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ISAIAH'S DAMASCUS ORACLE: RESPONDING TO INTERNATIONAL THREATS

A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Exegetical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Theology

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by

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May 1996

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	Grayson, A. K. Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles. Texts from Cuneiform Sources, vol. 5. Locust Valley, New York: J. J. Augustin Publisher, 1975.
ABD	Anchor Bible Dictionary. 1992 edition.
ANET	Pritchard, J. B., ed. Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament. 3rd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969.
ARAB	Luckenbill, Daniel David. Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia. 2 volumes. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926.
BDB	Brown, Francis; Driver, S. R.; Briggs, Charles A., eds. A Hebrew and English Lexicon. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964.
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia. Edited by K. Elliger and W. Rudolph. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977.
DB	Dictionary of the Bible. Rev. ed. (1963).
EB	Encyclopedia Biblica: A Dictionary of the Bible. 1899 ed.
GKC	Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar. Edited by E. Kautzsch. Revised according with the 28th German ed. by A. E. Cowley. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910.
HALAT	Hebräisches und Aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament. Edited by Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner. Third edition. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974.

Joüon	Joüon, Paul, A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew. Translated and revised by T. Muraoka. Subsidia Biblica, 14/1. 2 vols. Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1991.
LS	Liddell, H. G. and Scott, R. A Greek-English Lexicon. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1985.
OAN	oracles against the nations
pt.	participle
1QIsa[a]	First Isaiah scroll of Qumran cave 1
Tg	Targum Jonathan
TWAT	Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament. 7 volumes. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1987ff.
Vul	Vulgate
Waltke	Waltke, Bruce K. and O'Connor, M. An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax. Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1990.
Williams	Williams, Ronald J. Hebrew Syntax: An Outline. 2nd ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976.

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

At the heart of Isaiah's oracles against the nations stands the much debated *Maśśâ'* of Damascus. This oracle is a conundrum. There is very little agreement on its length, content, and overall message. Some commentators suggest that the *maśśâ'* is as short as the two and one-half verses that deal directly with the topic of Damascus. Others see the *maśśâ'* as long as the two chapters that lead up to the next *maśśâ'* superscription. Commentators have difficulty establishing the content of the *maśśâ'* because the referents are obscure and when commentators do identify the referents the subjects of Isaiah 17-18 range far afield of the *maśśâ*'s initial topic of Damascus. As a result many commentators exclude chapter 18 or limit the *maśśâ'* to Isaiah 17:1-11.[1] This effectively isolates Isaiah 18 from its context. Even after taking this step to unlock the meaning of Isaiah 18 commentators come no closer to agreeing on the interpretation of Isaiah 18 or the Damascus Oracle. Adding to the confusion is the debate over the authentic text. Commentators often emend the text, sometimes quite severely, according to the unique way each one decides authenticity. With such disagreement on the *maśśâ*'s boundaries and its contents commentators differ widely on what they think is the overall message of the *Maśśâ'* of Damascus.

[1] R. Clements, F. Delitzsch, O. Kaiser, O. Procksch, H. Wildberger, etc.

I believe there is a need for a fresh study of this oracle. We can show this need when we examine how commentators interpret the *Maśśâ'* of Damascus. We can quickly grasp each commentator's unique perspective when we study how each one interrelates the three major units that make up Isaiah 17 and 18. According to the commentators and the ancient witnesses and versions, these three units are Isaiah 17:1-11, Isaiah 17:12-14, and Isaiah 18:1-7.[2] Although a study of the interrelationship of the three units will explain the overall strategy of each commentator it will not explain why commentators interpret the units differently. To uncover those reasons we need to examine how each commentator analyzes the unit's specific features. This chapter will describe both how commentators see the interrelationship of the three units and how they analyze the decisive features of each unit.

The review of the commentators will permit me to postulate an alternate interpretation for Isaiah 17-18. The alternate interpretation strategy that I will propose is experimental and needs to be tested. At the end of this chapter I will offer a plan that will test my proposed interpretational strategy. That is what I intend to do in the succeeding chapters.

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[2] Cf. 1QIsa[a], Codex Aleppo, Codex Leningrad B19[A], and the Septuagint. The Jonathan Targum and the Vulgate divide Isaiah 17-18 along chapter lines. According to Emmanuel Tov in Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible, Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 1992, p. 15 (hereafter cited as Tov), the Massoretic Text, Qumran and the Septuagint have proven to be the relevant texts for textual criticism. Tov (p. 134), says the relevant ancient translations are the LXX, revisions of the LXX, the Targumin, the Peshitta and the Vulgate. When I refer to the "versions" they will include the LXX (Codices Vaticanus, Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus), the Jonathan Targum, and the Vulgate (Codices Amiatinus and Carensis). I will also make reference to the the Peshitta (Codex Ambrosianus).

How Scholars Interrelate the Major Units of Isaiah 17 and 18

Almost all commentators divide Isaiah 17-18 into three independent units. Commentators relate these units in an amazing variety of ways. This diversity of opinion stems in part from the obscurities in each unit, especially so in Isaiah 18:1-7 and less so with Isaiah 17:1-11. If we put aside what commentators give as the message of the units of Isaiah 17-18 we can reduce the number of approaches to three. On the surface most commentators will relate the three units in one of these ways: (a) the subject matter changes at end of Isaiah 17:11; (b) the subject matter changes at the end of chapter 17; and (c) the subject matter changes but is related.

Subject Matter Changes At the End of Isaiah 17:11

The larger number of commentators assert that the subject matter shifts after Isaiah 17:1-11 and that Isaiah 17:1-11 does not relate to the two sections that follow. These commentators agree that Isaiah 17:1-11 is about the downfall of Damascus and Samaria and the role of Yahweh in that downfall. Most of them do agree that Isaiah 17:12-14 and Isaiah 18:1-7 make one piece. However, they differ widely on the interpretation of Isaiah 17:12-18:7.

One prominent view about how Isaiah 17:12-14 connects with Isaiah 18:1-7 is that both units are concerned to explain the Judah-Assyrian conflict. Commentators differ on what it is about that conflict that unites the two units. Some simply see the units working together to explain the judgment of

Assyria.[3] Others believe that the units work together to comment on the Judah-Assyria conflict and to offer Judah the hope of salvation.[4] One even sees the units working together to give Ethiopia and the world the message that Yahweh will deal with Assyria.[5]

Some commentators see the units of 17:12-14 and chapter 18 as units that are forced together by the greater structure but that have little thematic connection. For example, for one commentator the "woe" interjection that begins both units is proof that the two units belong together.[6] Another commentator sees these two units form a section that is in keeping with general nature of a preceding section that spans Isaiah 14:28-17:11.[7] In

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[3] August Dillmann, Der Prophet Jesaia, Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament., 5th ed. (Leipzig: Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1890) (hereafter cited as Dillmann); Bernhard Duhm, Das Buch Jesaia. 5th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1968) (hereafter cited as Duhm); Edward J. Kissane, The Book of Isaiah, 2 vol. (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1941) (volume 1 hereafter cited as Kissane).

[4] H. Wildberger, Jesaja, Part 2: Jesaja 13--27, Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament, 10/2 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978) (hereafter cited asWildberger).

[5] Georg H. A. von Ewald, Commentary on the Prophets of the Old Testament, vol. 2: Yesaya, `Obadya, and Mikha, trans. J. F. Smith (Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1876) (hereafter cited as Ewald). Ewald suggests that 17:12-18:7 and 14:24-27 were one oracle that originally belonged to Isaiah's sixth book, which Isaiah published in 713 BC. Isaiah 17:1-11 originally belonged to Isaiah's second book that Isaiah published at the beginning of Hezekiah's reign. (Dates for historical events without a time designation are from the BC era.)

[6] John F. Sawyer, Isaiah, vol 1, The Daily Study Bible (Old Testament) (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984) (hereafter cited as Sawyer). Yet for Sawyer 17:12-14 and 18:1-7 deal with different topics. 17:12-14 expresses judgment against Assyria and 18:1-7 expresses judgment against Cush.

[7] John N. Oswalt, The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39, The New International Commentary On the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1986) (hereafter cited as Oswalt). The same thing is done by Otto Kaiser in Isaiah 13-39, The Old Testament Library, trans. R. A. Wilson (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974) (hereafter cited as Kaiser). However, Kaiser makes the two units eschatological and says they describe the conflict between the nations and Yahweh.

the same way that Isaiah 14:28-17:11 stands as a section of isolated units that describe the judgment of Judah's neighbours Isaiah 17:12-18:7 stands as a section of two independent units which describe the judgment of Yahweh upon the world.[8]

Of those who see a major subject change after Isaiah 17:1-11 there are a few commentators who do not unite 17:12-14 and chapter 18 at all. Some see common themes between 17:12-14 and chapter 18 but yet do not believe that one should read them as a single composition.[9] Others discount the material of 17:12-14 because they appraise it as a later addition.[10]

Subject Matter Changes At the End of Isaiah 17

Some commentators see a major subject change after Isaiah 17. Of these commentators most see 17:1-14 as one piece, although for a few the relationship between 17:1-11 and 17:12-14 is only superficial.[11]

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[8] The same thing is done by Otto Kaiser in Isaiah 13-39, The Old Testament Library, trans. R. A. Wilson (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974) (hereafter cited as Kaiser). However, Kaiser makes the two units eschatological and says they describe the conflict between the nations and Yahweh.

[9] Otto Procksch, Jesaja I, Kommentar zum Alten Testament, vol. 11 (Leipzig: A. Deichertsche, 1930) (hereafter cited as Procksch). Wildberger agrees with Procksch's assessment of the themes of 17:12-14 and 18:1-7 and finds in Procksch sufficient justification for viewing the units as a whole, something Procksch will not do.

[10] Herbert Donner, Israel unter den Völkern: Die Stellung der klassischen Propheten des 8. Jahrhunderts v. Chr. zur Aussenpolitik der Könige von Israel und Juda, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum, vol. 11 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964) (hereafter cited as Donner, Israel); Georg Fohrer, Das Buch Jesaja, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1966) (hereafter cited as Fohrer). Donner and Fohrer both agree that 17:1-6 and 18:1-6 are from the eighth century and that they are unrelated. The other verses are much later additions.

[11] T. K. Cheyne, The Prophecies of Isaiah, 2 vols. (London: C. Kegan Paul & Co., 1880) (volume 1 hereafter cited as Cheyne). Cheyne believes that an editor put 17:12-14 with 17:1-11 but that 17:12-14 connects thematically to neither 17:1-11 nor chapter 18.

Commentators believe the contrast between 17:1-11 and 17:12-14--the shift from judgment to salvation and the change in protagonists--is how 17:12-14 completes the message of 17:1-11. They see Isaiah 18 as unrelated to chapter 17 and they are unclear how the editor came to place Isaiah 18 there.[12] They have a variety of ways to integrate 17:1-11 with 17:12-14.

Some find in the Isaiah 17:1-11 and Isaiah 17:12-14 a common rhetorical purpose, which is to persuade Judah to trust in Yahweh alone. The first unit tells Judah not to trust in Ephraim and Damascus and the second unit tells Judah not to fear the one whom Ephraim and Damascus fear, Assyria.[13] This explanation gives the two units of chapter 17 a plausible cohesion but the explanation does not fit the material. Isaiah 17:12-14 foretells an attack that plunders and spoils and so does not serve simply to remove Judah's fear of Assyria.

Some integrate the two units by comparing them to the historical events as Isaiah 8 describes them. Isaiah 8 explains that Syria's attack upon Israel was a precursor for an Assyrian attack and that the Syro-Ephraimite alliance precipitated for Judah problems with Assyria.[14] What Isaiah 17 does is to explain in verses 1-11 the trouble that Syria and Ephraim received at the hands of Assyria and to explain in verses 12-14 the problems that these

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[12] Scholastika Deck, Die Gerichtsbotschaft Jesajas: Charakter und Begründung (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1991), p. 15 (hereafter cited as Deck).

[13] John H. Hayes and Stuart A. Irvine, Isaiah, The Eighth Century Prophet: His Times and His Preaching (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon, 1987) (hereafter cited as Hayes/Irvine).

[14] F. Delitzsch and C. Keil, Commentary on the Old Testament., 10 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1975), vol. 7: Isaiah, by F. Delitzsch, two vols. in one, trans. James Martin (volume 1 of Isaiah hereafter cited as Delitzsch).

events produced for Judah. This approach does not explain the purpose for repeating the historical events of Isaiah 8 and it does not explain the function of the promised deliverance at 17:14.

Another approach is to make the first unit the description of Yahweh's judgment and the second unit the description of Yahweh's deliverance. For one commentator this means that Assyria is the central focus of the two units.[15] The first unit describes how Assyria will carry out the judgment of Yahweh and the second unit is there to describe how then Assyria will receive judgment. This fails to explain the need to express a promised deliverance. This is resolved by another commentator who makes Ephraim the one that is delivered at 17:14. He considers that 17:1-11 foretells Ephraim's destruction and that 17:12-14 gives Ephraim the hope that in the end it will survive.[16] This perspective depends upon a problematic interpretation of the pronoun "us" in 17:14 that identifies it with Ephraim.[17]

Of the commentators who identify Isaiah 18 as wholly independent of an Isaiah 17 that is unified they interpret Isaiah 18 in divergent ways. Some see the rhetorical function of chapter 18 as paramount and conclude

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[15] R. E. Clements, Isaiah 1-39, New Century Bible Commentary (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1980) (hereafter cited as Clements, Isaiah 1-39).

[16] Christopher R. Seitz, Isaiah 1-39, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox, 1993) (hereafter cited as Seitz).

[17] Another type of the approach that views the first unit as Yahweh's judgment and the second unit as Yahweh's deliverance is the one of Karl Marti in Das Buch Jesaja, Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament, vol. 10 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1900) (hereafter cited as Marti). He sees 17:12-14 as a later addition by a post-exilic writer who wished to add to a judgment passage--17:1-11--the hope that Zion would be delivered. This assumption that the hope of Zion's deliverance is late will be discussed later.

that chapter 18 is there to direct Judah away from reliance upon Cush.[18] They believe that chapter 18 uses the description of Yahweh's destruction of Cush and of Cush's allies to warn Judah not to trust them. Others describe chapter 18 first in historical terms.[19] They believe chapter 18 describes the destruction of Assyria and the effect that that destruction will have on Ethiopia. One commentator modifies this to what he claims is a third century perspective.[20] For him the cutting of the branches in Isaiah 18 depicts the fall of Ethiopia at Babylon's hands and the feeding on the cut branches by birds indicates the rule of Persia, which will overthrow Babylon.

Isaiah 17-18: Two Parts But Related

Commentators who try to connect the three units of Isaiah 17-18 appeal either to structure, or to the final shape of Isaiah, or to wish fulfillment.

Those who appeal to structural considerations for the unity of Isaiah 17-18 rely almost solely on those considerations. One commentator fuses Isaiah 17-18 because it is part of a larger section that he has identified. The larger section ranges across Isaiah 15:1-18:7 and deals with the "downfall of

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[18] Clements and Hayes/Irvine.

[19] Cheyne, Marti and Delitzsch. Marti argues that post-exilic writers added material and rearranged the oracles' words to give two original units a message about the end time judgment. Isaiah 17-18 consists of two disparate oracles: the oracle of the fall of Aram and Ephraim (17:1-7, 10-11; 18:5-6); and the oracle to dissuade Judah from an alliance with Ethiopia (18:1-2, 4). In its present form Isaiah 18:5-6 is about the fall of Assyria.

[20] Seitz.

Moab, Syria and Other Nations."[21] His ties between chapter 17 and chapter 18 are weak. He sees 17:12-14 continuing the matter of Ephraim's judgment begun by 17:1-11. Chapter 18 is an example of how the nations are subject to God. Another commentator claims a unity based on a chiasm that he argues spans chapters 17-20.[22] He is not interested in demonstrating the unity of Isaiah 17-18 on internal connections or on the flow of thought in Isaiah 17-18.

Another approach is to define Isaiah 17-18 as a piece because it is so placed in Isaiah. According to these commentators the evidence shows that the three units of Isaiah 17-18 relate to one another but that they do not integrate. One commentator believes that it is "safer" to take chapters 17 and 18 as a whole rather than interpret the inidividual units as independent compositions.[23] He says 17:12-14 could belong to 17:1-11 because there is no indication of a subject change and 17:12-14 could belong to chapter 18 because they share a common introductory "woe."

Another commentator explains that the connection between 17:1-11 and 17:12-18:7 is the theme that Yahweh is the only true security and the one who rules the world. He calls Isaiah 17-18 "Damascus and Ephraim: Destruction and Preservation, the Work of Humankind and the Work of

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[21] Edward J. Young, The Book of Isaiah, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1965) (volume 1 hereafter cited as Young).

[22] John D. Watts, Isaiah 1-33, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, Texas: Word, 1985) (hereafter cited as Watts).

[23] J. A. Alexander, Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1974) (hereafter cited as Alexander).

God." This he sub-divides into 17:1-3, "an alliance that failed," 17:4-11, "Israel's destruction and Israel's remnant," and 17:12-18:7, "the world and its remnant."[24] What he does not do is explain the relationship between the topics of the various sections.

An approach that sees Isaiah 17-18 as a literary unity uses wish fulfillment to tie the units of Isaiah 17-18 together. This imaginative approach demands a radical redefinition of the contents of the chapters.[25] Isaiah 17:12-14 is Zion's empty dream for an immediate deliverance. At Isaiah 18:3-7 the prophet corrects Zion with a reality check and pronounces that before Yahweh restores Zion Yahweh will cut down everyone including Zion. This approach seeks unity at the price of a confident interpretation.

The approaches that describe Isaiah 17-18 as a unity continue to leave Isaiah 17-18 with major disjunctions.

How Scholars Interpret the Major Units of Isaiah 17-18

The preceding discussion introduced some of the controversy that surrounds Isaiah 17-18. The controversies are fueled by decisions that commentators make at the smallest level in each unit. These decisions are made with the scholar's external information and with personal assumptions. The divergencies over the interpretation of details is greatest when the texts are enigmatic about referents as in Isaiah 17:12-14 and Isaiah 18. To bring

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[24] Alec J. Motyer, The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1993) (hereafter cited as Motyer).

[25] Peter D. Miscall, Isaiah, Readings: A New Biblical Commentary (Sheffield: JSOT, 1993) (hereafter cited as Miscall).

clarity commentators turn to what they can surmise from history and they make assumptions and generalizations about the formation of the book of Isaiah and about the formation of Israel's religion. They use these assumptions to date the linguistic, thematic and theological contents of each unit. With this information they decide what is original and what was the *Sitz im Leben*. If we are to interpret these chapters and arrive at a proper understanding of the Damascus Oracle we can be speeded along the way by examining what others have done and by scrutinizing their assumptions and judgments. In this section you will see the reasons for the breadth of opinion and you will be able to see the merits of each position. After this review of what others have done I will try to improve on them. We will proceed in the order of the most controversial unit first.

Isaiah 18

In extravagant detail and in glowing terms Isaiah 18:2 and 7 describe a nation that is difficult to identify. The referents that commentators give for this illustrious nation give us a convenient way to group the various approaches to Isaiah 18. Isaiah 18:2 and 7 describe the illustrious nation as "a nation tall and smooth" and "a people feared from there and beyond, a nation dominating and trampling, whose land rivers divide" (translation my own). Citing in support Herodotus, who called the Cushites the "tallest and most beautiful people of the world," many commentators relate the illustrious nation to Cush.[26] Other commentators reject this identification because it creates for Isaiah 18 the unlikely scenario that Cush--"a land on the other side

[26] Herodotus 3. 20, 114.

of the rivers of Cush"--is sending ambassadors to Cush--the illustrious nation. Commentators not happy with this tension usually render the illustrious nation as a symbol for every nation or as Assyria.[27] These two and Cush are the common options for the identity of the illustrious nation.

Cush as the illustrious nation

The most common referent for the illustrious nation is Cush. H. Wildberger, for example, finds that Cush's attributes match those of the illustrious nation. In addition to Herodotus' comments he notes that Cush's conquest of Egypt would have made Cush a feared nation and that Cush was conspicuous for being a land that rivers divided. Of course, none of these qualities were exclusive to Cush. Nations feared Assyria and at times Egypt. The ancients also described Egypt and Assyria as lands divided by a river.

As we have noted to identify Cush with the illustrious nation creates a tension in the usual reading of Isaiah 18:1-2--the tension of having Cush sending messengers to itself. One solution to this tension is to make some distinctions within Cush. The Cush that is the illustrious nation can be either Cush proper or the tribal allies of Cush.[28] Edward Young, for example, suggests that these allies include Abyssinia and Meroe. Although possible, this raises an immediate contradiction between two identical descriptions for the illustrious nation. At 18:2 the illustrious nation is the allies of Cush and

[27] There are also Kissane's and Miscall's rare approaches. Miscall was described above. Based on Yahweh's choice of the Medes as the one to destroy Babylon (Isa 13:17) Kissane identifies the illustrious nation with the Medes. The prophet tells the Ethiopian envoys in Judah to go to the Medes. Yet, it is still Yahweh that destroys Assyria. There is less to commend this approach than others.

[28] Cheyne and Young.

yet at 18:7 the illustrious nation is supposed to be Cush proper. It is also not clear how the illustrious nation, which Isa 18:2 describes as the "land" of a "nation", can be at the same time various tribes in different places.

Most proponents of Cush for the illustrious nation alleviate the tension with an unprecedented change in senders.[29] They take the view that in Isa 18:2 there are two senders. Cush sends the "ambassadors" but someone else is speaking when the sender tells the "messengers": "Go, swift messengers." The second sender is Yahweh or Yahweh's prophet. Commentators understand 18:2 to say that Cush sends messengers to Jerusalem but once there the prophet orders them to return and take their ideas about mutual security with them.[30] The most common objection to this interpretation is that it is unusual to order someone to return home with "go" rather than "return." The other problem this creates is the peculiarity of having the sender describe the illustrious nation to messengers from it. Seitz goes one step further in his distinctive reading of Isa 18:2. In addition to separating the senders he distinguishes the emissaries.[31] The first sender is the "land across the rivers of Cush" and it sends the Cushites. The second

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[29] Alexander, Delitzsch, Dillmann, Donner, Duhm, Ewald, Fohrer, Marti, Procksch, Wildberger.

[30] Wildberger supports the existence of an Egyptian delegation to Jerusalem by pinponting Hezekiah's decision to ally with Egypt to a time between 705 and 701. This would strongly suggest that Hezekiah met a delegation from Egypt. Wildberger uses 2 Kings 18:14, a text about Hezekiah's tribute to Sennacherib at Lachish, to prove that Hezekiah announced allegiance to Assyria at Sargon's death in 705. He turns to Sennacherib's charge during the 701 campaign that Hezekiah had allied with Egypt to set the lower limit of Hezekiah's decision. Few, however would place 2 Kings 18:14 in 705.

[31] Also Sawyer.

sender is Yahweh in his divine council and he sends heavenly messengers. The difficulty with these finer distinctions between senders or between messengers is that the text does not indicate such distinctions.

Those who make Cush the illustrious nation interpret the rest of chapter 18 in many ways. We can group these according to the country that will be ruined. The list of countries that commentators have identified as the one that will suffer harm are: Cush, Cush's allies and Assyria.[32]

There are many who advocate Cush as the one that Isaiah 18 describes as suffering destruction.[33] Wildberger believes that when the prophet saw the ambassadors that Cush had sent to Jerusalem to secure Judah's support for an anti-Assyrian alliance, he sent them back with the difficult word that Cush would fall. The rest of Isaiah 18 describes the maturing of Cush's plans and the final destruction of Cush by Yahweh. What convinces Wildberger that Cush will face destruction is the "woe" cry of 18:1. He finds further support in two Scripture references that show that the ancients expected Cush's fall: Ezekiel 30:4, 9 and Isaiah 20. In fact,

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[32] One commentator sees Ephraim as the original victim. In an approach that assumes far too much Marti sees Isaiah 18 as an eschatological message about the fall of Judah's endtime enemy. Originally Isaiah 18 did not have 18:3 and 7 and I8:5-6 belonged to the oracle about Ephraim that starts in Isaiah 17. The original oracle described Cushite messengers visiting Jerusalem and Isaiah sending them home sometime between 728 and 704. Yahweh's silence showed that he was unperturbed. In their present context 18:5-6 tell the reader that Jerusalem's end time enemy will be destroyed. Marti eliminates 18:3 and 7 and interprets 18:5-6 as he does because he considers the idea of a world class judgment as late. On the contrary, Duhm (p. 139), points out that the eschatology that is universal and pure developed from the ideas of Isaiah who knew a world conquering power. This shows the ambiguity of dating according to an idea of world judgment. The example of a supposed late idea may not be product of a late idea but the early source for the ideas that come later.

[33] Wildberger, Kaiser and Seitz.

Wildberger believes it was Isaiah 20's failed prediction of Cush's fall that prompted the writing of Isaiah 18. He believes that the Isa 18:4 description of Yahweh waiting before he strikes is Isaiah's answer to the queries about the failed prediction. Wildberger's approach is frought with problems. He is wrong to find that the "woe" cry necessitates the destruction of the recipient of the "woe." He does not explain how there can be change in senders in 18:2. Isaiah 18:7 is a problem because it foretells the illustrious nation bringing tribute, an unlikely event if the illustrious nation is the one that Yahweh ruined. However, Wildberger gets around some of these difficulties by relying on a reconstructed original text that excludes 18:7.[34]

A refinement on the idea of Cush as the condemned nation is to take Cush's allies as the ruined nation. John Sawyer, for example, correlates Isaiah 18 to either 711 B.C. or 701 B.C.[35] He sees 18:5-6 as the judgment upon those that Isa 30:2 calls the ones who "go down to Egypt . . . for help." He explains that since in 18:5 only the branches are lopped off and nothing is said about the destruction of the whole plant, the main plant should still be intact. This means that Cush's allies will be destroyed but Cush will escape unharmed. This conveniently solves the problem of how a destroyed Cush could bring homage to Zion in 18:7. His solution is a classic case of making a metaphor say more than it is intended to say. If the major powers survive it is also not clear why the prophet would call on the whole world to observe these events.

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[34] See below "Source Criticism" for a discussion on the reconstruction of the text of Isaiah 18.

[35] Fohrer has the same interpretation as Sawyer except that he excludes 18:3 and 7 from the original text and he identifies the illustrious nation with Egypt.

We can see that those who take Cush or Cush's allies as the ruined nation run into a great deal of difficulty. That is why the greater number of commentators who interpret Cush to be the illustrious nation have a scenario that involves the destruction of Assyria.[36] Most of those who see this interpret Isaiah 18 as saying that Cush went to Judah or Jerusalem before the 701 confrontation with Assyria to solicit Judah's support and was then sent back by the prophet.[37]

Some see in Isaiah 18 a rapid change in subjects so that one can say both that Assyria destroys someone and is itself destroyed. Herbert Donner can find in Isaiah 18 not only the destruction of Assyria but also that of Egypt. He says Assyria destroys Egypt while Yahweh rests and that Yahweh destroys Assyria just at the moment when Assyria is ready to collect her spoils. Donner's idea gives meaning to the comparison of the silence of Yahweh to a maturing crop. It infers that Judah should stay neutral--its God is neutral at this time. Donner's interpretation lacks the textual evidence that Assyria will destroy Egypt. It conflicts with Isa 18:7 because there a viable Cush leads the way to Yahweh. Bernhard Donner does not have to deal with the problem of 18:7 because he dismisses it as secondary. Duhm sees the

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[36] Cf. Alexander, Cheyne, Delitzsch, Dillmann, Donner, Duhm, Ewald, Procksch, Young.

[37] For example, Ewald and Procksch suggest 714. Delitzsch's own unique perspective is to make Isaiah 18:2-3 one continuous discourse. This means that in Isaiah 18 Cush sends ambassadors to her provinces and the prophet sends them home to tell Cush's people the essence of verse 3. The trumpet and banner signals that verse 3 foretells will indicate that God will deliver the world from Assyrian domination. Delitzsch does not emend the first appearance of עַם in 18:7. His resulting interpretation is that the tribute brought to Zion includes the people of Cush themselves. Dillmann supports Delitzsch's analysis of 18:2-3 that views the messages as one continuous discourse.

time of Yahweh's silence as a time when Judah suffers under Assyrian aggression. Otto Procksch is unique in that he sees Judah destroyed by Assyria in 18:5 while, as with most other commentators, it is Assyria that the animals feed on in 18:6. This gives recognition to the powerful connection between the vineyard and Israel but it does not explain how the text shows such a sudden shift in subject.

Assyria as the illustrious nation

A number of commentators identify Assyria with the illustrious nation. The commentators who take this position choose the unnatural reading for Isa 18:2 of two different senders. They disagree what is happening and why.

One way of taking Assyria as the illustrious nation is to suppose that at 18:2 Cush sends its messengers to the Levant and that the prophet then sends his messengers to Assyria. John Hayes and Stuart Irvine take this approach. They date the events of Isaiah 18 to a time after Cush had invaded the Nile delta, after Assyria had forbidden trade with Egypt, and after 732 B.C. According to them Cush sent ambassadors to the people along the Mediterranean coast to form an alliance against Assyria and in response the prophet sent his messengers to Assyria to alert them of these plans. The "cutting off" in 18:5 refers to Yahweh, or Assyria as Yahweh's agent, destroying Cush's plans. Isaiah 18:6 is the remains of Cush and its allies. Isaiah 18:7 is about the tribute that Assyria will bring to Zion in gratitude for Zion warning it of Cush's maneuvers. Besides the change in senders at 18:2 this scenario lacks historical support and credibility. Hayes and Irvine identify the illustrious nation with Assyria partly because of the words in 18:2

קו־קו. These words or their homonyms appear in Isa 28:13 to refer to what seems to be the unintelligible speech of the Assyrians. Yet in 18:2 these words do not appear to designate speech. Hayes and Irvine admit that they lack the historical evidence of Ethiopian diplomatic missions in the year before Hoshea's revolt. We know that Hoshea did not ally himself with Ethiopia but with an Egyptian Pharaoh So. Historically it is unlikely that Isaiah thought Assyria would pay homage to Yahweh for Judah's information because Assyria's strength and pride were too great to pay homage for something like Judah's information and because everyone knew that Egypt was in no position to threaten Assyria. In addition, gratitude for information does not make for a worthy observance of Yahweh's glory. That Isaiah would send messengers to Assyria contradicts Isaiah's message of trust in Yahweh that one finds in places such as Isaiah 7. Hayes and Irvine's interpretation shows the influence of their attempt to place all the oracles of the OAN in 728 B.C.

Another way to make Isaiah 18 work with Assyria as the illustrious nation is for Cush to send its messengers to the Levant and for Jerusalem to tell the Cushite messengers to go on to Assyria. One proponent of this position is John Watts, who dates the events of Isaiah 18 to 716-715 B.C. Watts supposes that at that time the Cushite leader Shabaka would have sought foreign support for his drive to take control of lower Egypt. Watts believes that when Shabaka's ambassadors came to Jerusalem the Jerusalemite leaders suggested to Shabaka's ambassadors that they go to Assyria to gain at least the promise of non-interference. Isaiah 18:5-6 describe Shabaka's destruction of Egypt. Isaiah 18:7 portrays how the

Assyrians will bring tribute to Zion for Zion's loyalty. Watts identifies 18:5-6 with Egypt in a novel but unconvincing way. His inclusion of Egypt comes from his attempt to show a chiasm between chapters 18 and 19. His rationale for Assyria's tribute to Zion is insufficient. Watts curiously attributes the "I" statement of 18:4 to Shebna because according to Watts from Isaiah 18:4-22:25 only Shebna gets messages from Yahweh. Most commentators would not agree with him.

Another approach is to see irony in the sending of messengers. For example, Clements interprets Isaiah 18 as the report of a 716 B.C. visit of Ethiopian ambassadors to Jerusalem. They are looking for support for an anti-Assyrian revolt. In an ironic gesture the prophet charges the ambassadors to go to Assyria. Isaiah 18:5-6 describe the destruction of Cush and Egypt. E. Clements approach runs into difficulty at 18:7. He falls back on the argument that 18:7 is a confused later addition that took the language of the illustrious nation, which stood for Assyria in 18:2, and applied it to Cush.

When one makes Assyria the illustrious nation one faces the problems of explaining why someone would send messengers to Assyria and why Assyria would bring tribute to Zion. As well the historical and Biblical evidence makes a Cushite trip to Assyria unlikely. Those who have chosen to identify Assyria with the illustrious nation often wish to make Isaiah 18 support an agenda that has little to do with taking Isaiah 18 on its own terms.

Any nation as the illustrious nation

A third definition of the illustrious nation is to see it as any nation.

One way to follow this approach is to have Cush send its messengers to the Levant and then to have the prophet figuratively send

messengers to the world with the message of Isa 18:3. One example of this is John Oswalt, who dates the events of Isaiah 18 to 715 B.C. but then quickly extrapolates Isaiah 18 into a figure for all time. Oswalt uses the vague nature of the illustrious nation and of verse 3's address to the world to support a figurative interpretation of the material. The illustrious nation is figurative for the "mightiest people imaginable--a composite of all human greatness."[38] The first messengers are Cushite ambassadors who travel swiftly up and down the waters and who may be in Jerusalem to negotiate an alliance against Assyria. The second sender of 18:2 is the prophet who sends figurative messengers, exemplified by the Cushites from the ends of the world, to the whole world with the message of 18:3. That message is that all the world is to be alert to God's actions. The ruined nation of 18:5-6 is Assyria. Isaiah 18:7 describes how the sum total of all the world's power will pay homage to Yahweh. Oswalt's blend of a figurative illustrious nation with a definite enemy and a combination of concrete and figurative messengers is confusing and difficult to support. The illustrious nation is not a composite of all the world but seems to be a definite people. As we have noted above there is little evidence that there is distinction in the messengers or in the senders. Oswalt's effort to tie the commission to go to the illustrious nation with the message for the world is not successful because even according to Oswalt's definition the illustrious nation is not the world. It is not clear how homage in Zion from an imagined composite of all human greatness has value in a chapter that mentions the real Assyrian threat.

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[38] Oswalt, p. 361.

Another approach finds that 18:2 has one sender, Egypt, sending its messengers to every nation it can. In Isaiah 18:3 the prophet directs the Egyptian messengers to take his message to the world. J. Alec Motyer posits this approach, an approach that enables him to say that the world that Isa 18:3 calls to attention is the world that Isa 18:7 describes giving homage to Yahweh. According to Motyer Isaiah 18:1-2 explains that Egypt is sending its messengers to form anti-Assyrian alliances with any nation. In verse 3 the prophet tells these messengers, who have arrived in Jerusalem, to take the message of verses 4-6 to the world. Verses 5-6 are not about the fall of a nation but rather are about Yahweh's reaping of what the earth's rulers had planned for themselves. The year round presence of the birds and animals shows the completeness of Yahweh's action. At the chapter's end the world pays homage to Yahweh. Isaiah 18 shows that it is vain to seek Egypt-like collective security or Assyria-like conquest. Motyer's neat integration of all the details is based on some objectionable assumptions. The description of the illustrious nation does not describe the world. If this is not true then it is also not true that the world of 18:3 is what pays homage in 18:7. Isaiah 18:3 does not indicate that Isaiah addresses the Egyptian messengers. Isa 18:4-6 is too specific to be a generalized statement about Yahweh's dealings with ambitious nations. The hungry birds and animals and the cut branches are not the illustrations one would expect would describe how Yahweh acquired what the world's rulers had intended for themselves.

An Alternative Approach

Might we not consider a fourth alternative? The senders in Isa 18:2 are the land "on the other side of the rivers of Cush." The attributes of the

illustrious nation suit Cush or Cushite-Egypt. Cush was a nation feared by Egypt and a land which rivers divided. When Cush was in control of Egypt it was a nation that Assyria feared. According to Herodotus the Egyptians were a people of smooth skin and states that on every third day the Egyptian priests shaved the entire body.[39] According to 1 Chronicles 11:23 the ancients knew Egypt to have tall warriors. One could explain Isaiah 18 in the following terms. The leaders in the land on the other side of Cush are sending their emissaries to Cush to build an alliance that will stand against Assyria. From the prophet's point of view their alliance is pointless. Yahweh has told him what will happen (18:4) and so the prophet alerts the world to watch for it (18:3). According to 18:5 there will be a time in which Yahweh will watch the plans of nations unfold, a time when Assyria may even momentarily defeat Cush or Cushite-Egypt. However, before Assyria reaches its desired goals Yahweh will strike Assyria. In 18:7 Cush will bring tribute to Yahweh for its deliverance.

Isaiah 17:12-14

There is a virtual consensus on the protagonists and the historical referent of Isaiah 17:12-14. Most commentators agree that the roaring nations are contingents from Assyria, Assyria's allies, and Assyria's subject nations.[40] Commentators attribute the rebuke of 17:13 to Yahweh. The party

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[39] Herodotus 2. 237.

[40] Cf. Cheyne, Dillmann, Duhm, Ewald, Hayes/Irvine, Kissane, Motyer, Oswalt, Procksch, Sawyer, Wildberger. Alexander suggests that the referent includes Assyria but is not exclusively Assyrian.

that suffers plunder and experiences deliverance is Judah or Jerusalem. The event is Sennacherib's attack upon Palestine.

Some try to make Ephraim the victim of 17:12-14. F. Delitzsch and Christopher Seitz keep the referent Ephraim throughout Isaiah 17 with Ephraim the people whom Yahweh delivers from Assyria in 17:12-14. This approach deals inadequately with the fact that the audience for Isaiah 17 has been Judah and 17:14 speaks of "us."

One commentator even tries to make Assyria both the one that advances and the one that rebukes others. Young differs with the majority in that he interprets the rebuke of 17:13 as showing everyone's impotence in the face of Assyria's advance. Young interprets the images of fleeing, of chaff before the wind and of dust before the storm as metaphors for Assyria's relentless advance. The statement in 17:14 "it is no more" is his clue that Assyria has been destroyed. Young makes atypical use of the words in 17:13.

Among those who consider Isaiah 17:12-14 as non-authentic and therefore late there are a number who see 17:12-14 refer to the end time attack upon Zion. Otto Kaiser considers that Isaiah 17:12-14 describes the end of the world attack upon Zion.[41] The nations are the whole world. Karl Marti and Georg Fohrer agree with Kaiser's assessment of Isaiah 17:12-14. Their approach overlooks the fact that contrary to the eschatological attack upon Zion the attack in 17:12-14 succeeded in plundering Zion and the first

[41] Kaiser is uncommonly severe with Isaiah 17-18, suggesting that only verses 10 and 11 have a chance of being authentically Isaianic.

person statements of verse 14 indicate an on-going state of affairs not an end of the world.

Watts and Peter Miscall remain with Kaiser in the realm of the super-historical. For Watts the attacking nations are in the imagination of Zion's people. These are the paranoia that accompany idolatry. Daylight reveals that the attack was a great illusion. Watts interpretation betrays his effort to build a chiasm between Isaiah 17 and Isa 19:18-20:6. Miscall sees 17:12-14 as Zion's false dream that longs for immediate relief. The "us" in Isa 17:14 makes it unlikely that this passage is only about imaginations.

There are sufficient reasons to follow the majority of commentators who see in 17:12-14 Assyria attacking Judah and falling before God's rebuke.

Isaiah 17:1-11

Most commentators view Isaiah 17:1-11 as an oracle about the judgment of Damascus and Ephraim and with some exceptions they date the oracle to before 732. The disagreement on this portion of Isaiah is primarily founded on source critical arguments about verses 2, 7-8, 9, and 10-11.[42] We will discuss these below.

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[42] Deck, p. 79, challenges the authenticity of Isa 17:3b and 17:4-6 because they refer to the Northern Kingdom respectively as the "sons of Israel" and "Jacob". This does not fully persuade Deck because he finds that the 17:4 terms of "fat" and "might" could only refer to the Northern Kingdom during the Syro-Ephraimite war when the Northern Kingdom still possessed the rich Jezreel Valley. Procksch, p. 228, questions 17:4 because he cannot see how the prophet could speak in such corpulent terms about the Northern Kingdom. Wildberger, p. 646, says that there is nothing to mitigate Isaiah speaking these words before Tiglath-Pileser's attack stripped the valley away.

Source Criticism

Isaiah 17-18 has been heavily emended by those who believed they could improve the given texts. Because these emendations are not based on extant texts they remain highly speculative. We will look at the significant proposals for emending the text and for discounting the authenticity of texts.

The pecularity of mentioning the cities of Aroer in connection with the destruction of Damascus prompts a number of commentators to alter 17:2. Wildberger and Clements would move verse 2 to Isaiah 15 because they know of an Aroer that belongs to Moab. Others like Duhm and Marti would emend the text toward a reading closer to the Septuagint. T. K. Cheyne desires the expression "Aroer" because its cities would be the first ones Assyria would pass through in an invasion of Israel and because the vocables also mean "the laid bare." Without textual evidence to the contrary one should leave the verse intact and remain with the more difficult reading.

A number of commentators see 17:7-8 as a later addition.[43] The interpretation of 17:7-8 revolves around the referent of הָאָדָם, "people." Most will agree that it refers to Ephraim or to a remnant of Ephraim.[44] A few see it as the remnant of all of Israel.[45] Some see it as referring to humanity in general.[46] All commentators agree that in the present setting "people" includes Ephraim.

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[43] Clements, Donner, Duhm, Fohrer, Kaiser, Marti, Procksch and Wildberger.

[44] Alexander, Cheyne, Clements, Dillmann, Duhm, Ewald, Hayes/Irvine, Kaiser, Oswalt, Sawyer and Seitz.

[45] Delitzsch, Kissane and Young.

[46] Fohrer, Marti, Motyer, Procksch, Watts and Wildberger.

Wildberger, Donner and Kaiser see 17:9 as a later addition.[47] Clements sees 17:9-11 as a later addition because of the coordinating phrase "in that day."[48] Wildberger's reasons and, in part, Kaiser's reasons for 17:9's lateness are: (a) the subject of 17:9 is a third person masculine while in 17:10-11 it is a second person feminine; (b) the judgment threat of 17:9 is followed by different judgment threat in 17:10-11; and (c) 17:9 is prose while 17:10-11 is poetry. Wildberger explains the contrast between the subjects of 17:9 and of 17:10-11 as the oversight of an editor who did not see the "you" in 17:10 coming.[49] Wildberger's explanation is not convincing. We have too little evidence to call the contrast in the number and gender of the subjects a "mistake." It does not make the "mistake" explanation any stronger to transfer the fault to a hypothetical editor. Perhaps the author deliberately chose the abrupt change for rhetorical reasons. Wildberger says the editor added 17:9 to make the judgment of 17:10 more concrete but one could say the same for the original author. Wildberger's charge that the prose quality of 17:9 proves it is a later addition is premature because one cannot rule out that the author wanted such variety of style. Obviously Wildberger permits the later editor to be pleased with it. The question of whether 17:9 is a later addition often depends upon whether or not the commentator sees Judah as

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[47] Donner, Israel, p. 40; Kaiser, p. 81, Wildberger, p. 640.

[48] Clements, Isaiah 1-39, p. 157; Fohrer, p. 216.

[49] Wildberger, p. 661. Wildberger, p. 639, believes that the editor took Ephraim to be the referent of 17:10-11 but that Isaiah had Judah in mind.

the subject of 17:10-11. Both Wildberger and Kaiser choose Jerusalem or Judah for the subject of 17:10-11.[50]

At Isaiah 17:10-11 most commentators make Ephraim the addressee of the direct address. This is consistent with the subject of the preceding verses. For a few commentators the change in the number and gender of the subject signals a change in the referent to Judah.[51] Fohrer considers 17:9-11 to originate from around the year 600 B.C. because one can find similar expressions in the Psalms that first come into use in 600. Wildberger counters that with evidence from the book of Isaiah that shows that Isaiah was familar with the language of the Psalms.[52] Matters of language and style alone tend to be inconclusive anyway. Kaiser says the "you" indicates an authentic Isaianic saying against Jerusalem, the only one Kaiser finds in Isaiah 17-18. Watts says that the "you" in the instance of 17:10-11 indicates that the passage addresses Jerusalem and Wildberger says that is always the case for Isaiah. That conclusion would require one to call secondary many of Isaiah's verses. The nearby 18:3 has "you" refer to the world. Most

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[50] The same is true for Joseph Jensen, chapters 1-23 in "Isaiah 1-39," in The New Jerome Biblical Commentary, ed. R. E. Brown, J. A. Fitzmeyer and R. E. Murphy (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1990), pp. 240-41.

[51] Fohrer, Kaiser, Miscall, Watts and Wildberger. Presumably Judah has been the audience throughout Isaiah 17. The reference to Rephaim Valley in 17:6 shows this. One can also see this in the handling of the subject. The text describes the future of Ephraim impersonally and dispassionately on par with the handling of Damascus and not as one would expect if the addressee was Ephraim. The audience in 17:12-14 is the "us" of Judah.

[52] Fohrer, p. 217; Wildberger, p. 656.

commentators do not concur with this opinion. For example, Duhm identifies the "you" in Isa 8:9 with Syria and Israel.[53]

Often commentators assess 17:12-14 as non-authentic. Clements, for example, does not see 17:12-14 as authentic although his interpretation follows that of the majority. He calls this an "editorial composition . . ., which develops an authentic Isaianic theme by a process of 'midrash'-like exegesis."[54] Following Hermann Barth, Clements maintains that this unit belongs to Barth's *Assur-Redaktion*, a redaction of which the primary concern was to show that Yahweh would soon overthrow Assyria.[55] This redaction took place at the time of Josiah, a time when the fall of Assyria was imminent. Clements assumes that Isaiah was incapable of speaking of Zion's deliverance.[56] Yet, none of the ideas in 17:12-14 necessitate a late dating as even Scholastika Deck has to admit in his argument against the authenticity of 17:12-14.[57] The idea of evening trouble has connections to old myths that pre-date Israel and the sea imagery exists in the chaos myth.[58] Brevard

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[53] Duhm, p. 81.

[54] Clements, Isaiah 1-39, p. 161.

[55] Ibid., pp. 5-7; cf. Hermann Barth, Die Jesaya-Worte in der Josiazeit (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1977). Clements prefers the name "Josianic Redaction".

[56] R. E. Clements, Isaiah and the Deliverance of Jerusalem: A Study of the Interpretation of Prophecy in the Old Testament, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series, no. 13 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980), p. 51.

[57] Deck, pp. 23-25.

[58] Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament VI: 365, s.v. "ערב," by H. Niehr; Brevard Childs, Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis, Studies in Biblical Theology, second series, no. 3 (Naperville, Illinois: Alec R. Allenson, 1967), p. 129 (hereafter cited as Childs); Wildberger, pp. 672-73. Niehr cites E. Otto, Vetus Testamentum 30 (1980): 321.

Childs finds a form in 17:12-14 that Isaiah knew because Isaiah used it in Isaiah 14:26-27, a passage that is undisputed. Childs finds the old summary-appraisal form at 17:14: "this is the portion of those who plunder us and the lot for those who spoil us."[59] Whether one calls 17:12-14 an example of the Zion tradition or not Hamborg finds that the message that Yahweh controls the nations is one of Isaiah's concerns.[60] Many more say that the tradition of Zion's deliverance was current with Isaiah.[61]

The question over the Zion tradition relates to the debate over whether Isaiah could have preached salvation.[62] Some believe Isaiah could not have preached repentance or salvation because according to Isaiah 6 Yahweh had already determined Israel's judgment. On the other hand, Wildberger believes that Isaiah was keen enough to counter the awful predictions of judgment with a salvation tradition.[63] Gerhard Hasel observes that Isaiah must have believed in a remnant some time before the Syro-Ephraimite crisis because already by the time of the crisis Isaiah had a son he named Shear-Jashub, "a remnant will return."[64] John Bright points out that

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[59] Childs, p. 129.

[60] G. R. Hamborg, "Reasons For Judgment In the Oracles Against the Nations of the Prophet Isaiah," Vetus Testament 31/2 (1981): 145-59.

[61] Wildberger, p. 668.

[62] Cf. TWAT, s.v. "צִיּוֹן," by E. Otto. Wildberger , p. 675, says that Isaiah is describing God's judgment of the nations not Yahweh's help of Zion.

[63] Wildberger, p. 676.

