, Jerusalem, I have posted watchmen;
 they will never fall silent, day or night.
 You who invoke Yahweh, take no rest!
 7 And give him no peace either
 until he restores Jerusalem
 and makes her the pride of the world!
 8 Yahweh has sworn by his right hand
 and by his mighty arm:
 Never again shall I give your grain to feed your enemies,
 and foreigners will not drink the wine
 for which you have toiled.
 9 No! Those who harvest it will eat it

5 In place of 'your sons', here following the MT (יִבְעֻלוּ) & NETB, the NJB & NRSV (and many others) have 'your builder', emending the text to בְּנֵיהָ; however, this emendation is not the best option for at least **four** reasons: **1**, although Yahweh is never called the 'builder' of Jerusalem in Isaiah, the idea of Zion's children possessing the land does occur (49:20, 54:3, cf. 14:1, 60:21); **2**, all the ancient versions support the MT reading; **3**, although בָּנֶיהָ means 'marry', its basic idea is possession and, consequently, it stresses a relationship more than a state; and **4**, 'sons' is a well-known metaphor for 'inhabitants'.
 6 'Watchmen' probably refers to prophets (52:8, Ezk 33), to remind Jerusalem of her imminent salvation.
 7 The literal translation of 'pride' (here following the NJB & NETB) is 'praise'; the NRSV reads, "and makes it renowned throughout the earth."
 8 God's right hand and strong arm symbolise his power and remind the audience that his might guarantees the fulfilment of his promise.
 9 The NJB has simply 'the reapers' in place of 'those who harvest it'.

והללו את־יהוה
 ומקבציו ישתהו בחצרות קדשי: {ס}
 עברו עברו בשערים
 פנו דרך העם
 סלו סלו המסלה סקלו מאבן
 הרימו גס על־העמים:
 הנה יהוה השמיע אל־קצה הארץ יא
 אמרו לבת־ציון
 הנה ישעך בא
 הנה שכרו אתו
 ופעלתו לפניו:
 וקראו להם עם־הקדש יב
 גאולי יהוה
 ולך יקרא דרושה
 עיר לא נעזבה: {ס}

and praise Yahweh;
 the harvesters will drink it in my sacred courts!

- 10 Pass through; pass through the gates.
 Clear a way for my people!
 Level up, level up the highway and remove the stones!
 Hoist a signal to the peoples!
- 11 This is what Yahweh has proclaimed to the end of the earth:
 Say to the daughter of Zion,
 “Look, your salvation is coming;
 look, his reward is with him;
 his achievement precedes him!”
- 12 They will be called ‘The Holy People’,
 ‘Yahweh’s Redeemed’,
 while you will be called ‘Sought-After’,
 ‘City-not-Forsaken’.

¹⁰ This short poem (vv. 10–12) seems to serve as a conclusion to Chs 60–62. It resumes a number of themes from the Book of Consolation (cf. 40:3–5, 10, 49:22, 57:14).

¹¹ The NJB & NRSV omit the 2nd occurrence of ‘look’ (הנה); here, we follow the MT.

¹² Another translation for ‘Redeemed’ (גאולי) is ‘Protected’.

ישעיהו פרק סג

א מִי־זֶה | בָּא מֵאֲדוֹם חֲמוּץ
בְּגָדִים מְבַצְרָה זֶה
הֶדּוּר בְּלִבוֹשׁוֹ צֶעֶה
בְּרֹב כֹּחַ אֲנִי
מְדַבֵּר בְּצִדְקָה רַב לְהוֹשִׁיעַ:
ב מְדוּעַ אָדָם לְלִבוֹשֶׁךָ
וּבְגָדֶיךָ כְּדֶרֶךְ בִּגְתָּ:
ג פּוֹרָה | דֶּרֶכְתִּי לְבִדִּי
וּמַעֲמִים אֵין־אִישׁ אִתִּי
וְאֶדְרַכְכֶם בְּאַפִּי
וְאֶרְמָסֶם בַּחֲמָתִי
וְיִזְנֹחַם עַל־בִּגְדִי
וְכָל־מְלִבוֹשֵׁי אֶגְאָלְתִּי:
ד כִּי יוֹם נִקְם בְּלִבִּי
וְשָׁנַת גְּאוּלִּי בָּאָה:

ISAIAH 63

- 1 Who is this coming from Edom,
from Bozrah in crimson garments, so magnificently dressed,
marching so full of strength?
It is I, announcing vindication,
mighty to save.
- 2 Why are your garments red,
your clothes like someone treading the winepress?
- 3 I have trodden the winepress alone;
of my people, not one was with me.
So I trod them down in my anger,
I trampled on them in my wrath.
Their blood squirted out over my garments
and all my clothes are stained.
- 4 For I have decided on a day of vengeance,
my year of retribution has come.

ISAIAH 63

- ¹ Some emend 'Edom' and 'Bozrah', and translate, "Who is this that comes all in red, in crimson garments like a wine-harvester;" hence the application of the passage to the suffering of the Messiah. 'Marching' is a conjectural translation (צֶעֶד); the MT has 'bowing' (צֶעֶה).
- ² The literal translation of 'winepress' is 'vat'.
- ³ In place of 'my people', here following 1QIsa^a, the MT has 'the peoples'. The literal translation of 'blood' is 'juice', extending the metaphor of the grapes. Note, by a contrary image, that the juice is often called the 'blood' of the grape.
- ⁴ The term גְּאוּלִּי ('retribution') is sometimes translated here 'redemption'; for, the root גָּאֵל often means 'deliver', 'buy back' – a גָּאֵל was responsible for protecting the extended family's interests, often by redeeming property that had been sold outside the family.