[64] Gerhard F. Hasel, The Remnant: The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea from Genesis to Isaiah (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Andrews University Press, 1974), p. 249 (hereafter cited as Hasel).

Isaiah had good reason to speak of Yahweh's deliverance because he experienced Jerusalem's amazing escape from Sennacherib.[65] Even Clements considers 17:12-14 to be about this escape, an event he dates to 701 and the to the life of Isaiah.

There are some who place Isaiah 18 in the third century. Kaiser is among those who see Cush as the nation Yahweh judges in 18:5-6. He is like Wildberger so far as concerns the identity of the various players but he parts ways with Wildberger in his dating of Isaiah 18. A third century date lets him say that Isaiah 18 addresses the end time acts of Yahweh against the nations. Against Kaiser is the apparent reuse of 18:1-2 in Ezek 30:9.[66] Wildberger's comment about Kaiser is also telling: if Isaiah 18 is proto-apocalyptic the world judgment of 18:4-6 would not need the introduction of 18:1-2.[67]

Another date that effects the interpretation of Isaiah 18 is that of Seitz, who sees Isaiah 18 as the product of a Babylonian redactor, the redactor who also created the "oracles against the nations" (OAN) section of Isaiah. In Isaiah 18:2-3 Yahweh sends messengers from the divine council first to Cush and then to the world to tell the world to expect judgment. In verse 5 Babylon destroys Cush but the predator birds of verse 6 signify the coming of the Persians who replace the Babylons as Cush's oppressor. The Persian destruction of Babylon precipitates the coming of Cush to Zion

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[65] John Bright, A History of Israel, 3rd ed., (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), p. 287 (hereafter cited as Bright).

[66] Lawrence Boadt, Ez ekiel's Oracles against Egypt: A Literary and Philological Study of Ezekiel 29-32, Biblica et Orientalia, no. 37 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1980), pp. 57, 69.

[67] Wildberger, p. 683.

(18:7). Seitz supports his analysis with a a connection he sees between Isa 18:7 and a passage that is set within the call of Cyrus, Isaiah 45:14-17. Problematic is his analysis of Isa 18:6 that suggests a description of the Medo-Persian conquest of Babylon that is too subtle to be real. The only proof is that the 18:6 word "raptor" refers to Cyrus in Isa 46:11. There is nothing else to suggest that the the birds of 18:6 represent Persia and historically Babylon and Persia never did damage Cush.[68] Seitz's perspective on 18:7 is difficult to maintain because replacing a Babylonian master with a Persian one, albeit a kinder overlord, would hardly bring Cush in homage to Yahweh.. We have already commented on the view that 18:2 is about messengers from the divine council.

Wildberger finds Isaiah 18:3, 6b and 7 later additions.[69] Wildberger and Sawyer agree that Isa 18:3 is not Isaianic because it addresses the world. Most other commentators have no difficulty attributing 18:3 to Isaiah because Isaiah does attribute to Yahweh a universal perspective and he knew that all nations were wary of Assyria.[70] Wildberger sees Isaiah 18:6b as a superfluous because 18:6a has already given all the cuttings to the raptors and animals.[71] However, it is not uncommon for a writer to repeat an idea for emphasis. Fohrer reckons that Isaiah 18:7 is an eschatological return of

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[68] Cf. Niclolas Grimal, A History of Ancient Egypt, trans. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 359-81 (hereafter cited as Grimal).

[69] Also 18:2f but there Wildberger depends on observations that may simply show the creativity of the author. Wildberger believes 18:2f is an addition because the verse looks suspicious with its relative pronoun and description of the land rather than the people.

[70] Donner, Israel, p. 124; Duhm, p. 138; Procksch, p. 240; etc.

[71] He believes 18:6b is an addition because the bi-colon is pure poetry.

Egypt and eschatological statements are always late. However, above Wildberger showed that the theme of nations coming to Yahweh is not late. Wildberger explains that verse 7 is secondary for the following reasons: the connecting formula בָּעֵת הַהִיא; the prose form (but this criteria would demand the elimination of the identical lines in v. 2); the contradiction 18:7 makes with the rest of Isaiah 18 by representing the whole world with the description 18:2 uses for Cush; and the Deuteronomic sounding phrase מְקוֹם שֵׁם־יְהוָה, "the place of the name of Yahweh." None of these reasons is conclusive. By his interpretation Wildberger is the one responsible for the contradiction of referents in verses 2 and 7. According to J. Gamberoni the Deuteronomic sounding phrase may have received its inspiration from 18:7, not 18:7 from the Deuteronomist.[72] "The place of the name of Yahweh" is a phrase that only appears here in the Hebrew Bible and the phrase "name of Yahweh" appears not only in the "Deuteronomic" layer of the Hebrew Bible but throughout the Hebrew Bible, from Gen 12:8 to Micah 5:3 including Isaiah: Isaiah 24:15; 30:27. The idea of Yahweh dwelling on Mt. Zion is expressed in Isa 8:18, which is in one of the chapters of Isaiah that serves as a background to the Damascus Oracle. That Isaiah might use a term once in a chapter full of *hapax legomena* is not impossible. Even Wildberger acknowledges that the ideas in verse 7 are at least as old as the prophet Isaiah. Other ancient Near Eastern religions have the homage of foreign nations to a particular nation's god. Wildberger cites, for example, the goddess Inanna saying to her husband Urninurta of Isin: "You who [as Lord]

[72] TWAT, s.v. "מקום," by J. Gamberoni.

stand shining in heaven, and who [is present] to the amazement of all in the Land of Sumer, my Urninurta, all nations will bring you luxuries (gifts)."[73] In any case, one need not see the bulk of the verse as later and one should not interpret verse 7 as at odds with what the rest of the chapter intends.

Isaiah 17 and 18, A Unity

The superscription "the Oracle of Damascus" introduces an oracle that appears to extend over chapters 17 and 18. Should this be the case one ought to interpret Isaiah 17-18 as an integrated whole. We offer an experimental proposal that includes the current level of historical knowledge and makes Isaiah 17-18 cohesive.

An Experimental Proposal

Our review of the scholarly treatment of Isaiah 17-18 has shown the difficulty of the interpretational task. It has shown that however one splits the chapter the solution is always unsatisfying for at least one of the three major units of Isaiah 17-18. It has shown the tentativeness of emending the text. We are ready to look at a new interpretation for Isaiah 17-18 that values all the material in the chapters, integrates it and gives an intelligent role for each of the three units.

Isaiah 17 begins by making clear that the fall of Damascus and Ephraim is imminent. The charge is that Ephraim has trusted in its alliances and in idols instead of Yahweh. Since Judah is the audience for the message, we can surmise that Judah should be comforted by the report about its

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[73] Adam Falkenstein and W. von Soden, Sumerische und akkadische Hymnen und Gebete (Zürich: Artemis-Verlag, 1953), p. 109.

dangerous neighbors and ought to learn from Ephraim's experience not to trust in anyone but Yahweh. Apparently Judah has not been attentive to Yahweh and will also face judgment. The nations, especially Assyria, will carry out the judgment, roaring like the sea. Yet Yahweh will blast them back and spare the remnant that trusted in him. Damascus and Ephraim were in alliance with Egypt. Therefore, the message not to fear or imitate similar alliances must address the question not only of their future but also the future of the real strength behind them--Egypt. Isaiah 18 explains the destiny of their Egyptian underpinnings. Those beyond Cush's rivers ally with Cushite-Egypt but under Yahweh's watchful eye Egypt and Cush will be no match for Assyria. Then Yahweh will destroy Assyria as well. In the end Cushite-Egypt will pay homage to Yahweh at Zion in gratitude for Yahweh's saving attack on Assyria and in recognition of his supremacy. The only one to get homage will be Yahweh.

Such an interpretation is supported in Isaiah, in ancient secular historical sources and in the literary shape of Isaiah 17-18.

There is precedent in Isaiah for the message that Judah should not ally with Egypt and that Egypt would come to Zion. On at least one occasion Judah had some alliance with Egypt (which then would have included Ethiopia). Rabshekah reproached Hezekiah for relying on Egypt in Isa 36:9. It is also clear that there was a memory in ancient Israel of an event like Isa 18:7. After the deliverance of Hezekiah from Sennacherib nations brought offerings for Yahweh and gifts for Hezekiah (2 Chr 32:23).

Together Isaiah 17-18 follows very closely the narration of events in Isaiah 7-8. In Isaiah 7 the prophet speaks of the destruction of Damascus and

Samaria at the hands of Assyria. Yet, Judah is also spiritually depraved. Therefore, Yahweh will whistle to the "ends" of the rivers of Egypt, which could be Cush, and to the land of Assyria. Egypt and Assyria will both descend upon Judah but it will be Assyria that will do the destroying. In Isaiah 8 Isaiah invites the nations of the world to prepare for battle and be destroyed. Yahweh tells Isaiah not to pay any attention to the reports of conspiracy (the dealing of nations like those beyond Cush and Egypt?).

Non-biblical historical sources show that there were ties that existed between Palestine and Egypt in the last half of the eighth century B.C. This information parallels the events in Isaiah 17-18 and in a preliminary way supports the experimental proposal. Tiglath-Pileser's first goal in his invasion of 734 was to push through to Gaza and secure Palestine from Egyptian invasion before dealing with Ephraim and Syria. He then went on to defeat and absorb Syria and to subjugate Ephraim. Cush had alliances with different Egyptian pharaohs until they united behind Tehnakht and moved against Cush. Piankhy of Cush defeated the Nile delta coalition in 728 and returned to Nabata. Cush left the delta alone until Shabaka started to reign in 715 and moved his headquarters from Napata to Memphis. At that point nations adjacent to Cush could have sent emissaires to make alliances. Cushite-Egypt battled Assyria in 701 and then both parties returned to their lands. Although Assyria claimed a great victory its long absence from Palestine after 701 suggests either that Egypt defeated it or that it had some other set back. Egypt also retreated and did not act the part of conqueror. This would suggest setbacks or defeats for both Cushite-Egypt and Assyria which Judah could have interpreted as a divine intervention.

Isaiah 17-18 are a form of writing between prose and verse, or, as Gitay calls it, prophetic address.[74] Commentators probably overrate the doubts that the supposed prose verses of 17:7-8 and 18:7 cast on the literary unity of chapters 17 and 18. The two chapters share common agricultural imagery. "Harvest" is a common word throughout Isaiah 17-18. The strange shoots of Judah explain the reason for Yahweh's coming judgment (17:10) and the removal of the vine growths is how Yahweh carries out his judgment (18:5). The use of סוּר shares a unique meaning in 17:1 and 18:5 for the destruction of people. There are themes that repeat themselves at the beginning and ending of Isaiah 17-18. Chapter 17 begins with the grazing of sheep in "abandoned" (עזב) cities as a sign of judgment and chapter 18 ends with the ranging of cattle on "abandoned" (עזב) branches (corpses) as a sign of judgment. Damascus will not be a city in 17:1 and Zion will be the world city in 18:7.

Thesis and Methodology

There is a great lack of agreement among commentators and their interpretations of Isaiah 17-18. Isaiah 17-18 is obscure in many places and the interconnections between the major units are not obvious. Adding to the obscurity of the material is the gaps in our knowledge of the time. Many commentators have built their interpretations on assumptions or faulty information about the history of the time and about the condition of the text.

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[74] Yehoshua Gitay, "Reflections on th Study of the Prophetic Discourse: The Question of Isaiah I:2-20," Vetus Testamentum 33/2 (1983): 207-221.

These facts and the experimental interpretation above indicate that there is good reason to revisit Isaiah 17-18.

There is good reason to try to understand Isaiah 17-18 in its final form. We can guess about the rest but we are certain about the content of the final form. It is into this form that the final writer grafted intentionally and unintentionally his message and the pointers to his message. Most commentators, whatever their opinion about the tradition history of the material, will give an opinion of what the text in its present form means. It is to the interpetation of the present shape of the text that I want to concentrate my attention. To gain the intended meaning of Isaiah 17-18 we must study the author's directions to us for how he wants us to understand his creation.

We need not think that this approach separates us from what the eighth century prophet Isaiah wrote. I do not believe there are compelling reasons to dismiss the eighth century Isaiah as the author of Isaiah 17-18. The review above showed that there is neither agreement nor compelling evidence for a different writer. The events in Isaiah 17-18 are all written from the future perspective that Isaiah would have had. That Isaiah 17-18 is a collection of writings does not deny that Isaiah could have had his hand in its formation. I see the eighth century prophet either as having composed both chapters as they now stand by himself or through one or more of his immediate disciples under his supervision. However, for the purposes of this dissertation it is not necessary to identify the author of Isaiah. At this point the issue is immaterial because whoever put Isaiah 17-18 together assumed that the readers would read Isaiah 1-16.

To uncover what Isaiah 17-18 meant for the one who set it down demands that we follow the author's directions to the readers. We move in the author's direction when we do all we can to understand the history that the author knew, follow the author's rules of language, and are attentive to what the author has written. The main place to look for additional direction will be in the context and especially in the chapters preceding Isaiah 17-18. The author of Isaiah did not give us Isaiah 17-18 in isolation but within a book. It is within that the larger context that the author will provide the reader with any additional information that the author thinks is necessary and sufficient to understand a given pericope.

It is immediately apparent that the author set the material of Isaiah into a meaningful arrangement. We see this in the way that the author groups different materials such as the oracles against the nations. It is the chapters that precede Isaiah 17-18 that will be most important. I believe that the author wished the reader to read the text in a linear fashion. The text indicates this in several ways. First, to guide the reader the author uses superscriptions at the beginning of the book (Isa 1:1) and at the beginning of various sections of the book (2:1; 13:1). Second, the author makes historical connections at the start of pericopes (6:1; 7:1; 14:28; 36:1). Third, the technology of scrolls demanded a linear reading and did not offer the possibility of paging back and forth. Finally, the oral quality of the text suggests that the ideas in Isaiah will develop progressively. We can assume the oral quality because we know that the author wrote the scroll for people to read aloud. Oral presentations require that the author develope ideas in a linear fashion. In oral presentations the author must pay attention to what

information he or she has already given in any decision about how to communicate an idea. If the author wants the audience to know something before he gives them a new idea he must present that fact before he gives the new idea. Under these conditions the most helpful information for understanding Isaiah 17-18 will be the material that precedes it, Isaiah 1-16.

It is a linear reading of Isaiah that suggests the unity of Isaiah 17-18. The superscription "*maśśâ'*" appears ten times in Isaiah's OAN section. That superscription typically marks a unit of text that extends from superscription to next superscription. In the cases of Isa 17:1 that would entail a text that continued to the beginning of Isaiah 19. The examination of such a possibility would be valuable given the present disarray about the relations among the different parts.

I propose the following theses: (1) since Isaiah 17-18 fit under the same superscription we therefore should and can interpret them as one unit; (2) and that Isaiah 1-16 supplies the reader with the necessary information to interpret Isaiah 17-18 sufficiently. I believe we will find a unity supported by the composition of Isaiah 17-18, by the themes and metaphors in Isaiah 17-18, and through the events that Isaiah 17-18 describe.

The method that I will use to prove this thesis will be to study the information both external to the text and internal to it. First, I will seek to clarify what the author of Isaiah 17-18 says in the two chapters by carefully examining the text grammatically and lexically. There will be a priority given to the grammatical and lexical usage in Isaiah. Second, I will review what we know about the historical periods that the author refers to in Isaiah. I will give special attention to the events that the oracles against the nations section

records. Third, I will examine what the words and phrases, themes and metaphors of Isaiah 17-18 would mean to the one who first reads Isaiah 1-16. I will use the material in the rest of Isaiah 1-39 to clarify and test what we find in Isaiah 1-16. I will test the compatibility of Isaiah 17-18's words and phrases with the rest of Isaiah.

The goal of my efforts is to give a coherent interpretation of Isaiah 17-18 within its context.

PART I

TRANSLATION AND NOTES

CHAPTER II

TRANSLATION OF ISAIAH 17 AND 18

Chapter 17

1 The Oracle about Damascus.

Look! Damascus will be removed from (being) a city
and she will become a heap of ruin.
2 The cities of Aroer will be abandoned.
They will be for flocks;
and they will lie down and none will make (them) afraid.
3 And the fortification will disappear from Ephraim
and the kingdom from Damascus;
and the remnant of Syria
will be like the glory of the Israelites.
The utterance of Yahweh of Hosts.

4 And it will be in that day
the glory of Jacob will be diminished
and the fatness of his flesh will be made lean.
5 And it will be as when one gathers a harvest, standing grain
and one harvests heads of grain with his arm.
And it will be as when one gleans heads of grain in Rephaim Valley.
6 And there will be left in it gleaning berries like the striking of the
olive tree,
two, three ripe olives on the top of the high (bough),
four, five on the branches of it, the fruitful (tree).
The utterance of Yahweh, the God of Israel.

7 In that day a person will look to his Creator
and his eyes the Holy One of Israel will see.
8 And he will not look to the altars,
the work of his hands,
and what his fingers have made he will not see,
neither the Asherah poles nor the sun pillars.

9 In that day his fortress cities will be
like the abandoned (city) of the woodland and height
which they forsook before the Israelites.
And there will be devastation.
10 For you forget your saving God
and your fortress Rock you do not not remember,
as a result you are planting plantings of delight
and (with) a strange (grape) cutting you are sowing it.
11 In the day when you plant you make (it) grow,
and in the morning your seed you make sprout.
The harvest (is) a heap in the day of malady
and incurable suffering.

12 Woe to the roar of many nations,
who are roaring like the roaring of the seas,
and to the crash of the peoples,
who are crashing like the crash of mighty waters.
13 The peoples are crashing like the crash of many waters.
And (so) he will (explosively) blast it
and it will flee far away.
And it will be pursued like the chaff of the mountains before the wind
and like the dust before the wind storm.
14 At the time of evening, look, calamity;
before morning it is no more.
This is the portion of those who plunder us
and the lot for those who spoil us.

Chapter 18

1 Woe to the land of whirring pairs of wings
which (is) on the other side of the rivers of Cush,
2 which sends ambassadors on the sea,
and in papyrus vessels upon the face of the waters,
(saying:) "Go, swift messengers,
to a nation tall and smooth,
to a people feared from there and beyond,
a nation dominating and trampling,
whose land rivers have divided."
3 All inhabitants of the world
and dwellers of the earth,
when (someone) lifts the banner upon the mountains you shall see
and when (someone) blasts the trumpet you shall hear.
4 For the following is what Yahweh told me:
"I will be quiet and I will watch in my place,
like the dazzling heat in bright daylight,
and like a cloud of dew in the heat of (the grain) harvest."
5 When before harvest, as soon as the bud is finished,
and (as soon as) the flower renders an unripe grape,
then he will cut the shoots with the pruning knives;
and he has removed the branches; he has lopped off.
6 They together will be left to the raptors of the mountains
and to the beasts of the earth.
And the raptors will summer upon it
and all the beasts of the earth will winter upon it.
7 At that time tribute will be brought to Yahweh of Hosts,
a people tall and smooth,
and from a people feared from there and beyond,
a nation dominating and trampling,
whose land rivers have divided,
to the place of the name of Yahweh of Hosts, Mount Zion.

CHAPTER III

TRANSLATION NOTES

Translation Notes

17:1(a). מַשָּׂא דַּמָּשֶׂק--"the oracle about Damascus"

מַשָּׂא דַּמָּשֶׂק is a topical genitive.[1] מַשָּׂא describes the intent and not the form of the oracle (see Excursus). In prophetic usage it introduces the oracle that explains how Yahweh is manifesting or will manifest his revealed will in human affairs.[2] 1QIsa[a] writes Damascus דרמשק. Kutscher explains that this form was a later name for the city.[3] Chronicles gives evidence to this later form in 1 Chronicles 18:5-6; 2 Chronicles 16:2; 24:23; 28:5; and 28:23.

17:1(b). הִנֵּה דַמֶּשֶׂק מוּסָר מֵעִיר--"look! Damascus will be removed from (being) a city"

Gesenius (GKC) says the participle often announces a future event when the

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[1] Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 9.5.3e (hereafter cited as Waltke).

[2] Richard D. Weis, "A Definition of the Genre *Maśśâ'* in the Hebrew Bible" (Ph.D. dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, 1986), p. 276. Weis states that prophetic מַשָּׂא means the "prophetic exposition of YHWH's revealed will or activity."

[3] E. Y. Kutscher, The Language and Linguistice Background of the Isaiah Scroll (1QIs[a]), Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah, vol. 6 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974), p. 4 (hereafter cited as Kutscher).

subject is introduced by הִנֵּה.[4] This is especially so when that event is a *futurum instans*, an event that is imminent or near at hand and is sure to occur.

מוּסָר is a Hophal masculine participle from סוּר, "turn aside." Donner takes the root to be יסר, "chastise," which Wildberger rejects because there is no clear example of יסר appearing in the causative verbal pattern. According to the next verb וְהָיְתָה Damascus is feminine. Duhm and Donner emend מוּסָר to feminine to agree with the gender of Damascus but Wildberger and Clements do not.[5] Michaelis interprets מוּסָר as a noun but that is unprecedented.[6] Citing GKC 121b Wildberger deems Damascus an accusative and makes מוּסָר an impersonal participle in which case one would render the colon: "there is being removed Damascus."[7] סוּר appears again near the end of c. 18 in the Hiphil (Isa 18:5).

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[4] Kautzsch, E., ed., Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, 2nd English ed., revised according with the 28th German ed. by A. E. Cowley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), 116p (hereafter cited as GKC); see also Francis Brown, S. R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, eds., A Hebrew and English Lexicon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), s.v. "הִנֵּה" (hereafter cited as BDB).

[5] Bernhard Duhm, Das Buch Jesaia, 5th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1968), p. 132 (hereafter cited as Duhm); Herbert Donner, Israel unter den Völkern: Die Stellung der klassischen Propheten des 8. Jahrhunderts v. Chr. zur Aussenpolitik der Könige von Israel und Juda, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum, vol. 11 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964), p. 39 (hereafter cited as Donner, Israel); H. Wildberger, Jesaja, Part 2: Jesaja 13--27, Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament, 10/2 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978), p. 635 (hereafter cited asWildberger); R. E. Clements, Isaiah 1-39, New Century Bible Commentary (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1980), p. 158 (hereafter cited as Clements, Isaiah 1-39).

[6] Cited by J. A. Alexander, Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1974), p. 438 (hereafter cited as Alexander).

[7] Also Otto Procksch, Jesaja I, Kommentar zum Alten Testament, vol. 11 (Leipzig: A. Deichertsche, 1930), p. 227 (hereafter cited as Procksch).

According to Delitzsch מֵעִיר is an abbreviation for מֵהְיוֹת עִיר.[8] In that case Damascus is being removed from the state or class of cities. GKC 119v, w supports such a use for *min* and notes that in certain cases *min* with the idea of separation can only be rendered by complete final clauses. Williams recognizes this use of *min* and calls it the privative (deprived of) use.[9]

17:1(c). וְהָיְתָה מְעִי מַפָּלָה--"and she will become a heap of ruin."

וְהָיְתָה is a consecutive Qal perfect third feminine singular. The *waw* consecutive perfect form only follows a participle when the participle asserts something indefinite or undetermined and not when it describes an actual concrete situation.[10] After a participle in future time it refers to a consequential situation in future time.[11] The antecedent of the feminine היה is the hidden head noun for the subject "city of Damascus."[12] 1QIsa[a] has והיית. This is an example of a scribe aramaicizing the Massoretic Text (MT).[13]

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[8] F. Delitzsch and C. Keil, Commentary on the Old Testament., 10 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1975), vol. 7: Isaiah, by F. Delitzsch, two vols. in one, trans. James Martin, p. 332 (volume 1 of Isaiah hereafter cited as Delitzsch); cf. 1 Kings 15:13; similarly Alexander, p. 332.

[9] Ronald J. Williams, Hebrew Syntax: An Outline, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), para. 321 (hereafter cited as Williams).

[10] S. R. Driver, A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew and Other Sytactical Questions (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1892), p. 137.

[11] Waltke 37.7.2a.

[12] Waltke 6.4.1d.

[13] Kutscher, p. 159; Rudolf Macuch, Grammatik des Samaritanischen Aramäisch (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1982), p. 218.

מְעִי is a much disputed *hapax legomenon*. Otto Procksch believes there was an original מֵעִיר.[14] This is difficult to defend because it is unlikely that the author would use the same word twice. Aartun argues it stems from the Ugarit *mgy*, "come, reach somewhere," and renders the clause "she will be the entrance of collapse."[15] The parallelism Aartun attempts to establish with the previous colon is weak and his evidence overall for this Ugaritic connection is slim. Watts derives the word from מעה, "internal organs," but then contradicts himself by agreeing with Wildberger and Delitzsch (see below).[16] This would be the only time a derivative of מעה appears in such a context. For 17:1(c) the Vulgate (Vul) has *et erit sicut acervus lapidum in ruina*, "and it will be just as a heap of stones in a ruin." Targum Jonathan (Tg) reads ותהי לכרך מחמרא, "and she will be a fortress turned into a ruinous heap." 1QIsa[a] is identical with MT. Only the Septuagint (LXX) omits מְעִי and has καὶ ἔσται εἰς πτῶσιν, "and it will be fallen." The Hebräisches und Aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament (HALAT) suggests מְעִי comes from the noun עִי, "heap of stones, of rubble."[17] The מ comes either by dittography from the prior מֵעִיר or from a corruption of an original *lamedh*. The dittography explanation is unlikely because the two words are not

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[14] Procksch, p. 227.

[15] Kjell Aartun, "Bemerkungen zur Etymologie der ugaritisch bezeugten Wurzel mġy," Ugarit-Forschungen 6 (1974): 437-38.

[16] John D. Watts, Isaiah 1-33, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, Texas: Word, 1985), p. 236 (hereafter cited as Watts).

[17] Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, Hebräisches und Aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament, third edition (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974) (hereafter cited as HALAT).

proximate.[18] According to BDB מְעִי is an alternate form of עִי from עוה (I), "bend, twist."[19] The usage of עִי supports this. Contexts identical to this one use עִי to mean "heap."[20] Isaiah 25:2, which expresses a thought similar to 17:1(b), also puts the idea of "heap" (גַּל) opposite a word related to מַפֵּלָה (מַפֵּלָה). The author would have had reason to choose a form with *mem* since מְעִי serves to extend the alliteration in *mem* from the previous colon: מַפֵּלָה מְעִי...מוּסָר מֵעִיר. It would give paranomasia between מֵעִיר and מְעִי.

מַפֵּלָה is a feminine noun "ruin" from נפל. It is either the genitive of מְעִי or is a hendiadys and literally translates into "a heap of ruin."

17:2(a). עֲזֻבוֹת עָרֵי עֲרֹעֵר--"the cities of Aroer will be abandoned"

עֲזֻבוֹת is a Qal feminine plural participle of עזב, "leave, forsake, loose." The context gives this a future tense. It begins an alliteration with *ayin*.

עָרֵי עֲרֹעֵר is supported by the Vul and 1QIsa[a] but not by the LXX or the Tg. 1QIsa[a] has עורערו which Kutscher explains is the same as the MT.[21] The final *waw* is either a place name *waw* (cf. 1 Chr 6:77) or the effect of the Arab inhabitants of the Transjordan who added '*u*' at the end of proper nouns. Kutscher explains that the internal waw is due to the *ḥataf* assimilating to the 'o' vowel after the *resh*. The Tg has שביקן קרויהון וחרבן, "their cities are deserted and desolate." This could reflect a different analysis of the MT, a Piel infinitive absolute עַרְעֵר, "laid bare" (cf. Jer 51:58). The LXX has

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[18] Cf. Wildberger, p. 635.

[19] So Wildberger, p, 635; Delitzsch, p. 340.

[20] Ps 79:1; Jer 26:18; Micah 1:6; 3:12.

[21] Kutscher, p. 114.

καταλελειμμένη εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, "she is forsaken forever." This could be the LXX interpreting a proper noun as it does sometimes (cf. 17:5).

Many commentators follow the LXX to some degree because no one has found an Aroer in traditional Syrian territory. Procksch follows the LXX but recovers the ערי from the MT and emends it to עריהָ, "her cities."[22] He views ערער as a scribal error from the following לעדרים and deletes it. De Legarde suggests that the LXX reading comes from a Hebrew reading עָרֶיהָ עַדֵי עַד, "her cities forever," although the LXX does not evidence עָרֶיהָ.[23] Many commentators approximate his suggestion but try to keep more of the MT and emend it toward the LXX.[24] Wildberger remains with the MT but wants to move this and the rest of verse two into the Moab oracle (Isaiah 15-16).[25] Georg Ewald makes the likely suggestion that at this time Damascus controlled an Aroer.[26]

In the Hebrew Bible three places carry the name Aroer: a place near Beer-sheba (1 Sam 30:28); a place near Rabbah (Rabbah is also Rabbath-ammon) in Ammon (Joshua 13:25); and the other thirteen references are to the city or area around the Arnon River east of the Dead Sea. Many times in

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[22] Procksch, p. 228.

[23] BDB, s.v. "עֲרֹעֵר".

[24] Cited in BDB; cf. Donner, Israel, p. 39; Duhm, p. 132; Georg Fohrer, Das Buch Jesaja, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1966), p. 213; Otto Kaiser, Isaiah 13-39, The Old Testament Library, trans. R. A. Wilson (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), p. 75.

[25] Wildberger, p. 635.

[26] Georg H. A. von Ewald, Commentary on the Prophets of the Old Testament, vol. 2: Yesaya, `Obadya, and Mikha, trans. J. F. Smith (Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1876), p. 114.

the Hebrew Bible the Aroer on the Arnon refers to an area.[27] Hazael of Aram conquered the Aroer on the Arnon River in *ca.* 825 B.C. in his conquest of Gilead (2 Kings 10:33). It could have happened again. Israel regained much lost territory in the succeeding years but then according to Amos lost it in the middle of the eighth century. Amos pronounces judgment upon Syria for reconquering Gilead (Amos 1:3). At the very least the cities of Aroer could be those near Rabbah.[28]

17:2(b). לַעֲדָרִים תִּהְיֶינָה--"they will be for flocks"

The *lamedh* expresses possession or a quasi-allative relation.[29] The subject is the cities of Aroer.

17:2(c). וְרָבְצוּ וְאֵין מַחֲרִיד--"they will lie down and none will make (them) afraid"

מַחֲרִיד is a Hiphil participle from חרד, "tremble, be terrified." The particle of non-existence usually negates it.[30] The subject is "flocks."

17:3(a). וְנִשְׁבַּת מִבְצָר מֵאֶפְרַיִם--"and the fortification will disappear from Ephraim"

The Niphal verb נִשְׁבַּת, from שבת, means "be brought to a stop, disappear" (HALAT). BDB equates the Hiphil of שבת + the preposition *min* with the

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[27] Deut 3:12; Judg 11:26; Joshua 13:9.

[28] Edward J. Young, The Book of Isaiah, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1965), p. 469 (volume 1 hereafter cited as Young).

[29] Waltke 11.2.10d.

[30] Waltke 37.5-6.

Hiphil of סוּר + the preposition *min* suggesting that this line contains an idea similar to that of 17:1(b) above where there is a Hophal form of סוּר. Procksch deletes the *min* to build a construct chain and identify the fortress with Damascus but an emendation is doubtful when it is only done on semantic grounds.[31]

מִבְצָר, "fortification," is probably an aspect of Samaria and not of Damascus since as an aspect of Samaria it keeps the verse's symmetry: a major aspect from Ephraim with something from Damascus, the glory of Aram's remnant with the glory of the Israelites. The "fortification" could be Samaria, which the Hebrew Bible calls a מִבְצָר at 2 Kings 10:2, or it could have the collective meaning of all of Samaria's fortified cities. According to 2 Kings 8:12 מִבְצָרִים are the the cities of Israel that Damascus attacked.

Donner emends מַאֲפְרַיִם to "Aram" because Ephraim is not introduced until later.[32] Wildberger correctly points out that since the verse ties the destiny of the Israelites to that of the "Aram" the verse could also mention Ephraim here.[33]

17:3(b). וּמַמְלָכָה מִדַּמֶּשֶׂק--"and the kingdom from Damascus"

מַמְלָכָה, a feminine noun, denotes the sovereignty and dominion of the king rather than the power of the king (מַלְכוּת) or the quality that comes from being

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[31] Procksch, p. 228.

[32] Donner, Israel, p. 39.

[33] Wildberger, p. 636.

associated with the king (מְלוּכָה).[34] On the 1QIsa[a] spelling of Damascus see note at 17:1(a). The *waw* is coordinative.

17:3(c,d). וּשְׁאָר אֲרָם כִּכְבוֹד בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל יִהְיוּ--"and the remnant of Syria will be like the glory of the Israelites"

The masculine noun שְׁאָר is a collective and therefore takes a plural verb.[35] 1QIsa[a] has the singular יהיה to agree with the singular noun.

In Isaiah שְׁאָר is always the people who remains after the judgment of God falls upon a nation.[36] The MT includes וּשְׁאָר אֲרָם with the previous colon. The Tg and the Vul follow our division. The LXX captures the meaning of the MT division with καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν τῶν Σύρων ἀπολεῖται οὐ γὰρ σὺ βελτίων εἶ τῶν υἱῶν Ισραηλ καὶ τῆς δόξης αὐτῶν, "and the remnant of Syrians will perish, for you are not better than the Israelites and their glory." However, such a reading admits a total destruction of the Israelites that the succeeding verses contradict. To keep the sense of the LXX some replace כִּכְבוֹד with יאבד and then place יאבד with this colon.[37] This balances the line lengths but takes away the word "glory" that has the LXX's support. Wildberger prefers to leave the consonantal text alone and tries to achieve a better balance in line lengths by redividing the cola so that כִּכְבוֹד belongs to the preceding colon. This strains the integrity of the colon as a semantic unit

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[34] Cf. BDB, s.v. "מלך (II)".

[35] GKC 145a; Williams 229.

[36] Gerhard F. Hasel, The Remnant: The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea from Genesis to Isaiah (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Andrews University Press, 1974), p. 400-401.

[37] Duhm, p. 133; Donner, Israel, p. 39.

and overlooks the balance that does exist. The stress length of the four lines of this verse form a chiasm. Donner removes the final verb of the verse on the grounds that someone added it to compensate for the wrong division by the MT but he can only eliminate the need for the verb after he reconstructs the verse.[38]

According to passages like Amos 3:12; 4:5; and Hos 2:2 בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל can refer to the Northern Kingdom. The comparison that this colon makes with the Northern Kingdom may be with the way the Northern Kingdom is or as it will be. Before the Damascene kingdom fell the Syrians and the Philistines had mutilated the Northern Kingdom (cf. Isa 9:12). The succeeding verses talk of what will yet happen to the Northern Kingdom.

17:3(e). נְאֻם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת--"the utterance of Yahweh of Hosts"
נְאֻם יְהוָה is a nominal exclamation which is independent of its grammatical context.[39] נְאֻם follows neither nominal nor verbal paradigms and is a particle of speech.[40]

יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת emphasizes the kingship and the combative dimension of Yahweh as well as the location of Zion as Yahweh's dwelling place.[41] The one who determines the nations' destiny has sworn the foregoing to them.

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[38] Donner, Israel, p. 39.

[39] Waltke 40.2.3a.

[40] Samuel A.Meier, Speaking of Speaking: Marking Direct Discourse in the Hebrew Bible, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum, vol. 46 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992), p. 303.

[41] Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, In Search of God: The Meaning and Message of the Everlasting Names, trans. Frederick H. Cryer (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), pp. 126, 136 (hereafter cited as Mettinger).

This ends a section according to Codex Aleppo, Codex Leningrad B19^{A} (BHS has a *setumah*), 1QIsa^{a}, and the LXX. 1QIsa^{a} has an open paragraph.

17:4(a). וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא--"and it will be in that day"

בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא appears forty-five times in Isaiah. Here the phrase intends to include supplementary information.[42] When בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא introduces supplementary information it synchronizes the time of the foregoing event to the preceding event.[43]

וְהָיָה is typically found with בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא.[44] Some would like to remove it because they find the verb makes the line too long, it does not appear with the בּיוֹם הַהוּא in v. 9, and it is superfluous.[45] Watts translates it as a present to keep with the present time he has chosen for verses 1-3.[46] This overlooks the fact that בּיוֹם הַהוּא introduces supplementary material in only past and future pericopes.[47]

17:4(b). יִדַּל כְּבוֹד יַעֲקֹב--"the glory of Jacob will be diminished"

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[42] Waltke 17.5b.

[43] Simon J. De Vries, Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: Time and History in the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1975), p. 297 (hereafter cited as De Vries).

[44] Ibid.

[45] Duhm, p. 133.

[46] Watts, p. 236.

[47] De Vries, p. 297.

יִדַּל is the Qal imperfect from דלל (I), "be(come) small, lowly" according to HALAT.[48] BDB recognizes only one word דלל, "hang, be low, languish" and analyzes this occurrence as a Niphal imperfect. In either case the word means that Jacob's glory will diminish. דלל (I) is a relatively rare word occurring seven times in the Hebrew Bible. In the one other occurrence where the subject of דלל is a nation the Midianites take from Israel its agricultural production and leave Israel impoverished (יִדַּל in Judg 6:6). Then, as often happens with this verb, Israel confidently turns to Yahweh.[49] We also see such a turning to Yahweh here at 17:7-8. The same Midianite event functions in Isa 10:26 as an example of how God will deliver Israel from Assyria.

In Isaiah someone's כָּבוֹד endures only when God gives it. Only Assyria enjoys a non-divine "glory" (Isa 8:7). It appears when Yahweh brings Assyria against Judah and then it vanishes when Yahweh consumes it (Isa 10:18). כָּבוֹד is a catchword with the word in verse 3. This marks the progression of thought: the remnant of Syria is like the glory of the Israelites and the glory of Israel (Jacob) is diminished.

Although יַעֲקֹב usually represents all Israel it can refer to the Northern Kingdom as in Isa 9:8. The context indicates that in 17:4 "Jacob" concerns the Northern Kingdom. "Jacob" appears here as a human image with flesh and fat.

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[48] Also GKC 67g and Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament, 7 vols. (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1987-), s.v. "דלל," by H.-J. Fabry (hereafter cited as TWAT).

[49] TWAT, s.v. "דלל," by. H.-J. Fabry.

Procksch considers verse 4 to be an addition that someone added to explain the point of comparison in verse 3.[50] This is unsupported textually and overlooks the possible poetic delaying tactic.

17:4(c). וּמִשְׁמַן בְּשָׂרוֹ יֵרָזֶה--"and the fatness of his flesh will be made lean" מִשְׁמַן, "fatness," is a noun in construct from שׁמן (I), "grow fat." It appears four times in the Hebrew Bible. In Isa 10:16 it appears with many of the same words that appear here: כָּבוֹד, רָזוֹן, בָּשָׂר, but it describes God's slaughter of Assyria. In Ps 78:31 the מִשְׁמַן are choice men of Israel whom God destroyed in the wilderness wanderings. The psalm concludes with the statement that God rejected Ephraim and chose Judah and Mt. Zion. In all occurrences of this word the context is one of destruction or slaughter (also Dan 11:24).

The pronoun of בְּשָׂרוֹ refers to "Jacob." In 10:16 and 18 where the verbal agreement with 17:4 is quite high "flesh" is a figure for Assyria's farming and forest wealth (also cf. 9:20).

רזה, "be or grow lean," appears two times in the Hebrew Bible: Zeph 2:11; and here where it is a Niphal imperfect third masculine singular. Derivatives of the word are often the antonym of a word for fatness (Num 13:20, Ezek 34:20). In Ps 106:15 the derivative רָזוֹן describes Yahweh's slaying of the Israelites in the wilderness wanderings (see above מִשְׁמַן).

The Tg interprets this clause as יעותר יקריה יגלי, "the wealth of his glory will go into exile."

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[50] Procksch, p. 229.

17:5(a). וְהָיָה כְּאֶסֹף קָצִיר קָמָה--"and it will be as when one gathers a harvest, standing grain"

כְּאֶסֹף introduces a comparative clause.[51] In 17:5 the point of comparison and its punitive nature is unknown until 17:6. This vagueness is a feature of Hebrew poetry.[52]

קָצִיר is a masculine noun meaning, "harvesting, harvest." To deal with the two similar objects some scholars translate this object as, "at harvest."[53] However, when קָצִיר is a dativa determiner of time or a temporal accusative either a preposition governs קָצִיר or it is in construct with another word.[54] BDB suggests that one emend it to a Qal participle, קֹצֵר, "harvester."[55] This emendation provides a referent for the pronoun of "his arm" in the next colon but it has little textual support. Wildberger sees קָצִיר as a gloss since its verbal form is also present (but see below).[56] Novel suggestions are those of Gesenius who interprets קָצִיר as an abstract singular representing a group of קוצרים, "harvesters," and Dillmann who interprets it as a verbal noun analogous to פָּלִיל.[57] The Vul and the LXX have the word

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[51] Waltke 38.5.

[52] Waltke 11.2.9b.

[53] According to Wildberger, 636, these include Luzatto, Nägelsbach, and Cheyne.

[54] BDB, s.v. "קָצִיר."

[55] Cf. Clements, Isaiah 1-39, p. 159; Duhm, p. 133; Procksch, p. 229.

[56] Wildberger, p. 636; Watts, 237.

[57] Wildberger, p. 635, cites Gesenius; August Dillmann, Der Prophet Jesaia, Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament., 5th ed. (Leipzig: Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1890), p. 161.

"harvest." The Tg uses "harvester" but at the time of the Targum the word קָצִיר was used for "harvester."[58] Young keeps the MT vocalization and puts the feminine noun קָמָה, "standing grain," in apposition to "harvest."[59]

In the Hebrew Bible קָצִיר is always the object of קָצַר and never the object of אסף, "gather." Indeed, verse 5 describes the work of harvest atypically. The normal procedure was for the "harvester" (קוֹצֵר) to fill his hand with the "heads of grain" (שִׁבֳּלִים) of the "standing grain" (קָמָה) and to "harvest" them with his "arm" (זְרוֹעַ) using a sickle. The armfuls would fall in a heap behind the "harvester" where a "gatherer" would gather them into his bosom. The "gatherer" would tie the heads into sheaves and set them in heaps.[60] In contrast 17:5(a) describes the gathering of that which no one has yet cut. One can explain this irregularity as a type of parallelism that Norman Bronznick identifies whereby the author deliberately transposes the corresponding objects or predicates of two cola.[61] Such a grammatical chiasm serves to interlock the cola tightly. On 17:5 Bronznick proposes that one see the objects "standing grain" and "heads" as transposed parallels (and I would also add קָצִיר to the transposition).[62] The verse means to say: "It

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[58] Hermann Vogelstein, Die Landwirtschaft in Palästina zur Zeit der Misnâh: Der Getreidebau (Berlin: Verlag von Mayer & Müller, 1884), p. 57 (hereafter cited as Vogelstein).

[59] Young, p. 468.

[60] Encyclopedia Biblica, s.v. "Agriculture" (hereafter cited as EB); it relies in part on the Mishna; cf. Ps 129:7.

[61] Norman M.Bronznick, "'Metathetic Parallelism'--An Unrecognized Subtype of Synonymous Parallelism," Hebrew Annual Review 3 (1979): 25; he calls this "metathetic parallelism".

[62] Ibid., p. 26.

shall be as one gathers the heads of grain and as one harvests the harvest, the standing grain, with his arm."

Yitzhak Avishur lists אסף and לקט of Isa 17:5 as an example of word-pairs in tri-cola.[63]

17:5(b). וּזְרֹעוֹ שִׁבֳּלִים יְקָצוֹר--"and one harvests heads of grain with his arm" יְקָצוֹר is a Qal imperfect third masculine singular from קצר, "reap, harvest."[64] This an example of the finite verb continuing the preposition plus infinitive construction. GKC 114r suggests that placing the verb at the end of the clause takes the verb away from the *waw* and makes the imperfect form necessary. 1QIsa[a] has קצר that Kutscher sees as a substitution that the earlier occurrence of the word influenced.[65] All the versions agree with the MT.

זְרֹעַ is a feminine noun written defectively. All the versions render it "his arm" with the LXX using both of the possible meanings for זרע: "the 'seed' of the heads of grain he cuts with his 'arm'." Most interpret it as the subject but this is difficult since the verb is masculine.[66] BDB is right to consider it to be an accusative of instrument. Above we discuss the role of זְרֹעַ in agriculture and how at 17:5 it is a good candidate for grammatical chiasm. The antecedent of the pronominal suffix is an impersonal subject, which is also the subject in the previous clause.

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[63] Yitzhak Avishur, Stylistic Studies of Word-Pairs in Biblical and Ancient Semitic Literatures, Alter Orient und Altes Testament, vol. 210 (Kevelaer: Verlag Butzon & Becker, 1984), p. 64 (hereafter cited as Avishur).

[64] In BDB קצר (I); in HALAT קצר (II).

[65] Kutscher, p. 323.

[66] For example, Wildberger, p. 636.

17:5(c). וְהָיָה כִּמְלַקֵּט שִׁבֳּלִים בְּעֵמֶק רְפָאִים--"and it will be as when one gleans heads of grain in Rephaim Valley"

וְהָיָה ties this clause with 17:4 and sets the time in the future.

מְלַקֵּט is a Piel participle from לקט, "pick or gather up, glean." The *kaph* introduces a comparative clause.[67] As with the two preceding clauses, the reader will surmise the apodosis at verse 6. Regarding the harvest the Hebrew Bible only uses לקט for the gathering of gleanings (cf. Ruth 2:2-23). שִׁבֹּלֶת, which is the noun stem of שִׁבֳּלִים, appears with לקט in the Hebrew Bible to refer to the gathering done by the poor.[68] As such this clause represents a further intensification of the theme of the previous two clauses. The image here is one of the total stripping of a fruitful valley.

עֵמֶק רְפָאִים is a valley a few miles southwest of Jerusalem named after a major branch of the original Palestinian inhabitants (Deuteronomy 2:20-21). It was a major place for David's successful battles against the Philistines (2 Samuel 5). The Tg prefers to read it literally as the "plain of giants" and the LXX as the "valley of giants." This is one of two possibilities for רְפָאִים. The other is "dead men," which is how Isaiah uses the word in its other occurrences in Isaiah.[69] This suggests that Isaiah intended a play on words. Aram believed that Yahweh was only a god of the mountains (1 Kings 20:28). The use of Rephaim Valley proves otherwise. The location points to Judah as the author's audience.

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[67] Waltke 38.5.

[68] Oded Borowski, Agriculture in Iron Age Israel, (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1987), p. 61 (hereafter cited as Borowski).

[69] Isaiah 14:9; 26:14, 19.

17:6(a). וְנִשְׁאַר־בּוֹ עוֹלֵלֹת כְּנֹקֵף זַיִת--"and there will be left in it gleaning berries like the striking of the olive tree"

נִשְׁאַר is the Niphal perfect third masculine singular of שׁאר, "remain, be left over."[70] The subject is עוֹלֵלֹת. We can explain why the subject and the predicate disagree in gender and number as an example of the frequent case where a verb that precedes the subject is masculine singular regardless of the subject's gender and number.[71] The noun form of this verb appeared in verse 3. The point of comparison is the lack of survivors.

If one follows the rule that the referent is the closest matching noun the referent of בּוֹ, "in him," would be the "Valley of Rephaim." It might also be "Jacob" in verse 4.

Deuteronomy 8:8 uses the same agricultural products named in Isaiah 17:4-6, "wheat" and "oil," to head the lists that describe the promised land. Gustaf Dalman believes this indicates that wheat and oil were the foundations of a household in which case the illustration is most severe.[72]

The noun נֹקֵף, "striking off," is from נקף (I), "strike off." נֹקֵף is the usual word for harvesting olive trees.[73] Harvesters would strike the olive trees to remove the final olives.[74] The *kaph* heads a comparative clause.

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[70] HALAT; in BDB שׁאר (I).

[71] Williams 41.

[72] Gustaf Dalman, Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina, vol. 4: Brot, Öl und Wein (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1935), p. 163 (hereafter cited as Dalman); he cites an Arabic proverb that says as much.

[73] Dalman, p.194; cf. Deut 24:20.

[74] Borowski, p. 119; Dalman, p. 194.

עוֹלֵלֹת means "gleanings of grapes or olives."[75] Pickers had to leave the olives that were at the top of the tree.

זַיִת is a masculine noun that denotes "olive tree, olive."