ה	וַאֲבִיטֹ וְאֵין עֹזִר וְאֶשְׁתּוּמָם וְאֵין סוֹמֵךְ וְתוֹשַׁע לִי זִרְעִי וְחַמְתִּי הִיא סִמְכַתִּנִּי: וְאָבוֹס עַמִּים בְּאַפִּי וְאֶשְׁכַּרְם בְּחַמְתִּי וְאוֹרִיד לָאָרֶץ נִצָּחִים: {ס}	5	I looked: there was no one to help me; I was appalled but could find no supporter! Then my own arm came to my rescue and my own fury supported me.
ו	חֲסִדֵי יְהוָה אֶזְכִּיר תְּהִלַּת יְהוָה כָּעֹל כָּל אֲשֶׁר-גָּמְלָנוּ יְהוָה וְרַב-טוֹב לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר-גָּמַלְם כְּרַחֲמָיו וּכְכֹב חֲסָדָיו: וַיֹּאמֶר אֶדְ-עַמִּי הִמָּה בְּנִים לֹא יִשְׁקְרוּ וַיְהִי לָהֶם לְמוֹשִׁיעַ: בְּכָל-צָרָתָם לֹא לֹו צָר וּמִלֵּאָד פָּנָיו הוֹשִׁיעֵם בְּאַהֲבָתוֹ וּבְחַמְלָתוֹ	6	I crushed the peoples in my anger; I shattered them in my fury and sent their blood streaming to the ground.
ז		7	I shall recount Yahweh's acts of faithful love, Yahweh's praiseworthy deeds, because of all that Yahweh did for us, his great kindness to the House of Israel, his compassion and great faithfulness.
ח		8	For he said, "Truly, they are my people, children who will not betray me," and he became their Saviour.
ט		9	In all their troubles, it was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them. In his love and pity,

⁵ Note that the online MAM text reads וְתוֹשַׁע-לִי in place of וְתוֹשַׁע לִי; here, we follow the texts of the UXLC and Mechon Mamre in using a space rather than a *Maqaf*.

⁶ 'I shattered them' is a conjectural translation (וְאֶשְׁכַּרְם); the MT has 'I made them drunk' (וְאֶשְׁכַּרְם).

⁷ This long poem (63:7–64:11) is in the form of a collective psalm of supplication (cf., particularly, Ps 44, 89 and Lm).

⁸ The verb in the 2nd line refers to covenantal loyalty.

⁹ The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation. 'Messenger' follows the LXX (πρῆσβυς); the MT has 'anguish' (צָר).

הוא גאלם
 וינטלם וינשאם
 כלימי עולם:
 והמה מרו ועצבו
 את־רוח קדשו
 ויהפך להם לאויב
 הוא נלחם־בם:
 ויזכר ימי־עולם יא
 משה עמו
 איה | המעלים מים
 את רעי צאנו
 איה השם בקרב
 את־רוח קדשו:
 מוליך לימין משה יב
 זרוע תפארתו
 בוקע מים מפניהם
 לעשות לו שם עולם:
 מוליכם בתהומות יג
 כסוס במדבר
 לא יכשלו:

he himself redeemed them,
 lifted them up and carried them
 throughout the days of old.

- 10 However, they rebelled
 and vexed his Holy Spirit.
 Then he became their enemy
 and himself waged war on them.
- 11 Then he called the past to mind,
 Moses his servant.
 Where is he who saved them from the sea,
 the Shepherd of his flock?
 Where is he who put
 his Holy Spirit among them?
- 12 Who, at Moses' right hand,
 caused his glorious arm to march?
 Who divided the waters before them
 to win himself everlasting renown?
- 13 Who led them through the depths
 as easily as a horse through the desert?
 They stumbled as little

¹⁰ The phrase 'Holy Spirit' occurs in the OT only here (& v. 11) and in Ps 51:13, where it is associated with the Divine Presence.

¹¹ 'Servant' follows the *Peshitta*; the MT has 'people'.

¹² Literally translated, the first 2 lines read, "Who caused to go at the right hand of Moses the arm of his splendour?"

¹³ The term 'desert' here refers to flat, unobstructed land.

יד כְּבִהְמָה בְּבִקְעָה תֵרֵד
 רוּחַ יְהוָה תְּנִיחֵנוּ
 בֶּן נְהַגְתָּ עַמֶּךָ
 לַעֲשׂוֹת לָךְ שֵׁם תִּפְאָרֶת:
 טו הִבֵּט מִשָּׁמַיִם וּרְאֵה
 מִזְבֵּל קֹדֶשְׁךָ וְתִפְאָרֶתְךָ
 אֵיךְ קִנְאַתְךָ וְגִבּוֹרֶתְךָ
 הַמֶּזֶן מֵעֵד וְרַחֲמֶיךָ אֵלַי הִתְאַפְּקוּ:
 טז כִּי־אַתָּה אֲבִינוּ
 כִּי אֲבִרְהָם לֹא יֵדְעֵנוּ
 וְיִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יִכִּירֵנוּ
 אַתָּה יְהוָה אֲבִינוּ
 גָּאֲלֵנוּ מֵעוֹלָם שְׁמֶךָ:
 יז לָמָּה תִתְּעֲנֵנוּ יְהוָה מִדְּרָכֶיךָ
 תִקְשִׁיחַ לִבֵּנוּ מִירָאֲתֶךָ
 שׁוּב לְמַעַן עֲבָדֶיךָ
 שְׁבֹטֵי נַחֲלֶתְךָ:
 יח לְמַצֵּעַר יִרְשׁוּ עַם־קֹדֶשְׁךָ
 צִרְיָנוּ בּוֹסְסוּ מִקְדָּשְׁךָ:

- 14 as cattle going down to the plain.
 Yahweh's spirit led them to rest.
 This was how you guided your people
 to win yourself glorious renown.
- 15 Look down from heaven and see
 from your holy and glorious dwelling.
 Where are your zeal and your might?
 Are your deepest feelings, your mercy to me, to be restrained?
- 16 After all, you are our Father.
 If Abraham will not own us,
 if Israel will not acknowledge us,
 you, Yahweh, are our Father;
 'Our Redeemer' is your name from of old.
- 17 Why, Yahweh, do you let us wander from your ways
 and let our hearts grow too hard to fear you?
 Return, for the sake of your servants,
 the tribes of your heritage.
- 18 Your holy people have owned it for so short a time;
 our enemies have trampled on your Sanctuary.

14 Vv. 11–14 evoke God's first great saving act, the deliverance from Egypt, as the earnest of salvation to come.

15 The actual supplication begins here, framed by the two invocations of v. 15 and 64:11, corresponding to each other.

16 The first part of this verse refers to the sense of abandonment that comes with Exile.

17 Israel's sinfulness begets sinfulness. The prophet begs God to deliver his forsaken people from their sins and to restore their ruined Temple.

18 NETB has 'special' in place of 'holy', here following the NJB & NRSV (and most English translations).

יט הִיָּינוּ מֵעוֹלָם לֹא־מִשְׁלַת בָּם
לֹא־נִקְרָא שְׁמֶךָ עֲלֵיהֶם
לֹא־קִרְעַת שָׁמַיִם יִרְדָּת
מִפְּנֵיךָ הָרִים נָזְלוּ:

¹⁹ We have long been like those whom you do not rule,
like those not called by your name.
Oh, that you would tear the sky open and come down:
in your presence, the mountains would quake

¹⁹ The appeal for Yahweh to come is interrupted by the mention of features characteristic of theophanies (cf. Ps 18:7–8, 144:5). The last 2 lines are included here following the *MT* verse division and that of the *NJB*: the *NRSV* includes these as a separate verse (64:1 – see also #64:1).

ישעיהו פרק סד

א כְּקִדַּח אֵשׁ הַמָּסִים
מִיָּם תִּבְעֶה-אֵשׁ
לְהוֹדִיעַ שְׁמֶךָ לְצָרֶיךָ
מִפְּנֵי גוֹיִם יִרְגָּזוּ:
ב בַּעֲשׂוֹתֶךָ נֹרְאוֹת
לֹא נִקְוָה
יִרְדָּת מִפְּנֵי הָרִים נָזְלוּ: {ס}
ג וּמַעֲוֹלָם לֹא-שָׁמְעוּ
לֹא הֶאֱזִינוּ
עֵין לֹא-רָאָתָה אֱלֹהִים זֹלַתְךָ
יַעֲשֶׂה לְמַחֲכֶה-לִּי:
ד פָּגַעְתָּ אֶת-שֵׁשׁ וְעָשָׂה צֶדֶק
בְּדַרְכֶּיךָ יִזְכְּרוּךָ
הִזְאֲתָה קִצְפָּת וְנַחֲטָא
בָּהֶם עוֹלָם וְנוֹשַׁע:

ISAIAH 64

- 1 As fire sets brushwood alight,
as fire makes water boil,
make your name known to your foes,
and may nations tremble at your presence,
at the unexpected miracles you would do.
Oh that you would come down:
in your presence, the mountains would quake!
- 2 Never has anyone heard,
no ear has heard, no eye has seen
any god but you act like this
for the sake of those who trust him.
- 3 You meet those who gladly do right;
keeping your ways reminds them of you.
Yes, you have been angry and we have been sinners;
now we persist in your ways and we shall be saved.

ISAIAH 64

- 1 The NSRV & NETB (along with most English translations) include the last 2 lines of 63:19 as a separate verse, 64:1; therein, all subsequent verse numbers of this chapter are accordingly incremented (see also #63:19).
- 2 The NJB parenthesises the last 2 lines – a gloss repeating the opening of v. 1.
- 3 Paul (1Co 2:9) quotes this verse in more rhythmical form; it is hard to tell if he is quoting freely or if he had a different text of Isaiah.
- 4 The meaning of the last line is uncertain – the literal translation of the opening phrase is ‘we are in them forever’, which may refer to the ‘ways’ earlier in the verse. Others construe the meaning very differently: “We persist in our misdeeds – are we likely to be saved?” The passage would then be a cry of discouragement; the matter is in doubt and the text may be corrupt. The NRSV reads, “Because you hid yourself, we transgressed.”

ה וְנָהִי כְטֵמָא כְּלָנוּ
 וְכִבְגָּד עֲדִים כָּל־צְדָקָתֵנוּ
 וְנָבֵל כְּעֵלֶה כְּלָנוּ
 וְעֹנְוֵנוּ כְּרוּחַ יִשְׁאָנוּ:
 וְאִין־קוֹרָא בְּשִׁמְךָ
 מִתְעוֹרֵר לְהַחֲזִיק בְּךָ
 כִּי־הִסְתַּרְתָּ פָנֶיךָ מִמֶּנּוּ
 וְתִמּוֹנְגָנוּ בִּיד־עֹנְוֵנוּ:
 ז וְעַתָּה יְהוָה אֲבִינוּ אַתָּה
 אֲנַחְנוּ הַחֲמֵר וְאַתָּה יִצְרָנוּ
 וּמַעֲשֵׂה יָדְךָ כְּלָנוּ:
 ח אַל־תִּקְצֹף יְהוָה עַד־מָאֵד
 וְאַל־לֵעַד תִּזְכֹּר עוֹן
 הֵן הִבְטַנָּא עִמָּךְ כְּלָנוּ:
 ט עֲרֵי קֹדֶשְׁךָ הָיוּ מִדְּבַר
 צִיּוֹן מִדְּבַר הָיְתָה
 יְרוּשָׁלַם שְׂמִמָּה:
 י בֵּית קֹדֶשְׁנוּ וְתִפְאֳרֹתֵנוּ

- 5 We have all been like unclean things
and our upright deeds like filthy rags.
We have withered like leaves,
and our iniquities took us off like the wind.
- 6 There is no one to invoke your name,
to rouse himself to hold fast to you,
for you have hidden your face from us
and given us up to the power of our misdeeds.
- 7 Yet, Yahweh, you are our Father;
we the clay and you our potter,
all of us are the work of your hands.
- 8 Yahweh, do not let your anger go too far
and do not remember guilt forever.
Look, please, we are all your people.
- 9 Your holy cities have become a desert;
Zion has become a desert,
Jerusalem a wasteland.
- 10 Our holy Temple, our pride and joy,

5 'We have withered' follows the LXX (ἐξερρῡημεν); the MT is uncertain.

6 'Given us up' follows the LXX (παρέδωκας ἡμᾶς) and Peshitta; the MT has 'made us tremble' or 'melted us' (וְתִמּוֹנְגָנוּ).

7 The introductory וְעַתָּה ('yet') is quite forceful.

8 In his final petition, the prophet pleads for God to turn away from his anger and have compassion on Jerusalem and the destroyed Temple.

9 NETB has 'chosen' in place of 'holy', here following the NJB & NRSV.

10 The literal translation of 'our pride and joy', here following NETB, is 'our source of pride'.

אֲשֶׁר הִלְלוּךָ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
הָיָה לְשִׂרְפֶּת אֵשׁ
וְכָל־מִחְמְדֵינוּ הָיָה לְחָרְבָה:
יֵא הֵעֵל־אֵלֶּה תִּתְאַפֵּק יְהוָה
תַּחֲשֶׁה וּתַעֲנֵנוּ עַד־מָאֵד: {פ}

in which our ancestors used to praise you,
has been burnt to the ground;
all our delight lies in ruins.

¹¹ Can you restrain yourself at all this, Yahweh?
Will you stay silent and afflict us beyond endurance?

¹¹ The literal translation of 'at all this' is 'because of these'.