The BHS editors suggest from the LXX's ἢ that one should place אוֹ, "or," before the comparative clause and transpose the clause to the end of verse 5. This is a strange use of evidence from the LXX because the LXX does not support the transposition. Procksch suggests the same as the BHS because בּוֹ needs an immediate referent that has "berries" (עוֹלֵלֹת).[76] Moving the clause with זַיִת makes it the referent. Kissane puts the comparative clause ahead of "Rephaim Valley."[77] Wildberger finds a sufficient referent in "Jacob."[78]

17:6(b). שְׁנַיִם שְׁלֹשָׁה גַּרְגְּרִים בְּרֹאשׁ אָמִיר--"two, three ripe olives on the top of the high (bough)"

שְׁנַיִם שְׁלֹשָׁה. Placing numbers in collocation is a device to express a non-specific number.[79] Dillmann believes that "two, three" and "four, five" is a way to emphasize how few will survive.[80]

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[75] Borowski, p. 119.

[76] Procksch, p. 229.

[77] Edward J. Kissane, The Book of Isaiah, 2 vol. (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1941), p. 199 (volume 1 hereafter cited as Kissane).

[78] Wildberger, p. 637.

[79] GKC 134s.

[80] Dillmann, p. 161.

גַּרְגְּרִים is a masculine plural noun. It is a hapax legomenon that the HALAT renders "ripe olives" and BDB renders "berries." The context would support HALAT. The word means both grape and olive berries in post-biblical Hebrew.[81] The LXX has "berries of the olive," although it is unclear which Hebrew words this translates, the Vul has simply "olives," and the Tg takes the word as it is into its translation. Young finds support for "ripe olives" in an Arabic word *jar-jar*, "ripe olives."[82]

In the Hebrew Bible אָמִיר appears only here and in Isa 17:9. The LXX has in place of this word ἄκρου, "tip," and both the Vul with *rami* and the Tg with צנפא have words that mean "bough." BDB suggests it means "summit" and HALAT "branch." The idea is of some part of the plant that is high but probably not "summit" since the masculine noun רֹאשׁ, "top," still modifies it. The genitive may be epexegetical but we take it in the way of the versions, which is as a possessive. Andrzej Strus thinks אָמִיר is an allusion to אֲרָם, "Aram," at 17:3.[83]

17:6(c). אַרְבָּעָה חֲמִשָּׁה בְּסָעִפֶּיהָ פֹּרִיָּה--"four, five on the branches of it, the fruitful (tree)"

סָעִיף is a masculine plural noun with a third feminine singular pronominal suffix. In the Hebrew Bible it means "cleft" three times and "branch" at Isa 27:10. A related form, סָעַפָּה, means "branch" in Ezek 31:6, 8. When סָעִיף has

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[81] Dalman, pp. 238, 302.

[82] Young, p. 470; also Procksch, p. 230.

[83] Andrzej Strus, "Interpretation des noms propres sans les oracles contre les nations," in Supplements to Vetus Testamentum, 36 (Leiden: Brill, 1985).

the meaning "cleft" it always appears with סֶלַע, "cliff," and is a place of refuge. סָעִיף as "branch" and forms related to סָעִיף are always used metaphorically. They describe a destroyed city in Isa 27:10 (סָעִיף), a destroyed Assyria in Ezek 31:6 and 8 (סַעַפָּה), and the act of destroying Assyria in Isa 10:33 (סֵעֵף, "lop off [boughs]"). If in Isa 17:6 סָעִיף is a metaphor for city we would expect the same for the corresponding word אָמִיר in previous colon. This metaphorical use could apply as well to the occurrence of אָמִיר at Isa 17:9. The Tg inserts a long comment here about Israel being left to dwell in the midst of kingdoms that suggests it sees סָעִיף as representative for a nation.

פֹּרִיָּה is a Qal participle feminine singular of פרה, "bear fruit, be fruitful," and appears six times in the MT. It is in apposition to the pronominal suffix attached to the previous word.[84] GKC considers this verse a case where the scribes have incorrectly divided the radicals. GKC says the words should appear instead as בְּסָעְפֵי הַפֹּרִיָּה, a division which is semantically identical with the MT.[85] There is no support for this division in any of the versions. BHS claims 1QIsa[a] in support of this different division of the letters. This scroll, however, reveals a *yodh* at the end of the first word impressed over what is one or two indecipherable letters and reveals no *heh* at the start of the second word. The radicals in the MT would suit very well the marks that do remain at the damaged spot. Kutscher in his exhaustive study of the scroll believes the damage is a correction to *yodh* (בסעפי) of a

[84] GKC 131n.

[85] GKC 131n, n. 1.

former *heh* (בסעפה) and that this witnesses to the MT.[86] The Vul with (*in cacuminibus eius) fructus eius*, "of her fruitful one," would read פֹּרִיָּהּ. However, there is no occurrence of this verb with a suffix. The effect of this is to place it in apposition with the preceding word. Most commentators take פֹּרִיָּה to be "fruit tree" but Watts has "fruitbearing" and J. Alec Motyer has "fruitful."[87] However, in all of its occurrences the feminine singular participle of פרה refers to the fruitfulness of the tree (e.g., Gen 49:22). To say "fruitful tree" adds to the contrast between Jacob's former and later states.

17:6(d). נְאֻם־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל--"the utterance of Yahweh, the God of Israel" The Hebrew Bible uses this divine name to depict God as the warring monarch of Israel. Here it personalizes the judgment upon Israel and intensifies the impact. There is no escape since the God who is their protector and the God who knows where they are is the God who is bringing judgment. On the other hand there is a note of hope since this is the God who chose Israel.

This ends the section. There is a break here in Codex Leningrad B19^{A} (BHS has a *setumah*) and 1QIsa^{a} (closed paragraph).

17:7(a). בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִשְׁעֶה הָאָדָם עַל־עֹשֵׂהוּ--"in that day a person will look to his Creator"

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[86] Kutscher, p. 532.

[87] Alexander, p. 335; Kissane, p. 196; Wildberger, p. 635; Watts, p. 235; Alec J. Motyer, The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1993), p. 157 (hereafter cited as Motyer).

See on בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא at 17:4(a). The phrase introduces supplementary information synchronized to the foregoing.

When a human being is the subject of שׁעה and God is the object, שׁעה connotes a sense of trust or dependence.

הָאָדָם is not a specific individual but a collective. In Isaiah it refers to humanity. Isaiah 17:7 is the last time the arthrous term appears in Isaiah. The previous arthrous uses relate humanity to God.[88] The use of this general term suggests that in addition to Jacob the referent still includes Aram. However, the succeeding lines indicate that Jacob is the subject. Isaiah 17:7(b) explains that the subject will see the "Holy One of Israel," a term that one would use to give Israel hope.[89] Isaiah 17:10(a) charges that the subject is forgetting the "God of your salvation," something one can only say of Israel. The contrast between verse 10 and verse 7 only works if the subjects are the same. Perhaps the use of הָאָדָם intends to offer two interpretations.

עַל־עֹשֵׂהוּ. This preposition follows שׁעה when the subject is people and the object is God (cf. Isa 31:1). The pronominal suffix on the participle is genitival since the participle is a substantive. 1QIsa[a] has a *yodh* for the *waw* which Kutscher identifies as an Aramaicism.[90] The effect of placing verses 7 and 8 in the middle of c. 17 is to put the promise of salvation in the middle of a series of judgments.[91] Some such as the BHS see Isaiah 17:7-8 as prose

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[88] Isaiah 2:17, 20, 22; 6:12.

[89] Alexander, p. 82. In the Hebrew Bible only Israel looks to the "Holy One of Israel" (cf. Isa 10:20).

[90] Kutscher, p. 213.

[91] Isa 27:9 has a similar feature with the same subject matter.

apparently because of the different meter and longer lines. However, parallelism is still the dominant feature in both verses. The different length may be done for emphasis.[92]

17:7(b). וְעֵינָיו אֶל־קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל תִּרְאֶינָה--"and his eyes the Holy One of Israel will see"

The masculine singular pronominal suffix on עַיִן refers to הָאָדָם.

קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל is a divine name one finds almost exclusively in Isaiah.

תִּרְאֶינָה is the Qal imperfect third feminine plural of ראה, "see."

17:8(a). וְלֹא יִשְׁעֶה אֶל־הַמִּזְבְּחוֹת--"and he will not look to the altars"

The MT has a *zaqeph parvum* on יִשְׁעֶה.

1QIsa[a] has על instead of אל. Kutscher believes this is due to the weakening of the pharyngeals.[93] The scribe thought the preposition was על from verse 7. Most see הַמִּזְבְּחוֹת and the final two words of the verse אֲשֵׁרִים, "Asherim," and חַמָּנִים, "Chammanim," as glosses.[94] Omitting these words gives a smooth parallel to verse 7 but no text attests this omission.

17:8(b). מַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו--"the work of his hands"

מַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו is a construct chain functioning as the second accusative of the verb שעה. The *waw* is missing as happens at times.[95] Hebrew does not always

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[92] Isaiah 17 does something similar in other places. See e.g., Isa 17:3c,d; 17:5c,d; 17:9a,b; 17:11:c,d. In these cases the bicolon may well be one colon. The longer lines emphasize the point. Usually they conclude the thought.

[93] Kutscher, p. 410.

[94] For example, BHS; Wildberger, p. 637.

[95] Cf. Hos 1:1; Waltke 39.2.1b.

repeat the preposition.[96] מַעֲשֵׂה is a masculine noun from the same verb עשׂה from which the word "Creator" comes. The suffix of יָדָיו refers to הָאָדָם, "person." 1QIsa[a] does not have יד but the suffix that MT has on יד is instead on מעשׂה. This would suggest omission by homoioteleuton.

Isaiah has the phrase "the work of his hands" nine times. When it belongs to an unrighteous person it always means idols. This is also true for most other cases of its use in the Hebrew Bible as Wildberger also says.[97] Avishur identifies יָד and אֶצְבָּעוֹת as a an example of a type of word-pair common to Semitic languages where one word names a part of what the other word names. Usually the words appear in parallelistic form with the general noun first and the member noun second.[98]

17:8(c). וַאֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ אֶצְבְּעֹתָיו לֹא יִרְאֶה--"and what his fingers have made he will not see"

The pronominal suffix on the subject refers to הָאָדָם.

The MT and the Tg divide the verse here. The LXX, Vg and 1QIsa[a] differ from the MT and Tg and from one another in their use of conjunctions in this verse. The LXX, Vg, 1QIsa[a] and the Peshitta agree that there is no conjunction on "Asherim" and that the phrase "what his fingers did make" belongs with the previous phrase "the work of his hands." The net effect is that they divide the verse into a tri-colon (or possibly three bi-cola) rather

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[96] Williams 238.

[97] Wildberger, p 637.

[98] Avishur, p. 302.

than two bi-cola. Kutscher cannot say whether the placement of *waw*s in 1QIsa[a] or in the MT is superior.[99]

Putting the noun clause "what his fingers did make" with ראה, "to see," would parallel verse 7, which also has the direct object precede the verb.

The Hebrew Bible uses the word אֶצְבַּע for "human" fingers most frequently when discussing Levitical services. One finds the expression "what his fingers did make" only in Isa 2:8 where it joins with "the work of their hands" to describe the "idols that fill the land."

17:8(d). וְהָאֲשֵׁרִים וְהַחַמָּנִים--"neither the Asherah poles nor the sun pillars" הָאֲשֵׁרִים are the wooden idol poles of Asherah that compete with the worship of God.[100] Isaiah mentions the word again in 27:9 where it appears with two other words found in 17:8: חַמָּן and מִזְבֵּחַ. The *waw*s have a negative force after a clausal negative.[101]

The meaning of חַמָּנִים is uncertain. From the eight occurrences in the Hebrew Bible a חַמָּן is something that stands with an Asherah as an object of worship to a foreign deity. It is destroyed in the same way as the Asherah and together with the Asherah. Most often it is cut down (גדע or כרת). It is a word that appears more often in later literature. This reference is thus one of the earlier occurrences.

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[99] Kutscher, p. 427.

[100] Cf. John Day, "Asherah in the Hebrew Bible and Northwest Semitic Literature," Journal of Biblical Literature 105/3 (1986): 404.

[101] Waltke 39.2.1b.

BDB defines it as a sun-pillar and cites for support a Phoenician epithet of solar Baal, לבעל חמן. HALAT defines it as an incense altar. On one side of a Palmyrene "altar" an inscription tells of the dedication of a *ḥmn'*. Many take the incense stand pictured on another side of the "altar" to be a representation of that *ḥmn'*.[102] Such a stand that could rest upon an altar might fit the description in 2 Chr 34:4 of the חַמָּן as high above the altars. K.-M. Beyse supports both the proposal of sun-pillar and that of incense altar.[103] Beyse adds that there is an inscription from Palmyra which dedicates a *ḥamman* to the sun-god *šmš*. He points out that 2 Kings 21:3 mentions a cult to the sun in Israel. That verse states that Manasseh was merely reinstating pracitices that Ahaz had carried on. This suggests that Ahaz practiced solar worship and that these practices were coterminous with the חמן of 17:7. Hans Drijvers undermines the suggested definition of "incense altar."[104] He points out that the formula on the Palmyrene "altar," "made and offered this," is only for offering larger constructions like porticoes and columns in the sanctuaries of the Palmyrene gods.[105] In his judgment the so-called Palmyrene "altar" is too large for an altar and is really a building block. Drijvers believes a *ḥamman* is a temple. He presents evidence from a foundation inscription of *Allat*'s temple at Palmyra that defines a חמן.[106] At this site the Greco-Roman

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[102] Moshe Greenberg, Ezekiel 1-20, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1983), p. 132.

[103] TWAT, s.v. "חמם," by K.-M. Beyse.

[104] Hans J. W. Drijvers, "Aramaic hmn' and Hebrew ḥmn: Their Meaning and Root," Journal of Semitic Studies 33/2 (1988): 165-80.

[105] Ibid., p. 167.

[106] Ibid., p. 170.

prostylos temple absorbed the traditional Palmyrene chapel. The foundation text of the new temple calls the old temple the *ḥamana* and the new one *nws'* (ναός). The *ḥamana* measured 7.50 m X 5.50 m. In front of it in the open air stood the altar. Inside was the statue of *Allat*. A similar word in Arabic supports a widespread Semitic usage of this word--Arabic *ḥima*, "sacred enclosure." The "*-an(a)*" ending is a common feature in forming Semitic names. He recommends that one render the Hebrew חמן "chapel" or "sanctuary." Although Drijvers does throw into question the suggestion of "incense altar" his alternative definition has a difficulty. It does not adequately account for the way that the biblical records describe the destruction of a חמן. According to the Hebrew Bible it was "cut" down, a method of destruction that the Hebrew Bible does not apply to "altars" and a method that would not suit "chapels." The חמן was probably a symbol for a deity of that name. At the present level of knowledge "sun pillar" would be the best definition of a חמן. Taylor has shown that sun worship and Asherah worship were done jointly and he argues that the sun worship was an icon for Yahweh worship.[107]

Codex Aleppo has a break and 1QIsa[a] appears to have a closed paragraph. The other Hebrew texts and versions do not have a break.

17:9(a). בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִהְיוּ עָרֵי מָעֻזּוֹ--"in that day his fortress cities will be"
See note on 17:4(a) about בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא. This temporal adverbial phrase adds supplemental information that is at the same time as the foregoing.

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[107] J. Glenn Taylor in "Was Yahweh Worshipped As the Sun?" Biblical Archeology Review, May/June 1994, pp. 53-61, 90-91. His evidence is a four tiered cult stand from Taanach and the *pithoi* from Kuntillet 'Ajrud.

יִהְיוּ is a Qal imperfect third masculine plural. The subject is "his fortified cities." According to Williams a masculine verb frequently replaces a third feminine plural imperfect verb.[108]

The masculine noun מָעוֹז, "mountain stronghold, place of refuge" (HALAT), is an attributive genitive.[109] There is debate over whether it stems from עוז, "take or seek refuge" (BDB), or עזז, "be strong" (HALAT), since the word contains both ideas.[110] The MT suffixes it as עזז. Wagner suggests מעוז with עָרֵי, "cities of," describes the cities' fortification.[111] The masculine singular pronominal suffix on an attributive genitive properly belongs to the whole construct chain--"his fortress cities."[112] The referent for the pronominal suffix is הָאָדָם, "person," from verse 7. The next verse will connect this impersonal subject to "you."

17:9(b). כַּעֲזוּבַת הַחֹרֶשׁ וְהָאָמִיר--"like the abandoned (city) of the woodland and height"

כַּעֲזוּבַת begins a comparative clause.[113] This is the substantival use of a Qal passive participle feminine singular of the verb עזב (I), "leave, forsake." The Qal passive participle feminine appears nine times in the Hebrew Bible--

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[108] Williams 234.

[109] Waltke 9.5.3a.

[110] Wildberger, p. 637, agrees with HALAT.

[111] TWAT, s.v. "עוז," by S. Wagner.

[112] J. Weingreen, "The Construct-Genitive Relation in Hebrew Syntax," Vetus Testamentum 4 (1954): 52.

[113] Waltke 11.2.9a.

seven times in Isaiah--and it always applies to cities or countries (cf. Isa 17:2). BDB categorizes the occurrences at Isaiah 6:12 and 17:9 as nouns. It is possible to have one bound form followed by two genitives such as here with "woodland" and "height."[114] עֲזוּבַת functions here as the construct for genitives of location.[115] It may be a collective for the cities that the native population of Canaan abandoned at Israel's invasion.

חֹרֶשׁ is a masculine noun meaning "wood, wooded height."[116] In 2 Chr 27:4 the word describes the location where Jotham built fortresses. One finds the same idea in 1 Samuel 23:15-19 but with the word חֹרְשָׁה. It is at 1 Samuel 23 that it becomes clear that the word means wooded height.

וְהָאָמִיר. See at 17:6(b) where we define it as "high place." The "forsaken one of the height" may be similar to Isa 32:14 where the deserted "citadel and watchtower" describe the forsaken "fortress and city."

The BHS and many others emend the MT toward the LXX.[117] The LXX follows the MT closely in verse 9 except at 17:9(b) where it has ὃν τρόπον ἐγκατέλιπον οἱ Αμορραῖοι καὶ οἱ Ευαῖοι, "in the same way as the Amorites and the Hivites forsook." Instead of the passive "be forsaken" the LXX has the active verb. There are many problems with the interpretation of the LXX. The words in 17:9 only look a little like the two nations the LXX names. אָמִיר has most of the consonants of הָאֱמֹרִי, "Amorites," but חֹרֶשׁ is unlike

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[114] Williams 29.

[115] Waltke 9.5.2; 37.3c.

[116] BDB; HALAT.

[117] For example, Procksch, p. 231; Wildberber, p. 638.

חִוִּי, "Hivites." The word order of the LXX is the Hebrew Bible's order for all sixteen occurrences of these two words except Joshua 3:10. The words always appear as a part of longer list of countries. However, in 17:9 the Hebrew text does not follow that order. The "Hivites" would not be an example for 17:9 of those who abandoned their places. In the Old Testament by way of treaty the Hivites were the only nation of Canaan with which Israel made peace (Joshua 9:7; 11:19). The Hivites did not need to abandon their places (2 Sam 24:7). The reading of the LXX is not in any other version. The Tg also departs from the MT at 17:9(b) with ככרך דחרוב ואתחמר, "like a fortress that is desolate and ruined." The Tg seems to see in חרשׁ the idea of fortress. Possibly it sees אמיר as coming from the root מור, "alter."[118] However, this would be the only evidence for such a cognate. The Vul also departs from the MT at 17:9(b) with *derelictae sicut aratra et segetes*, "desertings just as ploughs and crops." The Vul gives the word חרשׁ its most common meaning of "plough" and possibly reads it as a participle: חֹרֵשׁ. The Vul's rendering of אמיר is difficult to support. 1QIsa[a] follows the MT.

It would appear that all these texts were trying to come to terms with a text like the MT. There is ancient agreement that the oldest texts had the words חרשׁ and אמיר.[119] We do not deny that the author may have intended אמיר to evoke the remembrance of the Amorites (אֱמֹרִי) who were the people that abandoned their cities in the face of the Israelites. Possibly the ח on the

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[118] Cf. Ps 46:3: "though the earth give way."

[119] The LXX does not חרשׁ and theVul does not have אמיר.

previous word evokes the Hittites, a word that in Ezek 16:3, 45 will appear alone with "Amorites" and in the same order as 17:9.[120] Referring to the Amorites and the Hittites could be an intentional way to lead into the next clause since it was they that experienced devastation at the hands of the Israelites. Definitely אמיר is a catch word that ties this verse to 17:6.

17:9(c). אֲשֶׁר עָזְבוּ מִפְּנֵי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל--"which they forsook before the Israelites" The antecedent of the relative pronoun אֲשֶׁר is the "forsaken woodland and height." The subject of the verb is either the people whom the Israelites displaced at the time of the Canaan occupation or it is impersonal.

מִפְּנֵי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל occurs here, twice in the Torah, and thirteen times in the Former Prophets. Besides the reference at Isa 17:9 this phrase always appears in the context of the exodus from Canaan or in the context of Canaan's occupation. "Before the Israelites" refers not only to a position but also to the reason for the event that took place there--the action happened not only in front of the Israelites but also because of them (e.g., Joshua 6:1; 1 Kings 14:24). The expression occurs where Aroer in Judg 11:33 and the Amorites in 1 Kings 21:26 are participants.

17:9(d). וְהָיְתָה שְׁמָמָה--"and there will be devastation"
וְהָיְתָה is Qal perfect third feminine singular. The subject is שְׁמָמָה.[121]

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[120] Ezekiel calls the Amorite the father and the Hittite the mother of Jerusalem and Samaria.

[121] Another possibility is that the verb has an impersonal subject. Although infrequent, feminine verbs can do this. See GKC 144b and Isaiah 7:7; 14:24. The subject may be the collective of the "his fortified cities" in which case this subject ties to the second person subject of the next line.

שְׁמָמָה, "devastation" (BDB), or "sinister desolation" (HALAT), is a feminine noun. It is always God's doing and is a final judgment even if God uses others to do it (e.g., Jeremiah 12:7-11). Except for Micah 1:7, where שְׁמָמָה refers to idols, it always refers to a country or to cities.

17:10(a). כִּי שָׁכַחְתְּ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעֶךָ--"for you forget your saving God"

כִּי introduces a causal clause. A. Schoors states that the causal clause begun by כִּי can stand either before or after the main clause.[122] In this case there are good reasons to see it as subordinate for what follows. Alexander believes that the עַל כֵּן in the next clause requires that כִּי introduce the reason for what follows.[123] From my examination of Isaiah wherever כִּי precedes עַל כֵּן without an intervening shift in thought the כִּי clause gives the reason for the action עַל כֵּן describes. James Muilenberg found the same about judgment speeches.[124] He says that when כִּי serves as the invective (*Scheltrede*) it provides the motivation for the threat (*Drohrede*) which usually follows. The כִּי clause is *Scheltrede* according to Wildberger who connects it with what follows.[125] Yet the role of כִּי in connecting its clause to what follows does not preclude it serving to tie its clause to the foregoing as can be seen in Isaiah 24:5, 13; and 25:2.

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[122] A. Schoors, "The Particle כי," Oudtestamentische Studien 21 (1981): 264.

[123] Alexander, p. 338.

[124] James Muilenberg, "The Linguistic and Rhetorical Usages of the Particle כי in the Old Testament, Hebrew Union College Annual 32 (1961): 157 (hereafter cited as Muilenberg, "כי"); also see p. 145 on the causal sense.

[125] Wildberger, p. 640.

שָׁכַחְתְּ is a Qal perfect second feminine. Since this verb is quasi-fientive and is an on-going emotional response at the time of the speaker it is in the class of the durative stative perfective. One can render it as above.[126] Since this is the first time Isaiah 17 uses direct address it highlights these verses. The word-pair in this bi-colon שכח and לא זכר confirms the importance of this verse.[127]

The gender of the verb suggests that the verb's subject is one or all of "his fortified cities." Frequently Hebrew construes the plurals of names of things or of persons with the feminine singular of the predicate.[128] The previous verse may have had collectives for cities in עֲזוּבַת and שְׁמָמָה. In keeping with the topic since Isa 17:3 the addressee may well be Samaria. In Isa 7:9 Samaria represents Ephraim.

אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעֵךְ is an attributive genitive.[129] The phrase occurs ten times in the Hebrew Bible and applies to David, Habakkuk and Israel. In the Hebrew Bible only God or one of his designates--Moses, Joshua, judges, or one of the kings of Israel--succeed in being or doing ישע.[130] One of the only exceptions is when Ahaz calls upon Assyria to "save" him from Syria but even in that case Isaiah 10:5 reveals that Assyria is God's agent (2 Kings 16:7).

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[126] Waltke 30.5.3c.

[127] Avishur, p. 230.

[128] GKC 145k,1. This happens when the focus is on how each member of the class is affected.

[129] See 17:9(a) on the use of the pronominal suffixes of attributive genitives.

[130] TWAT, s.v. "ישע."

17:10(b). וְצוּר מָעֻזֵּךְ לֹא זָכָרְתְּ--"and your fortress Rock you do not remember" וְצוּר מָעֻזֵּךְ is an attributive genitive. מָעוֹז is a catchword that appears in the previous verse. It contrasts the "fortress Rock" with the "fortress cities" that will soon incur devastation. Throughout the Hebrew Bible צוּר and יֵשַׁע often appear together and when they do they refer to God. זָכָרְתְּ is also a durative stative.[131]

17:10(c). עַל־כֵּן תִּטְּעִי נִטְעֵי נַעֲמָנִים--"as a result you are planting plantings of delight"

עַל־כֵּן introduces the results of the conditions that the כִּי clause describes.[132] Lenhard shows that עַל־כֵּן with an imperfect verb describes a result that has already occurred.[133]

תִּטְּעִי is a Qal second singular feminine imperfect from נטע, "to plant." Since it sits in the time of the discourse the imperfect is an on-going event.[134]

נַעֲמָן is a hapax legomenon. BDB suggests נַעֲמָן is from נָעַם, "be pleasant, delightful, lovely," which is a verb used in the context of love. BDB mentions and HALAT contends that נַעֲמָן is a corruption of the epithet for Adonis. So Wildberger and many others see this as a reference to the Adonis garden.[135] The plural genitive of נַעֲמָן suggests to GKC 124q that the

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[131] See above 17:10(a).

[132] See above; cf. Paul Joüon, A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew, trans. and rev. by T. Muraoka, Subsidia Biblica, 14/1, 2 vols. (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1991), 170h (hereafter cited as Joüon).

[133] Helmut Lenhard, "Über den Unterschied zwischen לכן und על־כן," Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 95 (1983): 269-272.

[134] Waltke 31.3b.

[135] Wildberger, p. 659.

compound idea of the construct chain is plural. Others consider נְעֲמָנִים a plural of majesty (see below). More likely the plural נְעֲמָנִים is a plural of amplification. Isaiah 5:7 uses a plural of amplification שַׁעֲשׁוּעִים, "delight, rapture" in a similar context to Isa 17:10. That verse states, with the same word נְטַע "planting" as in 17:10, that the men of Judah are Yahweh's planting of delight.

Only the LXX suggests a text different from the MT. Presumably the Tg understood the תִּטְּעִי as a Niphal since it has נציבא נצבא בחיר, "you were planted as a select plant." This probably arose out of the fact that in Isa 5:2 and 7 Isaiah connects the idea of "pleasantness" with the נטע of Israel. The Vul probably reads the word נאמנים to arrive at *plantabis plantationem fidelem*, "you will plant a faithful plant." 1QIsa[a] agrees with the MT. The LXX has φυτεύσεις φύτευμα ἄπιστον, "you will plant unfaithful plants." Rather than suggest that the LXX had a different Hebrew text this rendering may reveal that the LXX translators interpreted the word נְעֲמָנִין in the light of the rebellious foreign alliances and idolatry of the next clause.

Commentators connect the Adonis garden and 17:10 because 17:10 describes the planting, quick germination and sudden destruction of plants but the similarity is superficial. The Adonis garden involved the planting of quick-growing and short-lived plants. Grains, lettuce or fennel were planted in shallow pots. The worshipper watered them and placed them in the sun where the plants grew and wilted quickly. This represented the rise and death of the god. Great mourning followed this until the greening of the fields

signaled Adonis' rebirth. Plato described the process taking eight days whereas 17:10 suggests one day.[136]

Some argue for the Adonis garden from a proposed connection between "delight" in 17:10 and "Adonis." They allege that there is a verbal connection between the name of the flower ἀνεμώνη and the Hebrew נַעֲמָן. It is this flower that mythology says is born from the blood of Adonis. However, Semitic philology of נעם shows no trace of the word ἀνεμώνη.[137] In any case the ἀνεμώνη flower was not one of the plants planted in the Adonis garden and so does not directly bear on the Adonis garden.

Mathias Delcor demonstrates a different connection between the נַעֲמָן of 17:10 and Adonis.[138] Firstly, he points out that Ezekiel 8:14-17 indicates that at the idolatrous worship that mourns the death of Tammuz the worshippers used a זמרה, "cutting," which is the word that appears at 17:10(d). Secondly, according to Plutarch some ancients in Byblos called Astarte νεμανοῦν. In Byblos this word may have appeared in Semitic as *na'aman*. Ancient Semites could have applied *na'aman* to Adonis, since some ancients, like Lucian, showed that Byblos connected the worship of Astarte with that of Adonis.[139] Delcor shows that people in Syria knew the Phoenician Adonis and Balaat as Tammuz and Belti.[140] This suggests that

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[136] Ibid., p. 660.

[137] Mathias Delcor, "Le problème des Jardins d'Adonis dans Isaïe 17, 9-11 a la lumière de la civilisation Syro-Phénicienne," Syria 55 (1974): 389 (hereafter cited as Delcor).

[138] Ibid., p. 385.

[139] Ibid., p. 382.

[140] Ibid., pp. 379-80.

na'aman would have applied to Tammuz as well. Thirdly, Delcor suggests that the idea of *na'aman*, "the gracious one" (cf. Hebrew root above), can conceivably apply to Tammuz-Adonis. *N'm* appears in Ugarit as the adjective of a god meaning "lovely, gracious."[141] The Phoenicians liked to use the idea of "gracious" for Aphrodite Giblite (Tammuz) and later Hippolytus states that the Syrians called Adonis the "three desires."[142]

Delcor assumes that the names of gods will cross-reference beyond that for which we have evidence and makes the uncertain identification of νεμανοῦν with *na'aman*. That leaves his identification of 17:10 with the Adonis garden in the realm of possibility. 17:10(d) presents other problems for the Adonis garden theory. The verse describes the planting of "cuttings," which is something the devotees did not plant in these gardens. In addition the genitive זָר, "strange," is an inappropriate description for an idolatrous object going into an idolatrous garden. BDB's derivation from נָעַם sounds better. The "strange cutting" placed in a "planting of delight" is probably a metaphor for illicit political alliances such as the one Ephraim had with Aram. Irrespective of Delcor's effort to try to tie *n'm* to Adonis his evidence for the meaning of *n'm* is helpful. The use of the word in epitaphs suggests that there is in 17:10 an allusion to idolatry. Isaiah 1:29 alludes to the connection of certain oaks and gardens with idolatry when it states that Yahweh's judgment will make people ashamed of them.

17:10(d). וְזִמְרַת זָר תִּזְרָעֶנּוּ--"and (with) a strange cutting you are sowing it"

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[141] Ibid., p. 384.

[142] Ibid., p. 385.

Dalman defines וְזֹמֶרֶת, a feminine construct noun, as a "cut off branch."[143] זְמוֹרָה appears five times in the Hebrew Bible; at Ezek 8:17 it is a branch used in idolatrous practices. This word begins an alliteration in *zayin*.

The genitive זָר is the substantive use of the Qal masculine participle from זור (I), "be a stranger" (BDB). HALAT states that at 17:10 it means "strange, forbidden god."[144] Since HALAT bases its position on its interpretation of Isaiah 17:10 זָר it cannot determine how one should interpret 17:10. זָר might be an attributive genitive where "cutting of a stranger" means "a strange cutting." In that case it refers to Samaria's alliance with Syria. Isaiah 1:7 uses this word to refer to a foreigner.

תִּזְרָעֶנּוּ is a Qal imperfect second masculine of זרע, "sow," with a third masculine pronominal suffix. This word can take two objects.[145] The verb's gender has changed to the masculine after three clauses with the feminine. This pattern can express totality.[146] The same occurs in Ezek 23:49 and Ruth 1:8. The desire of GKC 47k to move the final waw to verse 11 and make the verb feminine, תִּזְרָעִין, is unnecessary. None of the versions mark a change in subject. The LXX has only a noun clause καὶ σπέρμα ἄπιστον, "and unfaithful seed." The Tg has ועובדין מקלקלין אסגית, "and multiplied corrupt deeds." The Vul has *et germen alienum seminabis*, "and you will sow alien seed." The damaged 1QIsa[a] appears to agree with the MT. The subject

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[143] Dalman, p. 301.

[144] Cf. TWAT, s.v. "זור/זור," by L. A. Snijders.

[145] GKC 117ee.

[146] GKC 144a.

continues to be the fortressed city. The singular pronoun refers to the "plantings" taken as a collective.[147]

The combination of "sowing" with "cuttings" is unique as Dalman admits.[148] One planted "cuttings" in the ground or grafted them. "Cuttings" guaranteed that the farmer had the same plant as the parent plant. Seeds are by nature a hybrid.

17:11(a). בְּיוֹם נִטְעֵךְ תְּשַׂגְשֵׂגִי--"in the day when you plant you make (it) grow" נִטְעֵךְ is either a noun from נֶטַע, "planting," or the Qal infinitive construct.[149] It has a second singular feminine suffix. The infinitive construct can function as a genitive and it does so, also with בְּיוֹם, in Gen 2:17.[150] Although the plural of the noun occurs in 17:10 Helmut Ringgren prefers the infinitive construct analysis because as a noun נֶטַע would have a meaning unique to this occurrence--"the act of planting." The LXX apparently interprets נִטְעֵךְ as heading a temporal clause: τῇ δὲ ἡμέρᾳ ᾗ ἂν φυτεύσῃς πλανηθήσῃ, "and in the day when you plant you will be lead astray." The Tg seems to interpret בְּיוֹם as heading a relative clause but sees נִטְעֵךְ as a Niphal finite verb with a genitive suffix: באתר דאתקדשתון למהוי עם תמן קלקילתון עובדיכון, "in the place where you were sanctified to be a people, there you corrupted your deeds." The Tg runs into difficulty translating the rest of the verse. The Vul

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[147] Waltke 16.4c.

[148] Dalman, p. 326.

[149] BDB and HALAT suggest it is a noun; HALAT and TWAT, s.v. "נטע," by H. Ringgren, suggest it is a Qal infinitive construct.

[150] Williams 194.

apparently reads תשׁגשׁגי as a noun: *in die plantationis tuae labrusca*, "on the day of your planting from a wild vine."

תְּשַׁגְשְׁגִי, a Pilpel imperfect second feminine singular, is a hapax legomenon. BDB analyzes it as a Pilpel of the root סוג (II), "fence about," from Aramaic.[151] The only other example of this root is Cant 7:3. Possibly the LXX and Tg did see the root סוג (I), "move away, backslide" (or שׁגה, "to go astray"). BDB also mentions that some attribute תְּשַׁגְשְׁגִי to שׁגה, "to grow."[152] In Ps 92:13 שׁגה is parallel to פרח, which occurs here in 17:11. The Qal of שׁגה is intransitive. שׁגה is closer in meaning than is סוג (II) to the word that corresponds to תְּשַׁגְשְׁגִי in the following clause. So thinks Wildberger who sees here the description of the Adonis and identifies שׁגה with an unattested שׁגג.[153] HALAT agrees citing Wildberger and renders שׁגג "let grow up, bring up."

17:11(b). וּבַבֹּקֶר זַרְעֵךְ תַּפְרִיחִי--"and in the morning your seed you make sprout"

זַרְעֵךְ is a masculine noun meaning "sowing, seed, offspring" from זרע. Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament (TWAT) suggests here it means "sown field, plantation" (cf. 1 Kings 18:22).[154]

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[151] Cf. GKC 55f.

[152] Likewise Abraham Even-Shoshan, ed., A New Concordance of the Bible (Jerusalem: "Kiryat Sefer" Publishing House, 1990).

[153] Wildberger, p. 638.

[154] TWAT. s.v. "זרע," by H. D. Preuß.

תַּפְרִיחִי is a Hiphil imperfect second singular feminine from פרח (I), "bud, sprout, shoot." The word is usually intransitive but the Hiphil in Ezek 17:24 and Isa 27:6 shows a transitive use.

17:11(c). נֵד קָצִיר בְּיוֹם נַחֲלָה--"the harvest (is) a heap in the day of malady" נֵד appears in the Hebrew Bible six times. Four times it represents the piling of the waters at the Red Sea and the Jordan River and once to the containment of the sea (Ps 33:7). According to BDB it is a masculine noun "heap" from a hypothetical root נדד (II). That is to say, the harvest will be abundant but not with good things. This is the best explanation if one makes no emendation. HALAT categorizes נֵד as a noun meaning "dam, dike" but emends the Isa 17:11 occurrence to a verb נַד from נדד (I), "flee." BDB mentions that some emend to נָד from נוד, "to move to and fro." The LXX and Tg are very different from the MT. The Vul is close to the MT but in place of נֵד has *ablata est*, "has been carried" (possibly נדד (I)).

נֵד has the characteristics (indefinite and preceding the subject) of a predicate that defines the subject of a non-verbal clause.[155]

קָצִיר usually means "harvest" but can also mean "shoot." The LXX and the Vul have the word "harvest." Isaiah 27:11 speaks of breaking and burning the withered קָצִיר "branch." The word means "branch" in Job 14:9, which has much of the same vocabulary as this verse--פרח, נטע and קציר.

בְּיוֹם נַחֲלָה describes the nature of this occurrence. To have two בְּיוֹם's in a single context has precedent. In Isaiah 30:25-26 two בְּיוֹם's name contrasting events on the same day: "on the day of great slaughter" and "on

[155] Williams 579.

the day when Yahweh binds up the bruises." In Isa 17:11 the two occurrences of בְּיוֹם also contrast: hopeful farming and injurious results. נַחֲלָה can be either a feminine noun meaning "possession, property, inheritance" or a Niphal participle feminine from חלה (I), "be weak, sick." BDB, HALAT and many others choose the latter.[156] G. R. Driver recommends the refinement "wasting disease" from the Arabic *nahila* "was wasted, worn out with emaciation."[157] The writer may have used a word that has a homonym meaning "inheritance" to express hidden irony. In other words Israel's "malady" is its inheritance. In Deut 29:22 חלה describes the condition that God promises to send upon Israel for her disobedience.

17:11(d). וְכְאֵב אָנוּשׁ--"and incurable suffering"

כְּאֵב is a masculine noun from כאב "be in pain." אָנוּשׁ, "incurable," from אנשׁ (I), "be weak, sick," is either an adjective or a Qal passive participle masculine.[158] The two words form the second genitive of ביום.

The Codex Aleppo shows a break, Codex Leningrad B19^{A} has a break (the BHS has *setumah*), 1QIsa^{a} shows an open paragraph, and the LXX has a break.

17:12(a). הוֹי הֲמוֹן עַמִּים רַבִּים--"woe to the roar of many nations"

The noun הֲמוֹן derives from המה, "murmur, growl, roar, be boisterous." In Isaiah it usually means a multitude of people but it can also be a roar that a

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[156] E.g., Wildberger, p. 638.

[157] G. R. Driver, "Isaiah 1-39: Textual and Linguistic Problems," Journal of Semitic Studies 13 (1968): 45 (hereafter cited as G. R. Driver).

[158] HALAT suggests the former and BDB suggests the latter.

multitude or army makes (13:4; 33:3; 63:15). In this case the word means the sound of roaring. However, in Isa 33:3 the "roar" of Yahweh scatters the nations. Avishur identifies עַם and לְאֹם as a word-pair.[159]

הוֹי is an onomatopoeic word that appears over fifty times in the Hebrew Bible. It appears again at Isa 18:1. In the Hebrew Bible only the prophets use הוֹי except for one occurrence where it is a funeral lament. Most commentators will group the use of this word into three classes: funerary lament ("alas"); interjection/vocative appeal ("ho"); and invective ("woe").[160] The wide variety of translations for הוֹי at 17:12 show the difficulty commentators have rendering it here: Delitzsch and Peter Miscall have "woe to"; John Oswalt and Watts have "woe [to us]"; J. A. Alexander has "hark"; T. K. Cheyne, Motyer and Wildberger have "ah"; Edward Young has "alas." Isaiah 17:12 uses הוֹי in a unique way because the juxtaposed word is an impersonal substantive. Otherwise, the syntax of the woe-cry in 17:12 is as one often finds it.[161] Isaiah 17:13 shows that a judgment is intended for the topic of the woe cry in 17:12.

Waldemar Janzen gives the most convincing theory for the origin of the word and its present meaning.[162] He explains הוֹי in a way that accounts

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[159] Avishur, p. 305.

[160] Gunther Wanke, "אוי and הוי," Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 78 (1966), p. 217; Daniel Hojoon Ryou, Zephaniah's Oracles Against the Nations: A Synchronic and Diachronic Study of Zephaniah 2:1-3:8, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), p. 334 (hereafter cited as Ryou); Waldemar Janzen, Mourning Cry and Woe Cry, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1972), p. 19 (hereafter cited as Janzen).

[161] E.g., Isa 1:4; 5:8, 11; 10:5 where a substantive or a participle and a verbal clause follow the הוֹי.

[162] Cf. Ryou, p. 339.

for the relationship between the funerary הוי and the prophetic הוי. Janzen studies the use of lament words in the ancient Near East. He uses his findings to propose that הוי arose in funerary lament and he observes that wherever הוי appears in the Hebrew Bible it contains elements of both appellation and lamentation.[163] Funerary הוי has an invoking quality and vocative הוי always has a somber quality. Prophetic הוי words contain both these qualities. Janzen believes that prophets used הוי because of its capacity to express intensely the emotional content of reversal in mourning.[164] It could express three levels of experience: (1) lament for anticipated personal troubles; (2) lament for someone else's reversal; (3) vengeance foreseen for the unpunished guilty one.

The stable part of the prophetic is הוי + an addressee.[165] The fact of an address after הוי is the uniform feature not the nature of that address.[166] A noun of general scope can describe the addressee such as we find in, for example, Isaiah 17:12 and 18:1.[167] The addressee can have a name put in participial form. Although the structure of *Gerichtsrede* (Judgment Speech) is often present the structure is not constant and the variations on that structure are not consistent. Against Westermann's notion that הוי originated in a curse formula Janzen shows that a better explanation is that people

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[163] Janzen, p. 20.

[164] Ibid., pp. 82-83.

[165] Ibid., p. 81; e.g., Isaiah 5:11 and 20 where the substantives must be addressees.

[166] Ibid., p. 62.

[167] Ibid.

commonly move from funerary lament to threat of vengeance.[168] Against Gerstenberger's idea that הוי originated in wisdom sayings Janzen finds that הוי appears in contexts that interpret historical moments.[169] Janzen also identifies three dominating characteristics about the contexts in which הוי appears. The context (1) addresses those who act in self-reliant independence of Yahweh and (2) confronts them with Yahweh who will bring low their haughty independence. This confrontation is usually through (3) a reversal of the present condition into its opposite, a reversal that is similar to *Talionstil*. Yahweh's confrontation is in terms of the Lord's Holy War against his enemies to bring in his Day. The ones Yahweh confronts can include a portion of Israel.

Janzen tries to show how all uses of הוי belong either to the funerary or prophetic class. He reviews the problem of no addressee. Isaiah 1:24 and its context implies the addressee, Jer 30:7 is textually uncertain, and Zechariah 2:10-11 may be speaking about an unnamed oppressor.[170] One can explain the הוי's that do not seem to inveigh or lament. The הוי's in Zechariah 2:10-11 are an invective if one directs them against an understood oppressor. Jeremiah 47:6 is a lament if one follows the grammar, however strange the meaning. Isaiah 55:1 may be contrasting death and life.[171] The

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[168] Claus Westermann, Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech, trans. H. C. White (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991).

[169] E. Gerstenberger, "The Woe-Oracles of the Prophets," Journal of Biblical Literature 81 (1962): 249-63; Janzen, pp. 61, 81-82.

[170] Janzen, pp. 73, 79; cf. Jer 50:27 for the quick change in addressees.

[171] Ibid., pp. 20n. 69, 73-74.

invective is no less such if there is a delay before the text explains it as in Isaiah 10:5; 17:12; 29:1.[172] To defend 18:1 as a woe cry Janzen considers Isaiah 18 to include an attack upon Cush (see below notes at 18:1).

Not all of Janzen's efforts to place הוי in either a funerary or an invective class are convincing but 17:12 is clearly more than a interjection. The context of 17:12 has all the features that normally appear for a prophetic indictment: an arrogant attack on Yahweh's people; Yahweh's attack; the nations experience the reversal of Yahweh's roar that makes them retreat.

17:12(b) כַּהֲמוֹת יַמִּים יֶהֱמָיוּן--"who are roaring like the roaring of the seas" This clause is an asyndetic relative clause.[173] Poetry commonly does not use the relative marker and simply juxtaposes relative clauses to the main clause.

כַּהֲמוֹת יַמִּים is a comparative clause. The object clause of the verb has rhetorical exposure for stress.[174] The plural of יָם, "sea," is a plural of amplification.

The subject of יֶהֱמָיוּן is "nations." The paragogic nun is true to Hoftijzer's conclusions.[175] It tends to occur on pause as here. In poetry it can mark ideas that are contrary and in contrast to the wishes of other people.[176]

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[172] Janzen, pp. 55, 59-60.

[173] Waltke 19.6a.

[174] Williams 574.

[175] Waltke 31.7.1a, b.

[176] Paragogics are more common in earlier texts.

17:12(c) וְשֹׁאוֹן לְאֻמִּים--"and to the crash of the peoples"

שְׁאוֹן is a masculine construct noun either from שׁאה, "make a din or crash, crash into ruins," according to BDB, or from שׁאה (II), "be in an uproar," according to HALAT. It begins a noun clause. In the Hebrew Bible שְׁאוֹן is either stopped by Yahweh or is the result of Yahweh's judgment.

17:12(d) כִּשְׁאוֹן מַיִם כַּבִּירִים יִשָּׁאוּן--"who are crashing like the crash of mighty waters"

כִּשְׁאוֹן heads a comparative verbless clause within an asyndetic clause. It parallels 17:12(b). Whereas the noun clause in 17:12(a) had an extra modifier, in this bi-colon the extra modifier is in the comparative clause.

מַיִם כַּבִּירִים is a phrase also found in Isa 28:2 where it represents someone that Yahweh will use as a destructive force against Ephraim. כַּבִּיר is an adjective from כבר (I), "be much, many," found only in Job and Isaiah. TWAT is not clear how to understand the outworking of many waters against God.[177] Peter Machinist suggests that it was Assyrian propaganda that led the author to use the metaphor of raging water for an attacking king and his armies.[178] He says Mesopotamian literature often associated the king with the primeval Flood in contrast to a specific body of water. Possibly this is why in Nah 1:8 Yahweh will be a mighty flood to Nineveh. The Hebrew Bible applies the metaphor first to Assyria (Isaiah 8:7-8), then later to Babylon (Jeremiah 51:13, 55), Egypt (Jeremiah 46:7-8; 47:2), and the King of the North (Daniel 11:10, 40).

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[177] TWAT, s.v. "מים," by R. E. Clements.

[178] Peter Machinist,"Assyria and Its Image in the First Isaiah," Journal of American Oriental Society 103/4 (1983): 727.

17:13(a) לְאֻמִּים כִּשְׁאוֹן מַיִם רַבִּים יִשְׁאוּן--"the peoples are crashing like the crash of many waters"

This accentuates the previous bi-colon by both saying that it is the peoples themselves who crash and by creating one long colon. The subject comes first giving it emphasis. This colon follows the pattern in 17:5(c) of summarizing the foregoing cola with repetition and intensification. The LXX, Vul and Tg all acknowledge this clause. In Isaiah מַיִם רַבִּים appears otherwise only at Isa 8:6 to refer to Assyria when it attacks Damascus, Samaria and Judah.

17:13(b) וְגָעַר בּוֹ--"and (so) he will (explosively) blast it"

גָּעַר is a Qal perfect third masculine singular meaning "rebuke." The relative *waw* + perfect can represent a consequential situation--as a result of 17:13(a) the rebuke bursts forth.[179] The short colon is effective emphasis.

In the Hebrew Bible the verb גער is effectual only when God is the subject, which is most often. In 17:13 the rebuke is effective. Apart from wisdom literature the noun גְּעָרָה belongs to Yahweh in all cases except one.[180] Above we noted that only God stops a שְׁאוֹן. These things allow us to say that the subject of the verb in 17:13(b) is God. BHS editors use 1QIsa[a]--ויגער--to suggest that an omission occurred and that the original looked like ויהוה גָּעַר גער or וְהוּא גָּעַר יִגְעַר. The LXX, Vul and Tg do not indicate this. Kutscher notes that it is quite common for the Isaiah scroll to have the *waw* +

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[179] Waltke 32.1.3e.

[180] Israel flees before her enemy's rebuke in Isa 30:17.

prefix conjugation where the MT has the *waw* + suffix conjugation.[181] He suggests that this is due to the later Hebrew development that replaced the *waw* conversive with the *waw* conjunctive.

A. Macintosh finds that גער originally meant an aspect of the physical expression of anger and that the Hebrew Bible uses it to denote angry protest.[182] James Kennedy shows that in certain poetic contexts we should render גער, "explosively blast."[183] He uses Isa 17:12 as his example. Kennedy tries to encapsulate all uses of גער with the definition "irresistible, powerful breath." This is easiest to maintain when "sea" is the object of גער.[184] The further the object is from the topic "sea" and the subject is from "Yahweh" the more difficult it is to maintain this definition.[185] In the case of 17:13 the effect is flight. This effect is the one גער has when the object is "nations" such as in Isa 30:17 and not the effect when the object is "sea." In the case of "nations" the verb describes a military attack. When the object is "sea" the effect of גער is to dry up (2 Sam 22:16; Ps 106:9; Isa 50:2; etc.). Yet the comparison with pursuing winds in the succeeding lines of Isa 17:13 support Kennedy's definition for this passage. A similar passage, Isaiah 29:5-6, indicates what גער in 17:13 could entail: "suddenly, in an instant Yahweh of

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[181] Kutscher, p. 357.

[182] A. A. Macintosh, "A Consideration of Hebrew גער," Vetus Testamentum 19 (1969): 478.

[183] James M. Kennedy, "The Root G`R in the Lighty of Semantic Analysis," Journal of Biblical Literature 106:1 (1987): 59.

[184] E.g., Ps 106:9.

hosts will come with thunder and earthquake and great noise, with windstorm and tempest and the flame of a devouring fire."

The verb גער usually takes the preposition *beth*. The antecedent of the masculine singular pronominal suffix may be לְעַמִּים. Frequently singular suffixes represent plurals.[186] Isaiah does this with similar situations in Isaiah 5:23 and 26. The plural participles at the end of the paragraph would seem to support this. However, the singular verbs in 13(d) and (e) may mean Assyria. In the oracles against the nations section of Isaiah (cc. 13-23) Assyria is in every oracle. Assyria is the power that dominates the world. Earlier in Isaiah Assyria had been prophesied to attack Judah (Isaiah 7:20; 8:8). The pronoun represents both ideas if Assyria is synecdoche for the "nations."

17:13(c) וְנָס מִמֶּרְחָק--"and it will flee far away"

מֶרְחָק is a masculine noun from רחק, "be, or become, far, distant." BDB states *min* can express "off" so that coupled with "afar" the combination would mean "afar off."[187] BDB states that מֶרְחָק with the preposition מִן can mean "to a distance." This is how LXX, Vul and Tg handle it. The related adjective רָחוֹק with מִן (מֵרָחוֹק) can be used for people fleeing toward a place far away.[188] The idea that enemies will flee far away is also in Isa 13:14 where each nation returns home after God has mustered the nations and they "crash."

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[185] Cf. Ps 76:7 (result is to lie still); Isa 51:20 (result is to be caught in a net); Jer 19:27 (intended effect is to imprison).

[186] GKC 145m.

[187] BDB, s.v. "מן"; cf. Isa 14:13.

[188] Isaiah 22:3; 23:7; Prov 7:19; cf. BDB.

17:13(d) וְרֻדַּף כְּמֹץ הָרִים לִפְנֵי־רוּחַ--"and it will be pursued like the chaff of the mountains before the wind"

כְּמֹץ begins another comparative verbless clause (see 17:12[d]). מֹץ, "chaff," is the smallest remains from cleaning grain and is the part that the wind blows away.[189] The Hebrew Bible only uses it to describe the judgment of God on enemies.[190] The expression "chaff before the wind" also appears at Job 21:8 and Ps 35:5.

הָרִים, "mountains," is a genitive of location. People threshed and winnowed grain on high places. David had to go up to the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite to build his altar (2 Sam 24:18). The dry wind from the heights winnowed grain (Jer 4:11). "Mountains" are unusually high for winnowing. The LXX does not have "mountains" but the Vul and Tg do. A similar idea appears in a metaphorical use at Isa 41:15 where God will make Israel thresh mountains and turn the hills into chaff and the wind will blow them away (cf. Isa 27:12). There the mountains represent nations.

רוּחַ occurs in Isaiah fifty-one times. It appears with various subjects and objects but only in Isa 41:16 does רוּחַ take away מֹץ, "chaff." לִפְנֵי has a locative sense.

17:13(e) וּכְגַלְגַּל לִפְנֵי סוּפָה--"and like the dust before the wind storm"

וּכְגַלְגַּל starts another comparative non-verbal clause. גַּלְגַּל is a masculine noun from גלל (II), "roll, roll away" (BDB). BDB renders it "whirl (of dust or

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[189] Cf. EB, s.v. "Agriculture."

[190] TWAT, s.v. "מץ," by H. Ringgren; cp. Isa 29:5.

chaff)." HALAT and Avinoam Danim prefer to render it "wheel(-plant)" by which they mean a type of tumbleweed plant.[191] For support they cite Ps 83:14 where גַּלְגַּל stands parallel to קַשׁ,"stubble." Both the LXX and the Tg see גַּלְגַּל as dust and the Vul as a whirling thing. At Isa 5:28 it is probably a chariot wheel but it conceivably connotes dust. The line in Isa 5:28 says: "their גַּלְגַּל (is like) a סוּפָה, 'windstorm'." Possibly one finds connections to a similar idea for גַּלְגַּל in what Vogelstein explains about the meaning of גלל in the Mishnah.[192] There גלל refers to dung mixed with chaff that one leaves to dry and to tread on in the street until it becomes like a fine flour that one can strew over the field. In a similar passage to 17:13, Isa 29:5 gives מֹץ, "chaff," the parallel אָבָק דַּק, "fine dust": "and the multitude of your enemies will be like a fine dust and the multitude of ruthless ones like blown chaff." It would seem then that in our passage גַּלְגַּל is a product from threshing that the wind picks up.

סוּפָה is a feminine noun from the root סוף, "to come to an end" (BDB). It is a catastrophic wind which HALAT renders "(destructive) wind (in storm)." Isaiah 5:28 and 66:15 compare סוּפָה, "storm wind," to גַּלְגַּל, "chariots' wheels," to give a dramatic figure for the approach of the chariots. Isaiah 66:15 goes one step further and relates סוּפָה and גַּלְגַּל, "chariot's wheels," to the Lord's גער, "rebuke." Jeremiah 4:11 illustrates Yahweh's judgment by a wind that is too strong for winnowing.

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[191] Avinoam Danim, "Plants as Biblical Metaphors," Biblical Archeology Review 5(3) (1979): 20-21.

[192] Vogelstein, p. 23.

17:14(a) לְעֵת עֶרֶב וְהִנֵּה בַלָּהָה--"at the time of evening, look, calamity"

לְעֵת עֶרֶב is a temporal use of *lamedh*. As a temporal clause it will parallel the next colon 17:14(b). Enemies like to attack at evening (1 Sam 14:36; Psalm 59:7, 15; Jer 6:4).

וְהִנֵּה בַלָּהָה is a presentative exclamation.[193] It begins with a presentative הנה that serves to bridge with emotion the dependent temporal clause with its apodosis.

בַלָּהָה is a feminine noun that BDB renders "terror, dreadful event, calamity, destruction" and HALAT renders "sudden terror." It is from בלה, which HALAT defines as "frighten, deter." The Hebrew Bible uses it to represent a destructive menace that succeeds in its aim. Job 27:20 parallels this word with סוּפָה.

17:14(b) בְּטֶרֶם בֹּקֶר אֵינֶנּוּ--"before morning it is no more"

בְּטֶרֶם is an adverb that heads a temporal clause. The clause is asyndetic and intensifies the preceding.

אֵינֶנּוּ is the particle of non-existence with a third masculine singular pronominal suffix. The singular pronoun is referring to the subject of 17:13. Wildberger would like to see a *waw* like the one on the previous וְהִנֵּה.[194] The Tg and LXX do not witness to this.

17:14(c) זֶה חֵלֶק שׁוֹסֵינוּ"--this is the portion of those who plunder us"

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[193] Waltke 40.2.1.

[194] Wildberger, p. 665.

זֶה is a demonstrative pronoun serving as the nominative. It has a deictic force referring to the preceding situation. The clause is a nominal clause. The word order is normal for a non-verbal clause.[195]

שׁוֹסֵינוּ is a Qal participle masculine plural from שׁסה, "spoil, plunder." This is a substantival use of the participle. In all eleven of the root's occurrences in the Hebrew Bible the object is Israel. We expect the antecedent to the first person plural pronominal suffix to be Israel here as well. Since the speaker in chapter 17 has spoken of Ephraim as something apart from himself, the Israel with which the speaker identifies--the "us"--must be Judah. TWAT makes the significant connection that the "us" of this verse is the "us" of the saved remnant that the word "Immanuel" in Isa 8:10 promises Judah.[196] This suggests that 17:12-14 parallels 8:9-10. שׁסה and בזז is a word-pair that usually appears in reverse order.[197]

17:14(d) וְגוֹרָל לְבֹזְזֵינוּ--"and the lot for those who spoil us"

גּוֹרָל usually refers to the random apportionment of something. It appears together with חֵלֶק eleven times in the Hebrew Bible. According to GKC 141e the copulative before a verbless clause indicates a state contemporaneous with the principal action. גּוֹרָל typically uses a *lamedh* to show possession. The suggestion of BHS to consider this lamedh the result of dittography and to remove it is therefore disruptive. The LXX, Tg and 1QIsa[a] all clearly evidence the *lamedh*.

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[195] GKC 141l.

[196] TWAT, s.v. "אח," by H. D. Preuß.

[197] Avishur, p. 293.

לְבִזָּזֵינוּ is a Qal participle masculine plural from בזז, "plunder." It is a substantive. In the use of this word only Israel of all nations ever succeeds in permanently keeping spoil.

In these last two cola the *lex talionis* is at work.

The Codex Aleppo shows a major break, Codex Leningrad B19^{A} has a break (the BHS has a *setumah*), 1QIsa^{a} shows an open paragraph and the versions show a break.

18:1(a) הוֹי אֶרֶץ צִלְצַל כְּנָפָיִם--"woe to the land of whirring pairs of wings"
On הוי see 17:12(a). The 18:1 use of הוי is distinctive because there is no destruction of the addressee and some commentators can find no guilt for the addressee.[198] Wildberger finds a participial addressee that identifies the addressee's guilt in the 18:2(a) "the one sending."[199] Syntactically Isa 18:1 is similar to other prophetic הוי's. Isaiah 28:1 and 30:1 are some examples of a substantive and noun clauses following הוי. The Tg and the Vul use the "woe to" formula. The LXX puts the noun following "woe" in the genitive suggesting a causal relationship such as "woe because of the land of winged boats" (οὐαὶ γῆς πλοίων πτέρυγες). Since no direct address follows הוי in 18:1 it is difficult to define 18:1 as a summons.[200] Lacking a finite verb הוי in 18:1 is not likely to be an interjection. Janzen defends 18:1 as a woe cry with the unlikely interpretation that in Isaiah 18 Yahweh sends messengers to call

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[198] Deck, p. 16.

[199] Wildberger, p. 688.

[200] Delbert R. Hillers, "Hôy and Hôy-Oracles: A Neglected Syntactic Aspect," in The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth, ed. Carol L. Meyers and M. O'Connor (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1983), p. 186.

upon Assyria to destroy Ethiopia.[201] Isaiah 18 does have the three characteristics that Janzen finds for the context of most prophetic הוי's: (1) self-reliant independence from Yahweh's sovereignty--in this case security in alliances; (2) Yahweh's confrontation of that independence--in 18:1 the growth of Assyrian power and the awful display of Yahweh's power; and (3) a reversal--here the land which received messengers will itself go to Yahweh. Isaiah 18 is not the only case of a woe cry to an addressee that is not destroyed. Instances in Isaiah where prophetic הוי confronts the self-reliant independence but then delivers the addressee are 29:1-8 and 31:1-9. Instances in Isaiah where prophetic הוי foresees no destruction are Isaiah 29:15 and 45:9-10. הוי in 18:1 is a prophetic invective in a restricted sense.

כָּנָף, "wing," is dual in our text and is usually a feminine noun. In addition to meaning "wings" כְּנָפַיִם can also refer to "fringes." Isaiah 11:11 and 12 states that God will gather Israel from the fringes of the earth that include Cush. The Hebrew Bible uses כָּנָף as the genitive of a construct chain only with words for "bird," with צֵל, "shadow," and once with סֵתֶר, "covert."

צִלְצַל is a hapax legomenon according to BDB, which lists it is a masculine construct noun--the absolute is צִלְצָל--that means "whirring, buzzing of insects' wings" from צלל (I), "to tingle, quiver."[202] In support of this definition is the reputation of the upper Nile as a land infested with insects. Some think of the tsetse fly of the upper Nile. Isaiah 7:18 may give some support to BDB when it states that God will call for the זְבוּב, "fly," from

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[201] Janzen, p. 60.

[202] TWAT, s.v. "כנף," by W. Dommershausen.

the end of Egypt. There are many other proposals but this one makes the best use of the verbal root and seems to have a precedent in Deut 28:42 (see below).

HALAT suggests צְלְצַל is a construct noun--the absolute is צְלָצַל--from either צלל (I) or צלל (II), "sink" (Exod 15:10).[203] HALAT cites Deut 28:42 as another example of the word from צלל (I). Deut 28:42 is a reference to locusts, "צְלָצַל," that will devour the land if Israel disobeys God. HALAT prefers to see צְלְצַל from צלל (II) because of the mention of papyrus vessels in 18:2 and it renders צְלְצַל as "boat." The LXX has πλοίων, "of boats," as does the Tg, which has בספינן, "in ships." Possibly the LXX and the Tg are deriving their meaning from an unknown cognate of צלל (II). G. R. Driver argues that the Aramaic ṣlṣl and the Arabic ḍulḍulu confirm the definition "ship" for צְלְצַל.[204] Indeed, one finds wood carvings of model sail boats in Egypt dating to times throughout the first millennium B.C.[205] They were single mast and used extensively on the Nile. Driver points out that the dual ending on כְּנָפַיִם which suggests two sails must be an incorrect vocalization and that one should change it to read a plural. However, with "boat" in the singular the problem remains. On the other hand the dual ending may have reflected an interest by the author to paint a picture of what the sails looked like. צְלְצַל כְּנָפַיִם could mean "winged boats," that is, "sail boats."[206]

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[203] But in Ethiopic "float".

[204] G. R. Driver, p. 45.

[205] Johm Baines and Jaromír Málek, Atlas of Ancient Egypt (New York: Facts on File, 1980), p. 68 (hereafter cited as Baines/ Málek).

[206] Cf. John H. Hayes and Stuart A. Irvine, Isaiah, The Eighth Century Prophet: His Times and His Preaching (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon, 1987), p. 254.

1QIsa[a] has divided the word into צל צל apparently with the idea of shadow. Aquila has a similar understanding and division with *umbra umbra*, "shadow, shadow." The verbal root of shadow is צלל (III) with the meaning "to be dark." Some commentators believe this is a reference to the phenomenon in Ethiopia that shadows will change sides over the course of a year. In the Hebrew Bible "shadow of wings" represents the protection of God. That does not suit Isa 18:1. "Shadows of wings" in Isa 18:1 could mean the shadow of a military force in the way Isaiah speaks of Assyria stretching out her wing (Isa 8:8). It could simply be an allusion to clouds of insects.

The Vul has for צִלְצַל *cymbalo*, "with cymbal." This is what the word צֶלְצְלִים means in 2 Sam 6:5 and Ps 150:5.[207] The Vul combines this with "wings of an army" for the crash of army divisions.

18:1(b) אֲשֶׁר מֵעֵבֶר לְ נַהֲרֵי־כוּשׁ--"which (is) on the other side of the rivers of Cush"

אֲשֶׁר heads up a relative clause. This is the relative clause marker that 17:12 created by juxtaposition.

מֵעֵבֶר is the masculine noun עֵבֶר, "region across/beyond, side," with the preposition *min* (BDB). This combination usually includes the preposition *lamedh*. BDB renders מֵעֵבֶר + *lamedh* "beyond, on the side of, from the other side of, to the other side" and suggests for Isa 18:1 "on (the side of)." HALAT renders this combination "opposite side of, over, beyond" and suggests for 18:1 "beyond." Alexander is able to give a list of scholars

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[207] BDB; HALAT gives צֶלְצְלִים.

for each possible interpretation of מֵעֵבֶר in 18:1.[208] More recently Vogt showed that עבר הירדן(מ) often means the Transjordan.[209] Wildberger uses Vogt inappropriately to render 18:1 as "the region of."[210] The Vul renders 18:1 as "across the river" (*trans flumina*). The LXX says "beyond." The Tg has a literal rendering of the MT מֵעֵבֶר although it replaces the rivers of Cush with the rivers of India. In Isaiah 18 one goes to different lands by travelling rivers not by crossing rivers. מֵעֵבֶר could point to an area on the east, west or south sides of the "rivers of Cush."

נַהֲרֵי is a masculine plural construct noun. It calls for a genitive of association.[211] The common plural נְהָרוֹת, which we do not find in chapter 18, refers either to rivers in general, or to the Euphrates, or to the Nile. The masculine plural נְהָרִים appears only in the following places: (a) Isaiah 18:1, 2, 7 and Zeph 3:10, which is like Isa 18:1, for the rivers of Cush and the rivers that divide a land; (b) Isa 33:21 for the eschatological rivers of the restored Israel; (c) Job 20:17 for rivers of plenty; and (d) in Habakkuk 3:8, 9 for the Reed Sea and the water in the desert of the Exodus. Snijders considers this form to be a plural of amplification.[212] He finds support for the plural of amplification in the word יָם, "sea," of 18:2(a), which he says refers to the "rivers" of 18:1 and, which stands for the Nile in places. According to Isa

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[208] Alexander, p. 343.

[209] E. Vogt, "'eber hayyarden = Region Finitima Iordani," Biblische Zeitschrift 34 (1953): 118-19.

[210] Wildberger, p. 679.

[211] Waltke 9.5.3h.

[212] TWAT, s.v. "נהר," by L. A. Snijders.

7:18 God would call to the fly בְּקְצֵה יְאֹרֵי מִצְרָיִם, "in the end of the rivers of Egypt." Of the versions only the Tg deviates from the MT. It has "the rivers of India (הודו)." The Tg is doing its typical updating, another example of which is Jer 23:33 where it writes "scribes" in the place of "prophets." From their Babylonian perspective these authors of the Tg who knew trade with India, saw India as the dynamic equivalent of Cush.

In Isaiah כוּשׁ is always the territory and people along the upper Nile that is otherwise known as Nubia with its capital at Napata.[213] In particular Isaiah 45:14 not only describes Cush as a territory near Egypt it uses language similar to Isa 18:7 when it says that the merchandise and people of Cush will come to Israel.[214] Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible Cush can also include the eastern shore of the Red Sea up to southern Transjordania.[215] In modern times Cushites are called Ethiopians. Nubia became independent from Egyptian control in the middle of the eleventh century B.C. From 726 until 664 it more or less dominated Egypt. In 715 the Cushite ruler even moved to Memphis to exercise direct control. Cushite culture was heavily Egyptianized.[216] During the time of their domination of Egypt Nubian

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[213] See Isaiah 11:11; 20:3, 4, 5; 37:9; 43:3; 45:14.

[214] Cf. 2 Chr 32:23 that relates such an event to the days following Yahweh's destruction of Assyria in the days of Hezekiah.

[215] Stan Hidal, "The Land of Cush in the Old Testament," Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok 41-42 (1976-1977): 106.

[216] Eleonora Kormyschewa, "Local Gods of Egypt in Cush and Problems of Egyptian Settlers," in Meroitica, ed. Dietlind Apelt, Erika Endesfelder and Steffen Wenig, vol. 12: Studia in honorem Fritz Hintze (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1990), p. 217.

pharaohs were interested in returning to traditional Egyptian values.[217] Under Nubian domination local leaders in Egypt were largely independent.[218]

18:2(a) הַשֹּׁלֵחַ בַּיָּם צִירִים--"which sends ambassadors on the sea"

This is the relative use of the participle הַשֹּׁלֵחַ. The masculine gender suggests the antecedent is כּוּשׁ but אֶרֶץ can be masculine.[219] The gender may refer the people of the land.

יָם is a masculine noun that can refer to the Mediterranean and other bodies of water but on rare occasion even to the Nile River (arthrous) as in Isa 19:5.

צִיר (II) is a masculine noun meaning "envoy, messenger." Someone usually sent a צִיר to make and keep alliances.[220] Besides here it appears parallel to מַלְאָךְ in Prov 13:17.

18:2(b) וּבִכְלֵי־גֹמֶא עַל־פְּנֵי־מַיִם--"and in papyrus vessels upon the face of the waters"

The phrase gaps the verb and object of the previous clause to give a clause of similar meaning.[221] The phrase "papyrus vessels" appears only here. Egyptians and probably Cushites traveled extensively by water both following

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[217] Grimal, p. 343.

[218] Baines/Málek, p. 49.

[219] The gender may reflect the referent of the "land of whirring wings". Hebrew prefers the *constructio ad sensum*. See Waltke 6.6b.

[220] TWAT, s.v. "מלאך," by D. N. Freedman and B. E. Willoughby; Joshua 9:4; Isa 57:9; Jer 49:14; Obad 1:1; related is Proverbs 13:17; 25:13)

[221] Waltke 39.2.4.

the Nile and on the Mediterranean Sea.[222] The vessels used for the sea were made of wood not papyrus. The papyrus vessel were used on the Nile and were light and easy to manage around cataracts.[223] This colon describes travel on the Nile.

מַיִם is the the masculine plural for "waters." מַיִם and יָם appear together about forty-eight times in the Hebrew Bible. One-half of these incidences (twenty-four times) pertain to Eqypt.

18:2(c) לְכוּ מַלְאָכִים קַלִּים--"(saying:) 'go, swift messengers'"

לְכוּ is a Qal imperative second masculine plural from הלך, "go, come, walk." Some say the speaker is Isaiah, but that would require an indication of a change of speaker. In the Hebrew Bible when there is a command to הלך, the one who does the שלח is the one who issues the command.[224] In this case the speaker is Cush.

מַלְאָכִים, "messengers," carry communications for another. They can serve domestically and internationally. The verb for "sending" messengers is most often שלח.[225]

קַלִּים is the plural adjective קַל from קלל, "be slight, swift, trifling."

18:2(d) אֶל־גּוֹי מְמֻשָּׁךְ וּמוֹרָט--"'to a nation tall and smooth'"

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[222] Edward Ullendorff, The Ethiopians: An Introduction to Country and People, 3rd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 45.

[223] Baines/Málek, p. 69.

[224] Cf. Jer 48:2 for another example of imperative הלך without a *verbum dicendi*.

[225] TWAT, s.v. "מלאך," by D. N. Freedman and B. E. Willoughby.

גּוֹי parallels the עַם in the next colon. גּוֹי and עַם are a word-pair and are interchangeable.[226]

מְמֻשָּׁךְ is a Pual participle masculine from מָשַׁךְ, "draw, drag." In the other three occurrences of the passive voice (Niphal) the word means "deferred, prolonged." BDB, HALAT and most commentators render מְמֻשָּׁךְ "tall" but each of the versions has a unique rendering. For example, the LXX renders it "highly placed." Other scholars see the word describing the shape of the country.[227] Many commentators use Herodotus' description of the Ethiopians as the "tallest and fairest and longest-lived of all men" to see in מְמֻשָּׁךְ a description of the Cushites' height and sometimes their longevity of life.[228] Isaiah 45:14 groups the Egyptians, Cushites and Sabeans together when it describes the Sabeans as tall. Josephus locates the Sabeans of Isa 45:14 in Nubia.[229]

מוֹרָט is from מָרַט, "make smooth, bare, bald; scour, polish." The word in its various forms applies most often to hair ("bald"). Herodotus says that the Egyptian priests shaved their whole body every third day.[230] BDB and HALAT analyze מוֹרָט as a Pual participle.[231] They suggest the possibility

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[226] Avishur, p. 650.

[227] Alexander, p. 344.

[228] Herodotus III:17, 20, 23, 97, 114; cf. Young, p. 476 n. 47 for the life expectancy interpretation.

[229] Cf. ABD, s.v. "Sabeans," by G. A. Herion.

[230] Herodotus II:38.

[231] Cf. GKC 52s.

that it may be a participle of a Qal passive stem.[232] This is probably correct for a number of reasons. Several times Ezekiel 21:14-16, 33 uses the feminine of this form, מֹרָטָה, interchangeably with the Qal passive participle feminine form, מְרוּטָה. A true Pual participle form מְמֹרָט with the preformative *mem* occurs at 1 Kings 7:45. A Qal passive stem participle would look: מֹרָט. Isaiah 18:2, 7's מוֹרָט may simply be the same form written *plene*. The ancient versions interpret a passive as is mentioned below. 1QIsa[a] has the form ממורט. Kutscher sees the scribe interpreting מוֹרָט as a Pual participle because of an unfamiliarity with the Qal passive stem participle.[233]

The Vul and Tg both read the מְמֻשָּׁךְ and מוֹרָט as attributes and have meanings that are attested for the Hebrew words. The Vul chooses to have "a people who are tearing and being torn in pieces." The Tg relating these words to Israel has "a people robbed and plundered" and then throws the next clause with "feared" into a past time. The LXX interprets these words the most liberally with "a nation in the heights and a strange people." The best rendering of the various characteristics listed in Isa 18:2 will assume that the author is consistent in his description of the people unless the author indicates otherwise. The author describes the people in this verse as a people feared. In the chapter the author uses these people to show a degree of contrast between verse 2 and verse 7. In verse 7's climactic conclusion to the chapter these people bring gifts to Yahweh at Zion. One would expect that verse 2 will say that these people are a strong people not submitted to Yahweh.

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[232] Waltke 22.6c.

[233] Kutscher, p. 344.

18:2(e) אֶל־עַם נוֹרָא מִן־הוּא וָהָלְאָה--"'to a people feared from there and beyond'" אֶל־עַם נוֹרָא is a prepositional phrase. נוֹרָא is a Niphal masculine participle of ירא, "fear," which functions as an attributive adjective. Others which Isaiah names as being feared (ירא) are: Syria and Ephraim (7:4), Assyria (8:12), and Elam and Media (21:1). אֶל appears in 1QIsa[a] as ל. This interchange of prepositions occurs quite frequently in the Isaiah scroll.

הָלְאָה is an adverb meaning "out there, onwards, further." GKC 103m finds the combination מִן־הוּא suspicious since *min* expects a pronominal suffix not a pronoun. Waltke finds the pronoun either textually doubtful or an ellipsis because the independent personal pronoun occurs only in the nominative case.[234] BDB sees this as an ellipsis for מֵאֲשֶׁר הוּא.[235] The Tg takes a temporal interpretation with מבכין ולהלאה, "from before and to the future." The Vul interprets הלאה as a negative and the *min* as a comparative with *post quem non est alius*, "after whom there is no other." The LXX translates it as the Vul but reads an Aramaic מַן, which is the interrogative "who," τίς αὐτοῦ ἐπέκεινα, "Who (is) beyond him?" (cf. Dan 3:15). A better way is to let הוּא function as a demonstrative "that one."[236]

מִן־הוּא וָהָלְאָה is a phrase found only here but the pattern מִן + XXX + וָהָלְאָה occurs ten times in the Hebrew Bible. This pattern can refer to time or place. The context of c. 18 gives little support for a comment about the *terminus a quo* of the people's power to incite fear. The contrast is between a

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[234] Waltke 16.2, n. 9.

[235] BDB, s.v. "מן."

[236] Wildberger, p. 680; e.g., Jer 7:4 uses הֵמָּה as a demonstrative.

people who are strong now (v.2) but who are later under subjection (v.7). The geographical sense shows best the universality of this nation's ability to induce fear. The antecedent of הוּא is the closest noun עַם. One finds a similar idea at 1 Sam 10:3: מִשָּׁם וָהָלְאָה, "from there and beyond."[237]

18:2(f) גּוֹי קַו־קָו וּמְבוּסָה--"'a nation dominating and trampling'"

The two nouns following גּוֹי are genitives. גּוֹי and עַם appear parallel to one another throughout this verse. They refer to the same nation and are interchangeable.

One finds קַו־קָו as such only here. BDB judges that קַו־קָו is the single word קַוְקָו and renders it as "might." That is how it appears in 1QIsa[a]. BDB sees this as a reduplicated קָו from קוה (I), "wait for." It considers the present Biblical meaning of קוה to have developed from an earlier "to twist, stretch" cords that later became the waiting "tension" of these cords. Assyrian evidences such a development in its words *qu'û* meaning "wait" and *qû*, "cord." Arabic has *qawija*, "be strong," and *quwwatun*, "strength, strand (of rope)." In support of this rendering of the reduplication BDB refers to the definition of the Arabic *quwwatun*, "strength, strand (of rope)," and cites the GKC 123e rule that repetition can express an exceptional quality. Wildberger prefers to render קַו־קָו "sinewy strength" because he defines the Arabic *qawija* "taut, be strong."[238] G. R. Driver finds a parallel in Akkadian that actually has a reduplication: *dandannu*, "very strong," that is from *dannu*, "strong."[239]

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[237] Cf. 1 Sam 20:22, 37.

[238] Wildberger, p. 680; cf. TWAT, s.v. "קו," by K.-M. Beyse.

[239] G. R. Driver, p. 46.

HALAT also recommends that one read with 1QIsa[a] קוְקִו and defines it as "suppleness, sinewy strength." It cites for support the Arabic words above.

The LXX and Vul have a sense related to the verb קוה (I), "wait." The LXX has ἀνέλπιστον, "unawaited," the basic meaning of "wait" but with negation. The Vul has *expectantem expectantem*, "waiting, waiting."

Some see the word קָו that Isa 18:2 uses as the same word that appears in Isaiah 28:10 and 13. Isaiah 28:10 describes what the priests and the prophets teach as צַו לָצָו צַו לָצָו קָו לָקָו קָו לָקָו זְעֵיר שָׁם זְעֵיר שָׁם. BDB and HALAT see this as a different קָו that is the senseless mimicry of Isaiah's words. Then 28:13 uses the same phrase to describe how Yahweh will manifest his judgment. This represents the unintelligible speech of foreigners. Donner sees these words as the stammering imitation of a drunk and sees the same קָו as what one finds in Isaiah 18.[240] In this light he sees the קָו־קָו of 18:2 as the onomatopoeic stammering meant to signal to the hearer a foreign (Ethiopian), unintelligible language.[241] One weakness with this proposal is that the reader already knows that this people is foreign. Another weakness is that this interpretation also breaks with the pattern in 18:2 of pairing similar attributes. Delitzsch also turns to Isa 28:10 for help in interpreting Isa 18:2. He considers the קָו in Isa 28:10 and 13 to be the word for precept, which is also from קוה (I).[242] According to this definition one would render the Isa

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[240] H. Donner, "Ugaritismen in der Psalmenforschung," Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 79 (1967): 327.

[241] Donner, Israel, p. 122; see TWAT, s.v. "קו," for other possible interpretation for Isaiah 28: 10 and 13.

[242] Delitzsch, p. 351.

28:10 as "precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little, there a little." Delitzsch renders קָו־קָו at 18:2 as "a commanding (nation)."

Whether or not the קָו in Isaiah 28 and in Isaiah 18 is the same word, biblical authors often use קָו or קָו, "measuring line," a word that is also from קוה (I), in the Hebrew Bible to describe the condition of a nation. Often it decrees the destruction of a nation (2 Kings 21:13; Isaiah 34:11, 17; Lam 2:8) or the restoration of Jerusalem (Jer 31:39; Ezek 47:3; Zech 1:16). Reduplicating the word amplifies the word's meaning. Perhaps קָו־קָו means "(the nation of) the supreme measuring line" or in other words "the exercise of domination." The parallel word in Isa 22:5 of מְבוּסָה supports this possibility.

וּמְבוּסָה is a feminine noun from בוּס, "to tread down, trample." It appears only in Isaiah 18 and in Isa 22:5. In 22:5 it describes the day when the Lord will judge Israel by means of Elam. There וּמְבוּסָה is one of three genitives of "day," the other two being: מְהוּמָה, "tumult," and מְבוּכָה, "perplexity." The parallel clause in 22:5 is the statement: "a day of battering down walls and of crying out to the mountains." מְבוּסָה means "trampling, subjugation." This sense is similar to the meaning I have given to קָו־קָו.

18:2(g) אֲשֶׁר־בָּזְאוּ נְהָרִים אַרְצוֹ--"'whose land rivers have divided'"

אֲשֶׁר־בָּזְאוּ begins a relative clause with a resumptive pronominal suffix. The head word is גּוֹי from the previous clause. The verb appears only here and in verse 7. BDB relates it to the Aramaic word בְּזַע, "cleave," and HALAT renders it "wash away." G. R. Driver argues against the Aramaic cognate

because that cognate means "broke in two, divided (money)."[243] Instead he suggests that בזא is a cognate of the Arabic *baḍa'a* "(a land) lacks fodder; vituperate a land for lack of fodder." The versions dislike his suggestion. The Vul has *diripuerunt*, "(whose rivers) have broken apart (their land)," the Tg has בזיזא, "(whose land the gentiles) plundered," and the LXX does not see the word.

נְהָרִים refers to the "rivers of Cush" mentioned in 18:1. From the foregoing it seems the nation to whom the messengers go is Cushite.

18:3(a) כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֵל--"all inhabitants of the world"

כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֵל is a noun clause in a vocative case. The focus shifts from the one land of whirring wings to the whole world. יֹשֵׁב and שֹׁכֵן make a word-pair.[244] There is a semantic difference apparent between them so that יֹשֵׁב is the person in a permanent settlement and שֹׁכֵן represents the person in an impermanent arrangement.[245] Together they would represent all people. תֵבֵל and אֶרֶץ is the reverse order of a known word-pair.[246]

The change in addressees shows that the narrator is again the speaker. Confirming this are the universality of the address--the messengers could never address all the world--and verse 4, where the speaker draws attention to himself.

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[243] G. R. Driver, p. 46.

[244] Avishur, p. 71.

[245] TWAT, s.v. "שכן," by M. Görg.

[246] Avishur, p. 157.

18:3(b) וְשֹׁכְנֵי אֶרֶץ--"and dwellers of the earth"

וְשֹׁכְנֵי אֶרֶץ is a noun clause in the vocative case.

18:3(c) כִּנְשֹׂא־נֵס הָרִים תִּרְאוּ--"when (someone) lifts the banner upon the mountains you shall see"

כִּנְשֹׂא־נֵס הָרִים is a temporal clause. Paul Joüon cites this text as an instance where the yiqtol form has the force of an imperative.[247]

נֵס is a "standard, ensign, signal, sign." In the Hebrew Bible נֵס usually appears with נשׂא. Yahweh is the only one who commissions it. Half of the occurrences of נֵס are in Isaiah. In Isaiah נֵס is Yahweh's call either for nations to attack Israel (5:26), or for Yahweh's holy ones to attack Babylon or Assyria (13:2; 31:9), or for nations to bring back the people of Israel (11:10, 12; 49:22; 62:10). Since the world will see the sign and the outcome will be the fall of Assyria Isa 18:3 probably signals Yahweh's attack of Assyria. Isaiah 31:9 says as much under similar conditions. The sign of 18:3 may play double duty because Yahweh's call for Assyria to attack Israel also marks the approach of Yahweh's attack upon Assyria. This was the essence of Isa 8:9, which juxtaposed the nations' war cry with the nations' defeat.

הָרִים served as the lookout posts from which one could signal the approach of friend or foe.[248]

The subject of תִּרְאוּ is the "dwellers of the world" and the "inhabitants of the earth." ראה and שׁמע make a word-pair that convey a total personal

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[247] Joüon 113m.

[248] TWAT, s.v. "הר," by S. Talmon.

apprehension.[249] In Isaiah the subject of ראה is all nations when the nations are to see: (a) the redemption of Jerusalem and the glory of God (cf. 52:10); (b) the judgment of Assyria (cf. 14:16; 30:30), or (c) the carcasses of the wicked (cf. 66:24). Isaiah 14:16 and 30:30 are similar to Isa 18:3. Like Isa 18:3, in Isa 30:30 Yahweh calls the world to take note of the signal. If Isa 18:3 follows this pattern it would mean that the prophet is inviting the world to see Yahweh destroy Assyria when Assyria attacks Judah.

18:3(d) וְכִתְקֹעַ שׁוֹפָר תִּשְׁמָעוּ--"and when (someone) blasts the trumpet you will hear"

וְכִתְקֹעַ שׁוֹפָר is a temporal clause. תקע, "thrust, clap, give a blow," is a Qal infinitive construct and is the typical verb for the שׁוֹפָר. שׁוֹפָר is a "ram's horn" that people blow for a signal.[250] Of the over seventy occurrences of שׁוֹפָר in the Hebrew Bible the intent is unclear only here. The uses of שׁוֹפָר in the Hebrew Bible that suit Isa 18:3 are: (a) a call to arms, such as Jer 51:27, which is the only other place that also has "raise the standard"; (b) a call for the Lord to start fighting, such as Zech 9:14; or (c) an alarm, such as Jer 4:21, which also has ראה and נֵס, and Joel 2:1. שׁמע, "hear," is the activity of all the world according to Isaiah when: (a) the Lord strikes down Assyria, such as Isa 30:30, where שׁמע also joins with ראה; (b) the Lord strikes down all nations, such as in Isa 34:1; and (c) Yahweh saves Israel, such as Isa 49:1. Since the whole world is to hear this, the blast could be the sound of Yahweh's attack upon Assyria and Yahweh's deliverance of Israel.

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[249] TWAT, s.v. "ראה," by H.-F. Fuhs; Avishur, p. 87.

[250] HALAT; ABD, "Music and Muscial Instruments," by E. M. Yamauchi.

The Codex Aleppo and the Leningrad Codex B19^{A} (the BHS has a *setumah*) show a break

18:4(a) כִּי כֹה אָמַר יְהוָה אֵלַי--"for the following is what Yahweh told me"

כִּי makes a weak causal connection--all the world should pay attention because Yahweh spoke to the prophet and revealed his plan. In Isaiah כִּי is attached to כֹה אָמַר about fourteen times of the forty-eight times כֹה אָמַר appears. Muilenberg identifies the כִּי that precedes the oracular formula כה אמר יהוה as belonging to climactic contexts.[251] He admits that besides being emphatic כִּי always presses speech onward from one remembered point to another. Anneli Aejmelaeus argues that it is impossible to draw the line between the emphatic cases of כִּי and those where there is an indirect connection with another clause (the indirect causal cases).[252] Furthermore, she says the Hebrew Bible probably did not normally use כִּי as an emphatic particle in places where it was possible to use it as a connective. It would have been impossible to distinguish the two. In argumentative texts כִּי is an argumentative coordinator. She recommends that one see כִּי as a connective with a causal relation, even it is a weak one, rather than as an emphatic particle. Aejmalaeus points out that indirect causal clauses do not give the cause for what is said in the main clause but rather the reason for saying it.[253]

18:4(b) אֶשְׁקְטָה וְאַבִּיטָה בִּמְכוֹנִי--"'I will be quiet and I will watch in my place'"

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[251] Muilenberg, "כי," p. 144.

[252] Anneli Aejmelaeus, "Function and Interpretation of כי in Biblical Hebrew," Journal of Biblical Literature 105/2 (1986): 205.

[253] Ibid., p. 203.

אֶשְׁקוֹטָה (*Kethib*) is a Qal imperfect first singular cohortative from שׁקט, "be quiet, undisturbed." The MT has a *Qere* reading אֶשְׁקֳטָה to object to the lack of reduction in the thematic vowel. In the Hebrew Bible when Yahweh is the subject of a positive שׁקט the nations conspire against Yahweh and his people (Ps 83:1) and when Yahweh is the subject of a negated שׁקט Yahweh acts on behalf of Jerusalem (Isa 62:1).

וְאַבִּיטָה is a Hiphil imperfect first singular cohortative from נבט, "look." God is the subject when the speaker wants to establish something or to plead for something.[254] At 18:4 נבט establishes that Yahweh is waiting for his time to attack. It is an attentive watching although without action for the moment.[255]

מָכוֹן is a masculine noun meaning "fixed or established place, foundation." It refers to the place where Yahweh dwells whether in heaven or on earth.[256] The theme of Yahweh waiting in a place (מָקוֹם) before Yahweh acts to deliver appears in Hos 5:15. In that case Yahweh attacks Ephraim and Judah and waits for their repentance.

18:4(c) כְּחֹם צַח עֲלִי־אוֹר--"'like the dazzling heat in bright daylight'"

כְּחֹם begins a comparative clause. חֹם, "warmth (of bread), heat (of day/summer)" is a masculine noun from חמם, "be or become warm."

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[254] TWAT, s.v. "נבט," by H. Ringgren.

[255] N. H. Tur-Sinai, Peshuto shel Migra, vol. 3a, p. 58, cited by Avishur (1984), p. 686, believes וְאַבִּיטָה is an example of the kind of corruption which interchanges a ה for a ח. It should read וְאֶבְטַח "I will be confident." Avishur says בטח and שׁקט is a word-pair. The text is intelligible and there is no textual evidence for Tur-Sinai's emendation.

[256] E.g., 1 Kings 8:13, 39.

צַח appears four times in the Hebrew Bible. This is an adjective from the hapax legomenon verb צחח, "be white," according to HALAT, or "be dazzling," according to BDB. The versions support this analysis. Sh. Talmon suggests that צַח may be from צחה, "thirsty."[257] The reduplicated form צַחְצָחוֹת that only appears at Isa 58:11 means "dry." HALAT explains that in the Hebrew Bible the related forms צחיח and צחיחה have meanings that fall between "dry" and "shining surface." The discovery of an ostracon at *Tell 'Arad* dated to the sixth century revealed a Canaanite month called צח but scholars later discounted that and read the line that the word was in as a patronym.[258]

עֲלֵי־אוֹר. עֲלֵי is an older full form of עַל, "upon," that poetry has preserved.[259] BDB interprets עֲלֵי־אוֹר as "in sunshine."[260] The LXX and the Vul interpret the עֲלֵי as a substantive of the verb עלה and translate this phrase as "noonday light." Aalen renders אוֹר, "bright daylight" because the Hebrew Bible never expressly says the brightness of the day is from the sun.[261] What distinguished the sun from the stars was not light but heat (Exod 16:21; 1 Sam

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[257] TWAT, s.v. "צח," by Sh. Talmon.

[258] J. Alberto Soggin, "Zum wiederentdeckten altkanaanäischen Monat צח," Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 77 (1965): 84; "Nachtrag zu ZAW 77 (1965), S. 83-86," Zeitschrift die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 77 (1965): 326.

[259] BDB, HALAT; cf. Waltke 11.2.13a: suffixed forms of the preposition derive from this.

[260] Cf. Tg; on the use of על to mark a circumstance ("in connection with") see Waltke 11.2.13g.

[261] TWAT, s.v. "אור," by S. Aalen; but see e.g., Isa 60:19 where the elimination of sun is the elimination of light.

11:9; Isa 49:10). A similar formulation is used for the time before dawn in, for example, 1 Sam 14:36: עַד־אוֹר הַבֹּקֶר, "until the light of morning." Talmon understands אוֹר to relate to אוֹרָה, "herb," and renders it "stand of grass."[262] Although one can find expressions of "dew/rain upon (עַל־) the grass (עֵשֶׂב)" one does not find the idea of "heat (חֹם) upon the grass" in the Hebrew Bible (Deut 32:2; Isa 26:19; Micah 5:7). Combining the circumstantial sense of עַל with Aalen's rendering of אוֹר a good rendering of this phrase would be "in bright daylight."

Grapes needed prolonged sunshine and dewy nights for them to reach perfection.[263] 18:4 has the intent to set up a contrast between the healthy maturation and the pre-mature harvest of verse 5.

In the light of a battle that 18:3 anticipates and of a crop's destruction in 18:5-6 the period of Yahweh's silence must be the time when the object of destruction is amassing power. The point of comparison is the apparent passivity of the heat of the light. Although passive it nurtures the plants. The dazzling heat represents how with Yahweh's support Assyria is successfully advancing toward its goal of world domination.

18:4(d) כְּעָב טַל בְּחֹם קָצִיר--"'and like a cloud of dew in the heat of (the grain) harvest'"

כְּעָב טַל begins a comparative clause. This clause coordinates with the previous clause through juxtaposition. טַל was a vital source of water for both

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[262] TWAT, s.v. "צח," by Sh. Talmon; he finds support for this in the appearance in Qumran Year or Festival lists of a season of *dš'*, which he compares to the stand of grass.

[263] DB, s.v. "Vine"; cf. 2 Sam 23:4 which tells of the light (אוֹר) at sunrise when there are no clouds and the brightness (נֹגַהּ) of that light after a rain which makes the grass sprout.

grain and wine crops especially in the dry summer when harvesting took place (e.g., Deut 32:2; Job 29:19; Prov 26:1). According to Michael Zohary, dew is important for the maintenance of summer crops.[264] In the Negev and the Coastal Plain dew-nights can number two-hundred and fifty. The cloud of dew confirms the point of the dazzling light. Yahweh will see that Assyria will make striking progress toward its goals right until Assyria's destruction.

בְּחֹם קָצִיר. קָצִיר is a masculine noun for "grain harvest." Some commentators want to see 18:4 as a reference to the vintage but there is no unambiguous case where such is the case.[265] Isaiah 16:9 is commonly cited as an occurrence of קָצִיר as vintage but there קָצִיר refers just as easily to the harvest of the fields (שְׂדֵמָה) of Heshbon as to the vintage of Sibmah. Instead of "heat of harvest" the LXX and the Vul both have "day of harvest." The BHS editors suggest an emendation that follows the LXX and the Vul but the agreement of the Tg and 1QIsa[a] with the MT renders the emendation doubtful.

18:5(a) כִּי־לִפְנֵי קָצִיר כְּתֻם־פָּרַח--"when before harvest, as soon as the bud is finished"

The prophet is speaking again since the agricultural image will describe Yahweh's lopping off in third person.

כִּי often appears after an initial clause headed by the oracular formula כה אמר (כי) (e.g., 7:8; 10:25; 43:1). Here it introduces a temporal clause that

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[264] Michael Zohary, Plants of the Bible (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 26 (hereafter cited as Zohary).

[265] BDB; Kissane, p. 207; vintage = בְּצִיר.

states the circumstances pertaining to the following main clause.[266] A similar use to the one found here of a temporal כִּי clause following the oracular formula is Isaiah 29:22-23: "For this is what the Lord . . . says: '. . .' For when . . ."