ישעיהו פרק סה

א נִדְרַשְׁתִּי לְלוֹא שֹׂאֵלוּ
נִמְצָאתִי לְלוֹא בִקְשָׁנִי
אִמַּרְתִּי הִנְנִי הִנְנִי
אֶל-גּוֹי לֹא-קָרָא בִשְׁמִי:
ב פָּרַשְׁתִּי יָדַי כָּל-הַיּוֹם
אֶל-עַם סוֹרֵר
הַהֹלְכִים הַדֶּרֶךְ לֹא-טוֹב
אַחַר מַחֲשַׁבְתֵּיהֶם:
ג הָעָם הַמְכַעֲסִים אֹתִי עַל-פְּנֵי תָמִיד
זִבְחִים בַּגִּנּוֹת וּמִקְטָרִים עַל-הַלְבָּנִים:
ד הַיֹּשְׁבִים בַּקְבָּרִים וּבַנְצוּרִים יִלְיָנוּ
הָאֹכְלִים בֶּשֶׂר הַחֲזִיר
וּפְרָק וּמֶרֶק פִּגְלִים כְּלִיהֶם:
ה הָאֹמְרִים קִרְבֵּנוּ אֵלֶיךָ
אֶל-תִּגְשֵׁבֵנוּ כִּי קֹדֶשְׁתִּיךָ
אֱלֹהֵנוּ עֹשֵׂן בְּאַפִּי
אֵשׁ יִקְדֶּת כָּל-הַיּוֹם:

ISAIAH 65

- 1 I let myself be sought by those who did not ask;
I let myself be found by those who did not seek.
I said, "Here I am, here I am,"
to a nation that did not invoke my name.
- 2 Each day, I stretched out my hands
to a rebellious people
who follow a way that is not good,
as the fancy takes them.
- 3 A people constantly provoking me to my face
by sacrificing in gardens, burning incense on bricks,
4 living in tombs, spending the night in dark corners,
eating the meat of pigs,
putting unclean broth on their plates.
- 5 "Keep your distance," they say,
"do not touch me, lest my sanctity come near you!"
Such words are like stifling smoke to me,
an ever-burning fire.

ISAIAH 65

- 1 The rhythm of Chs 65–66 is sometimes uncertain, giving grounds for thinking that some passages were written in prose.
- 2 God 'held out his hands' in a gesture of invitation (Rm 10:20–21).
- 3 'Sacrificing in gardens' is an allusion to nature-cult practices; offering incense was peculiarly associated with pagan worship.
- 4 The literal translation of 'unclean foods' is 'scraps (collective) of unclean foods' or, following 1QIsa^a, 'juice of unclean foods'. In place of וּמֶרֶק ('broth'), here following the Qere and supported by 1QIsa^a, the Ketiv has וּפְרָק ('fragment').
- 5 This verse refers to words of initiates, supposedly endowed with a 'holiness' that might be transferred by accidental contact.

1 הִנֵּה כְּתוּבָה לִפְנֵי
 לֹא אֶחְשֶׁה כִּי אִם־שְׁלַמְתִּי
 וְשְׁלַמְתִּי עַל־חִיקָם:
 2 עֲוֹנֹתֵיכֶם וְעֹנֹת אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם יַחְדָּו
 אָמַר יְהוָה
 אֲשֶׁר קָטְרוּ עַל־הַהָרִים
 וְעַל־הַגְּבְעוֹת חָרְפוּנִי
 וּמַדַּתִּי פָעַלְתֶּם רָאשֶׁנָּה עַל אֶל־חִיקָם: {ס}
 3 כֹּה | אָמַר יְהוָה
 כַּאֲשֶׁר יִמָּצֵא הַתִּירוֹשׁ בְּאֶשְׁכּוֹל
 וְאָמַר אֶל־תִּשְׁחִיתֶהוּ
 כִּי בִרְכָה בּוֹ
 כֵּן אֶעֱשֶׂה לְמַעַן עַבְדִּי
 לְבַלְתִּי הַשְׁחִית הַכֹּל:
 4 וְהוֹצֵאתִי מֵעֵקֶב זֶרַע
 וּמִיְהוּדָה יוֹרֵשׁ הָרִי
 וִירְשׁוּהָ בְּחִירֵי
 וְעַבְדֵי יִשְׁכְּנוּ־שָׁמָּה:
 5 וְהָיָה הַשְּׂרֹזִן לְנֹה־צֹאן

6 Look, it is inscribed before me:
 I shall not be silent until I have repaid them,
 repaid them in full,
 7 punished your guilt and your ancestors' guilt together,
 Yahweh declares.
 For having burnt incense on the mountains
 and insulted me on the hills,
 I shall pay them back in full for what they have done.
 8 Yahweh says this:
 As when a bunch of grapes is found still to have juice in it,
 people say, "Do not destroy it,
 for it contains a blessing,"
 so I shall act for my servants' sake,
 I shall not destroy them all.
 9 I shall produce descendants from Jacob
 and heirs to my mountains from Judah;
 my chosen ones will own it
 and my servants will live there,
 10 Sharon will be a pasture for flocks,

6 The literal translation of 'in full' is 'into their bosom' (cf. Ps 7:12, Jr 32:18 Rt 3:15, 2K 4:39, Lk 6:38); the expression recurs at the end of v. 7.
 7 The *Kethib*/*Qere* difference here would benefit from an explanation.
 8 As good clusters of grapes are separated from the bad, so God will separate the righteous from the unrighteous (Mt 25:32–33).
 9 'It' in the 3rd line (a 3FS suffix) probably refers to the land that contains the aforementioned mountains.
 10 'Sharon' is the northern coastal plain and 'Achor' the desolate region west of the Dead Sea (Jos 7:24).