לִפְנֵי קָצִיר can be either the temporal use or the referential use of the preposition.[267] Wildberger takes the referential use in the sense "in view of" and translates: "at the time that the grain is harvested . . ."[268] There are cases where קָצִיר suggests harvesting in general especially when it is opposite קַיִץ, "summer," and this is probably one such occurrence (Jer 8:20; Prov 26:1).[269]

כְּתֹם־פֶּרַח is a temporal clause. תֹם is the Qal infinitive construct from תמם, "be complete, finished," in the sense of being spent. This can be the transition to the next stage of development (cf. 1 Kings 7:22). פֶּרַח is the masculine noun from פָּרַח (I), "bud, sprout, shoot." Zohary explains that the grape flowers shed hood-like covers when they open. Aaron's rod presents an example of the stages of fruit bearing (cf. Num 17:23).[270] The progression is פֶּרַח, "bud," צִיץ, "blossom," and גמל, "to bear ripe fruit."

18:5(b) וּבֹסֶר גֹּמֵל יִהְיֶה נִצָּה--"and (as soon as) the flower renders an unripe grape"

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[266] Aejemalaeus, p. 196; Muilenberg, "כי," p. 146; Waltke 38.7.

[267] Waltke 11.3.1; e.g., referential use at Gen 7:1.

[268] Wildberger, p. 681; seconded by Watts, p. 245.

[269] Cf. HALAT.

[270] Zohary, p. 55.

בֹּסֶר is a masculine noun "unripe or sour grapes."[271]

גֹּמֵל is a Qal masculine singular participle from גמל. HALAT and BDB agree it means "render" and "wean." In the cases of Num 17:23 and Isa 18:5 HALAT renders it "finish" and BDB renders it "ripen." Num 17:23d shows the dispute: וַיֹּצֵא פֶּרַח וַיָּצֶץ צִיץ וַיִּגְמֹל שְׁקֵדִים, "and it sent out buds, and bloomed blossoms and rendered almonds." BDB says גֹּמֵל at Isa 18:5 is intransitive--"become ripe"--although the active voice is never intransitive elsewhere. HALAT says at 18:5 it means "ripened." Most render גֹּמֵל as "ripening" and consider it an attributive participle of בֹּסֶר. Dalman describes this colon as the stage before the ripe grape.[272] This it must be since this is happening during the "grain harvest."

נִצָּה is a feminine noun from נצץ, "to sparkle, bloom."[273] BDB suggests that the noun נִצָּה arose from an earlier meaning "shining amid leaves." It occurs here and in Job 15:33 where it belongs to the olive tree and parallels the בסר of the vine.

The difficulty in this clause for the translator is that the apparent subject, the unripe grape, cannot become a flower because it has passed blossoming. However, a verb is often a masculine singular when it precedes a feminine subject.[274] The LXX and the Tg follow the MT linearly with "flower" the object. The LXX has καὶ ὄμφαξ ἀνθήσῃ ἄνθος ὀμφακίζουσα,

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[271] BDB; HALAT; Dalman, p. 303.

[272] Dalman, p. 303.

[273] HALAT; in BDB it is from נצץ (I).

[274] Williams 229; GKC 145o; Procksch, p. 241.

"and when the unripe grape that is unripe buds a bud." The Tg has ובוסרא מיניה סמדר, "and its unripe grape species (to) budding." To make sense out of this the Tg makes out of the previous colon that of a tree blossoming. The Vul has *et inmatura perfectio germinabit*, "and unripe perfection will sprout forth." The Vul has avoided the idea of flower and abstracted from it the idea of perfection.

There is precedence for adding יִהְיֶה to the participle to give emphasis to an action continuing in the future.[275] Examples include such like: Judg 1:7: וְרַגְלֵיהֶם מְקֻצָּצִים הָיוּ, "and their feet were cut off"; and Deut 9:24: מַמְרִים הֱיִיתֶם עִם־יְהוָה, "you have been rebellious against Yahweh."[276] When we view it this way we would render 18:5(b) "as soon as the blossom will deal out the unripe grape." This approach complements the idea of the first clause that also described the end of a stage of growth.

18:5(c) וְכָרַת הַזַּלָּלִים בַּמַּזְמֵרוֹת--"then he will cut the shoots with the pruning knives"

כָּרַת is a Qal perfect masculine singular from כרת, "cut off, cut down." GKC 112oo explains that the perfect consecutive often appears to introduce the apodosis to temporal clauses "to announce future actions or events after simple expressions of time of any kind." Yahweh is the subject of כרת because he is the nearest referent and because this clause explains Yahweh's behavior. Yahweh alone will defeat Assyria according to Isaiah 10:33-34 and according to Isa 37:36 he did so.

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[275] GKC 116r.

[276] Also Joshua 5:5; Isa 2:2.

זַלְזַלִּים is a hapax legomenon. It is clear from the parallel in the next colon that this must be in the class of branches. BDB suggests זַלְזַל is a masculine noun and defines it as "(quivering) tendrils" from זלל (I), 'to shake," and HALAT defines is as "shoot (of vine before the onset of fruit)." BDB is insufficient because the tendril removal was not a concern until the main pruning after the plant was dormant. HALAT errs because it is clear from the preceding that the plant is into the fruit stage. Dalman says one may call the fruitbearing branches of the vine זַלְזַלִּים because of their mobility or may call them נְטִישׁוֹת (see below) because of their extension along the ground.[277] The LXX renders זַלְזַלִּים as τὰ βοτρύδια τὰ μικρὰ, "the small little grapes," the Vul has *ramusculi*, "branches," and the Tg exercising much liberty applies them to Gentile rulers. Wildberger believes that part of the terms that the Gezer calendar lists represent in order the following agricultural activities: קציר is the grain harvest; זמר is the pruning of the vegetation that the grape plant will not use for its grape production; and קץ is the vintage.[278] This is not a comprehensive definition since קץ also describes the fig harvest.[279] Wildberger believes that the shoots that are cut off in 18:5 are the summer pruining of זמר. Perhaps the LXX had this in mind when it explained this hapax legomenon as clusters of unripe grapes or as poorly formed grapes. However, people prune vines seriously only after the vines have become dormant.[280] The winter pruning removes most of the plant.

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[277] Dalman, p. 301; cf. Jer 6:9 that describes the mobile branches as סַלְסַלּוֹת.

[278] Wildberger, p. 692.

[279] Dalman, p. 340; Micah 7:1.

[280] Borowski, p. 109.

Summer pruning varies according to the conditions and carries with it no intrinsic note of severity. In contrast, the cutting away that this verse speaks of will leave food for animals and birds. In this verse the interest has been in the development of the fruit. The outcome of the fruit is in focus. The best rendering of זְלָזַלִּים is new fruit bearing shoots that normally the winter pruning removes. Here the pruner has removed them prematurely with the fruit still attached.

זְלָזַלִּים is a homophone of צְלָצַל in 18:1(a) and as such may echo verse 1.

מַזְמֵרָה is a feminine noun for a "pruning-knife" from זמר, "to trim, prune." One used this knife for pruning and for grape harvesting.[281] The term עֵת הַזָּמִיר, "the time of pruning," is only used to refer to the grape harvest.

18:5(d) וְאֶת־הַנְּטִישׁוֹת הֵסִיר הֵחַז--"he has removed the branches, he has lopped off"

נְטִישָׁה is the feminine noun "tendrils, shoots (of vine)" from נטשׁ, "leave, forsake, permit." It is not the tendril (see above). Besides this verse it occurs twice: Jer 5:10 for battlements that were probably thorny branches used to line walls; and Jer 48:32 for the spreading branches of a vine that are figurative of Moab.[282]

הֵסִיר is a Hiphil perfect third masculine singular from סוּר, "turn aside," which in the Hiphil means "take away." As a perfect it describes the

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[281] Ibid.

[282] On Jer 5:10 see BDB, s.v. "נטשׁ".

situation as complete.[283] Since it is in the future and is not an event that is continuing from the present this is a prophetic perfect.[284] The prophetic perfect represents a situation that is undoubtedly imminent. The subject is the Yahweh. In Isaiah when the object is a political entity the verb refers to the act of God. Yahweh's acts are against Assyria in Isaiah 10:27 and 14:25 and against Damascus in Isa 17:1. הֵסִיר ties the oracle together to the מוּסָר at Isa 17:1.

הֵחֵז is a Hiphil third masculine singular perfect and a prophetic perfect. It is a hapax legomenon which BDB and HALAT attribute to hypothetical root חזז, "strike away." They base this deduction on the rare Targum word נְחֵז, "spring forth," and the New Hebrew word נִתֵּץ, "spring, spurt, out." The Aphel would mean, "cut off." Interestingly the Tg does not use the Targum word but rather ויעבר, "and he will remove." The LXX has κατακόψει, "he will cut down," and the Vul has *excutientur*, "they will be struck off." From the two previous verbs it would seem almost certain that the meaning is one of cutting off. The vocalization is the pausal form for הֵחֵץ.[285]

18:6(a) יֵעָזְבוּ יַחְדָּו לְעֵיט הָרִים--"they together will be left to the raptors of the mountains"

יֵעָזְבוּ is a Niphal imperfect third masculine plural from עזב, "leave, forsake, loose." With the preposition לְ scholars usually render it "leave

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[283] Waltke 30.4d.

[284] Waltke 30.5.1e; GKC 106n.

[285] GKC 29q.

to."[286] The subject is the זְלְזַלִּים and the נְטִישׁוֹת. After subjects of different genders the predicate is masculine.[287]

The masculine noun עַיִט, "birds of prey," appears eight times in the Hebrew Bible. Here it is a collective. The pruning was so severe that it left enough fruit for birds to feed all summer.

The type of bird betrays the text's intent that the vineyard be only a figure for the real object of destruction. There are many opinions about the interpretation of the figure. In the Hebrew Bible עַיִט describes judgment either upon Israel's sinners by someone from the east (Isa 46:11), upon Judah by Judah's enemies (Jer 12:9), or upon Gog and Gog's allies by the Lord (Ezek 39:4). In the case of Ezek 39:4 the עַיִט will feast on Gog's troops. With a different word Ezek 32:4 describes birds feasting on pharaoh. Wildberger believes that the figure of Isa 18:5 applied originally to Assyria's destruction of Ethiopia.[288] Later a redactor extended the object of destruction to cover all the world at the endtime. Motyer takes the lack of historical details to infer that the object of destruction is the earth's rulers who have run the world by "Assyria-like purposes of imperialism" or "Egypt-like schemes of collective security."[289] Procksch identifies Israel with the grapes of the vine image of 18:4 that are quickly ripening in the heat. He believes that Assyria is about ready to harvest them but that God will intervene to

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[286] BDB; HALAT.

[287] GKC 146d.

[288] Wildberger, p. 693.

[289] Motyer, p. 162.

harvest Assyria.[290] Delitzsch uses the advanced stage of the grape maturation to identify the vine with Assyria, which is at the peak of its power.[291] He sees Assyria as the object of God's judgment. Edward Kissane uses the fact that the prophet has called upon all the world.[292] He argues that since only Assyria had oppressed the whole world, only Assyria would be of interest for the world and would be the devastated vine. Young identifies the object of judgment with Assyria because Assyria is the "enemy nation" of the time.[293] A close inspection of the information that Isaiah 18 gives reveals that neither Judah nor Cush/Egypt can be the object of the destruction since they are both around in 18:7. The fact that 18:3 describes that this event is of world-wide significance points to a destruction of a world power. The use of נבט in verse 4 suggests the deliverance of Judah. The power whose demise will spell deliverance for Judah and the world is Assyria. Assyria would seem to be the object of judgment. One finds a similar idea at Isaiah 10:33-34.

עֵיט הָרִים occurs only here. אֶרֶץ and הָרִים are a word-pair in reverse order.[294] People usually planted vineyards on הָרִים according to Isa 7:25 and so the birds would be on the "mountains" to feed on its fruit and its prunings. The Hebrew Bible does not usually describe birds as of the mountain. There

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[290] Procksch, p. 241.

[291] Delitzsch, p. 353.

[292] Kissane, p. 207.

[293] Young, p. 477; cf. Dillmann, p. 169; Duhm, p. 139; Alexander, p. 342.

[294] Avishur, p. 278.

is possibly one other place in the Hebrew Bible where there is a reference to the birds of mountains. Psalm 50:9 explains in warning Israel of judgment that כָּל־עוֹף הָרִים "every bird of the mountain," belongs to the Lord. One place has a similar idea: Ps 11:1 uses צִפּוֹר to say that David should flee to his mountain like a bird. The most frequent way of speaking of the presence of birds is עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם, "fowl of the heavens." The presence or absence of the combination of birds and cattle often means judgment in the Hebrew Bible. "Birds of the air/heavens and beasts of the earth" is a frequent expression. This phrase is a part of curses such as the ones David and Goliath use in 1 Samuel 17:44, 46. Deuteronomy 28:26 uses this phrase to describe the judgment Israel will face for disobedience to Yahweh.

יַחְדָּו, "together," is a manner adverb used for emphasis especially in poetry.[295]

18:6(b) וּלְבֶהֱמַת הָאָרֶץ--"and to the beasts of the earth"

The *lamedh* belongs to the verb of the previous colon. בְּהֵמָה, a feminine noun meanning "beast, animal, cattle," is a collective. The pruning is radical enough to leave food for animals all winter long. Although it is used figuratively here cattle (שׁוֹר) and sheep (שֶׂה) would feed on abandoned vineyards according to Isa 7:25. The phrase "beasts of the earth" usually refers to a division of animal life. This phrase signifies judgment upon Israel or Egypt when it or variations on it, such as חַיַּת כָּל־הָאָרֶץ, join with the phrase "birds of the air/heaven."[296]

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[295] BDB; Waltke 39.3.1j.

[296] E.g., Deut 28:26 for Israel and Ezek 32:4 for Egypt.

18:6(c) וְקַץ עָלָיו הָעַיִט--"the raptors will summer upon it"

וְקַץ is a Qal perfect third masculine singular of קיץ, "spend the summer" and is a hapax legomenon.[297] The noun קַיִץ, "summer, summer fruit" occurs frequently. The LXX has instead συναχθήσεται, "he will be collected." The Vul has *aestate perpetua*, "for a continuous summer," and the Tg has בקיטא, "in the summer." The versions show that they were not aware of a verbal use for this word. The verb parallel to it in the next colon is also a hapax legomenon.

עָלָיו has a masculine singular pronominal suffix. The antecedent may be the "branches" of 18:5 in a distributive sense--"upon each one"--or it may be the vine--"upon the vine."[298]

18:6(d) וְכָל־בֶּהֱמַת הָאָרֶץ עָלָיו תָּחֳרָף--"and all the beasts of the earth will winter upon it"

The adjective כל makes the universal significance of this event clear. The last colon of the series emphasizes "all" and intensifies the conclusion. 1QIsa[a] does not have the definite article before "earth."

תָּחֳרָף is a Qal imperfect third feminine singular. HALAT derives it from חרף (I), "spend the winter." BDB categorizes it as חרף (III), "remain in harvest-time." Strangely BDB places the noun חֹרֶף, "winter," under a different verbal root חרף (II) which it leaves undefined. The uses of the noun חֹרֶף and the meaning of קַיִץ bode against BDB's definition of the verb. The

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[297] HALAT; same as BDB, קיץ (II).

[298] GKC 145m recommends the distributive sense.

noun חֹרֶף can be a metaphor for the prime of life (Job 29:4) and the time of ploughing (Prov 20:4). חֹרֶף is not harvest-time but the season preparing for another crop. It is a cold season and according to Jer 36:22 includes the ninth month or December. קַיִץ can refer to not just the summer but to the harvest season (Jer 8:20). חרף together with "summer" make a permerismum and stand for the whole year.[299] BDB is right not to draw too close a correspondence with the seasons of the occidental world but its definition of חֹרֶף is too narrow. The usage of the nouns and the context of 18:6 support HALAT.

The Aleppo Codex shows a closed paragraph after this verse.

18:7(a) בָּעֵת הַהִיא יוּבַל־שַׁי לַיהוָה צְבָאוֹת--"at that time tribute will be brought to Yahweh of Hosts"

בָּעֵת הַהִיא is a time designative. This is the only occurrence of this phrase in Isaiah in future time. This phrase occurs fourteen times in future time in the Hebrew Bible. It is always a continuation of the subject matter and of the time of the previous sentences.[300]

יוּבַל is a Hophal third masculine singular imperfect of יבל, "bring." A *lamedh* usually accompanies. As a Hophal one brings something in order it to give it up to another.

שַׁי is a masculine noun "gift offered as a homage" and appears in the Hebrew Bible three times. It is always a matter of kings bringing gifts to the Lord (Ps 68:30; 76:12).

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[299] Gen 8:22; Ps 74:17; Amos 3:15; Zech 14:18.

[300] De Vries, p. 340.

יהוה צבאות is the name of Yahweh as the God of war.[301] It is an appropriate epithet in this context. According to Mettinger, the Sabaoth God is Yahweh present with his people, reigning over all the world, moving history to his goal and responding to the actions of people.[302] It is perhaps significant that this phrase last appeared at the start of the Damascus Oracle.

18:7(b) עַם מְמֻשָׁךְ וּמוֹרָט--"a people tall and smooth"

This begins the *inclusio* that appeared first in Isa 18:2. There are four differences between the repeated words of verse 2 and verse 7. In the phrase before us אֶל is absent and עַם replaces גּוֹי. In the next phrase a *waw* plus the preposition *min* prefixed to a noun replaces the אֶל. As pertains to the replacement of גּוֹי with עַם Avishur has shown that such interchanges in parallel phrases occur for stylistic reasons.[303]

The absenting of the אֶל in the phrase above makes clear that the direction of the gift is not to the illustrious people described in 18:2. It also lets the next preposition govern the phrases (see below at 18:7[f]). The precise relationship of this clause to the previous one is, however, not clear. Some would propose that the author gapped the preposition *min* and that the addition of the *waw* to the next phrase indicates the inter-relatedness of the two clauses.[304] Some see the "nation" in apposition to שֵׁי. Perhaps the less elaborate grammatical analysis is precisely what this text requires: the

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[301] BDB, s.v. "צבא."

[302] Mettinger, pp. 135-48.

[303] Avishur, p. 663.

[304] Wildberger, p. 681; Procksch, p. 242; Watts, p. 245.

illustrious nation brings gifts to Yahweh and those gifts include a nation, either themselves or someone like them. (cf. Isa 45:14). The LXX assumes a gapped *min*, with ἐκ λαοῦ, "from a people," as does the Vul *a populo*. The Tg does not assume the *min* but shows its own peculiar exegesis by stating הדוא יתיניה בתוקרבא לקדם יוי צבאות לעמא, "he will bring him with a gift before Yahweh of Hosts to the people," a perspective that views Israel as the illustrious nation. 1QIsa[a] has מעם. This is probably due to the scribe's intervention since there is much evidence for scribal emendations of prepositions.[305]

18:7(f) אֶל־מְקוֹם שֵׁם־יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת--"to the place of the name of Yahweh of Hosts"

אֶל is the direction of the gift movement. Verse 2(d) used this preposition to indicate the movement of messengers to the illustrious nation and now verse 7 uses it to indicate the direction of the illustrious nation to the place of Yahweh. This is a great reversal.

מְקוֹם is a less specialized term than מְכוֹן (18:4(2)).

שֵׁם־יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת is a phrase only appearing in three other places. The connection in 1 Sam 17:45 and 2 Sam 6:2, 18 is with the place of the ark of the covenant. These passages describe the ark of the covenant as the place where Yahweh of Hosts who fought for Israel dwelt. Mt. Zion now describes this place. 1QIsa[s] does not have צבאות but the versions do. 18:7 repeats "Yahweh of Hosts" twice, a repetition that is appropriate in this context in which Yahweh defeats Assyria.

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[305] Kutscher, pp. 409-10.

18:7(g) הַר־צִיּוֹן--"Mount Zion"

הַר־צִיּוֹן is a term that appears in Isaiah nine times. These passages describe the security of Jerusalem and the submission of all nations to Yahweh. "Mount Zion" is in apposition to the "place of the name of Yahweh of Hosts," where his name dwells (cf. 1 Kings 8:17, 20, 29; 2 Kings 23:27).

The Codex Aleppo, the Codex Leningrad $B19^{A}$ (the BHS has a *setumah*) and $1QIsa^{a}$ all show an open paragraph after this verse. The versions have a break.

Excursus: The Meaning of מַשָּׂא

The following excursus is an attempt to secure the meaning of the word מַשָּׂא in its prophetic usage. This is a specialized use of the word but because it is unique its precise meaning is not clear. Superficially the context in which the word finds itself does not provide many clues either. We will mine several sources to formulate a definition. First, we will examine how the Septuagint and Targumim translate the term. The Septuagint and the Targumim are the earliest interpreters of the term and because of their relative proximity to biblical times may have a knowledge of the term that goes beyond what the Hebrew Bible readily volunteers. Second, we will examine what modern scholars have been able to determine about the term. Third, we will compare the various ways the Hebrew Bible uses the word and its verbal root word נשׂא. This is still the most reliable information that there is on the meaning of the term as it is used in the Hebrew Bible but because the material is so sparse and so tentative we will turn to this after we review what others have said. Fourth, we will examine the content of the oracles labeled מַשָּׂא. This is another way to uncover how the Hebrew Bible understood the prophetic use of מַשָּׂא.

Introduction to the Problem

מַשָּׂא appears sixty-nine times in the Hebrew Bible. Twenty-seven of these occurrences are for a prophetic utterance.[1] Two occurrences (four if one counts Prov 30:1; 31:1) are for a proper noun. Related forms are: מַשָּׂאָה (one occurrence); מַשָּׂאֵת (fifteen occurrences); and מַשָּׂא (one occurrence). מַשָּׂא

[1] Prophetic מַשָּׂא names texts at 2 Kings 9:25; Isaiah 13:1; 14:28; 15:1; 17:1; 19:1; 21:1; 21:11; 21:13; 22:1; 23:1; 30:6; Ezek 12:10; Nahum 1:1; Hab 1:1; Zechariah 9:1; 12:1; Mal 1:1. It also occurs at Jeremiah 23:33 (2X), 34, 36 (2X), 38 (3X); Lam 2:14.

is from נשׂא, which BDB renders "lift, carry, take" and HALAT renders "lift, raise (high), pardon, contain, carry, bear, support, take." It is a noun of the *maqtal* type that names the instrument or the object of a verbal action.[2] The feminine form מַשָּׂאָה follows the *maqtalat* noun type that indicates a one time performed action.

The profane meaning of the word is typically "burden." Can the notion of "burden" capture all the uses of a noun that derives from such a multi-functional verb as נשׂא? Are there no specialized uses? One well worn procedure has been to translate מַשָּׂא uniformly--one meaning for one word--whether it is the prophetic מַשָּׂא or non-prophetic. Some of the versions have done that. For the prophetic use of מַשָּׂא the King James Version uses exclusively the word "burden." Luther uses the word *Last*,"burden," in every case except Lam 2:14 where he uses *Predigt*, "sermon."[3] The Vulgate uses *onus*, "burden," in every instance except Lam 2:14 where it uses *adsumptiones*, "choices." These versions fail to explain how these prophetic sayings got to be called by this name. They fail to show how the prophetic use is similar or different from the profane usage of the word--the carriage of physical loads. What connotation are we to derive for the prophetic use? How are the מַשָּׂא's carried? Does God bear them or does the prophet or the addressee? Why do they label sections of text?

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[2] TWAT, s.v. "נשׂא"; Waltke 5.5b.

[3] Martin Luther, Die Bibel oder die ganze heilige Schrift des Alten und Neuen Testaments nach der deutschen Übersetzung D. Martin Luthers (Stuttgart: Privileg. Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1930).

Septuagint

The Septuagint (LXX) uses very many different words to translate מַשָּׂא. Rather than define the word by etymology the LXX seeks a semantic definition derived from context. We will divide the various types of translation alternatives into those words that are literal translations, those words that keep a semblance of the literal meaning, and those words that have no apparent connection to the profane meaning of מַשָּׂא or its verbal root. For completeness we must mention that מַשָּׂא appears twice as the name of a son of Ishmael for which the LXX simply gives a transliteration Μασση (Gen 25:14; 1 Chr 1:30).

The LXX renders מַשָּׂא with seven words that literally mean something that one carries.[4] For example, seven times it uses the word βάσταγμα that Liddell and Scott (LS) render "that which is borne."[5] This constitutes all the occurrences of βάσταγμα in the LXX. Seven times the LXX uses αἴρω that means "to lift." Αἴρω is a word that the LXX commonly uses to render נשׂא, "lift, carry," and twenty-seven other eight Hebrew roots. Whenever αἴρω translates מַשָּׂא it is for the the sacred load that the Kohathites carry.

Many times the LXX accurately translates the contextual sense and keeps the literal sense in mind.[6] For example, the LXX uses σύσσημον,

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[4] Ἄρσις (2 Kings 8:9); γόμος (2 Kings 5:17; Exod 23:5); βάσταγμα (Nehemiah 3:15, 19; Jer 17:21, 22, 24, 27); φορτίον (Ps 38:5; Isa 46:1); αἴρω (Numbers 4:15, 24, 31, 32, 47, 49; 2 Chr 35:3); ἀναφορά (Num 4:19); ἀρτόν (Num 4:27 [2X]).

[5] Information about the frequency of words in the LXX comes from E. Hatch and H. Redpath, A Concordance to the Septuagint, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1983). Unless otherwise indicated the definitions of the words from the LXX come from H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, R. in A Greek-English Lexicon (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1985) (hereafter cited as LS).

[6] Δόξα (Isa 22:25); μερίς (for מַשְׂאֵת Gen 43:34 [3X]); ἀφορισμός (for מַשְׂאֵת Ezek 20:40); δῶρον (for מַשְׂאֵת Amos 5:11 and Jer 40:5); σύσσημον (Judges 20:38, 40); σημεῖον (Jer 6:1);

"signal," twice for מַשְׂאֵת when מַשְׂאֵת means "signal in smoke." Σύσσημον translates only one other Hebrew stem--נֵס, "banner (of God)." The LXX uses Σημεῖον, "sign," (LS) once to render מַשְׂאֵת. It is a word that translates eight Hebrew stems including נֵס, words that for the most part mean "sign." One can from these two examples that the LXX will select words that are appropriate for the context and that still contain the idea of "lift." In another place where the LXX considers the מַשָּׂא to be a gift it uses the word δόμα, "gift," a word that translates ten Hebrew roots.

Then there are cases where the LXX uses words that are different from the profane and verbal root meanings of מַשָּׂא.[7] Some of these cases are non-prophetic. For example, ὁρμή, "rapid motion forward (of things or of human aspects)," renders מַשָּׂא twice. Ορμή translates six Hebrew stems with meanings as diverse as "anger" and "river." This is an interpretation of מַשָּׂא that has no apparent relation to the root meaning.

Some of these words with non-profane meanings are for prophetic מַשָּׂא.[8] Λῆμμα, "anything received; a statement taken as true; the matter, substance or argument of a sentence," renders prophetic מַשָּׂא. It translates only one other Hebrew word--שְׁאֵרִית, "remnant." LS take the basic meaning of Λῆμμα to be similar to the meaning of its verb form λαμβάνω, "to take or

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ἔπαρσις (for מַשְׂאֵת Ezek 24:25; for מַשָּׂא Ps 141:2); δόμα (2 Chr 17:11), χρίω (Hos 8:10); λαμβάνω (for מַשְׂאֵת Zeph 3:18).

[7]Ὁρμή (Numbers 11:11, 17); ὑπόστασις (Deut 1:12); Χρηματισμός (Prov 31:1); ἀφηγέομαι (Ezek 12:10); ᾠδή (1 Chronicles 15:22, 27); κρίνω (for מַשָּׂא 2 Chr 24:6); εἶπον (for מַשְׂאֵת 2 Chr 14:9); θαυμάζω (2 Chr 19:7); προσέρχομαι (2 Chr 24:27); ἄφεσις (Est 2:18); πόλεμος (Isa 46:2); no word (1 Chr 15:22 [second מַשָּׂא]; 2 Chr 20:25; Prov 30:1; Isa 21:13; Jer 23:38 [first מַשָּׂא]).

[8]λῆμμα (2 Kings 9:25; Jeremiah 23:33, 34, 36 (2X), 38 (2X); Lam 2:14; Nahum 1:1; Hab 1:1; Zecheriah 9:1; 12:1; Mal 1:1); ὅρασις (Isaiah 13:1; 19:1; 21:1); ὅραμα (Isaiah 21:11; 23:1); ῥημα (Isaiah 14:28; 15:1; 17:1; 22:1); λόγιον (for מַשָּׂאָה Isa 30:27).

receive." This bears a similarity to the meaning of the verbal root of מַשָּׂא, the word נשׂא.[9] Ὅρασις, "seeing, vision, appearance," translates the uses of prophetic מַשָּׂא. The LXX uses it to translate eight other Hebrew stems, in particular מַרְאֶה, "appearance," and חָזוֹן, "vision."

In conclusion one can see that the LXX is not following a close correspondence between מַשָּׂא and the words chosen to translate it. One cannot say that the LXX is working with two basic meanings to מַשָּׂא such as "load" and "utterance." It seems rather that the LXX wants to capture the sense of the context. The various words that the LXX uses to translate prophetic מַשָּׂא shows there is confusion about that sense. These various words show that the LXX can see the prophetic מַשָּׂא as an utterance or as a thing seen.

Targumim

The Targumim is more restrictive than the LXX in its use of words for מַשָּׂא. מַשָּׂא appears most often as מטל or מטול, "load."[10] מטל is from the verb נטל, "to lift" which corresponds to the Hebrew verb נשׂא. Although the Targum does use other words for rendering מַשָּׂא it usually interprets by the words it adds to the text.[11]

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[9] This may explain why λῆμμα is the preferred word of Symmachus and Theodotion for prophetic מַשָּׂא.

[10] Numbers 4:15, 19, 24, 27 (both times), 31, 32, 47, 49; 11:11, 17; 2 Sam 15:33; 19:36; 2 Kings 9:25; 1 Chr 15:22 (both times), 27; 2 Chr 35:3; Isaiah 13:1; 14:28; 15:1; 17:1; 19:1; 21:1; 21:11; 21:13; 22:1; 22:25; 23:1; 46:1; Jeremiah 17:21, 22, 24, 27; Ezek 12:10; Nah 1:1; Zechariah 9:1; 12:1; Mal 1:1. מטל renders מַשָּׂאֵת in Est 2:18.

[11] Other words that the Targum uses for renderings close to profane מַשָּׂא are: מלסובראּ, "to carry" (for מַשָּׂאָה Isa 30:27); חולק, "portion" (Gen 43:34 [3X]); טוען, "load, oppression" (Exod 23:5; 2 Kings 5:17; 8:9); מסובראּ, "burden" (1 Chr 1:30). For semi-literal renderings the Targum uses: יתיר, "pillar" (for מַשָּׂאֵת Judges 20:38, 40); סבר, "to carry (plunder)" (2 Chr 20:25); סימא (Greek for field signal, Jer 6:1); מביזבן, "gift, wheat of a certain depth" (for מַשָּׂאֵת Jer 40:5). For non-literal renderings the Targum uses: עסק, "business of God" (Deut 1:12); סעודתא, "dinner" (for

מטל usually translates the prophetic use of מַשָּׂא. 2 Kings 9:25 adds to the Hebrew text after מטל the phrase "of this prophecy" thereby further defining a very general term. Very often the Targumim add the phrase "the cup of a curse given to *PN* to drink."[12] In Isa 13:1 the Targum further interprets מַשָּׂא by translating "which Isaiah . . . saw" with "of the prophecy of Isaiah." In Isa 14:28 the Targum translates "this burden" with "the burden of this prophecy." The Targum expands Isa 21:1 so that instead of saying "the burden of the desert" the Targum says "burdens of armies that are coming from the desert." In this way the Targum reinterprets the literal word to signify not a "message" but "marching armies." Isaiah 21:11; 22:1; 22:25 all add the thought that מטל is a prophecy. Other prophetic מַשָּׂא rendered by מטל are Ezek 12:10; Zechariah 9:1; 12:1; Mal 1:1. There are few instances where different words render the מַשָּׂא as it appears in the prophets.[13]

In conclusion the Targumim renders מַשָּׂא etymologically but its expansions are semantic derivations. It interprets the prophetic use of מַשָּׂא as a prophecy and not only a prophecy but often one of a foreordained path the addressee must journey. This path is one of drinking from the cup of God's curse of judgment. There is a cup of salvation in the Hebrew Bible at Ps 116:13 that is the promise of God's salvation that the faithful may use by calling upon Yahweh. At Zech 12:2 Jerusalem is a cup that sends all the

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מַשָּׂאת 2 Sam 11:8); חקרובהא, "gift" (2 Chr 17:11); מסב (2 Chr 19:17); משכן זמנא, "tent of meeting" (for מַשָּׂאת 2 Chronicles 24:6, 9); מסקי מסין, "the height of his taxes" (2 Chr 24:27 [?]); אצוחא, "dough" (for מַשָּׂאת Ezek 20:40); חבב, "beloved" (Ezek 24:25); מרות, "rule" (Hos 8:10); ממון, "money of deception" (for מַשָּׂאת Amos 5:11).

[12] This occurs as Isaiah 13:1; 15:1; 17:1; 19:1; 21:11, 13; 23:1; Nahum 1:1.

[13] נבואתא "prophesy" (Jer 23:33 (2X), 34, 36(2X), 38(3X); Hab 1:1; Lam 2:14 [נבואת]); נטל (Isa 30:6 but gives it the sense of a load carried by an animal); מלסובראי "to carry" (Isa 30:27).

surrounding nations reeling. The Targum finds that a מַשָּׂא is such a cup of trouble from God from which the nations have to drink. In the Targum God never gives Israel this cup.

Modern Commentators

We turn now to the question of what modern scholarship has done with the term מַשָּׂא. Excluding the cases when מַשָּׂא is a proper noun there are three main ways that scholars explain the uses of מַשָּׂא. First, there is the group that seeks a definition on an etymological basis of "one word--one meaning" such as the King James Version, Luther, the Vulgate and to some extent the Targumim do.[14] Second, there is the group of those that seek an etymological definition that recognizes the two major semantic divisions with a "two word--two meanings" approach. Third, there is the group that pays more attention to the semantics such as the LXX does.

H. S. Gehman finds that מַשָּׂא has basically one meaning although he argues for it from the contextual use of prophetic מַשָּׂא and from the example of the LXX. He concludes that prophetic מַשָּׂא places a judgment upon the addressee.[15] This he says was also the opinion of Calvin. For him the best translation of the prophetic usage of מַשָּׂא is "burden." In effect he makes the prophetic מַשָּׂא a figure of the profane use of מַשָּׂא.

P. A. De Boer is close to H. S. Gehman but he believes that there has been some change in the meaning of prophetic מַשָּׂא over time. De Boer understands prophetic מַשָּׂא as the "imposition of a burden" because "oracles"

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[14] See above at "Introduction to the Problem."

[15] H.S. Gehman, "The 'Burden' of the Prophets," Jewish Quarterly Review 31(1940/41): 107-21.

are simply "heavy burdens" of God's judgment. The result of placing the term מַשָּׂא at the head of texts was for it to develope into a technical word for the "argument, thesis, title" of the following passage. He believes that מַשָּׂא came to mean what the Greek word λήμμα means. De Boer argues against the thesis of K. H. Graf (1862) that מַשָּׂא has two basic meanings: "oracle" that comes from נָשָׂא קוֹל, "he lifts the voice," and "burden."[16]

Wildberger is one of those who sees in מַשָּׂא at least two different words. In his commentary on Isaiah he says that מַשָּׂא comes from נשׂא, "to lift, carry," and therefore means "burden" in many places.[17] However, in Isaiah מַשָּׂא seems to mean "catastrophe, destruction, punishment, God's judgment." This מַשָּׂא probably comes from נשׂא קוֹל, "lift the voice." In later prophets מַשָּׂא came to mean "the word of Yahweh."[18] The word play of Jeremiah 23 proves the existence of two terms: "burden" and "utterance." Wildberger does not demand that the idea of "burden" is included in prophetic מַשָּׂא although he can understand why some do. He renders it as *Ausspruch*, "utterance." McKane points out that the word play at Jeremiah 23 does not imply that the מַשָּׂא that means "utterance" contains the idea of its homonym, "burden."[19]

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[16] P. A. H. De Boer, "An Inquiry into the Meaning of the Term משׂא," Oudtestamentische Studien 5 (1948): 197-214. According to Richard D. Weis in "A Definition of the Genre *Maśśa'* in the Hebrew Bible" (Ph.D. dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, 1986), p. 25 (hereafter cited as Weis), Campegius Vitringa appears to have been the first in historical critical scholarship to have argued that prohetic מַשָּׂא means something different than מַשָּׂא in other contexts and the first to have proposed that the prophetic usage derived from נָשָׂא קוֹל.

[17] Wildberger, p. 505.

[18] Cf. Nah 1:1; Hab 1:1; Zech 9:1; 12:1; Mal 1:1.

[19] William McKane, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Jeremiah, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986), p. 599 (hereafter cited as McKane).

Gesenius divides the morpheme מַשָּׂא into three homonyms meaning: (I) things related to carrying; (II) utterances; and (III) proper nouns.[20] Under מַשָּׂא (I), "things carried," he has four sub-headings: (1) the act of carrying; (2) the burdens that are borne; (3) gifts and taxes; and (4) the longing of the soul. He sub-divides מַשָּׂא (II), "utterances," into: (1) proverbs; (2) utterances coming from God; (3) utterances coming from a prophet; and (4) deceptive prophesying. It is noteworthy that he sees the Jeremiah 23 use of מַשָּׂא, a prophetic use, as a play on the homonyms and so he places it under מַשָּׂא (I), "things carried." He enters מַשָּׂאָה under מַשָּׂאֵת. Gesenius gives the latter word essentially the same meaning as מַשָּׂא (I), "things carried." The verbal root for all these words is נשׂא. Gesenius does not help to clarify the relationship between these homonyms and leaves the impression that they are unrelated. What is clear is that Gesenius finds a מַשָּׂא (II) because of the unique use of מַשָּׂא for utterances. Gesenius does not support the understanding of the prophetic use of מַשָּׂא as a "burden."

HALAT groups the various meanings of מַשָּׂא and its cognates in a way similar to Gesenius. It also divides the morpheme מַשָּׂא into three words. It distributes the references a little differently and has some unusual interpretations. For מַשָּׂא (I) HALAT is careful to distinguish the metaphorical use of burden with a sub-heading it calls *Beschwer*, "hardship." It places Hosea 8:10 under *Beschwer* which Gesenius places altogether differently under his sub-heading of "gifts and taxes." HALAT places Jeremiah 23's use of מַשָּׂא under both מַשָּׂא (I) and מַשָּׂא (II). It lists the cognate forms of מַשָּׂא in the manner of Gesenius. HALAT goes further in attempting to explain the

[20] W. Gesenius, Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über des Alte Testament, 17th ed. (Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1962).

prophetic use of מַשָּׂא than Gesenius. It finds an etymological connection between the prophetic use and נָשָׂא קוֹל "he lifts the voice."

H.-P. Müller assigns מַשָּׂא two basic words: מַשָּׂא (I), "burden," and מַשָּׂא (II), "utterance."[21] Both stem from נשׂא, "carry, lift." He derives מַשָּׂא (II) from an elliptical usage of נשׂא קוֹל. He supports the independence of מַשָּׂא (II) from מַשָּׂא (I) with the fact that מַשָּׂא (II) does not always mean judgment in prophetic use (Zechariah 9:1; 12:1; Mal 1:1), nor in non-prophetic speech (Proverbs 30:1; 31:1; Sir 9:18), nor in the case of 1 Chronicles 15:22, 27 where מַשָּׂא means "to sing." He argues that the primary meaning of מַשָּׂא cannot be "burden" or else the wordplay of Jeremiah 23 would be impossible. The facts that speak in favor of a general meaning of "saying" for מַשָּׂא (II) are that "saying" can be the subject of הָיָה, "happen" (Isa 14:28) and the object of חָזָה, "see a vision" (Isa 13:1; Hab 1:1; Lam 2:14). He argues that prophetic מַשָּׂא would not have paralleled the phrase "the word of Yahweh" in later collections of salvation prophecies such as at Zechariah 9:1; 12:1 and Mal 1:1 if "burden" was the primary meaning.

R. B. Y. Scott also sees in the morpheme מַשָּׂא two homonyms along the lines of HALAT but he submits that the prophetic מַשָּׂא came from "lifting up the hand" and not from "lifting up the voice."[22] Lifting up the hand was a gesture of solemn oath or prophetic curse. He supports this with Deuteronomy 32: 40-42; Ezek 36:7; Revelation 10:5-6. The first two references are to God נשׂא, "lifting," his hand to heaven to swear that he will take vengeance on his enemies. The third reference is to an angel αἴρω,

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[21] TWAT, s.v. "מַשָּׂא," by H.-P. Müller.

[22] R.B.Y. Scott, "The Meaning of *massa'* as an Oracle Title," Journal of Biblical Literature 67 (1948): v-vi.

"lifting," its hand to heaven and swearing that God's judgment has come. Scott suggests that the same thing may be happening in Amos 1-2 where several times God says that for "three sins . . . even for four" he will bring judgment and in Isa 5:25 where the Lord raises נטה his hand and strikes down his people. Scott then uses Isaiah 21:1-2 to show that the prophetic מַשָּׂא designates a "grim vision" or a "harsh oracle." Scott is not able to show an example where with the word מַשָּׂא there is the gesture of lifting hands to make an oath. "Lifting" of hands can also mean an attack by God. Scott does not show why מַשָּׂא cannot signify that instead. Most texts headed by מַשָּׂא do not concern an oath as much as a description of events or a dialogue between the prophet and Yahweh. מַשָּׂא as "oath" would not explain what the מַשָּׂא of the people is in Jeremiah 23.

Richard Weis has yet another suggestion for the prophetic מַשָּׂא. He doubts the value of etymologies for deriving the meaning of a word. His strategy is to find the meaing of prophetic מַשָּׂא by a semantic investigation that involves a sophisticated examination of the context and that supplements that with a form-critical study of the passages that מַשָּׂא labels. After arriving at his conclusion he uses etymology to try to explain how prophetic מַשָּׂא came to mean what it does. His etymology for the term says that it is a homonym that means "the signal of Yahweh's intentions received by the prophetic lookout."[23] He finds support for this in a Lachish letter that speaks of watching for "fire signals." He believes that the plural in the Lachish letter is for a cognate of מַשָּׂא, the word מַשְׂאֵת. In the Hebrew Bible מַשְׂאֵת means "fire-signal" (Judges 29:38, 40; Jer 6:1). Since both מַשָּׂא and מַשְׂאֵת form their plural

[23] Weis, pp. 353-54.

the same way Weis believes that מַשָּׂא can mean figuratively what מַשְׂאֵת means literally. In support he points out that the Lachish letter has the same word for "watch"--שמר--that Isa 21:11 uses to describe the prophet acting as a lookout.[24] In Akkadian *maššu* (B) is a derivative of *naśâ'*, which is parallel to the Hebrew נשׂא. *Maššu* can be a fire signal like the Hebrew מַשְׂאֵת but only for signals in ritual and omen texts, never in secular texts. Weis developed two other possible definitions for the prophetic מַשָּׂא: (1) "the thing brought back (to the inquirer from the prophet's encounter with the deity)," a word that would have come from נשׂא, "bring, carry"; and (2) the "prophetic expression of divine revelation," a word that comes from נשׂא as "utter, recite." He finds these two definitions too general to give a meaningful description of the texts that מַשָּׂא heads.

Modern scholars disagree whether there is a single unifying meaning to מַשָּׂא or two or more separate and distinct meanings. The prophetic use is especially problematic and attempts to understand its distinct nature vary. Many would like to see it as an utterance that is burdensome. Others recognize that this does not cover all the cases and does not sufficiently recognize its role in heading up divine communications.

נשׂא

Knowledge about the use of the verb נשׂא can be helpful in determining the use of מַשָּׂא. This is especially so where the meaning of מַשָּׂא is not clear from the context. In the Hebrew Bible one can find for every use of מַשָּׂא instances of the verb נשׂא functioning in the same way.[25] This can help

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[24] Lachish Letter iv 10 in H. Donner and W. Röllig, Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften, 3rd ed. (Wiesbaden, 1976) 1: 35 (#194).

[25] The contextually determined use of מַשָּׂא with a corresponding use of נשׂא:

interpret some uses of מַשָּׂא. For example, with the help of passages that use נשׂא to say "lift up the voice and sing" like Isaiah 24:14 and 52:8 it is possible to suppose that מַשָּׂא in 1 Chronicles 15:22 and 27 is the act of singing.

The verb נשׂא appears over six hundred times. It always has the meaning of "to lift" or "to carry." Of the 641 uses only one-third are for transporting objects. The majority use of נשׂא is for carrying or lifting non-physical things or for carrying or lifting physical things as metaphor for something else.[26] When the verb expresses the idea of an utterance it never means "to carry" but rather "to lift."

Exod 23:5 animal's burden = e.g., Gen 31:17 "lift upon camels"
Num 11:11 responsiblity for people = e.g., Isa 66:12 "you will be borne on her side"
Judg 20:40 smoke signal = e.g., Jer 6:1 "lift burden of fire in Beth Hakkerem"
2 Sam 11:8 mess of food = e.g., Job 40:20 "mountains bring him forth food"
2 Sam 15:33 person as a hindrance to travel = e.g., Isa 66:12 "you will be borne on her side"
2 Sam 19:35 person as a drain on another's provisions of food =e.g., 2 Sam 19:42 "if we took (provisions)"
2 Kings 9:25 oracle for person/nation = e.g. Isa 14:4 "lift this proverb against the king of Babylon"
1 Chr 15:22 song = e.g. Isa 52:18 "lift up their voice ...sing"
2 Chr 17:11 tribute of silver = e.g. Isa 60:6 "camels...carry gold and silver (to Jerusalem)"
2 Chr 19:7 regard for persons = e.g. Deut 10:17 "Lord lifts not a face"
2 Chr 20:25 carriage of spoil = e.g. 1 Kings 15:22 "lifted the stones of Ramah..."
2 Chr 24:6 levy of Moses for Temple = e.g. Ezra 1:4 "lift him silver...freewill offering for the Temple"
2 Chr 35:3 service of holy carriage = e.g. Num 7:9 "their service they carried on a shoulder"
Neh 13:5 loads carried into Jerusalem on Sabbath = e.g. Jer 17:21 "carry no burden into Jerusalem on Sabbath"
Esth 2:18 Esther's feast = 2 Sam 19:14 "He has not carried to us any carried thing (meal)"
Job 7:20 handicap of guilt before God = Lev 16:22 "goat bears upon him all iniquities"
Ps 38:5 iniquities upon a person = Lev 17:16 "bear his iniquity"
Ps 141:2 lifting of hands in prayer = Ps 28:2 "lift up my hands to your holy place"
Prov 30:1 proverb = e.g. Job 29:1 "lifting up his proverb (משׂא)"
Ezek 20:40 food offerings = Deut 14:24 "carry tithes"
Ezek 24:25 desire of a person = Jer 22:27 "lift the soul (desire)"
Hos 8:10 king of princes = Esth 3:1 "lifted him (above princes)"
Zeph 3:18 reproach = Micah 6:16 "carry the reproach"

[26] Here the most frequent use is for lifting the eyes, lifting the face (to show approval, to be approved), lifting the head (to be promoted, to attack), lifting the voice, lifting a lament, lifting a parable, lifting oneself (to promote oneself, to attack, to be exalted), lifting one's hand (to swear, to bless, to attack), the wind lifting someone (for their destruction), lifting an ensign (figure of speech), lifting heads (to number people, to promote people), taking a wife, bearing sin, lifting sin

Nine times מַשָּׂא and נשׂא appear in the same verse. Numbers 11:17 and Deut 1:12 indicate that the מַשָּׂא is the verbal object of נשׂא.[27] In this case מַשָּׂא is the responsibilty to "carry" the cares of the Israelites. Jeremiah 6:1 and Gen 43:34 have מַשְׂאֵת as an object of נשׂא. In the case of Jer 6:1 מַשְׂאֵת is the signal that people נשׂא, "raise." At Num 4:15 מַשָּׂא defines נשׂא.[28] Here מַשָּׂא is the Kohathite duty to נשׂא, "carry," the holy vessels. In 1 Chr 15:27 and Isa 30:6 מַשָּׂא and נשׂא relate less definitely.

נשׂא with an elided object may also be a clue to what מַשָּׂא could mean. Most of the thirty-one elisions are verbal objects that are in the immediate vicinity of the verb. Four times the word elided is the name of a nation or a king that God or someone else will take away (Exod 17:11; Hos 5:4; Amos 4:2; Micah 2:2). Twice the word elided is "sin" and it is in an expression for forgiveness. Twice the word elided is "voice" (Ps 93:3; Isa 42:11). Once "hands" is missing in the expression for swearing (Isa 3:7). Once the elision is "punishment" (Job 34:31) and once it is "reproach" (Ps 55:12).

Knowledge about the verb shows that מַשָּׂא often elides a genitive. We have already mentioned the case of eliding "voice" in 1 Chronicles 15:22 and 27. Another clear elision is at Ps 141:2. Clearly from the parallel line in Ps 141:2 and from the use of נשׂא at Lam 2:19 and Ps 28:2 there is an elision that is the word "hands," which are lifted in prayer.

(to forgive), bearing punishment, bearing reproach, bearing people (to care for people), bearing fruit, and going up.

[27] Other cases of מַשָּׂא as the verbal object of נשׂא is Num 11:17; Deut 1:12; 2 Kings 9:25; and Jer 17:27. Gen 43:34 concerns the provision of food that someone נשׂא, "takes." At 2 Kings 9:25 the מַשָּׂא is the prophecy that the Lord נשׂא, "lifted," against Jehoram.

[28] Similar defining goes on at Isa 46:1.

נשׂא often introduces prophetic action. The Hebrew Bible uses it in the title of prophetic sayings when it has the object מָשָׁל, "proverb," or קִינָה, "lament."[29]

The first encounter with the prophetic use of נשׂא comes in the story of Balaam's prophesying over Israel (Number 23:1-24:25). The king of Moab hires Balaam to curse Israel but Balaam blesses it instead. In each of Balaam's seven sayings נשׂא uses the word מָשָׁל, "proverb," in the formula "he lifted up his proverb and said."[30] The first three of these "lifted proverbs" state a fact about Yahweh's intentions, a fact that supports what Yahweh had foretold would happen in human events. The last four "lifted proverbs" are against named nations. Isaiah 14:4 has "lift up this proverb [מָשָׁל] for [על] the king of Babylon."[31] This formula appears in Micah 2:4 to introduce the mournful cry that outsiders will make for Israel when Yahweh's will comes to fulfillment. The will of Yahweh is stated in the previous verse. In Hab 2:6 this formula introduces a series of woes. These woes express the destiny of the wicked and the plan of Yahweh.

Another use of prophetic נשׂא is opposite the word קִינָה, "lament." Ezekiel 19:1 has "lift a lament [קִינָה] concerning the princes of Israel and say." Here the prophetic נשׂא with קִינָה functions like the מַשָּׂא superscriptions that

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[29] Other prophetic uses of נשׂא not at the head of a saying are: "lifting this מַשָּׂא upon him" (2 Kings 9:26); "lift up your eyes" (Isaiah 51:6; 60:4; Jeremiah 3:2; 13:20; Daniel 8:3; 10:5; Zecheriah 1:18; 2:1; 5:1; 5:5; 5:7; 6:1); "lift up a banner" (Isa 13:2; Jer 50:2); "lifted me up" (Ezekiel 8:3; 11:1; 43:5), "lift a lament" (Ezekiel 26:17; 27:32); "lift up mine hand" (Ezek 36:7).

[30] Numbers 23:7, 18; 24:3, 15, 20, 21, 23.

[31] The preposition על accompanies נשׂא fifty times. When נשׂא with על is an utterance it appears with קינה, "lamentation" (Jeremiah 7:29; 9:10; Ezekiel 26:17; 27:2; 28:12; 32:2; Amos 5:1; Hab 2:6), נהי, "wailing" (Jeremiah 9:10, 18), משל, "proverb" (Isa 14:4; Mic 2:4), משא (2 Kings 9:25), and בכי, "weeping" (Jer 9:10). When dealing with human objects all these require על to mean "concerning" not "upon."

label the prophecy. In Ezek 27:2 the combination of נשׂא and קִינָה introduces a prophetic saying that tells of the present glory and the future demise of Tyre. One can find similar uses of this combination in Ezekiel 28:12 and 32:2. Amos 5:1 indicates that the קִינָה is the same thing as the phrase "I [Lord] lift a word against you [Israel]." Here the word קִינָה sits independent of the rest of the sentence even as מַשָּׂא often does.

Prophetic מַשָּׂא in the Light of Context

Etymological approaches to determining the meaning of a word can mislead. Weis points out that the "one word--one meaning" approach to defining מַשָּׂא tries to unify at the level of the noun. The "two word--two meaning" approach tries to unify at the level of the verb. However, one cannot assume a "core" meaning that will unify all the secondary meanings.[32] Ferdinand Saussure showed how faulty it is to use diachronic linguistics as the primary means of determining a word's meaning. It is this approach that has been the mainstay of etymologies. He recommended that one rely upon synchronistic studies.[33] To apply Sassure to the study of מַשָּׂא is to study the word in its context, that is, if we are to understand it correctly.

The prophetic use of מַשָּׂא in narrative first appears in 2 Kings 9:25. There the prophetic saying that מַשָּׂא heads is the Lord's earlier word about Ahab. The content of the מַשָּׂא is that Yahweh would requite in Naboth's vineyard the blood Ahab shed to get Naboth's vineyard. The מַשָּׂא is functioning as a decree from God for future fulfillment. There is a play on

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[32] Weis, p. 31.

[33] Ibid., p. 30. Ferdinand de Saussure pioneered the distinction between "diachrony" and "synchrony" and alerted scholars to the dangers of relying too much on etymologies for the meaning of words.

מַשָּׂא in this case where the מַשָּׂא is both a judgment and the reason for the judgment. In the way that God lifted (נשׂא) the מַשָּׂא, a prophetic saying, concerning Ahab, Bidkar lifted (נשׂא) the body of the Joram on to the field. The lifting of Joram's body upon Naboth's field is the realization of the מַשָּׂא. It fulfills God's word.

Jeremiah 23 includes a discussion about prophetic מַשָּׂא and uses the term eight times.[34] Although the MT vocalizes מַשָּׂא as an absolute noun the argumentation makes clear that in the six times it accompanies Yahweh it is in grammatical construct with Yahweh. This special relationship to Yahweh is what chapter 23 goes on to assert. Even before the term מַשָּׂא first appears Yahweh explains what מַשָּׂא means by reviewing Israel's prophets. A מַשָּׂא is something from God and not of human creation. A prophet receives it from the divine council and its words are not always words of peace and safety. The people's desire for it suggests that it often comforted them but as the anger of Yahweh shows that is not its only message. In verse 33 the people, prophets and priests are asking Jeremiah for the מַשָּׂא of Yahweh and Yahweh responds by saying that they have become the מַשָּׂא and that he will abandon them.[35] This is a play on the two basic meanings of מַשָּׂא, "utterance" and "burden." For people to become the מַשָּׂא and then to abandon them conjures up the vision of Yahweh discarding his people whom he has been carrying.

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[34] מַשָּׂא appears in Jeremiah 23:33 (2X), 34, 36 (2X), 38 (3X).

[35] Most commentators follow the LXX and Vul and divide the characters in 23:33 to read אַתֶּם הַמַּשָּׂא, "you are the מַשָּׂא" (cf. William L. Holladay in Jeremiah 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 1--25, vol. 1: Introduction and Commentary on Jeremiah I-XXV, Hermeneia--A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), p. 647 (hereafter cited as Holladay, Jeremiah); McKane, p. 599. As was mentioned above this play on words does not demand that the meaning of "burden" be contained in the מַשָּׂא used for "utterance."

The following verse explains that Yahweh will punish anyone who dares to say he has a מַשָּׂא יְהוָה, "a מַשָּׂא of Yahweh." This indicates that a מַשָּׂא is from the Lord and he gives it as he chooses.[36] It belongs to no one other than him. To call something a מַשָּׂא of Yahweh when it is not one is to take the name of the Lord in vain. Verse 35 describes what the people should do--they should ask for Yahweh's answer but they will not do that because the people have no desire to hear what Yahweh has to say. According to Jer 23:36 the people pervert the מַשָּׂא of Yahweh by giving that name to what they come up with.[37] The Lord has told the people not to claim a מַשָּׂא of Yahweh but they do anyway. The result is that God will cast them out (verse 39).[38] Thus a מַשָּׂא of Yahweh is a direct revelation of God that is sacred and God punishes any abuse.

Isaiah 13:1 describes the מַשָּׂא as something which Isaiah saw (חָזָה). One finds this also in Hab 1:1. Nah 1:1 calls the מַשָּׂא a חֲזוֹן, "vision," of Nahum. In the case of Habakkuk there is clearly nothing visionary about this seeing. In the "vision of Obadiah" Obadiah follows his heading with "this is what the Lord says." The Hebrew Bible may call the prophet's מַשָּׂא a vision to indicate its supernatural quality but that does not mean the prophet "saw" it.

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[36] Weis, p. 90, believes that Jeremiah 23 is saying that Yahweh makes a distinction between a מַשָּׂא of Yahweh that is something sacred and just a מַשָּׂא (as in Proverbs 30:1 and 31:1). He thinks that the מַשָּׂא of Yahweh is a prophet's composition and the application of a pre-existing Yahweh word to the present situation.

[37] Some render הַמַּשָּׂא יִהְיֶה לְאִישׁ דְּבָרוֹ as "the מַשָּׂא will be to the man (who bears Yahweh's) word" instead of "the מַשָּׂא will be a man's word"; Holladay, Jeremiah, p. 652, supports the former and McKnight, p. 600, supports the latter.

[38] Many commentators read with the LXX and the Vul נשׂא instead of נשׂא. Holladay, Jeremiah, p. 652, sees a wordplay between נשׂא and מַשָּׂא in the common idea of "lift."

When we examine the sayings that have the title "מַשָּׂא" we see that the majority of them concern non-Israelite nations.[39] Judgment for someone or someones and hope for Israel are the themes of the prophetic מַשָּׂא that appears more or less in every passage.[40] That is not to say that the topic entity of the מַשָּׂא is the one under judgment. In the case of Zech 12:1 the nation that the prophet addresses is not the one God judges. A מַשָּׂא cannot be a judgment for the hearers in the case of Jeremiah 23 or Lam 2:14 because the hearers eagerly seek it for themselves.

Weis uncovers many valuable details in his form critical study of מַשָּׂא.[41] He finds in the texts headed by מַשָּׂא, as he delimits them, that they seldom contain the prophetic messenger formula כה אמר יהוה, "thus spoke Yahweh." He also seldom finds the prophetic judgment speech pattern as Westermann defines it.[42] What is characteristic of these units is that they are a mixture of prophet's speech and Yahweh's speech with the prophet's speech predominating.[43] Yahweh's speech is often hard to distinguish except for a change of person. Isaiah 17:1-11 is an example where the speech of prophet

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[39] מַשָּׂא in the heading of a prophetic saying appears in Isaiah 13:1; 14:28; 15:1; 17:1; 19:1; 21:1, 11, 13; 22:1; 23:1; 30:6; Ezek 12:10; Nah 1:1; Hab 1:1; Zechariah 9:1; 12:1; Mal 1:1.

[40] Isaiah 21:11-12 is the anomaly.

[41] John B. Geyer in "Mythology and Culture In the Oracles Against the Nations," Vetus Testamentum 26/2 (1986): 129-45, identifies what he considers are the defining elements of the texts headed by the word מַשָּׂא. Only two of the texts have all five of his elements, those elements being superscription, destruction, lamentation, flight, and Yahweh. The three or four elements that are common to most texts, that is, a superscription, a forecast of destruction, lamentation, and the name Yahweh, are not common to all. These features do not determine what is distinctive about these texts. Flight is not the central feature to these texts.

[42] Ibid., pp. 203, 207; the prophetic judgment speech follows the pattern of an accusation followed by an announcement of judgment.

[43] Ibid., p. 212.

and Yahweh are about equal. As a whole the מַשָּׂא texts never address Yahweh or the prophet. Most often the texts address the Judahites and less often they address the topic entity of the מַשָּׂא.[44]

Principally the texts contain descriptive genres (reports or announcements) and ordering genres (commands) and most texts have both. The reports or announcements motivate the commands. Ultimately the motivation points to an act of Yahweh and usually that motivation is explicit. Some texts have only descriptive sections such as Isaiah 17:1-11. When texts contain only descriptive sections they usually give insight into the future. Texts with both ordering and descriptive genres provide direction for behaviour in the light of specific aspects of present.

The prophet usually speaks the commands. When the prophet gives a command it can be a summons to communal lamentation or jubilation or it can be an order for concrete human action. If it is a summons to communal lamentation or jubilation the prophet will address the topic entity of the מַשָּׂא. If it is a command for concrete human action the prophet will address the audience or addressee. When Yahweh or someone else gives the order the order will be directed to an object one step removed from the audience.

The connection between Yahweh acts and their human manifestations or results is the "dominant and crucial infrastructure pattern" of these texts.[45] The majority of oracles cite and clearly set apart Yahweh's revelation or plan.[46] The Yahweh revelation is clearly the subject of the interpretation in

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[44] Ibid., p. 213.

[45] Ibid., p. 226.

[46] Ibid., pp. 223-24. Seven texts quote a speech of Yahweh: Isaiah 14:29-32 at v. 32b; 15:1b-16:12 at 16:6-11; 21:13b-17 at vv. 16b-17; 22:1b-14 at v. 14b; 23:1b-18 at vv. 11b-12; Nahum 1:2 - 3:19 at 1:12-13; Malachi 1:2 - 3:24 at 1:2, etc. One text reports a Yahweh vision:

the texts. These texts usually explain the manifestation in human affairs of the revelation that is quoted or cited. Seventy-five percent of the oracles that describe an act of Yahweh describe the human manifestation of that act.[47] When the oracle does not give the human result then context or some other means will describe it. Only Isaiah 17:1-11 does not follow the pattern.

On the level of the intention of the text Weis makes the further observation that the intention of most of these texts is to explicate certain events in human affairs as a manifestation of the revealed will and/or act of Yahweh.[48] This intention is the unifying and characterizing aspect of the texts headed by מַשָּׂא. Of the four texts that do not describe Yahweh's will even they concern themselves with the meaning of Yahweh's will for human affairs. Two texts correlate themselves to a previous Yahweh speech--2 Kings 9:26a and Isaiah 30:6b-7. One text makes its point precisely by having no revelation to report--Isa 21:11b-12. One text expands a Yahweh speech where the speech is unclear about human affairs--Isaiah 17:1-11.

The texts headed by מַשָּׂא imply that there is a problem of indeterminacy. This indeterminacy can be about the revelation of Yahweh, or

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Isaiah 21:1b-10 at v. 2b. Two texts explicitly cite Yahweh's plan: Isaiah 19:1b-25 at v. 12; 23:1b-18 atvv. 8-9. One text explicitly cites a previous Yahweh vision: Habakkuk 1:2 - 2:20 at 2:2-3. One text explicitly cites the symbolic action previously commanded: Ezekiel 12:11a-16. One text clearly presupposes there should be a quotation: Isaiah 21:11b-12.

[47] Ibid., p. 223. Cases where there is a Yahweh act together with a human act that the prophet explicitly describes is the result of that Yahweh act are: Isaiah 13:3-5, 6-8, 10-16, 17-22; 14:1-2, 30; 19:1b, 2-10, 16-17, 19-22; 21:1b-4, 6-9; 22:5-14; 23:11-13; Ezekiel 12:13-16 (3X); Nahum 1:11-2:11; Zechariah 9:4-6a, 6b-7, 8, 10, 15; 10:3b-5, 6-7, 8-12a (4X); 12:2, 3-6 (3X), 8, 12: 9-13:1, 13: 2-3 (2X), 7b-9 (2x); 14:2, 3-5a, 5b-21. A Yahweh act without the explicit presentation of a resulting human act but where the text indicates a human result in another way occurs at: 2 Kings 9:26a; Isaiah 14:21b-23; 15:9; 16:5-11; 21:16-17; Ezekiel 12:13-16; Habakkuk 1:5b-11, 2:3a, 3b, 4-20 (2X); Zechariah 9:12b-13 (2X), 16; 12:7.

[48] Ibid., p. 228. Although Isaiah 13:2-14:23; Zech 9:1-11:3; and 12:1b-14:21 do not explicitly quote Yahweh they do describe Yahweh's will.

about the human situation, or about the relationship between that revelation and human affairs.[49] These texts could have arisen to respond to a question about how the will of God will manifest itself. This is the case at Isaiah 14:29-31 and 21:11b-12. That these texts arose as responses to inquiries may explain why the topic of the מַשָּׂא does not determine the addressee.

For the מַשָּׂא to have been the name of a genre there had to have been at least one text that was conceived with that name. Weis has succeeded in finding two places in the Hebrew Bible where there is incontrovertible evidence that the superscription with "מַשָּׂא" belonged to the original beginnings of the text. One is Isaiah 14:28-32 and the other is Zecheriah 9:1-11:3.[50] What makes it clear that מַשָּׂא originally labelled Zech 9:1-11:3 is that this text is indistinguishable from Zechariah 8 without the מַשָּׂא heading. The heading is superfluous for anyone trying to construct the book.

Weis makes the observation that the placement of מַשָּׂא texts within still greater compositions gives these texts the added function of serving the purposes of the composition. They describe how the will of Yahweh described elsewhere in the composition will manifest itself in human affairs.[51] For example, it is clear to Weis that the chapters that precede Isaiah 13-23 reveal the plan of Yahweh.[52] In particular chapters 2-4 reveal the will of God

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[49] Ibid., p. 229-31.

[50] Ibid., pp. 260-61.

[51] Ibid., pp. 273-74.

[52] Ibid., p. 246. Weis (p. 243), cites Marvin A. Sweeney, "Isaiah 1-4 and the Post-Exilic Understanding of the Isaianic Tradition" (Ph.D. dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, 1983), pp. 277-80, for the structure of Isaiah. Isaiah 2:2-4:6 demonstrate Yahweh's plan to cleanse Judah and Jerusalem so that Zion may be the locus of Yahweh's world rule. Isaiah 5-35 spell out the implementation of this plan. Isaiah 5-27 involve the chastisement and restoration of Israel and Judah and the nations in a new world order. Isaiah 28-35 announce Yahweh's assumption of dominion in Zion.

for the next thirty-one chapters of Isaiah. The מַשָּׂא oracles in chapters 13-23 will serve to expound on the matters in chapters 2-4. The will of Yahweh for Assyria is described in Isaiah 14:24-27. Weis reckons that chapters 13-23 will explain what that will mean for the nations.

Although the essence of the genre does not change over time Weis can mark some changes in the use of the מַשָּׂא genre. In the time of Isaiah the genre is typically a revelation that a prophet received in response to an inquiry that is primarily about the human situation. By the sixth and fifth centuries the genre is a response to a query about the failure of previously communicated revelations to reach fulfillment and to provide guidance for human affairs.[53] The later texts of Zechariah 9:1-11:3; 12:1-14:21; and Malachi 1:2-3:24 do not contain within themselves the Yahweh revelation that they are expounding.[54] They expound the previously communicated Yahweh revelation that exists outside the מַשָּׂא.[55] The superscriptions show this (Zechariah 9:1; 12:1; Mal 1:2). The superscriptions make a distinction between מַשָּׂא and דְּבַר יְהוָה "the word of Yahweh." This suggests that the revelation to which the מַשָּׂא relates is distinct from the מַשָּׂא.

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[53] Ibid., pp. 341-42. Weis (p. 335), states that Zechariah 9:1-11:3 and 12:1-14:21 respond to this disjuncture between the promises in the word of Yahweh and human events with elaborations on Yahweh' plan. Zechariah 9:1-11:3 also provides instructions on appropriate behavior. Malachi 1:2-3:24 addresses the community behavior that is the cause for the disjuncture. The problems of the three texts are the same: agricultural infertility and the failure of the religio-political restoration.

[54] Ibid., pp. 346-47.

[55] Weis argues that these texts had no independent existence and were written for their context. They were written to support the belief in the promises made by Yahweh through Haggai.

Conclusion

In conclusion I wish to summarize what we can say about prophetic מַשָּׂא as a word and as the name of a genre and then apply this to the Damascus מַשָּׂא.

From the evidence of the various uses of מַשָּׂא and its verbal root נשׂא there is reason to believe that מַשָּׂא does not represent two homonyms. It is a word that can have almost as many meanings as its verbal root. A similar process is at work in the English noun "lift." The noun "lift" depicts at least thirteen of the various applications of the verb "to lift."[56] The noun "lift" has meanings that range from "the amount that may be lifted at one time" to "an act of stealing" to "an organized movement of men, equipment, or supplies." The division of מַשָּׂא into two constellations of meanings is an accommodation to manageability.

Weis' view that prophetic מַשָּׂא means the "sign" of Yahweh's message that a prophet sees is unprecedented in the Hebrew Bible. Of the options that Weis lists for the definition of מַשָּׂא the one that seems most congruent with the information is a "prophetic expression of divine revelation." Perhaps the closest parallel to prophetic מַשָּׂא is the combination of נשׂא with מָשָׁל "to lift the saying" as one finds it in, for example, Num 24:23. The contents of the texts that this phrase introduces bear a striking resemblance to the texts מַשָּׂא introduces. In English one should render the superscription of Isa 17:1 as the "oracle" about Damascus.

One can call the texts headed by מַשָּׂא a genre. Weis shows that the intention of the texts is the most significant feature of a prophetic מַשָּׂא. In

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[56] Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 1977 ed., s.v. "lift."

terms of the contents of an oracle labelled מַשָּׂא a מַשָּׂא is an "expostion" of Yahweh's revealed will or activity. In terms of its use a מַשָּׂא is a prophetic interpretation of Yahweh's revealed will or activity. Our knowledge of the contents and context of the texts that מַשָּׂא heads supports Weis' description of the genre. For example, the מַשָּׂא texts are definitely a genre exclusive to the prophets. The cautionary note is that we have no comprehensive comparison of this genre with all other genres of prophetic discourse. Without that data we cannot be sure we have the genre's defining characteristics.

The מַשָּׂא genre aims to show the way that Yahweh's acts will manifest themselves in human affairs. It aims to give direction for action in the present or insight into the future based on what Yahweh has or was revealing about his actions or intentions. Often it responds to a problem of indeterminacy, of opaqueness about the way Yahweh's action or intention is manifesting itself. Applying this to the Damascus Oracle the מַשָּׂא genre is a message from Yahweh that explicates the present events as manifesting the will of Yahweh that was previously revealed about Damascus. This suggests that the information in Isaiah 7-8 about earlier prophecies concerning Damascus is vital to understanding and interpreting the Damascus מַשָּׂא. It also suggests that the apparent supplements within Isaiah 17:1-11 that explain the Yahweh revelation with further revelations is in the nature of the מַשָּׂא oracle and intrinsic to it. To remove the material after 17:1-3 would leave something that does not normally appear with a מַשָּׂא superscription.

If it is true that one defines this genre less by formalistic qualities and more by intention then one may well permit oneself to extend the Damascus Oracle beyond Isa 17:11. For Weis two criteria for not doing so is the

introduction of a woe saying and the change in the topic entity at 17:12.[57] However, woe sayings appear throughout Weis' other מַשָּׂא oracles.[58] Change in topic entity alone cannot be a limiting factor since Weis does not delimit according to the prior change in topic entity at Isa 17:4. In other מַשָּׂא's the topic entity of the מַשָּׂא is an occasion for revelations of Yahweh about many other topic entities. One example is Zechariah 9:1-11:3. According to Weis Isaiah 17:1-11 is the only מַשָּׂא without a description of Yahweh action and the only מַשָּׂא that does not correlate Yahweh's plan with human events. That is not so if the Damascus Oracle is longer. Both Isaiah 17:13 and 18:4-5 cite Yahweh's actions. It is not unusual to find Yahweh's intentions expressed near the end of a מַשָּׂא.[59] In addition Isa 18:3 quotes a speech of Yahweh that explains Yahweh's plans as often happens in a מַשָּׂא. The Damascus מַשָּׂא would have a command that suits Weis' criteria at Isa 18:2 if the מַשָּׂא included chapter 18. Weis found that מַשָּׂא's as a whole are addressed either to the topic of the מַשָּׂא or to Judahites. Isaiah 17-18 are addressed as a whole to the Judahites.

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[57] Ibid., p. 53.

[58] Nah 3:1; Habakkuk 2:6, 9, 12, 15, 19; etc.

[59] Cf. Isaiah 14:32b; 16:6-11; 21:12; 21:17b; 22:14, 23:9, etc.

PART II

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT FOR ISAIAH 17-18

CHAPTER IV

A HISTORICAL SURVEY OF JUDAH'S INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT FROM 745 UNTIL 681

It is difficult to interpret Isaiah 17-18 because of the lack of knowledge about the history to which these chapters make reference. If we could know the times and events about which Isaiah 17-18 speak we could with more certainty interpret them. The period that Isaiah 17-18 addresses can be demarcated. We know from the information given in 17:1-3 that the historical setting for these chapters was such that Damascus and Ephraim had tied their destinies together. We also know that the historical setting was one when Cush played a role in the events of Israel's history. The historical events of both chapters were probably coterminous with Isaiah for the author to have found them relevant to the Book of Isaiah. The setting could not have been after Samaria's fall and after the end of the Northern Kingdom because Damascus and Ephraim no longer interacted. This makes the fall of Samaria in 721 the *terminus ad quem* for 17:1-6. From the time of Isaiah and later there was only one period when Cush had a role in the events that involved Palestine. That was the time of the twenty-fifth Nubian dynasty. Piankhi founded this dynasty in 747 B.C. From his reign onward Ethiopia overshadowed Egypt. In 663 the dynasty lost control of Egypt because of

Assyrian attacks and in 656 it lost suzerainty from Thebes.[1] These dates are the broad limits of the historical setting.

We should try to narrow the dates further and estimate what conditions and events Isaiah 17-18 depicts. We can do this both externally and internally. In this chapter I will begin to determine the probable dates and events for the contents of Isaiah 17-18 using available historical records from Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt and Israel. In the next chapter I will try to define Isaiah 17-18 further by determining the historical events that are important to the section in which Isaiah 17-18 finds itself. We will correlate the situations described in Isaiah's OAN to the extant historical records.

The reigns of the Assyrian kings will be used to organize the presentation since this information is attested by two different sources: the Assyrian Chronicles and the Babylonian Chronicles.[2] I will group the presentation into sections covering the reign of each of the Assyrian kings

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[1] Niclolas Grimal, A History of Ancient Egypt, trans. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 352-54; J. Bright, A History of Egypt, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), p. 311 (hereafter cited as Bright).

[2] Ancient Mesopotamian historiography has several categories of texts one of which is the chronographic text. The chronographic text gives information chronologically. This kind of text may refer happenings to the years in the reign of a king or may only give the length of various reigns. A. K. Grayson in Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles, Texts from Cuneiform Sources, vol. 5 (Locust Valley, New York: J. J. Augustin Publisher, 1975), pp. 2-4 (hereafter cited as ABC), uses the term "chronicle" to refer to those chronographic texts which include narrative and as such can be distinguished from the other chronographic text, which is the king lists. Both Assyrian and Babylonian chronicles are extant. Elnathan Weissert in "Interrelated Chronographic Patterns in the Assyrian Eponym Chronicle and the 'Babylonian Chronicle': A Comparative View", in Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale 38 (1984): 482-88, argues that the Babylonian Chronicles are dependent on the Assyrian Eponym List. This does not detract from the accuracy that the Babylonian Chronicles show. J. A. Brinkman in A Political History of Post-Kassite Babylonia (1158-722 BC) (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1968), p. 32, finds them eminently reliable.

who ruled during the period from the mid-eighth to the mid-seventh centuries. I intend to find the probable contexts for the contents of Isaiah 17-18.

The Time of Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 B.C.)

Tiglath-Pileser III reigned from 745-727.[3] When he began his reign Assyria was weak as a result of the expansion of Urartu during the first half of the eighth century and the strife internally. At the same time Israel and Judah knew their most prosperous days. Tiglath-Pileser would change that. One of his first acts was to gain control of Babylon. In 745-44 Tiglath-Pileser took the throne and marched to the "territory of the rivers". The Babylonian Chronicle 1 explains that he campaigned against Babylon to suppress the Arameans in that year.[4] Although at this time he did not take the Babylonian throne the statement in Babylonian Chronicle 1,i,25 makes clear that he controlled Babylon during the rest of his reign. In 729 he had to campaign against Babylon again. This time he chose to rule Babylon personally and

[3] See A. Kirk Grayson, "Assyria and Babylonia," Orientalia 49 (1980): 140-194, for a complete description of the different types of Assyrian texts. The Assyrian records have come to us in various forms. The most helpful records for constructing the history of the time are the chronographic texts and the royal inscriptions. The most important chronographic texts for our purposes are the eponym lists (eponymcalendar) that give labels to years listed consecutively. Some eponym lists narrate the key military campaigns for each year. The best list is Canon B (C^b1). The royal inscriptions consist primarily of annalistic texts and display (or summary) texts. The annalistic texts are in chronological order and the display texts are in geographic sequence. The royal inscriptions began to be discovered in 1845 at Nimrud. They were on slabs which had been inscribed for earlier kings and which Esarhaddon had appropriated in order to use the blank reverse side for his own inscriptions. The fact that they were found in disarray has made the order of the slabs and the reconstruction of the events that they record a controversial matter. H. Tadmor recently made a new attempt at ordering the slabs using artistic and typological criteria; see his "Introductory Remarks To a New Edition of the Annals of Tiglath-Pileser III," Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities II/9 (1968): 168-87 (hereafter cited as Tadmor, "New Edition").

[4] ABC, p. 248.

stayed there for the last two years of his life.[5] During this time he bore the title "King of Babylon", a title that was most prestigious for an Assyrian king.[6]

At the beginning of Tiglath-Pileser's reign Damascus was again becoming the dominant power in Palestine after half a century of the other. Damascus had been the dominant power during the last quarter of the ninth century under the reign of King Hazael. He conquered territory as far south in the Transjordan as Aroer in the Arnon Valley.[7] That changed at the start of the eighth century when at the battle of Apheq Joash, king of Israel, turned the tables on Damascus.[8] As a result Damascus was probably Israel's vassal during the reign of the Israelite Jeroboam II.[9] When Jeroboam II died in 748 Damascus once again took control. The death of the king exposed Samaria to

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[5] Tadmor in "New Edition," (p. 182), places Lay 34a, an inscription that recognizes Tiglath-Pileser as the ruler of Babylon, at the end of Series A of the Annals (Lay = A. H. Layard, Inscriptions in the Cuneiform Character from Assyrian Monuments). This puts the start of Tiglath-Pileser's rule of Babylon at the end of his life. The conventional opinion has been to place the inscription at the beginning of the Annals. However, the Babylonian King List A (iv) states Tiglath-Pileser (here called Pulu) ruled Babylon for two years at the end of his life. This meant that Tiglath-Pileser must have established his rule over the Babylonian sacred cities in the beginning of his rule and then apparently abandoned them for fourteen years; see e.g., J. B. Pritchard, ed., Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 272 (hereafter cited as ANET).

[6] See e.g., the tablet from Nimrud dated to 728 (K3751, British Museum) in Daniel David Luckenbill, Ancient Records of Assyrian and Babylonia, 2 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926), I: 282 (hereafter cited as ARAB).

[7] Wayne T. Pitard, Ancient Damascus: A Historical Study of the Syrian City-State from Earliest Times until its Fall to the Assyrians in 732 B.C.E. (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1987), p. 151 (hereafter cited as Pitard).

[8] Ibid., 167.

[9] Ibid., 177.

violent struggles for power.[10] For the next few years Damascus was free to subject its will on others. However, within ten years Assyria would stop both Damascus and Israel.

What Tiglath-Pileser would do to Damascus and to Israel followed a strategy that Tiglath-Pileser had newly devised for controlling conquered lands. In the past Assyrian leaders made vassals out of defeated nations. Under Tiglath-Pileser defeated nations participated in a three stage loss of political independence.[11] The first stage was simply vassalage as kings had practiced it before. Assyria started stage two when it uncovered an anti-Assyrian conspiracy. At this stage Assyria would reduce a nation's territory and would deport portions of the upper class. It would appoint new rulers from the people who would be loyal to Assyria. The territory that Assyria removed it turned into provinces. If there was further trouble Assyria applied a third stage. Assyria would make the nation into one of its provinces, it would deport the native upper class, and it would introduce a new foreign population. These mass resettlements would make Tiglath-Pileser infamous.

In 738 Tiglath-Pileser began to apply this system to Palestine.[12] A coalition headed by "Azriyau of Yaudi" opposed him. There has been some

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[10] Ibid., 179.

[11] Herbert Donner, "The Separate States of Israel and Judah," in Israelite and Judaen History, ed. John H. Hayes and J. Maxwell Miller (London: SCM Press, 1977), p. 419 (hereafter cited as Donner, "States").

[12] Pitard, p.183. Tadmor in "Azriyau of Yaudi," in Studies in the Bible, ed. by C. Rabin, Scripta Hierosolymitana 8 (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961), proved that P. Rost, Die Keilschrifttexte Tiglat-Pilesers III nach den Papierabklatschen und Originalen des Britischen Museums, 2 vols. (Leipzig: E. Pfeiffer, 1893), I, lines 150-7 (II, plate XV) (hereafter cited as Rost) and Rost I, lines 83-91 (II, plates XIII, XIV) were parallel accounts and belonged to the period 738 not 742. (Lines 150-57 are within a fragment (lines 123-59) that mentions the settlement of exiles in Ulluba, a city that Tiglath-Pileser had conquered in 739. Line 157 is followed by the statement "In my ninth year of reign." Bob Becking in The Fall of Samaria: An Historical and Archeological Study (Leiden:

debate over the identity of Azriyau. Since it is the same name that scholars supposed the Assyrian records give Azariah of Judah it seemed that Judah headed the coalition. Recent realignments of the texts proves that Azriyau was a rebel from Hamath.[13] Tiglath-Pileser put down the coalition and incorporated the areas around Hamath as provinces. This threw the other Palestinian states into panic. They rushed to show their loyalty to Assyria with tributes. In the same year Tiglath-Pileser reports that those that sent him tribute included Damascus, Israel and the Queen of Arabia.[14]

The Assyrian records about the Assyrian advance and the accompanying tribute supports some significant determinations about the Israelite kings of the time. The Assyrian records and 2 Kings 15:19-20 corroborate the Israelite King Menahem's part in the 738 tribute.[15] 2 Kings 15:19-20 describes that the purpose of Menahem's tribute to Pul was to "strengthen his own hold on the kingdom" and that Pul then withdrew from

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Brill, 1992), p. 2 (hereafter cited as Becking), points out that Kullania, which is mentioned at lines 90-101, is according to the Eponymcalendar C^b1 a campaign conducted in 738. Kullania was the capital city of the neo-Hittite kingdom of Unqi in northern Syria.

[13] N. Na`aman, "Sennacherib's 'Letter to God' on His Campaign to Judah," Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research 214 (1974): 25-39. Na`aman has shown that K6205 belongs with BM82-3-23, 131 (BM=British Museum) and that the two are connected with Sennacherib's "Letter to God". The person referred to is Hezekiah not Azariah. Such facts as the reference to the border between Philistia and Judah as "my border", the name of the deity Anshur, and the invasion of Judah, suggest that this fragment does not belong to Tiglath-Pileser.

[14] ANET, p. 283 (translation of Rost I, lines 26-27 and the parallel account in Rost I, lines 14-16). The Iran Stela mentions similar tributaries but since it has Tuba'il as the King of Tyre instead of Hiram this is often seen as a slightly earlier tribute (cf. Pitard, p. 184). The ninth year of Tiglath-Pileser is his palû 8.

[15] This would support the dating of Menahem's reign to at least 738.

the land.[16] The Assyrian records describe an amount of tribute that matches the tribute of a usurper buying Assyrian support. For example, the usurpers Hulli of Tabal and Metenna of Tyre paid similar amounts of tribute to secure their hold on power.[17] This supports the idea that Menahem was also a usurper whose control of Israel was weak. After Menahem's reign there was a two year reign of his son Pekahiah. Pekah then assassinated Pekahiah (2 Kings 15:25).

The Assyrian tribute list of 738 is also the first appearance of Rezin of Damascus in ancient records.[18] It is clear that Rezin was the leading figure in the fight against Assyria as can be seen by the two year campaign Assyria held against Damascus in 733 and 732.[19] In the years 737-735 Tiglath-Pileser fought in campaigns in the North and East. It was during this time that a coalition of Palestinian states formed around Rezin and that Israel established a special alliance with him.[20] This was also the time that Rezin and Pekah began their attacks on Judah which 2 Kings 15:37 reports occurred

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[16] Pul is a name by which Tiglath-Pileser was known in late cuneiform sources such as the Babylonian King List A iv 8 (cp. Babylonian King List A in ANET, p. 272, with Babylonian Chronicle 1 in ABC 72) and in the Hellenistic Ptolemaic Canon. See also ABC, p. 248, and E. Schraeder, Keilinschriften und Geschichtsforschung (Giessen: 1878), pp. 422-60, for discussions on the name.

[17] Mordecai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor, II Kings: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary (N.p.: Doubleday and Co., 1988), p. 172 (hereafter cited as Cogan/Tadmor).

[18] Rezin appears in the tribute lists of Rost I, lines 83-91 and lines 150-7 and on the Iran Stela, which dates around 738. Cf. Pitard, p. 183-84.

[19] Eponymcalendar C^b1.

[20] Pitard, p. 184. Cogan/Tadmor, pp. 190-91, indicates that it was J. Begrich in Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft 83 (1929): 213-37, who first suggested that Syria and Israel had formed a "Syro-Ephraimite" alliance. This suggestion has been followed by most scholars since that time.

during the days of Jotham. Jotham reigned until 735 having taken over when Uzziah was stricken with leprosy (2 Kings 15:5).[21]

Rezin's dominance over Israel showed itself in his annexation of Israelite territory and in his hold over Pekah. Rezin's annexation of Israelite territory is made evident in 731 when Assyria made provinces out of the defeated Syro-Ephraimite league. At that time Tiglath-Pileser apparently did not venture to Samaria because he credited Israel with the overthrow of Pekah.[22] He did enter Israel far enough to be able to declare that he deported from "the land of the house of Omri . . . all of its people."[23] However,

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[21] I prefer the date 735 for the end of Jotham's reign chiefly because it is during the reign of Jotham that Rezin joined Pekah to attack Judah (2 Kings 15:37). Pekah could not have taken Israel into an alliance with Syria any earlier than two years after 738 because Menahem ruled Israel at least until 738 (see above) and between Menahem and Pekah was a two year reign of Pekahiah. Barnes points out that the date of 735 for the end of Jotham's reign is supported by the odd synchronism of 2 Kings 15:30 that connects Jotham's 20th year with Hoshea's first year (2 Kings 15:33 states Jotham reigned in Jerusalem 16 years so his 20th year was four years after his reign ended, i.e., 731). Those who follow the date of 735 for the end of Jotham's reign include: W. H. Barnes, Studies In the Chronology of the Divided Monarchy of Israel, Harvard Semitic Monographs 48 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), p. 153 (hereafter cited as Barnes); Bright, chronological chart VI; A. Laato, "New Viewpoints on the Chronology of the Kings of Judah and Israel," Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 98 (1986): 216 (hereafter cited as Laato); Edwin R. Thiele, The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), p. 131 (hereafter cited as Thiele). Other chronologies give Jotham's final year respectively as 743, 744 or 742: Cogan/Tadmor, p. 182; John H. Hayes and Paul K. Hooker, A New Chronology for the Kings of Israel and Judah and Its Implication for Biblical History and Literature (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988), p. 56 (hereafter cited as Hayes/Hooker); J. Alberto Soggin, A History of Ancient History, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985), p. 219.

[22] H. C. Rawlinson, Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia, 5 vols. (London: British Museum, 1861-1909), III: plate 10, no. 2 (hereafter cited according to the conventional pattern III R 10,2); translation in ARAB, I: 293.

[23] Ibid. This is an obvious exaggeration but it would be premature to totally dismiss it as stock rhetoric as Stuart A. Irvine wants to do in Isaiah, Ahaz, and the Syro-Ephraimitic Crisis, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 123 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990). p. 68 (hereafter cited as Irvine, Isaiah).

improved texts show that Tiglath-Pileser considered the Israelite areas that he absorbed to have belonged to Syria.[24] The Hebrew Bible does not necessarily contradict this when it gives its account of what seems to be the same Assyrian action. 2 Kings 15:29 reports that Assyria annexed Galilee and the Transjordan but it does not say to whom Assyria believed the land belonged. Isaiah 9:12 testifies that Aram had taken land away from Israel. Rezin could have forced Pekah to cede land to him if Pekah was only a puppet ruler of Rezin. It is probable that Pekah was under Rezin's control. Pekah would have been vulnerable to such control if he was a ruler of a rebel Transjordan, as some suggest. The suggestion of a long rule of partisan groups that began in 752/51 would help to explain Pekah's reign of twenty years purported by 2 Kings 15:27.[25] Pekah's rebel rule would also explain the statement in 2 Kings 15:25 that Pekah took with him fifty Gileadite men when he assassinated Pekahiah.

Damascene domination of Palestine included an effort to gain control of Judah. In 2 Kings 16:5 Rezin and Pekah assaulted Jerusalem. The king of Judah at the time was Ahaz, who had taken over from Jotham around 735.[26]

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[24] ND4301 + 4305 and K2649 has filled in some of the lacunae of the text of III R 10,2, lines 15-19. What had been assumed to say Naphtali actually says Hazael. This means that the places mentioned in lines 5-8 of III R 10,2 deal with the disposition of what was considered to be the kingdom of Damascus and not Israel. The areas mentioned there include Ramoth-Gilead. 2 Kings 15:29 does not describe to whom Assyria attributed the land when it states that Assyria occupied Gilead and Galilee. Lay 29b, lines 230-234, indicates that Assyria conducted military actions in Galilee with the possibility that Assyria considered Galilee a part of Syrian territory. Cf. Irvine, Isaiah, pp. 63-67.

[25] Becking, p. 6. Pekah may have considered himself the legitimate heir of the Jehu dynasty and counted his years from the murder of Zechariah. Cf. Nadav Na'aman, "Historical and Chronological Notes on the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah in the Eighth Century B.C.," Vetus Testamentum 36 (1986): pp. 78-79 (hereafter cited as Na'aman , "Chronological").

[26] There is general consensus that Ahaz ruled Judah in 735 (e.g., Bright, p. 471; Thiele, p. 217; Hayes/Hooker, pp. 56-57). The exact limits of his reign are disputed.

Damascus took Elath on the Red Sea from Judah and put it under the control of the Edomites (2 Kings 16:6). This shows that like the earlier Hazael Damascus had control in parts of the Transjordan as far as the Red Sea and may have controlled the Aroer by Rabbath-ammon. In 2 Chronicles 28:5-15 Syria took many of Ahaz's people prisoner. Pekah killed one hundred and twenty thousand soldiers in Judah and took two hundred thousand women and children captive. His attack brought him close enough to Ahaz to kill both Ahaz's son and the officer in charge of the palace. Pekah did not hold on to his captives from Judah. Israel's army let them go when a prophet warned the army of God's displeasure at taking former countrymen captive. Josephus reports the same efforts by Rezin and Pekah to overtake Judah.[27]

The goal of Rezin and Pekah aggression against Judah was to force Judah to join in their alliance against Assyria. At that time Judah's foreign policy was to submit to Assyria, a policy that had been followed by Pekah's predecessor Menahem. When Pekah took over he and Rezin decided to place their own king upon Judah's throne. According to Isaiah 7:6 they planned to forcibly unseat Ahaz and replace him with the son of Tabeel. The siege of Jerusalem mentioned in 2 Kings 16:5 must have taken place sometime between the accession of Pekah to the throne and before the Assyrian campaign turned against Damascus. Some think it occurred between the Philistine campaign and the Damascus campaign.[28] At that time Damascus

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[27] Josephus, The Works of Josephus, trans. William Whiston (Peabody, Massachusettes: Hendrickson, 1988), Bk. 9, c. 12, pars. 245-251. Miller and Hayes warn that where Josephus' work and the biblical narrative overlap Josephus depends on the biblical materials; see J. M. Miller and J. H. Hayes, A History of Ancient Israel and Judah Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), p. 316.

[28] Donner, "States," p. 429. Donner assumes that the Philistine campaign was not against the coalition. However, the flight of Hanno of Gaza would indicate otherwise.

and Ephraim would have felt the need for Judah's support most acutely. More likely it occurred immediately after Pekah's accession when Pekah saw the support that there was within Judah for his brand of foreign policy.[29]

We can surmise the participants of the anti-Assyrian coalition to which Damascus and Ephraim belonged by identifying those lands that after the 734 Philistine campaign refused Assyria tribute and by noting which lands Assyria attacked. Conspicuously absent from the tributary list of IIR 67 are Rezin, Pekah and Hiram of Tyre.[30] The tributary list does include Salamanu of Moab, Kaushmalaka of Edom, Sanipu of Beth-Ammon, and Ahaz of Judah. The flight of Hanno of Gaza to Egypt according to ND400 suggests that he was a part of the coalition. The mention of the Meunites in the same text may suggest that they belonged in the coalition. Samsi of the Arabs must have been a part of the coalition since the final lines of the text seem to describe Assyrian action against her.[31] The statement by Tiglath-Pileser in Layard 72b + 73a that Samsi broke her oath indicates that she had been a vassal. It is not clear when her vassalage began. In Layard 29b Tiglath-Pileser rebuffs Mitinti of Ashkelon for his rebellion. Mitinti had been one of the tributaries on the list of 734. He re-joined the coalition after the Assyrian campaign of 734. The text appears to say that he fell ill when he saw the defeat of Rezin coming and that his son Rukiptu took over. This succession may have been through a coup d'etat. From these details we can conclude that Damascus,

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[29] Irvine, Isaiah, pp. 298-99.

[30] Ibid., pp. 41-44. Irvine shows that the absence of these names in lines 7-9, lines which he establishes concern events of 734, is difficult to ascribe to the lacunae of the text.

[31] Ibid., p. 56. One finds the same battle site in parallel accounts of Samsi's submission to Tiglath-Pileser in IIIR 10,2, line 19 and Lay 66, line 213. The personal pronouns are feminine.

Israel, Tyre, Ashkelon, Samsi of the Arabs and possibly the Meunites were still together after the campaign against Philistia. Gaza had been a part of the coalition before the Philistine campaign.

During the days of the anti-Assyrian coalition Egypt and Cush influenced the surrounding countries but did not agitate them. All countries respected their power. Historically Egypt had played a major role in the fight against Assyria. It fought with Damascus and Israel against the Assyrian Shalmaneser III and in the battle at Qarqar in 853 effectively stopped him for awhile.[32] From that time forward Egyptian policy was one of supporting Syro-Palestinian powers against Assyria.[33] The initial Assyrian incursion into Palestine during the 734-32 campaigns took the form of a sudden thrust to the Egyptian border. This showed with what seriousness Assyria regarded the threat of an Egyptian intervention in Palestine. There was no military encounter between Assyria and Egypt at the time. When Assyria reached Gaza, Hanno fled to Egypt. Assyria was confident enough about having contained Egypt that it took Hanno back and left him in charge of Gaza. Assyria's main contention with Egypt was over the control of trade. Evidence for this is in the example of the Nimrud Letter XII dating to the 730's. It prohibits Tyre and Sidon from trading in timber with Egypt.

It seems that during the Palestinian invasion of Tiglath-Pileser Assyrian relations with Cush were positive. Assyrian records reveal that there were significant contacts between Assyria and Cush at this time. These records distinguished between Egypt, which they called *Musiri*, and Cush, which they

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[32] ANET, pp. 278-79.