וַעֲמַק עֶכּוֹר לְרֶבֶץ בָּקָר
לְעַמִּי אֲשֶׁר דָּרְשׁוּנִי:
וְאַתֶּם עֲזַבְתֶּם יְהוָה יא
הַשֹּׁכְחִים אֶת־הַר קֹדֶשִׁי
הַעֲרֹכִים לֶגֶד שְׁלָחַן
וְהַמְּמַלְאִים לִמְנֵי מִמְּסָד:
וּמִנִּיתִי אֶתְכֶם לַחֶרֶב יב
וְכֻלְכֶּם לִטְבַּח תִּכְרְעוּ
יַעַן קָרָאתִי וְלֹא עֲנִיתֶם
דִּבַּרְתִּי וְלֹא שָׁמַעְתֶּם
וַתַּעֲשׂוּ הָרַע בְּעֵינַי
וּבְאֲשֶׁר לֹא־חָפַצְתִּי בַּחֲרָתְכֶם: {פ}
לֵכֶן כֹּה־אָמַר | אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה יג
הִנֵּה עֲבָדִי | יֹאכְלוּ וְאַתֶּם תִּרְעָבוּ
הִנֵּה עֲבָדִי יִשְׁתּוּ וְאַתֶּם תִּצְמָאוּ
הִנֵּה עֲבָדִי יִשְׂמְחוּ וְאַתֶּם תִּבְשּׁוּ:
הִנֵּה עֲבָדִי יִרְנוּ מְטוֹב לֵב יד
וְאַתֶּם תִּצְעַקוּ מִכָּאֵב לֵב
וּמִשֹּׁבֵר רוּחַ תִּלְלִילוּ:

the Valley of Achor a feeding ground for cattle,
for those of my people who have sought me.

- 11 But you who abandon Yahweh,
who forget my holy mountain,
who lay the table for Gad,
who fill cups of mixed wine for Meni:
- 12 I shall destine you to the sword
and all of you will stoop to be slaughtered,
because I called you and you would not answer,
I spoke and you would not listen;
you have done what I considered evil,
you chose to do what displeases me.
- 13 Therefore, Lord Yahweh says this:
my servants shall eat while you go hungry;
my servants shall drink while you go thirsty;
my servants shall rejoice while you are put to shame.
- 14 My servants shall shout for joy of heart,
while you shriek for sorrow of heart
and howl with a broken spirit.

11 'Gad' was the Aramaean god of luck (the NRSV has 'Fortune'); 'Meni' (לִמְנֵי) is unknown, possibly a god of fortune (the NRSV has 'Destiny'): the text seems to be punning on this name and the first word of the following verse (וּמִנִּיתִי, 'I shall destine').

12 The translation 'I shall destine' is conjectural, emending the Qal form, מִנִּיתִי ('I assign') to the Piel, מִנִּיתִי ('I ordain').

13 For each of the instances of 'my servants shall...', here following the NRSV, the NJB has 'you will see my servants...'

14 Refer to #13 on the opening clause.

טו וְהִנַּחְתָּם שְׁמֶכֶם לְשִׁבוּעָה לְבַחֲרִי
וְהִמִּיתָךְ אֲדֹנִי יְהוָה
וְלַעֲבָדָיו יִקְרָא שֵׁם אֲחֵר:
טז אֲשֶׁר הִמְתַּבְּרָךְ בָּאָרֶץ
יִתְבָּרָךְ בֵּאלֹהֵי אֱמֶן
וְהִנְשַׁבַּע בָּאָרֶץ
יִשָּׁבַע בֵּאלֹהֵי אֱמֶן
כִּי נִשְׁכַּחוּ הַצָּרוֹת
הָרֵאשֹׁנוֹת וְכִי נִסְתָּרוּ מֵעֵינַי:
יז כִּי־הִנְנִי בּוֹרֵא שָׁמַיִם חֲדָשִׁים
וָאָרֶץ חֲדָשָׁה
וְלֹא תִזְכְּרֶנָּה הָרֵאשֹׁנוֹת
וְלֹא תַעֲלִינָה עַל־לֵב:
יח כִּי־אִם־שִׂישׁוּ וְגִילוּ עַד־עַד
אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי בּוֹרֵא
כִּי הִנְנִי בּוֹרֵא אֶת־יְרוּשָׁלַם גִּילָהָ
וְעַמָּהּ מְשׁוֹשׁ:
יט וְגִלְתִּי בִירוּשָׁלַם

- 15 Your names will live on as a curse for my chosen ones,
"May Lord Yahweh strike you dead;"
but, to his servants, he will give another name.
- 16 Whoever blesses himself on earth
will bless himself by the God of truth,
and whoever swears an oath on earth
will swear by the God of truth,
for past troubles will be forgotten
and hidden from my eyes.
- 17 For look, I am going to create new heavens
and a new earth,
and the past will not be remembered
and will come no more to mind.
- 18 Rather be joyful, be glad forever
at what I am creating,
for look, I am creating Jerusalem as a joy
and her people as a delight.
- 19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem

15 The curse of the 2nd line understands 'like these wicked people' (cf. Jr 29:22).

16 In place of 'God of truth', here following the MT & NJB, the NRSV has 'God of faithfulness' and NETB has 'faithful God'.

17 In the early prophets, the messianic happiness prophesied for the future was described more or less as a return to paradise (see #11:6).
However, in apocalyptic literature, though not entirely repudiating earlier forms, the prophet envisages a complete renewal.

18 The NJB has 'my people' in place of 'her people', here following NETB (the NRSV has 'its people').

19 Note, in comparison to v. 18, the MT has 'my people' here.

וְשִׂשְׁתִּי בְעַמִּי
 וְלֹא-יִשְׁמַע בָּהּ עוֹד
 קוֹל בְּכִי וְקוֹל זַעֲקָה:
 כ לֹא-יִהְיֶה מִשָּׁם עוֹד
 עוֹל יָמִים וְזָקֵן
 אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִמְלֹא אֶת-יָמָיו
 כִּי הַנָּעַר בֶּן-מֵאָה שָׁנָה יָמוּת
 וְהַחוּטָא בֶן-מֵאָה שָׁנָה יִקָּלֵל:
 כא וּבְנוֹ בָתִּים יֵשְׁבוּ
 וְנִטְעוּ כְרָמִים וְאָכְלוּ פְּרִים:
 כב לֹא יִבְנוּ וְאַחֲרֵי יֵשֵׁב
 לֹא יִטְעוּ וְאַחֲרֵי יֵאָכֵל
 כִּי-כִימֵי הָעֵץ יָמֵי עַמִּי
 וּמַעֲשֵׂה יָדֵיהֶם יִבְלוּ בַּחִירִי:
 כג לֹא יִיָּגְעוּ לָרִיק
 וְלֹא יִלְדוּ לְבָהֳלָה
 כִּי זֶרַע בְּרוּכֵי יְהוָה
 הֵמָּה וְצֹאצְאֵיהֶם אִתָּם:
 כד וְהָיָה טָרֶם-יִקְרָאוּ וְאֲנִי אֶעֱנֶה

and delight in my people.

No more will the sound of weeping be heard there,
nor the sound of a shriek.