[33] Grimal, p. 326.

called *Meluhha* or *Kusi*. Assyrian art did not begin to depict Egyptians or Cushites until the reign of Sargon. When it did it universally depicted the Egyptians and Cushites as enemies of Assyria.[34] The Assyrian annals said little about Cush at the time of Tiglath-Pileser. However, the Assyrian administrative records from 732 mentioned Cushites in the wine distribution.[35] It is very likely that these Cushite dignitaries were involved in the exportation of Nubian horses. The chariot horse received its name from a Cushite breed of horse. It was called the *kusaya*, "Cushite", and apparently hailed from Nubia. This is corroborated by the devotion that Piye had for horses and by the way that Sargon could be appeased by the Egyptian gift of six horses. Tiglath-Pileser III had every reason to be serious about the import of Nubian horses. The possibility exists that Piye sent ambassadors to Assyria to keep relations peaceful at the time of Assyria's invasion of Palestine but the Assyrian ruler Sargon knew of no such contact.[36]

According to Egyptian records Cush remained militarily inactive at this time. It had control of upper Egypt beyond Thebes through alliances that it made with several Egyptian kings. This is clear from the statement Piye made after his invasion of Egypt in 728.[37] His reproach of several Egyptian

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[34] Stephanie Dalley in "Foreign Chariotry and Calvary In the Armies of Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon II," Iraq 47 (1985): 46 (hereafter cited as Dalley), makes reference to P. Albenda, "Observations on Egyptians in Assyrian Art," Bulletin of the Egytological Seminar 4 (1982): 5-32.

[35] Nimrud Wine List No. 9; mentioned by Dalley, p. 44.

[36] At ANET, p. 286, Sargon states that the ancestors of the king of *Meluhha* had never sent messengers to Sargon's fathers to bring greetings.

[37] Irvine, in Isaiah, p. 173, believes that it was in 734 that Piye went into lower Egypt. Duane L. Christensen in "The Identity of "King So" in Egypt (2 Kings 17:4)," Vetus Testamentum 39, 2 (1989): 147 (hereafter cited as Christensen), dates the invasion to *ca.* 724-722. However, K. A. Kitchen proves that the invasion of lower Egypt was in 728 or 727 in The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt (1100-650 B.C.), 2nd edition (Warminster, England: Aris and Phillips, 1986), p.

kings infers that they had earlier pledged loyalty.[38] Cush's military inactivity is also clear from Piye's strategy against the Egyptian attack against him. His plan was to wait for his enemy to move toward Nubia before advancing. Cushite Egypt's passivity toward Assyria would have bolstered Judah while it faced Damascene and Samarian attacks.

Jerusalem refused to be a part of the coalition against Assyria. According to 2 Chronicles 28:16-18 Ahaz faced attacks not only from Aram and Ephraim but also from Edomites and Philistines. In 2 Kings 16:8 when the Syro-Ephraimite league besieged Jerusalem, Ahaz appealed to Tiglath-Pileser for help against Israel and Syria. Assyrian records confirm that Ahaz paid tribute in 734.[39] This may have been Ahaz's first tribute. Although Ahaz refers to himself as the "servant and son" of Tiglath-Pileser in 2 Kings 16:7 that does not necessarily imply vassalage. The term "servant" was used

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139 (hereafter cited as Kitchen, Period), and in "Further Thoughts on the Egyptian Chronology in the Third Intermediate Period," Revue d'Egytologie 34: 63-64, 66-67. The Piye Stela reports the invasion took place in Piye's Year 21. A synchronism can be made between the end of the 23rd Dynasty in 736 (Year 19 of Iuput II) and Year 12 of Piye using the Wadi Gasus inscription. This would make 747 the start of Piye's rule. Year 21 and the invasion would be in 727. Kitchen also calculates the date of the invasion using dates after the invasion and working backwards. He starts with Shabaka's conquest of of lower Egypt, an event that happened between 716-712. If the stela of Year 3 of Shabaka from Bubastis correlates to the death of Osorkon IV (Bubastis and Tanis) in 713 then the conquest took place in 714. Between this conquest and Piye's invasion must fit the 12 year minimum that belongs to the reigns of Tefnakht and Bakenrenef, kings of the 24th dynasty at Sais (Bakenrenef = Mantheo's Bocchoris). The latest date for Piye's invasion following this computation would fall between 728-724 and probably no later than 727. See n. 68 below.

[38] Piye shows this when following his invasion of Egypt he reproaches the kings of Hermopolis and Herakleopas for their disloyalty.

[39] II R 67, line 11. Irvine in Isaiah, pp. 41-42, convincingly argues that this does not date to 728. It must date to 734/33 since this text also mentions Mitinti as a tributary, someone who Tiglath-Pileser removed from power (Ashkelon) at the first defeat of Damascus (Layard 29b).

by anyone who was not a vassal and the significance of the term "son" is not known.[40]

Records document well the reaction of Tiglath-Pileser to the rebellious coalition.[41] From the steps taken it appears his aims were: (1) to cut-off help from Egypt; (2) to maintain the control over trade; and (3) to subdue any opponents. The Eponymcalendar Canon B puts the Tiglath-Pileser campaign in Palestine in the years Nisan, 734--Nisan, 731. Associated with the first year is a campaign against Philistia and with the next two years a campaign against Damascus.[42] The campaign against Philistia involved a thrust down the Mediterranean coast that left some areas untouched but established Assyria's immediate presence in Gaza.[43] There Assyria set up a trading-center. Assyrian forces then moved south of Gaza to the Wadi Besor ("Brook of Egypt") where they subjugated the Meunites and gained control of the trade routes out of Egypt. After this initial invasion many nations voluntarily submitted to Assyria.

Assyria's two year campaign annihilated the coalition against it. Tiglath-Pileser defeated Rezin in the field, captured Damascus and executed Rezin.[44] Thus the kingdom of Damascus came to an end. At some point

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[40] Becking, p. 10, argues that this proves he was a vassal. Cogan/Tadmor, p. 187, shows the opposite.

[41] Sources for the 734-32 campaign of Tiglath-Pileser are: Rost I, lines 191-210 (= Lay 72b-73a); Rost I, lines 211-228 (= Lay 66); Rost I, lines 229-240 (= Lay 29b); Rost I, lines 78-83 (= III R 10,2); II R 67; ND400; ND4301 + 4305.

[42] A. Ungnad, "Eponym," in Reallexikon der Assyriologie, ed. E. Ebeling and B. Meissner (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1932).

[43] See Irvine in Isaiah, pp. 70-72, for much of this summary.

[44] 2 Kings 16:9 attributes the death of Rezin to Tiglath-Pileser; ARAB, I:280.

during this siege of Damascus Tiglath-Pileser defeated Samsi at Mt. Saquirri, a point possibly east of Palestine, and Hiram of Tyre. He then returned both rulers to their thrones. At some point, probably after Rezin was confined to Damascus, Tiglath-Pileser attacked and defeated the towns under Ashkelon's control. The inhabitants of Ashkelon deflected the Assyrian rage by assassinating Mitinti and replacing him with Rukiptu, who swore allegiance to Tiglath-Pileser.

After the fall of Damascus and while Tiglath-Pileser was still in Damascus Ahaz quickly gave his further tribute.[45] According to 2 Chronicles 28:20-22 Tiglath-Pileser's help to Judah was not without its problems. Even after Ahaz made his gift problems with Assyria continued. While in Damascus Ahaz decided to have a copy of the altar in Damascus made for Jerusalem. At first glance the imitation of a defeated foe would appear unreasonable but the imitation of Syrian culture was in vogue in the world. Assyria incorporated many aspects of Syrian art and architecture.[46]

In the aftermath of the Palestinian campaigns Assyria made Syria and parts of Israel into provinces.[47] It deported large numbers of Israelites but it left most of the Israelite territory intact.[48] One factor that convinced Tiglath-Pileser that that was not necessary was Hoshea's assassination of Pekah.

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[45] 2 Kings 16:10.

[46] Cogan/Tadmor, p. 193.

[47] 2 Kings 15:29; Isa 8:23; III R 10,2, lines 15-16; Lay 29b, lines 231-34. According to Becking, p. 20, Assyria made from the former Israelite territory the provinces *Du'ru* on the Mediterranean coast, *Magidu* in the North, and *Gal'ad(d)a* in Transjordan. According to Pitard, p. 189, Assyria turned Syria into the provinces *Hauran*, *Qarnini*, *Manṣuate* and *Ṣubite* (= Zubite). The information about these provinces comes from later records.

[48] See above n. 24; see also 2 Kings 15:29.

Tiglath-Pileser confirms this by his statements. He admits that he did not unseat Pekah and says it was the people who deposed Pekah. He does take credit for Hoshea's accession to the throne.[49] It took Hoshea until Tiglath-Pileser had begun his campaign against Sapia (southern Babylon) in 731 before Hoshea succeeded in his unseating of Pekah. This is apparent because Hoshea took his tribute to Sarrabanu.[50] Hoshea would have given his tribute sooner if he could have because he would have received Tiglath-Pileser's confirmation and hence he would have fortified his hold on power.[51]

When a Chaldean seized the throne of Babylon from a Babylonian in 731 Tiglath-Pileser reacted immediately.[52] He campaigned from 731-729 to gain control of Babylon and then took the throne himself. He used both diplomacy and some show of force against Arameans and Chaldeans to do it. As a result he became the first Assyrian to be both king of Assyria and king of Babylon. Tiglath-Pileser died in 727 under uncertain conditions.

The siege of Jerusalem by the Syro-Ephraimite league is the most probable setting for Isaiah 17:1-6. It is at this point that the league tied the fates of Syria and Ephraim. The destruction of the two nations and Aroer was about to take place. There was still reason to speak of the "glory" and "fat" of Israel. After 732 that glory was faded. The message of destruction in Isaiah 17 had relevance only if it addressed a situation where Syria and

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[49] ND4301 + 4305, line 10 and III R 10,2, lines 15-19.

[50] ND4301 + 4305, line 11.

[51] This tribute is an important synchronism for the reign of Hoshea.

[52] J. A.Brinkman, Prelude to Empire: Babylonian Society and Politics, 747-626 B.C., Occasional Publications of the Babylonian Fund, 7 (Philadelphia, 1984), pp. 42-43 (hereafter cited as Brinkman, Babylonian).

Damascus appeared strong and unlikely to fall, which was still the case before 734. In Isaiah 17 Damascus is still a kingdom and King Rezin is still alive.

The Time of Shalmaneser V (727-722 B.C.)

Records covering the reign of Shalmaneser V are sparse. He, like his father, took both the title "King of Assyria" and "King of Babylon" and he held both titles throughout his reign.[53]

The Eponymcalendar for the years of Shalmaneser is in poor condition. Some believe that "Damascus" should fill the lacunae that names the targets of Shalmaneser's campaigns. They argue that the two year campaign against Damascus in 733/32 and 732/31 never states that the city of Damascus was *ka-šid*,"conquered", but rather that there was a campaign against the *mat*, "land", of Damascus. Therefore, Tiglath-Pileser never did capture the city. After the reign of Shalmaneser Sargon refers to Damascus only as a province. This leaves Shalmaneser as the only one who could have conquered the city of Damascus.[54] However, the eponyms do not state every city that Assyria captured. Nor is it likely that Tiglath-Pileser III would have left the job unfinished before going on to fight in Babylonia. The Biblical record resists such a scenario. In addition to stating the capture of Damascus it reports that

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[53] Babylon Chronicle 1 in ABC, p. 73.

[54] O. Loretz and W. Mayer, "Pulu - Tiglathpileser III. und Menahem von Israel nach assyrischen Quellen und 2 Kön 15,19-20," Ugarit Forschungen 22 (1990): 223, cited by Becking, p. 14. The eponym of 728 shows the first syllable of the object of that year's campaign--'Da'. Some suggest that this is the beginning of Da-maš-qa ka-sid (so G. Smith, who popularized the Assyrian texts in the last century). Even this reconstruction would fail to prove the point that the city was conquered in 728 because the city is always spelt Di-maš-qa. This reading would also not support Shalmaneser's conquest of Damascus since 728 belonged to the reign of Tiglath-Pileser.

Ahaz met with Tiglath-Pileser at Damascus and then was able to enter the city to see its religious center.[55] Had Tiglath-Pileser not finished the task of besieging Damascus he would have left a field commander to do so.[56]

Some place Josephus' report of a five year siege of Tyre in the reign of Shalmaneser.[57] This is especially true for those who postulate a broad Palestinian revolt against Assyria during Shalmaneser's reign. Nations often saw the change in rulers as a moment of weakness and the best time to revolt. This could have been true for Tyre. Quoting from Menander's Greek translation of the Archives of Tyre Josephus says that an Assyrian king named Selampsas invaded Phoenicia during the reign of King Elulaios of Tyre and after establishing terms for peace he departed.[58] Tyre revolted but some cities subservient to Tyre turned against Tyre and looked to Assyria for protection. A five year siege of Tyre by the king of Assyria ensued. There are problems with Josephus' account. Shalmaneser did not campaign long enough for a five year siege. Sargon who was quick to claim victories never mentions Tyre. Many of the details of Josephus' account better suit the days of Sennacherib.[59] For example, it is Sennacherib that mentions a King Luli of Sidon that in Greek would be written Elulaios.

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[55] 2 Kings 16:9-10.

[56] Becking, p. 14.

[57] Hayes/Hooker, p. 66.

[58] Josephus Bk IX, c. 14, par. 284.

[59] For a discussion about the dating of Josephus' account see J. H. Brangenberg, "A Reexamination of the Date, Authorship, Unity and Function of Isaiah 13-23," Ph.D. dissertation, Golden Gate Baptist Seminary, 1989, pp. 181-85 (hereafter cited as Brangenberg). The name Selampsas is as close to Sennacherib as it is to Shalmaneser. The details of Menander's account are so similar to those of Sennacherib's campaigns (see below) that to place them in the reign of

The Biblical record concerning events during the reign of Shalmaneser report that Hoshea took advantage of the ruler change in Assyria. He sent envoys to So of Egypt and stopped paying tribute to Assyria. King So was probably Pharaoh Osorkon IV of the 22nd Dynasty who ruled in Tanis in the East Delta, the part of Egypt closest to Palestine.[60] According to 2 Kings 17:4 Shalmaneser responded to the treason by taking Hoshea captive and then by besieging Samaria for three years before capturing it. According to 2 Kings 17:6 and 2 Kings 18:9-10 the siege of Samaria began in Hoshea's seventh year and ended in his ninth, probably 725/4-723/2.

Shalmaneser presents the unlikely situation that King Luli experienced the same events twice in his life. On the other hand Cogan/Tadmor (pp. 198-99) argue that Selampsas is Shalmaneser.

[60] Kitchen, Period, pp. 372-75. Some of the reasons Kitchen gives include: we know abbreviations like this were done, e.g., "Sesse" for Ramesses II; "So" could not have been a Hebrew transcription for Tefnakht's Horus-name because foreign scribes never referred to Egyptian pharaohs by any other name than by cartouche-names or personal names; "So" could not have stood for the city Sais, Tefnakht's capital, because the 2 Kings 17:4 text does not allow a place name unless it is sharply emended; Tefnakht and Sais were too distant to have been of any use to Hoshea; the Hebrew prophets inveigh only against the East Delta and their rulers; there was a long-standing alliance between Israel and the 22nd Dynasty kings. Donner in "States," p. 433, has suggested that "So" is an inaccurate rendering of the Egyptian appellation king. This is the choice of Becking (p. 470) who cites R. Krauss, Biblische Notizen 11 (1980): 29-31). It is also the choice of N. Na'aman in "The Biblical Background to the Conquest of Samaria (720 BC)," Biblica 71 (1990): 217 (hereafter cited as Na'aman, "Samaria"). Christensen calls all philological grounds inconclusive and identifies "So" with Tefnakht on historical grounds. He considers Tefnakht to have been the only ruler in the Delta strong enough to help and hence the only ruler to whom Hoshea would appeal. He sets the invasion of Piye back to 723 so that he can describe Tefnakht as undefeated and as amassing power when Hoshea makes his appeal to Egypt. Christensen fails to counter the synchronism that Kitchen uses to establish the date of Piye's campaign of 727 and he cannot prove that Piye supressed the fact that Tefnakht was a king. (Tefnakht assumed the kingly title in approximately 727.) Tefnakht and his later successor never became so dominant in the lower delta that they were able to take away the strong independence of other Egyptian rulers. For example, when Shabaka of Ethiopia invaded Egypt in *ca.* 714 he erected a stela to his rule in Bubastis, a city that belonged to Osorkon of the East Delta. Christenson does prefer a philological theory of D. B. Redford that suggests that "Nechepso" in Mantheo comes from the two words "Necho" and *pso*. Redford in "A Note on II Kings 17,4," Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities Journal 11 (1981): 75-76, postulates that *Pso* is short for two words "the Saite". Thus "Nechepso" means "Necho the Saite". *Pso* became in Hebrew *sw'*. However, it is unprecedented for the Hebrew Bible to simply call Tefnakht "the Saite".

The Babylonian Chronicle corroborates the Biblical record that credits Shalmaneser with conquering Samaria.[61] During his short reign Shalmaneser spent 726 at home and not campaigning.[62] The Eponymcalendar indicates that after the hiatus Shalmaneser campaigned for three successive years--725/4-723/2--at locations that are now illegible. Samaria would fit well the lacunae for the three years for reasons beyond the fact that this is the only Assyrian record that correlates with what the Hebrew Bible records give as the Assyrian king at the time of the Samarian siege, the duration of the siege, and its date. The fact that under this proposal the siege came at the end of Shalmaneser's life would resolve the problem of Sargon claiming the conquest of Samaria. At the death of Shalmaneser the Assyrian forces would have returned home without the time to institute massive deportations. Sargon would have finished the job and taken the credit for Samaria's fall.

Shalmaneser died on Tebeth 12 of his fifth year.[63]

During the years of Shalmaneser's reign Egypt and Ethiopia went through a power struggle. In approximately 728 Tefnakht of Sais advanced on Piye of Nubia. He was a Libyan of the 24th Dynasty who controlled the West-Delta and the South of Egypt up to Memphis.[64] Piye's response was to

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[61] ABC, p. 73. Dalley, p. 36, makes clear that the term used here for the conquest of Samaria, "break", does not require the burning of the city.

[62] ARAB, II: 437.

[63] ABC, p. 73 (Babylonian Chronicle 1).

[64] The information about Piye's invasion comes from the great granite Piye Stela that stood in the Gebel Barkal temple; see Kitchen, Period, pp. 139-44, 363-72, 544. The stela mentions Osorkon whose earliest date is after the death of Shoshenq V in 731; see Kitchen, Period, p. 355. The presence of Osorkon on the Piye Stela sets the upper limit for when Piye could have invaded Egypt to late 731. This eliminates the possibility that Piye prepared to conquer Egypt at the time of Assyria's 734-32 campaigns in Palestine. The Athens Stela indicates an official reign of at least seven years for Tefnakht after the Piye conquest. On the basis of the death of the Apis bull

wait for Tefnakht to consolidate his troops in the upper Delta. When Hermopolis defected Piye sent his forces down the Nile to engage Tefnakht along with the order for his troops to stop at Thebes to do a religious act of devotion to Amun. Dissatisfied with the progress of his troops Piye joined them. He says he celebrated the Opet Festival of Amun while enroute. Piye pushed Tefnakht back as far as Memphis and with an ingenious use of warships he conquered Memphis. At Memphis King Iuput II of Leontopolis, who was of the 23rd Dynasty, Chief Akunosh of Ma and other Egyptian rulers paid Piye homage. Subsequently Piye received the homage of King Osorkon IV of Tanis and Bubastis. Piye proceeded to break Tefnakht's rebellion at Mosdai and forced Tefnakht to submit. With control over all of Egypt established Piye returned to Napata never to return. After Piye's departure from the Delta an inevitable power vacumn developed. Tefnakht again took steps to fill it.

John Hayes and Paul Hooker consider Shalmaneser's reign to be the best setting for Isaiah 17. They argue that an anti-Assyrian coalition re-emerged in 728 the suppression of which Tiglath-Pileser began and Shalmaneser completed.[65] Hayes and Hooker admit that they have no evidence for such beyond what is described above. They say that Isaiah 15-

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Tefnakht's successor Bakenrenef reigned for five years at which time Shabaka invaded the Delta and eliminated him. Shabaka then installed a Nubian governor in Sais. That invasion took place in Shabaka's second year. This means there were at least eleven years between Piye's invasion and Shabaka. The range for the start of Shabaka is 716/715-713/712. The lower limit of Piye's invasion would be 727/15-724/23.

[65] Hayes/Hooker, p. 66; J. H. Hayes and S. A. Irvine, Isaiah, The Eighth Century Prophet: His Times and His Preaching (Nashville: Abingdon, 1987), pp. 246-254 (hereafter cited as Hayes/Irvine).

18 have these events in mind.[66] In order to prove that Shalmaneser campaigned in Palestine in 727 Hayes and Hooker pull out of 2 Kings 17:3-4 two confrontations between Shalmaneser and Hoshea, one in 727 and one in 725.[67] They back this up with Menander's account of a two phase Assyrian action against the Pheonicians, an account that we showed above fit better in the reign of Sennacherib.

Stuart Irvine supports Hayes' dating with some additional arguments. He says that the Syrian monarchy could have revived in Damascus. For this there is no evidence. It is unlikely since Damascus was a province of Assyria. He believes that the reference in Isa 17:2 to the destruction of the cities of Aroer is to Shalmaneser's suppression of a Transjordanian revolt in 727 that preceded his actions against Damascus. Irvine believes Isaiah listed the cities of Aroer as an example of what will happen to Damascus.

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[66] It seems one of the main concerns for Hayes is to relate most of these events to the death of Ahaz, which is mentioned in the oracle against Philistia at Isa 14:28, so that he can demonstrate that Isaiah's oracles against the nations are placed in a chronological order. He dates Ahaz's death to 728. Ahaz's death and the conquest of Ashdod by Sargon at Isa 20:1 are the only two specific historical events mentioned in the oracles to the nations section.

[67] Becking (p. 50), argues that the chain of wayyiqtol forms proves that verses three and four of 2 Kings 17 present events in succession. He admits that this chain is broken in verse three because of a qatal form but argues that this is done for emphasis and that it does not change the succession. He overlooks the epexegetical use of wayyiqtol in which case the wayyiqtol is not a succeeding event but the explanation for the foregoing (see Waltke 33.2.2). Na'aman in "Samaria," sees 2 Kings 17:4-6 (the capture of Hoshea and the siege of Samaria) as referring to the activities of Sargon. He argues that it was the Ethiopians to whom Hoshea appealed and who were the so-called Egyptians that fought Sargon in 720. Surprisingly, it is Na'aman who notes that the Assyrians were careful to distinguish Egyptians from Ethiopians (cf. A. Spalinger, "Esarhaddon and Egypt: An Analysis of the First Invasion of Egypt," Orientalia 43 [1974]: 320-4). Na'aman believes the three year siege and the synchronism of Hoshea are the mistakes of the deuteronomistic historian. Laato (pp. 216-29), takes a similar tact but sees Shalmaneser responsible for the capture of Hoshea and Sargon responsible for the conquest of Samaria. Christenson argues that Hoshea appealed to Tefnakht of Sais and that Piye attacked Tefnakht during the Assyrian siege of Samaria.

However, Irvine lacks the evidence for the supposed 727 anti-Aroer military operations in Transjordan.[68] Isaiah 17 does not lend itself to this interpretation. It sets the events of Aroer in the same time as those of Damascus and Ephraim, that is, as an event yet to occur. Isaiah 17 describes Damascus as the dominant force in Syro-Ephraimitic affairs, something that would be difficult after the earlier destruction of Damascus. The reference to the kingdom of Damascus in Isaiah 17:3 is impossible after Damascus has become a province of Assyria even if one does not agree with the account in 2 Kings 16:9. The comparison in Isaiah 17:3 of Aram to Israel would be unlikely after 732 when Aram had suffered more than Ephraim. Additionally it is doubtful that the provinces of Syria or that the city of Samaria would have challenged Judah in 727. This makes the Isaiah 17:12-14 theme of a mighty threat to Judah less comprehensible.

Hayes also sees Isaiah 18 set in 726. Supposedly Ethiopian ambassadors encouraged Hoshea to appeal to Egypt for help.[69] For this there is no evidence. Besides being a peculiar way to read the first two verses of Isaiah 18 it is unlikely that Ethiopia would encourage Hoshea to go to the untrustworthy Tefnakht as Hayes suggests. The theory of Ethiopian diplomacy seems unlikely when one remembers that after Ethiopia had shown

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[68] Irvine, Isaiah, pp. 116-118. Irvine cites Hosea 10:14 for support for a Transjordanian action of Shalmaneser. The referents for Shalman and Beth Arbel are very uncertain; cf. F. I. Andersen and D. N. Freedman, Hosea, The Anchor Bible, vol. 24 (New York: Doubleday, 1980), pp. 570-71.

[69] Hayes/Irvine (pp. 253-4), sees the aim of the Ethiopian emissaries as that of keeping trade open between Egypt and the rest of the Mediterranean coast. With the tensions that existed between Egypt and Ethiopia it seems less than likely that Ethiopia wanted to promote Egyptian trade.

its superiority in the face of Egyptian aggression it was content to recede into the background.

The Time of Sargon II (722-705 B.C.)

Sargon came to power on Tebeth 12, which dates to Dec. 20, 722 or Jan. 18, 721.[70] It appears he usurped the throne.[71] With his accession the thrones of Assyria and Babylon separated. Merodach-baladan II was the King of Babylon until 710 when Sargon regained control of Babylon.[72] From 710 until his death Sargon was also King of Babylon.

The first year of Sargon seems to have been a year for securing his hold on power. The annals show that to pacify the citizens he gave them the *Assur*,"Ashur", Charter.[73] Six thousand three hundred Assyrians failed to support his accession and it took two years before Sargon was secure enough to deport them to Hamath in Syria.[74] At the same time as his accession, trouble was brewing with Elam with the result that he lost control of Babylon. In these crises Sargon had to ignore the events in the West. The annals inscribed in the early part of Sargon's reign indicate no contact with the West until his second year. The later annals, depending on how one revises them,

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[70] ABC, p. 73 (Babylonian Chronicle 1); Hayim Tadmor in "The Campaigns of Sargon II of Assur: A Chronological-Historical Study," Journal of Cuneiform Studies 12 (1958): 37, n. 136 (hereafter cited as Tadmor, "Sargon II"). The main source for establishing the chronology of Sargon's reign is the Eponymcalendar supplemented by the Babylonian Chronicle 1. Two recensions of the Eponymcalendar are preserved; cf. Tadmor, "Sargon II," pp. 84-85).

[71] Brinkman, Babylonian, p. 45.

[72] ABC, pp. 15, 75; the biblical name Merodach-baladan in the Babylonian Chronicles is Marduk-apla-iddina.

[73] Tadmor, "Sargon II," p. 37.

[74] Borowski Stela as noted by Dalley (p. 33).

may show a Samarian campaign in his first year.[75] If the records do show a campaign to Samaria in Sargon's first year it was probably an invention. The later annals transferred events from year two to year one to credit Sargon with a victory for each of his regnal years.

In 720, Sargon's second year, Sargon fought an attack planned by Elam and Babylon. Merodach-baladan of Babylon did not make it to the battle in time to support Elam and withdrew. Sargon claims to have won the battle but the Babylonian Chronicle gives the victory to Elam.[76] It appears the battle resulted in a stalemate since Sargon did not regain the land he lost to Elam and did not attack Babylon for ten years.[77]

With Assyria weakened by the political instability many Palestinian nations lunged for freedom from Assyrian control. Ilubidi, a usurper of throne at Hamath, rebelled. For additional strength he incited the cities of Arpad,

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[75] Tadmor, "Sargon II," p. 31. According to Tadmor the earlier annals, known as the Assur Charter, begins its counting with the first full year of Sargon's reign. It describes the campaigns beginning in the second year. One of the later display inscriptions known as the Prisms of Nineveh begins its counting with the second year. The later annals, the Annals of Khorsabad, begins its counting with the first year of Sargon's reign but fills the first year with new passages about the conquest of a city that most take to be Samaria and about the war with Elam that comes from the second year. Becking (pp. 39-45), has of late called into question the restoration of the Khorsabad Annals to [*Sa-me-ri-n*]*a-a-a*, "Samaria" (ARAB, II: 2). Scholars use display inscriptions to fill in lacunae in the annals. Becking shows that there is not enough similarity between the display inscriptions and the Khorsabad Annals of Sargon II (Saal II, pl. 2-3, lines 10-17; published in H. Winckler, Die Keilschrifttexte Sargons nach dem Papierabklatsche und Originalen neu herausgegeben, 2 vols. [Leipzig, 1889], I: 4-5 [hereafter cited as Winckler]) to restore the lacunae in the Khorsabad Annal with the word "Samaria". The display inscriptions that scholars use are the Nimrud Prism (Fragment D, Col. IV, lines 25-49; published in Iraq 16 (1954): 173-201) and the Khorsabad Sargon II Display (Rooms IV, VII, VIII and X, lines 23-5; Room X published in Winckler, I: 100-101). If this restoration is disallowed the only witness to a Samarian campaign in Sargon's first year is eliminated.

[76] ABC, p. 73 (Babylon Chronicle 1); ARAB, II: 70 (Assur Charter).

[77] Brinkman, Babylonian, p. 48, n. 223.

Simirra, Damascus and Samaria to join him in the rebellion and then met Sargon at Qarqar in 720.[78] At the same time Hanno of Gaza in Philistia with the support of Egypt revolted against Assyria. Judah remained aloof to these conspiracies, which turned out to be good for it because Sargon subdued all these efforts against his domination.[79] Sargon captured Hanno and penetrated Egypt and destroyed Raphia. Scholars now know that the Egyptian general he defeated is *Re'e*.[80] It would seem that the Egyptian king involved was someone who had the most to lose from trade restrictions at the border between Egypt and Assyria, probably someone like Osorkon IV.[81] At this time Sargon received tribute from Pharaoh of Egypt, from Samsi of Arabia and from Itamar of Saba.[82] As future events would prove Egypt no longer sought to challenge Assyria.

The aftermath of this campaign was the confirmation of Samaria and its hinterland as an Assyrian province called Samerina. Samaria would never be a part of another rebellion.[83] Sargon deported the people of Samaria and resettled it with even more people of different nationalities.[84] The Samaritans

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[78] ARAB, II: 3, 27. The conquest of Samaria is always associated with a battle against Egypt and the conquest of Raphia. This adds support to the idea that Sargon was not in Samaria at the start of his reign.

[79] ARAB, II: 70; ANET, p. 285.

[80] Until recently the name was read as Sib'e. Scholars identified this spelling with "So"; cf. R. Borger, Journal of Near Eastern Studies 19 (1960): 64-66.

[81] Kitchen, Period, p. 551.

[82] ANET, p. 285. From the way the account is written this would seem to be concurrent.

[83] Becking, p. 105.

[84] ANET, p. 284.

that were deported received fair treatment from their Assyrian masters partly because of the skill Samaria had in developing chariotry without calvary.[85]

Sargon's next major action in Palestine was in 716. He settled people at the Brook of Egypt and He put the people under the control of a vassal sheikh of Laban. This was the first Assyrian military outpost on the very border of Egypt.[86] To placate Sargon the Egyptian Osorkon IV presented Sargon with twelve big horses.[87] This gift was of such significance that Sargon describes it in his annals. A portion of the Nimrud Prism that is probably reporting on this time states that Sargon mixed Assyrians and Egyptians for the purposes of trade and re-opened the sealed harbour of Egypt.[88] The Khorsabad Annals record other events that seem to be from the 716 campaign but that they displace to 715 to fill that year with successes for Sargon.[89] They say Sargon resettled into Samaria distant Arabians--Tamud, Ibadid, Marsiman and Haiapa. They also indicate that tribute was received from Egypt and from Šamši, queen of Aribi.

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[85] 2 Kings 17:24; Dalley, pp. 32, 48. CTN III, Nos. 99-108, called Horse Lists, show Sargon had a unit of top equestrian officers from Samaria, the only national unit known under its city name (CTN = Cunieform Texts from Nimrud).

[86] Tadmor, "Sargon II," p. 78.

[87] Tadmor in "Sargon II" (p. 77), dates the relevant portion of a prism-fragment VA 8424 to 716 since it is followed by wars dated to 715 (VA 8424 published by E. Weidner in Archiv für Orientforschung 14 [1940/4]: 43). On philological grounds W. F. Albright in "Further Light on Synchronism Between Egypt and Asia in the Period 935-685 B.C.," Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research 141 (1956): 24-25, identifies the Egyptian king that the fragment names *Šilkanni* with Osorkon IV. It is possible that this tribute was an effort to court Assyria's support against an Ethiopian invasion.

[88] Nimrud Prism, Fragment D, Col. IV, lines 42-49; cf. Tadmor, "Sargon II," pp. 34, 78.

[89] Tadmor, "Sargon II," p. 78; ARAB, II: 7. In the Nimrud Prism the first contact with the Arabians is in 716 while in the Khorsabad Annals it is in 715.

In 713 Sargon uncovered a plot by Aziru, King of Ashdod, to withhold tribute and he replaced Aziru with his brother Ahimetu.[90] By 712 the infuriated people of Ashdod had overthrown Ahimetu and replaced him with Iamani. Iamani acquired the support of Judah, Edom, Moab and "those by the sea" and he sought the support of Pir'u, king of Egypt (*Musiru*).[91] He then rebelled against Assyria. Sargon conquered Ashdod and made it into a province that year.[92] This move effectively brought the rebels under his control. Iamani fled for refuge "into the territory of Egypt (*Musiru*) which belongs to Ethiopia (*Meluhha*)" but the Ethiopian king sent him back to Assyria in chains.[93]

The advent of Ethiopia in the Iamani affair may establish when it was that Shabaka, the Nubian king, conquered the Delta. It is likely that Shabaka made his conquest of the Delta between the time that Iamani appealed to Egypt and the time that Iamani fled. What is known about Shabaka's conquest would explain Iamani's experience in Egypt. Shabaka executed Osorkon and he moved his capital from Napata to Memphis.[94] The removal

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[90] Tadmor, "Sargon II," p. 79; cf. ARAB, II: 13.

[91] ARAB, II: 105 (Nineveh Prism A).

[92] ARAB, II: 32. The Eponymcalendar states that Sargon did not go on any campaigns in his tenth year (712) which would suggest that this campaign was conducted by a *turtanu*. This is confirmed by Isaiah 20:1 that says that "tartan" came to Ashdod. The Nineveh Prism attributes the Ashdod campaign to *palû* 9 (712) but the Khorsabad Annals attribute the campaign to its *palû* 11 (711). Tadmor, "Sargon II," p. 93 prefers 712 because he finds the Nineveh Prism more reliable.

[93] ANET, 286 (Khorsabad Display Inscription). This text states that the ancestors of the king of *Meluhha* had never sent messengers to Sargon's fathers to bring greetings. This is one possible correlation with Isa 18:2.

[94] Kitchen, Period, p. 552. Shabaka moved his capital to Memphis after conquering lower Egypt but local rulers regained some independence according to John Baines and Jaromír Málek in Atlas of Ancient Egypt (New York: Facts on File, 1980), p.49, and according to Kitchen, Period, p. 395.

of Osorkon and the subjugation of the Egyptian rulers would explain why Iamani's flight took him to an Egypt that was controlled by Ethiopia. Ethiopia's delivery of Iamani to Assyria is the first record of an official contact with Assyria.

From 712-706 Sargon had no further campaigns in Palestine and Hezekiah was able to amass some power. Sargon's absence from Palestine was in part due to outwardly friendly relations with Cush.[95] By handing Iamani over it was clear that Cush had no hostile intensions. Trade with Cush was mutually satisfactory. In the years following the Ashdod revolt Hezekiah was able to seize much Philistine territory.[96] During Sennacherib's reign, for example, the people of Ekron surrendered their king Padi to Hezekiah. At some point in Hezekiah's reign Simeonites were even able to settle in the hill country of Edom.[97]

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[95] This is supported by the seal impression, British Museum 81-2-4, 352. This Assyrian seal impression, "Assyrian" because it was found at Nineveh, is from a papyrus document of diplomatic significance. It bears the image of Shabaka in a triumphal pose along with his titles. See also Tadmor, "Sargon II," p. 84. Assyrian art of the period always depicted Egypt and Ethiopia as enemies of Assyria (see above). Hayes/Hooker (p. 73), contend that Assyrian policy was to ally with Egypt against Ethiopia. This goes beyond the evidence. Dalley (p. 46) is probably right when she posits that trade was the main concern of Assyria's foreign policy and in particular the horse trade with Ethiopia. Assyria wanted to keep that trade unimpeded.

[96] 2 Kings 18:8: "From watchtower to fortified city, he defeated the Philistines as far as Gaza and its territory." See also Bustenay Oded, "Judah and the Exile," in Israelite and Judaean History, eds. John H. Hayes and J. Maxwell Miller (London: SCM Press, 1977), p. 445; ARAB, II: 119. Nadav Na'aman in "Sennacherib's 'Letter to God' on His Campaign to Judah," Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research 214 (1974): 27, shows that Sennacherib reports in his "Letter to God" that Hezekiah had captured a royal city of the Philistines and strengthened it for himself.

[97] According to 2 Chronicles 4:34-43 Simeonites moved into Philistine territory during the reign of Hezekiah and into the area of the Meunites around Mt. Seir and the hill country of Edom because of their population growth.

The days of the Ashdod revolt may have been the time of Hezekiah's life-threatening illness. According to the biblical account Hezekiah's illness was associated with an Assyrian threat to Judah.[98] The only times for such a threat were 712 and 701. In addition Isa 39:1 records that Merodach-baladan, King of Babylon, sent envoys to congratulate Hezekiah on his recovery. In 701 Merodach-baladan was no longer King of Babylon. Except for a brief time in 703 when Merodach-baladan was King the throne remained in Assyrian hands from 710 until 694. Babylonian envoys could only have come from Merodach-baladan in his position as King of Babylon between 722 and 710.[99] In 710 Assyria went to war against Merodach-baladan and Elam to regain Babylon.[100] A visit by Merodach-baladan's envoys made sense in 712. The Ashdod revolt was indicating to him that Hezekiah was now willing to oppose Assyria. Merodach-baladan would naturally have been interested in assessing the strength of anyone that was fighting his enemy. It is possible that his envoys came shortly before his war with Assyria in 710. There is evidence to suggest that Hezekiah did not recover until the Assyrian campaign of 712 was over. In Isaiah 22, for example, Hezekiah is absent from the charges Isaiah levels against Judah. The 712

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[98] Isaiah 38:5-6. Hezekiah was given another fifteen years of life.

[99] ABC, pp. 15-16, 75-81. There was a short period of less than a year in the early days of Sennacherib's rule when Merodach-baladan regained control of Babylon; cf. ARAB, II: 116. Brinkman in Babylonian (p. 57), dates this to 703. Merodach-baladan was permanently driven away in 699; cf. ARAB, II: 147; Brinkman, Babylonian, p. 60). From 694-89 the Babylonian throne was controlled by Elamites but then it returned to Sennacherib who this time took the throne himself and kept it until his death; cf. ANET, p. 272; Brinkman, Babylonian, pp. 61-65).

[100] ARAB, II: 14; Sargon says Merodach-baladan "put his trust in the Bitter Sea and its mighty waves." Because Chaldean and Elamite forces retreated into the swamps and highlands Assyria had great difficulties completely conquering them.

campaign did not make Jerusalem any less of a potential asset to Babylon's defense against Assyria. So it is possible that Babylonian envoys came to Hezekiah after the Assyrian incursion of 712 and before Babylon's war with Assyria in 710.

In 710 Sargon conquered Babylon. Although Merodach-baladan had sent a large gift to Elam for its support the inexperienced Elamite ruler avoided clashing with Assyria. Sargon carried away 90,580 people and much plunder in his conquest of Babylon. Yet he was welcomed into Babylon and he made sacrifice at its altar.[101] At the news of Babylon's fall Sargon says other leaders submitted to him.[102] Merodach-baladan tried to flee to Elam but Elam refused him entrance. He had to face Sargon and suffered defeat in 709 but was not himself captured. Sargon died in 705 in a campaign against a people who could have been Medes.[103]

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[101] ARAB, II: 18

[102] ARAB, II: 36, says this about the seven kings of *Ia'* of Cyprus.

[103] Brinkman, Babylonian, p. 54; Tadmor in "Sargon II," (p. 97), believes the campaign was against Tabala. Becking (p. 70), states that the Medes did not achieve the status of a single state in the eighth century. Assyrian records first record Assyrian dread for a Median ruler in 674 when the omen texts name Kashtaritu, Herodotus' Phraotes. However, Tiglath-Pileser shows he saw the Medes as a collective when he boasted of subduing many of the "mighty Medes"; cf. ARAB, I: 281, 286. J. M. Cook in The Persian Empire (New York: Schlocken Books, 1983), p. 3 (hereafter cited as Cook), says that by 735 the Medes had a "sort of capital" called Zakruti. The king that Herodotus in Book 1: 96-100, says unified the Medes was concurrent with Sargon. Sargon says that in 715 he captured Daiaukku, the Mannean governor, who scholars believe corresponds to Deioces of Herodotus; cf. Cook, p. 6. Sennacherib says that on his second campaign he received tribute "of the distant Medes, the name of whose land the kings, my fathers had not heard, and I made them submit to my yoke"; cf. ARAB, II: 142. Many believe that Ukshatar, who attacked *Harhar* during Sennacherib's rule, is the same as the Mede Kyaxares who Herodotus says succeeded Deicoes as King of the Medes; Cook, p. 6. In addition to the question of how unified the Medes were in the last third of the eighth century are two facts that are important for our purposes. Firstly, the Israelite deportation was to lands formerly Median. Sargon's annals indicate that in 716 Sargon took over the Median area of *Harhar* and settled people there from other conquered areas; cf. ARAB, p. 6. I. M. Diakonoff in "ערי מדי: The Cities of the Medes," in Ah, Assyria...Studies In Assyrian and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography Presented to Hayim

The Time of Sennacherib (705-681 B.C.)

The Assyrians inferred from the death of Sargon on the battlefield that he had sinned. This determined that his son Sennacherib would distance himself from his father.[104] Sennacherib did not seem to have the unrest at home that followed a ruler change. He was soon pre-occupied with matters to the South, that is, unrest from Merodach-baladan and the allies of Merodach-baladan like the Elamites. While Sennacherib was busy elsewhere Hezekiah continued to fortify himself.

In 703 Merodach-baladan, a Chaldean, regained the Kingship of Babylon but within one year, in the campaign of 703/2, Sennacherib had unseated him and made Babylon secure.[105] In his Annals Sennacherib says he conquered seventy-five strong cities and four hundred and twenty small cities of the Chaldeans. He carried to Assyria 208,000 people and untold booty. He proceeded to rule Babylon through puppet kings until he lost it again in 694. He went to war against the Chaldeans and their allies to regain it. In 689 he succeeded in recapturing Babylon but his anger with Babylon

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Tadmor, eds. Mordechai Cogan and Israel Eph`al, Scripta Hierosolymitana, vol. 33 (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press/The Hebrew University, 1991), pp.16-17, deduces that the people settled there were primarily the Israelites. This is in part to what 2 Kings 17:6 refers when it says that the Israelites were settled in the cities of the Medes. Secondly, Sargon's annals show him constantly involved with the Medes. In 716 there was *Harhar* and in 715 there was Daiaukku. In 714 Sargon again says he marched against the Medes. In 713 he received tribute from forty-five city chieftains of the mighty Medes.

[104] Brinkman, Babylonian, p. 54.

[105] ARAB II, p. 116.

was such that he totally destroyed it.[106] Babylonian records know him as King of Babylon from 705 to 703 and from 689 onward.[107]

In 701 Sennacherib reasserted his control over Palestine. Most scholars organize the details of Sennacherib's activities in Palestine in one of two ways. One construction keeps the events together in one campaign.[108] We can describe the one campaign construction as follows. A number of nations and cities rebelled against Sennacherib in Palestine as he fought in the South. In 701 Sennacherib moved into Palestine to subdue these rebellious states.[109] He conquered Sidon and Ashkelon and took tribute from many other states.[110] In the meantime, as Sennacherib records it, Ekron called "upon the Egyptian kings, the bowmen, chariots and horses of the king of Ethiopia, a countless host" for help.[111] Egyptian/Ethiopian forces did respond, something that suggests that Cush's leadership change took place around this time. This response was a radical change in Cushite policy toward Assyria. The leadership change that happened around this time was

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[106] ARAB II, p. 151-52.

[107] Babylonian King List A in ANET, p. 272.

[108] ARAB II, pp. 116-21; Kitchen, Period, pp. 383-86.

[109] The biblical evidence places the campaign in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah's reign; see 2Kings 18:13 = Isa 36:1. Na'aman, "Chronological" (pp. 84-85), explains this as being calculated from Hezekiah's sole reign. In the same article Na'aman reviews the various ways that the Egyptians counted the years of kings and offers a list of what he believes were the various ways used in the Book of Kings.

[110] ARAB, II: 118-21. Tribute came from such places as Ashdod, Edom, Moab and Ammon. Unless otherwise specified the rest of this account comes from these Annals of Sennacherib.

[111] Ibid.

the accession of Piye's son Shebitku.[112] Sennacherib met the Egyptian/Ethiopian forces at Eltekeh and defeated them. He took many soldiers captive, captured Ekron and put Padi back in charge. Sennacherib then split his forces. One part attacked Lachish and another part went on to besiege Jerusalem.[113] Hezekiah gave tribute but refused to surrender.[114] The siege of Lachish was memorialized in Assyrian reliefs. They show Nubians from outside of Egypt fighting Sennacherib at Lachish.[115] While the Assyrian forces had been divided into two contingents Cushite-Egypt saw an opportunity. It mounted a second attack with Taharqa at its head.[116] Sennacherib turned from Lachish to Libnah and the part of his army around Jerusalem joined him. The Assyrian forces regrouped and Taharqa retreated. Unexpectedly, for a reason unspecified by Assyrian annals, Sennacherib also

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[112] BM24429 is a statue that dates itself to the fifteenth year of Shabaka. This gives him a minimum reign of fourteen years. Shabaka did not march into Egypt until the second year of his reign according to the Serapeum epigraph and according to records found in Egypt; see Kitchen, Period, p. 142. Kitchen, Period (p. 155), suggests that the military involvement of Ethiopia/Egypt against Assyria was a radical departure from the earlier neutral or friendly neutral position. This points to a leadership change before 701. Counting back fourteen years would put Shabaka on the throne in at least 715. Aware that Yamani of Ashdod requested help in 713 from an Egyptian pharaoh K. A. Kitchen accomodates this in "Further Thoughts on Egyptian Chronolgy in the Third Intermediate Period," Revue d'Egytologie 34 (1982-83): 67, by proposing that Shabaka did not replace Osorkon IV right away. Shabaka may have ruled until about 700 sharing a co-regency with Shebitku from 702. Barnes (pp. 97, 119), argues that Shabaka's conquest of Egypt was after the 713 request for help from Yamani of Ashdod and that Shebitku could not have called Taharqa until Shebitku was sole ruler. Kitchen's argument that the 701 conflict is the only time that there was reason to call Taharqa and an army from Nubia is compelling..

[113] Isaiah 36:2.

[114] Annals specify the tribute and its arrival in Nineveh but not when it was given. 2 Kings 18:14-6 states it was given while Sennacherib was at Lachish.

[115] Dalley, p. 46.

[116] Isaiah 36:8-9. The Annals do not mention this approach of Taharqa.

gave up his campaigning and returned to Nineveh.[117] Together Sennacherib claims to have taken forty-six of Judah's strong, walled cities besides smaller ones.[118] He gave them to Mitinti of Ashdod, Padi of Ekron and Sille-bel of Gaza.[119]

The one campaign approach is criticized largely because of the presence of Taharqa. In 701 he was young and definitely not yet king as the Biblical records report. There are now Egyptian records that show that at the start of Shebitku's rule Shebitku called for Taharqa and some of Shebitku's brothers to come up from Nubia to Thebes. They brought with them an army.[120] From there they travelled with Shebitku into lower Egypt. Taharqa was twenty at the time. This event may have been a step to solidify Shebitku's hold on power. Shebitku was Piye's son and only the nephew of his immediate predecessor Shabaka. This event could also have reflected a call for reinforcements to fight Assyria. Whatever the reason, the Egyptian records do explain Taharqa's presence in Palestine in 701. That the Biblical accounts would call Taharqa a king could have been due to the perspective of the Biblical writer, who was writing when Taharqa was king. Taharqa

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[117] The Annals do not allude to any unusual event but then they can be expected to leave out that which humiliated the king; cf. Irvine, Isaiah, p. 28. They do not explain why Sennacherib never conquered Jerusalem nor why he did not stay in Palestine to receive Hezekiah's tribute, receiving it in Nineveh instead (ABC II: 143). Herodotus in Book II, 141, and Josephus in Book X, c. 1, who refers to Herodotus, mention that Sennacherib retreated from the battle at Egypt's borders (Pelusium) because of an epidemic of field mice that ate his weaponry. Isaiah 37:36-7 speaks of a divine plague that killed 185,000 soldiers in one night.