- 20 Never again will there be an infant there
who lives only a few days,
nor an old man who does not run his full course;
for the youngest will die at a hundred
and, at a hundred, the sinner will be accursed.
- 21 They will build houses and live in them;
they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
- 22 They will not build for others to live in,
or plant for others to eat;
for the days of my people will be like the days of a tree,
and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.
- 23 They will not toil in vain,
nor bear children destined to disaster;
for they are the race of Yahweh's blessed ones
and so are their offspring.
- 24 Thus, before they call, I shall answer;

20 The point seems to be that those who die at the age of 100 will be considered children, as the average life span will be much longer than that.

21 This verse gives an idyllic – if not simplistic – view of a pleasant life.

22 For the last line, here following the NRSV, the NJB reads, “and my chosen ones will themselves use what they have made.”

23 Literally translated, the last 2 lines read, “For offspring blessed by Yahweh they (are) and their descendants along with them.”

24 In the New Jerusalem restored, all will be at peace (11:6–9); compare 27:13, 56:7, Jl 3:17.

עוֹד הֵם מְדַבְּרִים וְאֲנִי אֶשְׁמַע:
 כֹּה זֶאֱב וְטֹלָה יִרְעוּ כֶּאֱחָד
 וְאַרְיֵה כִּבְקָר יֹאכַל-תֶּבֶן
 וְנָחֵשׁ עֵפֶר לֶחֱמוֹ
 לֹא-יִרְעוּ וְלֹא-יִשְׁחִיתוּ בְּכָל-הָהָר קְדֹשִׁי
 אָמַר יְהוָה: {ס}

before they stop speaking, I shall have heard.

- ²⁵ The wolf and the lamb will feed together,
 the lion will eat hay like the ox,
 but the serpent – its food shall be dirt.
 No hurt, no harm will be done on all my holy mountain,
 Yahweh says.

²⁵ In the 3rd line, some see an allusion to Gn 3:14 (*'you will eat dirt'*): The point would be that even in this new era, the snake (often taken as a symbol of Satan) remains under God's curse; however, it is unlikely that such an allusion exists. Even if there is an echo of Gn 3:14, the primary allusion is to 11:8, where snakes are pictured as no longer dangerous; as in 11:1–9, the prophet anticipates a time when the categories predator-prey no longer exist (see #11:8).

ישעיהו פרק סו

ISAIAH 66

א כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
הַשָּׁמַיִם כִּסְאִי
וְהָאָרֶץ הִדְם רַגְלִי
אֵיזָה בַּיִת אֲשֶׁר תִּבְנוּ-לִי
וְאֵיזָה מְקוֹם מְנוּחָתִי:
ב וְאַתְּ-כָּל-אֱלֹהֵי יָדַי עָשִׂתָּה
וַיְהִיו כָּל-אֱלֹהֵי נְאֻם-יְהוָה
וְאֵלֶּזֶה אֲבִיט
אֶל-עֲנִי וְנִכְהָרוֹחַ
וְחָרַד עַל-דְּבָרִי:
ג שׁוֹחֵט הַשּׁוֹר מִכַּה-אִישׁ
זֹבֵחַ הַשֶּׁה עֶרְף כָּלֵב
מַעֲלָה מִנְחָה דֶם-חֲזִיר
מִזְכִּיר לְבָנָה מְבֹרָךְ אֹן
גַּם-הֵמָּה בָּחָרוּ בְּדַרְכֵיהֶם
וּבְשִׁקּוּצֵיהֶם נִפְשָׁם חִפְצָה:

- 1 Thus says Yahweh:
With heaven my throne
and earth my footstool,
what house could you build me,
what place for me to rest?
- 2 I made all these things
and all are mine, declares Yahweh.
Nevertheless, I look to the person
of humbled and contrite spirit,
who trembles at my word.
- 3 Some slaughter a bull, some kill a human being,
some sacrifice a lamb, some strangle a dog,
some present an offering of pig's blood,
some burn memorial incense, a revolting blessing;
all these people have chosen their own ways
and take delight in disgusting practices.

ISAIAH 66

- ¹ The prophecy of vv. 1–4 condemns the Temple, the rebuilding of which had been undertaken after the Jews' return from Exile.
- ² 'Are mine' follows the LXX (ἐστίν ἐμὰ) and Peshitta; the MT has 'were'; perhaps we should emend וַיְהִיו ('and they were') to וְלִי הָיוּ ('and to me they were').
- ³ The passage sets out four lawful acts of worship and four Canaanite acts of worship in parallel: human sacrifices, the killing of dogs, the eating of pork and the veneration of idols. This does not mean that someone who slaughters a bull is no better than someone who sacrifices a human, *et cetera* – such a radical condemnation of formal religion is nowhere found in the Old Testament.

- ד גַּם־אֲנִי אֲבַחַר בְּתַעֲלִילֵיהֶם
וּמְגֹרֶתָם אָבִיא לָהֶם
יַעַן קָרָאתִי וְאֵין עֹנֶה
דִּבַּרְתִּי וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ
וַיַּעֲשׂוּ הָרַע בְּעֵינַי
וּבִאֲשֶׁר לֹא־חָפְצָתִי בָּחֲרוּ: {ס}
- ה שָׁמְעוּ דְּבַר־יְהוָה הַחֲרָדִים אֶל־דְּבָרוֹ
אָמְרוּ אַחֵיכֶם שֹׁנְאֵיכֶם מִנְּדִיכֶם
לְמַעַן שְׁמִי יִכְבֹּד יְהוָה
וְנִרְאָה בְּשִׂמְחַתְכֶם
וְהֵם יִבְשׁוּ:
ו קוֹל שֹׁאֵן מִמְּעִיר
קוֹל מֵהֵיכָל
קוֹל יְהוָה
מִשְׁלֵם גָּמוֹל לְאִיבָיו:
ז בְּטָרֶם תַּחֲלִיל יִלְדָּה
בְּטָרֶם יָבֹא חֶבֶל לָהּ
וְהִמְלִיטָה זָכָר:
- 4 I too take delight in mocking them,
and bringing upon them what they fear,
because I have called and no one would answer,
I spoke and no one listened.
They have done what I regard as evil
and have chosen what displeases me.
- 5 Listen to the word of Yahweh, you who tremble at his word.
Your brothers, who hate and reject you for my name, say,
"Let Yahweh show his glory,
let us witness your joy;"
but they will be put to shame.
- 6 Listen, an uproar from the city!
A voice from the Temple!
The voice of Yahweh
bringing retribution on his enemies.
- 7 Before being in labour, she has given birth.
Before the birth pangs came,
she has delivered a son.

⁴ The meaning of the word here translated as 'mocking them' (בְּתַעֲלִילֵיהֶם), following the LXX (ἐμπαίγματα αὐτῶν), is uncertain; some modern translators prefer 'punishing' or 'ill-treating'. The word is the same as in 3:4 ('raw lads', see the footnote thereto).

⁵ 'Show his glory' follows the LXX; the MT has 'glorify', which many translators render in the passive: "Let Yahweh be glorified!"

⁶ NETB reads: "The sound of battle comes from the city; the sound comes from the temple! It is the sound of the LORD paying back his enemies."

⁷ The imagery of this verse expresses the sudden and miraculous advent of the New World (cf. 26:17–18, where the same imagery of childbirth is found, with a somewhat different application).

ח מי־שָׁמַע כְּזֹאת
 מי רָאָה כֵּאלֵּה
 הַיּוֹחַל אֶרֶץ בְּיוֹם אֶחָד
 אִם־יִוָּלַד־גּוֹי פֶּעַם אַחַת
 כִּי־חָלָה גַּם־יִלְדָּה צִיּוֹן אֶת־בָּנֶיהָ:
 ט הֲאֲנִי אֲשַׁבֵּיר וְלֹא אוֹלִיד
 יֹאמֶר יְהוָה
 אִם־אֲנִי הַמּוֹלִיד וְעַצְרָתִי
 אֲמַר אֱלֹהֶיךָ: {ס}
 י שִׂמְחוּ אֶת־יְרוּשָׁלַם וְגִילוּ בָּהּ
 כָּל־אֲהַבֶּיהָ
 שִׂישׁוּ אֶתָּה מְשׁוֹשׁ
 כָּל־הַמִּתְאַבְּלִים עָלֶיהָ:
 יא לְמַעַן תִּינָקוּ וּשְׂבַעְתֶּם
 מִשֵּׂד תִּנְחַמֶּיהָ
 לְמַעַן תִּמְצוּ וְהִתְעַנְּגַתֶּם
 מִזֵּיו כְּבוֹדָהּ: {ס}

- 8 Who ever heard of such a thing,
 who ever saw anything like this?
 Can a country be born in one day?
 Can a nation be brought forth all at once?
 For Zion, scarcely in labour, has brought forth her children!
- 9 "Shall I open the womb and not bring to birth?"
 asks Yahweh.
 "Shall I, who bring to birth, close the womb?"
 asks your God.
- 10 Rejoice with Jerusalem! Be glad for her,
 all you who love her!
 Rejoice, rejoice with her,
 all you who mourned her!
- 11 So that you may be suckled and satisfied
 from her consoling breast;
 so that you may drink deep with delight
 from her generous nipple.

⁸ The word אֶרֶץ ('country', in the 3rd line) is normally translated 'land', but here it stands metonymically for an organised nation,

⁹ The rhetorical questions of this verse expect the answer, "No, of course not!"

¹⁰ Restored 'Mother' Jerusalem can provide abundantly for all (49:17–21).

¹¹ Literally, this verse reads, "You will suck and be satisfied, from her comforting breast; you will slurp and refresh yourselves from her heavy breast."

יב כִּי־כֹה | אָמַר יְהוָה
 הִנְנִי נֹטֶה־אֵלֶיהָ
 כְּנָהָר שָׁלוֹם וּכְנָחַל
 שׁוֹטֵף כְּבוֹד גּוֹיִם וַיִּנְקֶתֶם
 עַל־צֵד תִּנְשְׂאוּ
 וְעַל־בְּרָכִים תִּשְׁעֲשְׂעוּ:
 יג כָּאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר אָמַר תִּנְחַמְנוּ
 בֶּן אֲנֹכִי אֲנַחֲמָכֶם
 וּבִירוּשָׁלַם תִּנְחַמוּ:
 יד וּרְאִיתֶם וְשֵׁשׁ לְבָבְכֶם
 וְעֲצָמוֹתֵיכֶם כַּדֶּשָׁא תִפְרָחְנָה
 וְנוֹדְעָה יְד־יְהוָה אֶת־עַבְדֵּיו
 וְזַעַם אֶת־אֹיְבָיו: {ס}
 טו כִּי־הִנֵּה יְהוָה בָּאֵשׁ יָבוֹא
 וְכִסּוּפָה מִרְכָּבָתוֹ
 לְהָשִׁיב בַּחֲמָה אָפּוֹ
 וְגִעְרָתוֹ בְּלֹהֲבֵי־אֵשׁ:
 טז כִּי בָאֵשׁ יְהוָה נִשְׁפָּט
 וּבַחֶרֶב אֶת־כָּל־בָּשָׂר

- 12 For, Yahweh says this:
 Look, I am going to send peace
 flowing over her like a river,
 and like a stream in spite the glory of the nations.
 You will be suckled, carried on her hip
 and fondled in her lap.
- 13 As a mother comforts a child,
 so I shall comfort you;
 you will be comforted in Jerusalem.
- 14 At the sight, your heart will rejoice,
 and your limbs regain vigour like the grass.
 To his servants, Yahweh will reveal his hand
 but, to his enemies, his fury.
- 15 For, see how Yahweh comes in fire,
 his chariots like the whirlwind,
 to assuage his anger with burning,
 his rebukes with flaming fire.
- 16 For, by fire will Yahweh execute fair judgement
 and, by his sword, on all flesh;

12 Literally, the 2nd/3rd lines read, "Look, I am ready to extend to her like a river prosperity [or peace], and like an overflowing stream, the riches of nations."

13 The 1st line reads literally, "Like a man whose mother comforts him."

14 Translated literally, the 2nd line reads, "and your bones like grass will sprout."

15 Chariots are like a windstorm in their swift movement and in the way that they kick up dust.

16 The NJB has 'people' in place of 'flesh', here following the MT & NRSV.

וּרְבוּ חֲלָלֵי יְהוָה:
 הַמְתַּקְדְּשִׁים וְהַמְטַהֲרִים אֶל־הַגְּנוֹת
 אַחַר אֶחָד אַחַת בַּתּוֹךְ
 אֲכָלִי בֶשֶׂר הַחֲזִיר
 וְהַשֶּׁקֶץ וְהַעֲכָבֵר
 יַחַד יִסְפוּ נֶאֱסִי־יְהוָה:

י" וְאֲנֹכִי מַעֲשִׂיהֶם וּמַחְשַׁבְתֵּיהֶם בֹּאֶה לִקְבֹּץ אֶת־
 כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם וְהַלְשִׁנוֹת וּבֹאוּ וּרְאוּ אֶת־כְּבוֹדִי:
 י" וְשִׁמַּתִּי בָהֶם אוֹת וּשְׁלַחְתִּי מֵהֶם | פְּלִיטִים אֶל־
 הַגּוֹיִם תִּרְשִׁישׁ פּוּל וְלֹוד מִשְׁכֵּי קֶשֶׁת תַּבַּל וַיּוֹן
 הָאֵיִם הָרְחוֹקִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־שָׁמְעוּ אֶת־שְׁמִעִי וְלֹא־
 רָאוּ אֶת־כְּבוֹדִי וְהִגִּידוּ אֶת־כְּבוֹדִי בְּגוֹיִם: כ' וְהֵבִיאוּ
 אֶת־כָּל־אַחֲיֵיכֶם מִכָּל־הַגּוֹיִם | מִנְחָה | לַיהוָה
 בַּסּוּסִים וּבַרְכָב וּבַעֲבִים וּבַפָּרָדִים וּבַכִּרְכָּרוֹת עַל־

and Yahweh's victims will be many.

¹⁷ As for those who sanctify themselves
 and purify themselves to enter the gardens,
 following the one in the centre,
 who eat the flesh of pigs, revolting things and rats:
 will perish together, declares Yahweh.

¹⁸ For, I know their deeds and their thoughts, and I am coming to gather
 every nation and every language. ¹⁹ I shall give them a sign and
 send some of their survivors to the nations: to Tarshish, Put, Lud –
 known for its archers – and Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands far away
 that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory; and they shall
 proclaim my glory among the nations. ²⁰ They shall bring back all your
 kindred from all the nations as an offering to Yahweh, on horses, and in
 chariots, and in litters, and on mules and on camels, to my holy

¹⁷ This verse is isolated from its context and perhaps ought to be joined to 65:3–5. It alludes to acts of a secret cult presided over by a priest, or priestess, if we read the feminine with the *Qere* (אַחַת – the *Ketiv* has אֶחָד) and 1QIsa^a, cf. Ezk 8:11.

'Revolting things' (שֶׁקֶץ, cf. Lv 7:21, 11:10–42): there is no point emending the word to get 'reptiles' from it (see Gn 1:20).

¹⁸ Vv. 18–24 were probably added as a conclusion to Chs 40–66, or even to the whole book. The whole passage seems originally to have been in verse but has been distorted by the insertion of a list of nations (v. 19) and the list of means of transport (v. 20). The MT lacks 'I know', here following the LXX (ἐπίσταμαι) & Peshitta. 'I am coming' follows the LXX (ἔρχομαι), Peshitta, Tg & Vg (*venio*); the MT has 'it [F] is coming' (בֹּאֶה).

¹⁹ The 'survivors' of the nations (cf. 45:20–25) are the converts, who are sent to preach the faith to the most distant parts of the world. It is remarkable that these earliest 'missionaries', for such they are, should be converts from paganism. The list of nations is an addition, borrowing its elements from Ezk 27:10–13; the probable identifications are: 'Tarshish' = Spain, 'Put' (following the LXX, Φουτ; the MT has 'Pul', פּוּל) = Libya, 'Lud' = Lydia, 'Tubal' = Cilicia, 'Javan' = Ionia or, more generally, Greece. The NJB, following the LXX (Μοσσοχ), has the proper name, 'Meshech', in place of 'known for its archers', which translates the MT's מִשְׁכֵּי קֶשֶׁת.

²⁰ The precise meaning of the word here translated as 'camels' is uncertain (the NRSV has 'dromedaries').

הַר קְדֹשִׁי יְרוּשָׁלַם אָמַר יְהוָה כַּאֲשֶׁר יָבִיאוּ בְנֵי
 יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַמִּנְחָה בְּכֵלִי טָהוֹר בֵּית יְהוָה:
 כֹּא וְגַם־מֵהֶם אֶקַּח לַכֹּהֲנִים לְלוֹיִם אָמַר יְהוָה:
 כִּב כִּי כַאֲשֶׁר הַשָּׁמַיִם הַחֲדָשִׁים וְהָאָרֶץ הַחֲדָשָׁה
 אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי עֹשֶׂה עִמָּדִים לִפְנֵי נְאֻם־יְהוָה בֵּן יַעֲמֹד
 זִרְעֲכֶם וְשִׁמְכֶם: כֹּג וְהָיָה מִדִּי־חֹדֶשׁ בְּחֹדְשׁוֹ וּמִדֵּי
 שַׁבָּת בְּשַׁבָּתוֹ יָבוֹא כָל־בָּשָׂר לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לִפְנֵי
 אָמַר יְהוָה: כֹּד וַיֵּצְאוּ וּרְאוּ בַּפָּגִל הָאֲנָשִׁים
 הַפְּשָׁעִים בִּי כִי תוֹלַעְתָּם לֹא תָמוּת וְאִשָּׁם לֹא
 תִּכָּבֵה וְהָיוּ דְרָאוֹן לְכָל־בָּשָׂר:
 {ש}

mountain, Jerusalem, Yahweh says, just as the Israelites bring a grain offering in a clean vessel to the House of Yahweh. ²¹ And I will also take some of them as priests and Levites, Yahweh says.

²² For, as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, declares Yahweh, so shall your descendants and your name remain. ²³ From New Moon to New Moon, from Sabbath to Sabbath, all humanity will come and bow in my presence, Yahweh says.

²⁴ And on their way out they will see the corpses of those who rebelled against me; for their worm will never die nor their fire be put out, and they will be held in horror by all humanity.

²¹ Some converts will actually be admitted to the sacred ministry – the same remarkable open-mindedness as in v. 19.

²² The NJB has ‘your name and your race’ in place of ‘your descendants and your name’, here following the NRSV & NETB.

²³ The verb that introduces this verse (וְהָיָה) serves as a discourse particle and is untranslated;

²⁴ In contrast to the perpetual worship offered by Yahweh’s devotees (vv. 22–23), follows the endless punishment that will overtake his enemies (v. 24). Rather than finish the reading of the book on this terrible note of warning, it was the custom of the Synagogues to end by repeating the promise of v. 23.