[118] 2 Kings 18:13 says it was all the fortified cities.

[119] ARAB, II: 143 adds Ashkelon.

[120] Kawa Stelae IV and V; cf. Kitchen, Period, p. 157. Taharqa was twenty years old at the time and Piye's son. Since Shabaka's accession establishes Piye's death to *ca.* 715, the *terminus ad quem* for Taharqa's twenty-first year is 695.

became king in 690 and reigned until 664. It is within these years that the writer of Isaiah is working as his last historical details show. The last events that the writer reports are the assassination of Sennacherib and the succession of Esarhaddon at Isa 37:38, events that date to 681. To suggest that the Biblical account refers to a time when Taharqa was king is made more unlikely by the fact that Ethiopian monarchs did not normally lead their armies.[121]

Isaiah 18:2 could reflect some of these activities between Shebitku in Memphis and Taharqa at Napata.

The other construction for the details of Sennacherib's actions in Palestine is the theory of two campaigns, a theory that Bright has popularized.[122] The campaigns divide as follows. The first campaign of Sennacherib to Palestine follows the same steps as those in the one campaign theory up to the attack on Jerusalem. At this point Sennacherib apportions Judah's territory as mentioned above, returns to Nineveh and receives there the rest of Hezekiah's tribute. In the subsequent years Sennacherib was busy elsewhere, especially with putting down the 694 rebellion in Babylon.[123] In 690 Taharqa took the throne. These two factors convinced Hezekiah to make another drive for independence. In 689 Babylon was razed and Sennacherib

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[121] Christensen, p. 149.

[122] Bright, pp. 284-88, 298-309. Becking (pp. 54-56), has a different twist that brings less agreement among the various historical records. He suggests the first campaign was the campaign of Sargon in 716, which he dates to 715/4, and the second was in 701. Some suggest 711 and put Sennacherib on the scene as the tartan of Sargon; cf. Brangenberg, p. 164. One of the problems with this earlier date is that the palace administrator was Shebna in 712 when that part of the biblical record associated with the first campaign calls for Eliakim (Isa 36:3).

[123] Brinkman 1986, pp. 61-67.

was free to turn his attention to Palestine.[124] Sennacherib again attacked Libnah and Lachish. Taharqa began his move into the area. Not wanting to lose any time Sennacherib sent his field commander to Jerusalem to demand surrender. Hezekiah refused. Sennacherib went on to meet Taharqa and probably defeated him. Even though Sennacherib was victorious something made Sennacherib return home before he captured Jerusalem--possibly a plague or an emergency in Assyria.

The two campaign theory is an attempt to explain how it is that Hezekiah could both give tribute to Sennacherib and then resist him, how the Annals of Sennacherib can speak of Assyria meeting Egypt at Eltekeh when the Biblical records speak of meeting Egypt at Libnah, and how Biblical records can call Taharqa a king. That Hezekiah would give tribute without surrendering is not improbable. Both theories handle the matter of where the Egyptian forces met Assyria in similar ways in as much as they both adopt both accounts. The solution of the two campaign theory is to simply place more time between the two encounters. The problem of Taharqa as king of the Cushite-Egyptian forces has been covered above. The two campaign theory fails for lack of evidence.[125]

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[124] This campaign against Palestine is nowhere attested.

[125] H. Tawil in "The Historicity of 2 Kings 19:24 (= Isaiah 37:25): The Problem of Ye'orê Maṣôr," Journal of Near Eastern Studies 41 (1982): 195-206, makes the interesting point that one should not see the spelling of *Maṣor* in 2 Kings 19:24 as the name for the Nile but rather as the name for the Assyrian mountain *Musri*. Sennacherib directed water from that mountain to Nineveh in 694 in what was an amazing engineering feat. On the other hand, Tawil admits that Isaiah and Micah use the form of the word in 2 Kings 19 to refer to Egypt and that the word *ye'or* refers most especially to the Nile. William H. Shea in "Sennacherib's Description of Lachish and of Its Conquest," Andrews University Seminary Studies 26/2 (1988): 171-180, argues Sennacherib's "Letter to God" as restored by Na'aman (q.v. n. 13) describes a second Palestinian campaign of 689. Shea identifies the unnamed city in this text as Lachish. The main fault with his proposal is that it lacks corroboration in any ancient records. Shea in "Sennacherib's Second Palestinian Campaign," Journal of Biblical Literature 104/3 (1985), pp. 408-12, proposes that the Adon

Date of Isaiah 17 and 18

There are a number of possibilities for dating the Damascus Oracle that present themselves. Although some scholars divide the oracle into many parts each with its own date there are really three main sections around which most discussion revolves: 17:1-11; 17:12-14; and 18:1-7.

Almost universally scholars date the section 17:1-11 to the reign of Tiglath-Pileser and to a time prior to the fall of Damascus.[126] There are some who date this section to a conjectured Palestinian protest during the reign of Shalmaneser V.[127] What the section makes clear is that Samaria, Ephraim, the kingdom of Damascus, and "Jacob" all exist.[128] Israel's glory has not yet faded. This was the situation before Tiglath-Pileser's intervention and not afterward. Damascus ceased to be a kingdom in 732 when Assyria added it to the Assyrian provincial system. Assyria began to remove territory from Samaria in 732 and had absorbed all of it into the provincial system by 720.

Papyrus, which is a call to Egypt for help from someone in Ekron threatened by an Assyrian advance, dates to 689, although Sennacherib says that in 701 Ekron called upon Egyptian kings and the bowmen, chariots and horses of Ethiopia to help him against Assyria; cf. ARAB, II: 119-20. Shea uses this to support the theory of a second Assyrian invasion of Palestine during the life of Hezekiah. His date is built on the identification of Sanduarri with the letter's *šndwr*. Even if the identification is correct the date for the Adon Papyrus is still inconclusive. The range of possible dates can be as late as 676 when Sanduarri died. For example, another possible date would be 677 when Esarhaddon was active in the Levant and attacked Sidon; cf. ANET, p. 303.

[126] Brangenberg, p. 113.

[127] A third option is that of Otto Kaiser in Isaiah 13-39, The Old Testament Library, trans. R. A. Wilson (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), pp. 76-77, who dates this section to the Seleucid period because of the linguistic form and content. He does not explain what his criteria are for making this judgment. He interprets the beginning of Isaiah's OAN as Judah's attempt to understand the events that lead to the exile. For the Damascus Oracle he will presumably look for a historical setting after the exile; Kaiser, p. xi.

[128] Aroer is difficult to place and the events surrounding it are lost.

Isaiah 17's peculiar comparison of the fall of Damascus to the fall of Israel may inidicate the perspective before the siege of Damascus.

Some date the 17:1-11 to 727 contending that the Syro-Ephraim alliance restarted at the accession of Shalmaneser. We reviewed this proposal above. Those who support this date suggest that Damascus revived its kingdom in the 720's. There is no evidence of that.[129] They point out that the oracle does not mention that the league attacked Jerusalem. That may be because 17:1-11 dates to a time before that had taken place. 17:1-11 seems to be written before the fall of Damascus in 732 because after that time it could not have spoken of Ephraim as the model for Syria's end. The best date for this passage would be before 734.

Scholars usually date section 17:12-14 to the last third of the eighth century. Most prefer the dates 734 or 701. Kissane suggests 711 largely because he sees this section and the next speaking of the same event.[130] Kissane requires that Ethiopia figure in the message. Isaiah 17:12-14 depicts how hostile forces from various countries surround Judah and plunder it. There is a sudden event that sends the enemies home. In the days before Tiglath-Pileser's campaign Syria, Ephraim, Edom and Philistia plundered Judah. Syria and Ephraim even besieged Jerusalem. That suddenly ended with Tiglath-Pileser's 734 rapid movement through Palestine to Egypt. Judah was not attacked again until 701. Assyria besieged Jerusalem in 701 but it lifted the siege. A little later Assyria left Judah for some unexplained reason not to return to the area for many years. Judah feared attacks from its

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[129] Hayes/Irvine, p. 250.

[130] Edward J. Kissane, The Book of Isaiah, 2 vol. (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1941), pp. 194-95.

neighbours before Assyria intervened and feared an attack from Assyria when Judah joined the revolt of 712 and then again in 701. There was no siege of Jerusalem in 712, Assyria's attack was restrained, and there is nothing to indicate that the Assyrian withdrawal was sudden. It is possible that Judah was anxious when the Assyrian troops were nearby for the siege of Samaria and during the war of 720 against the revived Syro-Palestinian league.[131] However, these anxious times were not accompanied by the plundering of Judah. The two most likely dates for this section are 734 and 701.

Chapter 18 is difficult to date because the referents are difficult to identify. The oracle mentions a land that is on the other side of the rivers of Cush sending ambassadors. It states that a destination for these messengers is an illustrious nation.[132] Their boats are made of papyrus. Some event of world importance is about to take place. Yahweh will intervene before some series of events reaches its expected fulfillment. The result will be devastation for some party. The illustrious nation will then bring gifts to Zion.

Cush had reason to send envoys up the Mediterranean coast to ensure the security of its trade at any time during the Assyrian action in the Levant. However, trade does not seem to be the issue for Isaiah 18. Rather Isaiah 18 concerns matters that are significant for the world and that have a conquest aspect. Cush remained isolationist under Piye. With Shabaka's recapture of

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[131] On the revived Syro-Palestinian league see above the rebellion initiated by Ilubidi of Hamath.

[132] Many scholars see the same messengers in v. 2a and v. 2b but a sender who is different from the addresser. Some see different messengers. Since the content of the message is not given I assume that the command to the messengers continues the scene of verse 2a.

Egypt and move to Memphis the active control of areas beyond Cush became important. Yet Shabaka did not go outside Egypt. He seemed to have been on good terms with Sargon. In 701 Ethiopia was involved militarily in Palestine. One cannot say for sure whether or not this was an occasion when Ethiopia sent messengers to Palestine to form alliances. Assyrian records report that Egyptian and Ethiopian military involvement in Palestine in 701 was only at the request of other nations. Assyrian and Egyptian records do report Ethiopian messengers returning Iamani to Assyria sometime after 712 and report Ethiopian messengers delivering a message from Memphis to Napata requesting Shebitku's brothers and troops in 702. Thus historically we are certain that Ethiopians sent messengers to Assyria and up the Nile to Ethiopia. In a preliminary way, either of these countries could be the illustrious nation of 18:2.

We can make further inferences about the identity of the nations mentioned in Isaiah 18. Chapter eighteen says that the nation that God cuts down is also the one that has been maturing a series of military objectives. The military objectives and God's intervention were to be of worldwide concern. The only nation that had been pursuing militaristic ends that concerned the world was Assyria. The nation that is cut down in chapter 18 is different from the illustrious nation because the illustrious nation will be around to bring tribute to God at Zion. That leaves Ethiopia the illustrious nation.

The time when Ethiopians in Memphis sent messengers to Ethiopia was in 702. The time when the Assyrian threat directly challenged Ethiopia was in 701. According to the Biblical record Yahweh stopped Assyria short and Assyria returned to its land. Such an intervention would explain why the

prophet expected Cush to bring gifts to Yahweh. The year 701 was also the time when Shebitku's calls for troops from Ethiopia would have encouraged Hezekiah since according to the Assyrian field commander Hezekiah was relying on Egypt (2 Kings 18:21). This hope in Cush would have been incentive enough for the prophet to have a message about Cush. The best date for chapter 18 according to this construction is 701.

CHAPTER V
THE HISTORICAL SETTING FOR ISAIAH'S ORACLES AGAINST THE NATIONS

One of the fruitful areas of recent research has been to investigate the historical setting that each of Isaiah's oracles against the nations addresses. As knowledge of ancient Near East history has increased scholars have had to re-evaluate the events that they thought were the concerns of the various oracles.[1] What these concerns are has a direct bearing on how well one understands the concerns of the Damascus Oracle because the Damascus Oracle belongs to and contributes to this collection of oracles. The current level of knowledge, which includes the information of the last chapter, will permit a review of the historical setting that each oracle addresses. This review will produce information that will help determine the historical situation of Isaiah 17-18.

Oracle About Babylon--Isaiah 13:1-14:27

The Oracle About Babylon, Isaiah 13:1-14:27, was one of the first oracles scholars set in a time later than Isaiah. This was done primarily because of these aspects to the oracle: (a) the oracle speak's of Babylon's greatness when at the time of Isaiah Assyria was the dominant power; (b)

[1] One current summary of the dates given by very many scholars to the various parts of Isaiah's oracles section is given in Appendix A of J. H. Brangenberg, "A Reexamination of the Date, Authorship, Unity and Function of Isaiah 13-23," Ph.D. dissertation, Golden Gate Baptist Seminary, 1989, pp. 345-65 (hereafter cited as Brangenberg).

Babylon is the Chaldeans' pride; (c) the reference to the Medes; (d) and the people of Jacob are in exile soon to be set free. A common way to come to terms with these aspects has been to date this oracle to the days preceding the fall of Babylon, an event which took place at the hands of the Medo-Persian Empire in 539.[2] Scholars have raised serious objections to this approach. One objection is that although Cyrus captured Babylon, he was unduly kind to it. Babylon's fall was not a destruction of Babylon and was not a reason for the inhabitants to mourn.[3] Another difficulty exists with the terminology. In the middle of the sixth century people living in Babylon did not call the Medo-Persian Empire "Media" because Cyrus conquered the Medes sometime before 550.[4] The exilic prophets of the sixth century explicitly mentioned Judah when they talked of the exiled, something the oracle does not do.

A better time for the setting of the Oracle About Babylon is the last third of the eighth century. There are features in each of the two chapters that suit that time best. Chapter 13 criticizes the accused for their pride and not for their attacks on Israel. This is presumably because Babylon had not yet attacked Israel.[5] Babylon would not attack Israel until the end of the seventh

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[2] Bernhard Duhm, Das Buch Jesaia, 5th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1968), p. 18 (hereafter cited as Duhm).

[3] J. B. Pritchard, ed., Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), pp. 314-16 (hereafter cited as ANET).

[4] J. M. Cook in The Persian Empire (New York: Schlocken Books, 1983), p. 4; Cook also says it was the Mede Kyaxares who captured Nineveh in 612 B.C.; Seth Erlandsson, The Burden of Babylon: A Study of Isaiah 13:2-14:23, trans. George J. Houser (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1970), p. 87 (hereafter cited as Erlandsson).

[5] Erlandsson (p. 161), interprets Isaiah 13:2-18 as having a different subject than the one in the rest of the chapter of Babylon. He sees the subject of 13:2-18 as unspecified but in the first

century. In the eighth century Babylon was what the oracle calls the Chaldean pride. Only at this time was there a contest between Assyria and various Chaldean kingdoms as to who would control Babylon. It truly would be the "jewel of the kingdoms" which a Chaldean would want to possess.[6] A century and a half later Jeremiah 50-51 would not speak of Babylon as a possession of the Chaldeans but as synonymous with the Chaldeans calling it the land of the Chaldeans. The reference to the Medes in the oracle fits with the eighth century. In the eighth century people knew that the Medes were a potential threat to Assyria since the Assyrians had continuously fought them. They were the world's model warriors according to Tiglath-Pileser who regularly referred to them, and only them, as "mighty." The Assyrians could have included them in an assault upon Babylon since Assyrians would conscript forces from their occupied territories that included much of Median territory.[7] If Isaiah 13 is speaking about the Medo-Persian conquest of Babylon it is doing so as an eighth century writer because only in the eighth century would the writer be likely to refer to the Medo-Persian empire as the "Medes." The mention of Babylon's allies in Isa 13:14 fits with the eighth century for at that time Babylon's allies were free to desert it and did. The

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place as Assyria. This should not affect what I see as the data that can be used to date the chapter. Chapter 13 announces the punishment of an unnamed land at the beginning, goes on to foretell the punishment of the whole world, and then focuses on the destruction of the kingdom of Babylon.

[6] Charles Boutflower, The Book of Isaiah, Chapters [I-XXXIX], In the Light of the Assyrian Monuments (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1930), p. 103 (hereafter cited as Boutflower).

[7] John H. Hayes and Stuart A. Irvine, Isaiah, The Eighth Century Prophet: His Times and His Preaching (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon, 1987), pp. 222-23 (hereafter cited as Hayes/Irvine). Assyria is the means by which Yahweh is bringing together an army from faraway lands in Isaiah 13:4-5.

picture of Babylon's destruction suits the eighth century best. Babylon fell four times that century: conquered by Tiglath-Pileser III in 729; re-taken by Sargon in 710; taken by Sennacherib in 703; and re-taken and destroyed by Sennacherib in 689. The only time in ancient history when Babylon was totally destroyed was 689.[8]

The best date for chapter 14 is also in the eighth century. It mentions only Jacob and Israel as exiled. Later writers would speak of the return of Judah to places like Jerusalem. Isaiah 10:5-34 and 37:22-29 describe the King of Assyria in terms similar to the descriptions given the King of Babylon in this oracle. In fact, of the Babylonian kings scholars suggest only two would fit the description of the king in this oracle, that is, someone who was striking nations in fury, building massively with Lebanese cedars, striving for world supremacy, permanently deporting peoples, leveling cities, dying in battle, and having his dynasty end.[9] These are Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon.

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[8] The next destruction of Babylon took place over a period of centuries, first with Darius destroying the walls in 518, then Xerxes destroying the temple of Belus, and finally declining under the rule of the Seleucids; cf. F. Delitzsch and C. Keil, Commentary on the Old Testament., 10 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1975), vol. 7: Isaiah, by F. Delitzsch, two vols. in one, trans. James Martin, p. 304.

[9] Brangenberg (pp. 87-92), examines Tiglath-Pileser III, Sargon II, Sennacherib, Merodach-baladan, Asshur-uballit, Nebuchadnezzar, Nabonidus, Belshazzar, Alexander the Great, and an ahistorical symbol to find matches for the tyrant of c. 14. He rejects Nebuchadnezzar because Nebuchadnezzar was not a cruel oppressor and did not destroy his land and slay his people. Merodach-baladan was no world ruler. We know that the Assyrian kings called themselves "king of the universe"; for Tiglath-Pileser see Daniel David Luckenbill, Ancient Records of Assyrian and Babylonia, 2 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926), I: 280 (hereafter cited as ARAB); see ARAB, II: 112 for Sargon; see ARAB, II: 191-98. Brangenberg dismisses Sennacherib because he never bore the title of "King of Babylon"; but Babylon King List A in ANET, p. 272, says otherwise. Only Tiglath-Pileser ever called himself "King of Babylon." Brangenberg prefers Tiglath-Pileser. His lineage ended with Shalmaneser. On the other hand Sargon's lineage carried on for a century. Esarhaddon treated Tiglath-Pileser's inscriptions and reliefs with the irreverence due an evil king. Esarhaddon risked bringing a curse upon himself for his irreverence. Tiglath-Pileser's evil may way have been to destroy his land and slay his people.

Both were simultaneously kings of Babylon and Assyria. Of these two only Tiglath-Pileser's lineage ended soon after his death with the death of his son Shalmaneser V in 722. Tiglath-Pileser was the first king of the ancient Near East to resettle people on the massive scale that Isa 14:17 describes.

Many scholars see the section Isaiah 14:24-27 as an independent oracle. Even with the various opinions about the compositional history of chapter 14 there is almost universal agreement that 14:24-27 reflects a situation in the last third of the eighth century.[10] If indeed the King of Babylon mentioned earlier in chapter 14 is one of the kings of Assyria then the section 14:24-27 readily connects to the rest of chapter 14. If this section continues the same time frame as the preceding section its contents would date to a time before the death of Tiglath-Pileser. On the other hand, the description in this section suits Sennacherib's campaign against Judah and look very much like Isa 37:36's description of the destruction of Assyria in the Lord's land. At the very least 14:24-27 must date to a time before the destruction of Assyrian forces in Judah in 701.

Chapter 13 originated in anticipation of the fall of Babylon. One purpose for the text was to explain what this fall would mean. The date would be before 729. Both sections of Chapter 14 were probably written before the death of Tiglath-Pileser and after he had become king of Babylon. Isaiah 14:24-27 may date later but not any later than 701.

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[10] R. E. Clements, Isaiah 1-39, New Century Bible Commentary (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1980), pp. 145-46 (hereafter cited as Clements, Isaiah 1-39), argues for the Josianic period. Erlandsson (p. 166), shows how this section completes the foregoing.

Oracle About the Philistines--Isaiah 14:28-32

It is widely agreed that the Oracle About the Philistines dates to a time in the last third of the eighth century.[11] The clear reference to the death of Ahaz is one of only two historical references in Isaiah's OAN. Unfortunately the date of Ahaz's death is not settled. The most likely dates for his death and therefore, the most likely dates for the oracle are 727 and 715.[12] The difficulty in dating Ahaz's death lies with the dates of his successor Hezekiah whose fourth year was the year of Shalmaneser's advance on Jerusalem and whose fourteenth year was the year Sennacherib captured all Judah's fortified cities.[13] The other data that can determine the time of the oracle include the following items. An oppressor of the Philistines has ceased although it is not clear whether that means someone died or whether a nation has suffered a serious defeat, militarily or otherwise. This oppressor will be succeeded by a worse oppressor from the North. As a result of the weakness of their enemy the Philistines have sent envoys to Judah. These envoys seek Judah's partnership in their bid for freedom. This is clear from the answer of Judah, an answer that concerns matters of where one goes for help. Judah says that it goes to Yahweh for help.

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[11] Otto Kaiser in Isaiah 13-39, The Old Testament Library, trans. R. A. Wilson (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), p. 53 (hereafter cited as Kaiser), gives the date 333 when Alexander defeated the Persian King at Issos. Kaiser questions the Isaianic authorship because of the mixture of imagery and because it offers few reasons for the coming judgment.

[12] John Bright in A History of Israel, 3rd ed., (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), p. 276 (hereafter cited as Bright), supports 715; Mordecai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor in II Kings: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary (N.p.: Doubleday and Co., 1988), p. 190 (hereafter cited as Cogan/Tadmor), support 727.

[13] Cf. 2 Kings 18:9 and 13.

We can surmise that the oppressor will be Assyria since the oppressor is from the North and since the oppressor is a descendant of the previous oppressor. Some suggest that Ahaz or Judah was the oppressor of Philistia and that Philistia rejoiced over Ahaz's death. That is not likely given that Ahaz's successor would be from the North and given that the Philistines sent envoys to Ahaz's descendants to seek support not peace. If the prophet's depiction of a neutral Judah is apt then the oracle dates to a time when Judah did not join in rebellions against Assyria. That was true until 712.

Philistia could have felt there was a glimmer of hope for independence from an oppressor a number of times between the years 727 and 712. Hope could have been renewed in 727 when Tiglath-Pileser died, in 722 when Shalmaneser died, and later in 722 when the Chaldeans and Elamites freed Babylon from Sargon. However, the oracle states that the vanished oppressor had attacked Philistia. There is no evidence that Shalmaneser struck Philistia. There is no chronology that would place Ahaz's death in the year that Sargon met defeat. This leaves the year Tiglath-Pileser died 727 as the most likely date for the oracle.

The Oracle About Moab--Isaiah 15-16

This oracle is one of the most difficult to date as is clear by the wide range and number of dates given by scholars. There are elements that suggest it dates prior to Isaiah, other elements that suggest it describes one of the late eighth century Assyrian campaigns into Palestine, and yet other elements that point to post-Isaianic dates that some scholars use to prove a second century

origin.[14] We know too little about Moab's place in the history of the ancient Near East to make definite statements about when the events the oracle describes took place. There is a note that three years remain before the fulfillment of the prophetic message but without a way to correlate the note to some other event the note remains unfruitful for rendering a date.[15]

This oracle could have to do with the last third of the eighth century. One could expect that there would be a message about Moab at a time when Isaiah had messages for most of Israel's neighbours. Assyrian annals name Moab in 734, 713 and 701. In 734 Moab pays tribute to Tiglath-Pileser. In 713 Moab was part of the conspiracy against Assyria headed by Ashdod. In 701 although Moab was part of the rebellion it was one of the first to yield to Sennacherib.

The prophet gives some details helpful for dating. Moab is independent of Judah, Judah is secure, Moab is under attack, and, according to Isa 16:1, travel is possible between Edom and Judah. These would have been the conditions in a scenario where after paying its tribute Moab decided to turn against Tiglath-Pileser and join the Syro-Palestinian league as Ashkelon had done. In 733 or 732 Moab's people would have sought safety

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[14] Georg H. A. von Ewald in Commentary on the Prophets of the Old Testament, vol. 2: Yesaya, `Obadya, and Mikha, trans. J. F. Smith (Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1876), pp. 137-41, sees three prophets at work. The oldest prophet was commenting on an Arab invasion of Moab sometime after 897 when Moab had revolted from Israel. He comes to this conclusion because of the extreme emotion of the prophet and some of the language that is used. Duhm (p. 126), believes the text received its present form at a time when people wanted to see Moab and Arabs humbled. He says this is the sentiment of someone like Alexander Jannaeus would have had in the second century. With the discovery of 1QIsa[a] this date is ruled out.

[15] That no one reported the fulfillment, in contrast to Isa 37:38, indicates that future generations did not update this prophecy. They left Isaiah's prophecy intact.

in Judah or Edom. The conditons outlined above would be satisfied if Moab was a part of the 720 revolt against Sargon. Sargon's 716 campaign may have affected Moab since it stretched into the desert to the Red Sea.[16] In all three of these instances Judah was secure. For those who construct a Damascus campaign for Shalmaneser in 727, this is another possible date.[17] From 713 Judah would offer no security from Assyria since Judah also opposed Assyria. Before 713 Assyria expressly mentions Moab only in 734.

Oracle About Egypt--Isaiah 19-20

Scholars usually divide the Oracle About Egypt into three sections for dating purposes. These sections are 19:1-15, 19:16-25, and chapter 20.

Most commentators place the first section sometime in the last third of the eighth century.[18] This section has five pieces of information that we can use to identify its historical setting. First, it mentions a civil war within Egypt. This was the case in Egypt in the days leading up to Piye's conquest as Tefnakht fought to control Egypt. It was so in the years following Piye's conquest when Tefnakht and then his son Bakenrenef again tried to claim supremacy of Lower Egypt until Shabaka invaded and forced Egypt to submit to Cush in 714. There was civil war again after Assyria made Psammethicus

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[16] ARAB, II: 7-8.

[17] Hayes/Irvine, pp. 329-30.

[18] Kaiser (pp. 99-100) proposes a different date. He prefers the period 404-343 when Egypt had a period of independence before Persia's reconquest. Kaiser rules out the time of Isaiah and the seventh century because of the literary style. Yet he admits that the author drew all his ideas from Isaiah. For a counter argument see Alec J. Motyer, The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1993), p. 163 (hereafter cited as Motyer).

vassal of Egypt in 663 and until Psammethicus had gained complete control of Egypt. Not until 404 was there again times of internal conflict.[19] Second, the oracle says Egypt would be given hard masters and a fierce king. Shabako was a king over all Egypt who proved to be fierce and a hard master to the existing pharaohs. Other possibilities include almost every foreign king that ever conquered Egypt. Third, the passage's use of the term "pharaoh" points to a composition before the end of the Persian era after which Egyptian pharaohs were no more.[20] Fourth, the drying up of the Nile is a detail about which little is known. This may be a metaphor for the collapse of economic activity which was indeed a factor in the last third of the eighth century.[21] We know that the Assyrian kings restricted trade with Egypt. Tiglath-Pileser stopped it. Sargon encouraged trade somewhat when he reopened the centre at Egypt's borders. Fifth, the mention of Noph (Memphis) and Zoan (Tanis) suggests a time before the importance of Sais as the central authority over all Egypt. Sais took unambiguous control under the rule of Psammethicus. Together these details point to a time before Sargon reopens trade and before Shabaka's conquest of the Delta.

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[19] From Shabako's reign until the end of Tarhaqa's reign Cush ruled Egypt. Assyrian rule established Psammetichus I as the main leader in Egypt in 663 and by 656 Psammetichus ruled all of Egypt. This central rule of Egypt held until the Persians defeated Egypt in 525. There were times of internal power struggles after Egypt gained independence from Persia in 404. In 338 Persia succeeded to regain control of Egypt. This was soon followed by Greek control in 333. Niclolas Grimal, A History of Ancient Egypt, trans. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 354-82 (hereafter cited as Grimal).

[20] Grimal. p. 383.

[21] Boutflower (p. 319), reports: "The goddess Ishtar answered the Assyrian Ashurbanipal's deliberation about invading Egypt with: 'I will fill the land with blood, will turn it into a desert with weeping and wialing.'"

The second section 19:16-25 is the most difficult of the three sections to date. There is no general agreement among commentators on when to date this section. Some of the difficulty lies in distinguishing the Exodus and Conquest traditions from the historical details.

Those who date this section to the third or second centuries believe the text pictures Israel as slaves in Egypt.[22] The text has an intellectual attitude of universal expectations, one that portrays Egypt and Assyria worshipping Yahweh. For these commentators this is a late development. Ptolemy III's deportation of Jews to Egypt suits this late date. Since the text juxtaposes Jewish enslavement to a Jewish friendliness toward Egyptians these commentators conclude that the period is one when there was Egyptian proselytes. With the 1QIsa[a] such a late date falls away.

Some would date this section to the fifth century. The sizeable Jewish communities springing up in Egypt at that time can explain the presence of Yahwism in Egypt. The reference to the Canaan language suits this century because Aramaic was the language of these communities. After the Greek conquest the language spoken by Jewish communities changed to Greek.[23]

The text points to another date. The text makes clear that Judah is not exiled and uses the word "Judah" to name Israel. That suggests a date not much later than the fall of the Northern Kingdom. The presence of "Assyria"

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[22] Kaiser, pp. 108-109.

[23] John F. Sawyer, Isaiah, vol 1, The Daily Study Bible (Old Testament) (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984), p. 174. This approach sees the cry to the Lord in v. 20 as coming from Jews in Egypt. The more natural understanding is that the cry comes from the Egyptians. According to verse 17 Judah is striking Egypt with terror and verse 22 describes Egypt as calling for help.

indicates a time before Assyria's fall in 612.[24] The text sees Canaan as a living language and towns of Canaan speaking peoples in Egypt. Such towns inhabited by Israelites began to develop in response to the mass deportations of Sargon.[25] Towns of Canaan speaking peoples may also have arisen along Egypt's borders in response to Sargon's policy to mix the peoples there and reopen a trading center.[26] The text states that there would be a time when Egypt would fear the "land of Judah" on account of Yahweh's plans. There were only a few times when Egypt could have lived in the fear of the "land of Judah" and those times were before 612. The "land of Judah" may mean the geographical location from which a non-Judahite enemy might come or it might mean Judah itself. In the former instance the "land of Judah" represented a danger whenever Assyrian forces advanced into southern Palestine: Tiglath-Pileser in 734; Sargon in 720 and 716; Sennacherib in 701; Esarhaddon in 674, 671, 669; Ashurbanipal in 664-63. Although less likely, the country of Judah could have represented a threat for the lesser Egyptian rulers while Hezekiah was amassing power. The hand of Yahweh that is against Egypt in Isa 19:16 manifests itself in Sennacherib's attack of Cushite-Egyptian forces in 701.[27] The passage assumes Egypt will be under an

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[24] Kaiser (p. 108), sees this section as *vaticinium ex eventu* of third and second century events. He does not explain how an author could keep from making some reference to the nations that faced him.

[25] Grimal, p. 355.

[26] Nimrud Prism, Fragment D, Col. IV, lines 42-49; cf. Hayim in "The Campaigns of Sargon II of Assur: A Chronological-Historical Study," Journal of Cuneiform Studies 12 (1958): 34, 78.

[27] Isaiah 20:3-4.

oppressor that was the case with the Cushite pharaohs. The text says that Egypt will be harassed but then will be delivered to live at peace with Assyria.[28] This could point to a time when the Ethiopians would be driven out of Egypt by the Assyrians. This happened with permanence under Ashurbanipal.[29] It promises days of free movement between Egypt and Assyria. In 716 Sargon normalized trade.

An early date for the second section would be before 716 when there was a Cushite oppressor on the horizon and trade had not yet normalized.

The date for the third section, chapter 20, is largely undisputed. Most scholars agree that this dates to *circa* 712.[30]

The Oracle About the Desert By the Sea--Isaiah 21:1-10

Opinion divides evenly on this oracle. Scholars view it as written either in the days of the exile immediately before the Cyrus's conquest of Babylon by an anonymous prophet or in the days of Isaiah. Bernhard Duhm suggests the exilic date because at that time the nations of Elam and Media were united under Cyrus and prepared to attack the Chaldeans and because

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[28] Hayes/Irvine (pp. 263-66), suggest that Sargon is the Egypt's deliverer from the Ethiopian oppressor by opening trade with Egypt. However, Sargon did not stop Cush's invasion.

[29] If we take literally that the outcome of God's deliverance is the peaceful coexistence of Assyria, Egypt and Israel, then perhaps the oppressor from whom God delivers Egypt is Cush. This would point to a time when Cush would soon control Egypt and when Cush would be vulnerable to an Assyrian attack.

[30] Even Kaiser (p. 116), will relate this to the events of that date but he gives for the earliest composition date the sixth century. If the text was composed in the sixth century it would serve as a reminder to trust in Yahweh. Kaiser argues that the climate of Palestine would not have permitted Isaiah to walk around naked for three years. He also sees a contradiction in the oracle between saying that the nations that hoped in Egypt will be shocked and yet speaking as if these nations did not suffer the same fate as their ally Egypt.

Babylon had not yet fallen.[31] If this were the exilic period it would be strange that the fall of Babylon would leave the prophet sombre. People saw the rise of Cyrus and the conquest of Babylon as the coming of a saviour. Even Babylon rejoiced at the coming of Cyrus. Duhm admits that the writer lived in Judah. This is clear from the perspective of the writer, who posts a lookout outside of Babylon, and from the imagery of whirlwinds sweeping through the Negev. It would be strange for a prophet to address people who have lived in Babylon all their lives with imagery that was from Judah. If verse 2 is about those who destroy Babylon it would be unusual to speak of Cyrus as the "traitor" and "looter" as in verse 2.

The details in the text point to other dates. The combination of Elam and Media suggests a time before 640. In 640 Ashurbanipal of Assyria annihilated the state of Elam.[32] Biblical records never called the forces of Cyrus, who ruled until 530, "Medes" but rather "Persians" or "Medes and Persians." It was in the eighth century when the Elamites allied with the Chaldeans and probably with the Medes.[33] The oracle's sombre perspective

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[31] Duhm, pp. 149-50.

[32] Bright, p. 314.

[33] Assyrian records relate Manneans and Medes, cf. ARAB, II: 8 and the discussion of Deioces in the last chapter. In ARAB (II: 161), Sennacherib says that he deported Chaldeans and Manneans in his 703 campaign against Babylon and in ARAB (II: 153), he says he defeated Merodach-baladan's ally Elam in the 703 campaign. Sennacherib says of his eighth campaign, a campaign against Babylon (that J. A.Brinkman, Prelude to Empire: Babylonian Society and Politics, 747-626 B.C., Occasional Publications of the Babylonian Fund, 7 [Philadelphia, 1984], p. 63, dates to the years 692-691), that Babylon had sent gifts to Elam and had formed a great coalition; see ARAB, II: 126, 157. Sennacherib could be referring to the Medes of the Zagros Mountains when he says of this campaign that the kings of the mountain were allied with the king of Babylon and Elam; cf. ARAB, II: 151. In ARAB (II: 118), the Medes had submitted to the yoke of Sennacherib after his second campaign so an act against Assyria could have been called treasonous in terms similar to Isa 21:2.

on the fall of Babylon suggests that the destruction of Babylon is not told at the time when its fall is a great act that frees Judah. This kind of perspective suits the eighth century when Assyria was Judah's oppressor.

There are other data in the text that agree with an eighth century date. Although the addressee in the heading--"the desert by the sea"--seems to be obscure, it is similar to the name of the Chaldean homeland. Sargon calls the Chaldean homeland "the secluded (shore) of the sea of the east."[34] Tiglath-Pileser and Sennacherib called the Chaldean homeland "the Sealand."[35] Dougherty shows that the Sealand included desert areas of Arabia.[36] If the oracle's title is the Chaldean homeland then the oracle addresses the Chaldeans who are in control of Babylon. The feasting that goes on in Isa 21:5 even while Elam and Media are going to war could identify the behaviour of Merodach-baladan. Merodach-baladan seldom had his troops lead in battle.[37] Of the five times that Assyria threatened him he either came too late to help Elam as in 720 or he tried to flee. All but once he called on Elam to fight Assyria. In 710 and 703 he used huge bribes to secure Elam's support. In 720 and 703 Elam answered Merodach-baladan's request by amassing great armies from many nations. In 691 the then Chaldean king of Babylon also hired Elam and Elam responded by gathering many nations.

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[34] ARAB, II: 14.

[35] ARAB, I: 285; II: 153; so also Esarhaddon in ARAB, II: 213.

[36] Raymond Philip Dougherty, The Sealand of Ancient Arabia, Yale Oriental Series, vol. 19 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932), p. 169.

[37] Brinkman, J. A., "Elamite Military Aid to Merodach-Baladan," Journal of Near Eastern Studies 24 (1965): 165.

If the oracle is set in the eighth century the Elamites and Medes would be attacking Assyria not Babylon. Such a reading of the oracle could explain why at Isa 21:2 Elam and Media's attack is said to end the pain and yet why the fall of Babylon offers so little relief. The statement in Isa 21:1, "the traitor betrays, the looter takes loot," can refer to Assyria who is described with the same vocables in Isa 33:1. A great battle did take place at Halule in 690 between Assyria and a massive coalition led by Elam that included troops from Parsua, Ellipi and Chaldea.[38] Both sides claimed victory. However, Sennacherib returned in 690 and proceeded to begin the re-capture of Babylon. Assyria is the grievous one which was attacked but the attack failed and Babylon fell instead. If Isa 21:9 is referring to two horsemen rather than horses this would agree with the Assyrian method of putting soldiers in pairs and would further support the idea that it is Assyria that captures Babylon.[39]

According to verse 10 Judah suffered a defeat before Babylon fell. In that case a most satisfactory date for the events of the oracle is Sennacherib's war for Babylon in 691 because that is after Judah's defeat of 701. If Judah suffered "threshing" in 712 then another historical possiblity for the events described in the oracle is Sargon's attack on Babylon in 710 or 703. If the year is 710 the calls for the Medes and Elamites to attack went unheeded.[40]

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[38] ARAB, II: 155-56. Parsua (a land of Persians) shares with the Medes a common Iranian ancestry.

[39] Ibid.

[40] ARAB, II: 14. The presence of Media is not as pronounced at this time and Elam double crosses Merodach-baladan.

The Oracle About Dumah--Isaiah 21:11-12

The Oracle About Dumah is so lacking in details that it is impossible to say with certainty to what situation the oracle is referring. Most commentators place it in the last third of the eighth century. A few commentators place it later thinking that the proximity to an oracle about Babylon implies that Babylon is the threat.[41] Babylon attacked Arabia in the person of Nabonidus, who reigned between 555-539, and who oppressed the region between 550-545. These two periods of time may be what the text means by a time of morning followed by darkness.[42] Dating the previous oracle to the eighth century undermines this position. A weakness with a sixth century date is the lack of a hostile tone toward Edom which is common in exilic writers.

"Dumah" is the name of a son of Ishmael. Little else is known about the word. Because of the linguistic similarity some identify it with Dumat al-Gandal--Adummatu in Assyrian records--which is an oasis in the Arabian desert.[43] Since the inquirer in the oracle is from Seir the message concerns Edom. The gist of the news is that the period of troubles will end but then after a time they will return. Edom joined every Palestinian rebellion against

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[41] Clements, pp. 179-80. Some believe that the two oracles tie together because of the image of the watchman and because of the question and answer device.

[42] Some interpret the presence of Aramaisms to mean that this oracle belongs to the sixth century. It is now clear that Aramaic was already common in the eighth century; cf. Isa 36:11.

[43] August Dillmann, Der Prophet Jesaia, Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament., 5th ed. (Leipzig: Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1890), p. 193; Brangenberg, p. 148. There is a Dumah in Judah but it bears no relationship to the other particulars of this oracle. "Udumu" was the name given to Edom by various Assyrian kings; cf. Erlandsson, p. 93. Dumah is also the Hebrew word for "silence." Scholars claim one or more of these as the significance of Dumah in this passage.

Assyria except 720 and 716, and was quick to bring tribute in 734 and 701. In 712 Edom may have faced some retribution. Around 690 near the end of Sennacherib's reconquest of Babylon Sennacherib attacked Telhunu, queen of the Arabs, and Hazael, king of the Arabs. He pursued them to Adummatu and destroyed Adummatu.[44] Perhaps this is the coming night. The two times when Edom would have been at the brink of relief and yet close to renewed oppression were 712 and possibly 701.

Oracle About Arabia--Isaiah 21:13-17

The Oracle About Arabia is only a little more detailed than the Oracle for Dumah. Since the material of the two oracles is similar and the LXX seems to treat the two oracles as one--no heading over the second oracle--some commentators also treat the two oracles as one. The similarities between the oracles persuade most commentators to date this oracle with the previous two oracles in the eighth century. Of those who say that the previous oracle is exilic they say this oracle is exilic and they identify the enemy in the oracle with Babylon because this oracle follows an oracle about Babylon.[45] Some commentators date to the third century verses 16-17 that specify how much time remains until the fulfillment of the prophecy. They defend this on the grounds that the verses are harsh and that the verses follow material that, according to these commentators, is eschatological.[46]

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[44] ARAB, II: 158, 214.

[45] Clements, p. 180.

[46] Ibid., p. 181.

The Arabia Oracle supplies information that can assist in finding its date. The superscription has a topic with a dual meaning, "Arabia" and "evening," like the superscription of the previous two oracles, that might place this oracle in their time period. The oracle's ending follows the pattern that the ending of the Oracle About Moab follows. It tells the the time until the catastrophe and uses similar expressions such as: "as a servant bound by contract"; "the remnant will be few"; and "the glory will end." This suggests a date close to the origin of the ending of the Oracle About Moab. The Arabia Oracle contains various proper nouns: Dedan, Tema and Kedar. Dedanites were a southern Arabian tribe in the area of Tema. [47] Tema was an oasis city one hundred miles south of Elath and two hundred miles east of the Red Sea. Kedar was an Arabian tribe north of the Dedanites that often gave its name to all the Arabs. In this oracle someone is fleeing an army and is seeking refuge in Tema and is seeking help from the Dedanites. Kedar will soon be devastated. These places are significant in the Assyrian records for the final third of the eighth century.

Assyrian records often mention the Arabians. Queen Zabibe of the Arabians and Kedar paid tribute to Tiglath-Pileser in 738.[48] Tema paid tribute to him.[49] The annals report that in 733-732 Queen Samsi of the Arabs was part of the Syro-Palestinian league when Tiglath-Pileser defeated her.[50]

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[47] Oxford Bible Atlas, ed. Herbert G. May, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 67.

[48] ARAB, I: 276; Motyer, p. 277.

[49] ARAB, I: 287.

[50] ARAB, I: 293.

Sargon says of 716-715 that he struck distant Arabs and deported them to Samaria.[51] Also that year he received tribute from Queen Samsi and from *It'amra*, the Sabaean. Ancient records knew Sennacherib as the "King of the Arabs and the Assyrians."[52] In 703 during Sennacherib's first campaign against Merodach-baladan Sennacherib captured Arabs, one who was Baskanu, the brother of *Iati'e*, "Queen of the Arabs."[53] Sennacherib says that in 701 Hezekiah used Arabs to protect Jerusalem but that when he advanced they deserted.[54] After Sennacherib's battle at Halule in 691 he went on to defeat the Queen of the Arabs and she and King Hazael of Kedar fled to Adummatu, which place Sennacherib destroyed.[55] The King of Kedar's flight out of Dumah correlates with the oracle's refugees that needed help from Tema and the Dedanites. This final stage of the King of Kedar's flight and the destruction of Adummatu, Dumah in the Hebrew Bible, explains the loss of Kedar's glory.

Oracle About the Valley of Vision--Isaiah 22

For dating purposes the Oracle About the Valley of Vision divides into two parts: verses 1-14 and verses 15-25. There is almost unanimous

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[51] ARAB, II: 6.

[52] Herodotus 2: 141.

[53] ARAB, II: 130, 116.

[54] ARAB, II: 143.

[55] ARAB, II: 158, 207. Assurbanipal says that Hazael was king of Kedar; cf. ARAB, II: 337.

agreement that both parts date to 712-711 or to 701. Even those who differ with this dating admit that some of both sections must date to Isaiah.[56]

The dating of the first section can use a number of details from the section. Jerusalem had prepared for war by building a new water storage facility between the walls and by strengthening its walls. Yet even while the attacker was at a distance the leaders fled and were captured. Jerusalem's residents had feasted irreverently in their time of danger and are celebrating now after the dangerous events. Still the city will be destroyed and Elam and Kir will be a part of that attack on Jerusalem.[57] These details narrow the dating to the end of the eighth century. The only time that the citizenry could have celebrated an escape would have been then since the Babylonians captured Jerusalem in the seventh century and deported many. The mention of Elam and Kir may refer to some of the conscripts in the Assyrian army.

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[56] Kaiser (pp. 139, 151), says the prophet Isaiah authored Isaiah 22:1-4, 12-14 in the first section and Isaiah 22:15-18, but not the name "Shebna," in the second section. He considers the remaining verses unauthentic for these reasons: (a) vv. 5-6 are eschatological in nature; (b) vv. 7-8 and 11b refer to past decisions of God; (c) vv. 9-11a refer to past events. He feels constrained to point out that later editors worked over the second section. He sees this in the following: (a) there is a change in speakers with the writer speaking about Yahweh in vv. 17-18 but Yahweh speaking in vv. 19-23; (b) v. 19 belongs before v. 18b. With these observations he is able to conclude that vv. 19-23 was an eschatological Messianic hope which along with vv. 15-18 was historicized during the Ptolemaic era by the addition of real names. The editors then added vv. 24-25 to warn the people not to have Jewish tax officials work on behalf of the Ptolemies. Kaiser's comments are creative but they lack historical corroboration both from textual criticism and from other historical records. His assumption that every unusual literary feature is the mark of a later addition leaves little room for the creativity of a writer.

[57] Hayes/Irvine (pp. 279-81), prefer to see vv. 5-8 as a description of what just took place. This is an unusual use of the day of the Lord and does not connect with v. 4, which speaks of coming destruction.

For example, the Horse Lists show that the Assyrian army had equestrian units from various nationalities including Chaldean and Samarian.[58]

The first section of the Valley of Vision Oracle does not easily date to 701. In 701 Jerusalem was besieged which is not the case in this oracle. In 701 the prophet comforted Hezekiah rather than reprimand him as Hezekiah piously sought God's help. The prophet expressed no displeasure with the actions taken by the leaders of Jerusalem in 701 and his message to Jerusalem was that its enemy would face judgment.

In 712, however, Jerusalem did not experience a siege. The trouble the prophet foresees fits what came after 712. The siege of Judah's ally Ashdod in 712 can explain what, according to Isa 22:2, the people feared would happen to them. Jerusalem's 712 escape of such a siege can explain the oracle's report of celebration in Jerusalem. The contrast between the sternness of this oracle and the comfort Isaiah gives Hezekiah in the face of Assyrian attacks in chapters 37 and 38 suggests this oracle is written in a time when Hezekiah was not to be blamed for the decisions that were made, a time when he was not in charge. The idea of Hezekiah's absence from decision-making is supported by his absence from both parts of chapter 22. An occasion for Hezekiah's absence from direct leadership was his fatal illness. Hezekiah's illness and the "convalescent call" of Merodach-baladan's ambassadors is dated to 713 by most of those who date the divine deliverance

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[58] Stephanie Dalley in "Foreign Chariotry and Calvary In the Armies of Tiglath-Pileser III and Sargon II," Iraq 47 (1985): 32, points out that Nimrud Prism, Fragment D, Col. IV, line 32 describes how from a nation that Sargon conquered he conscripts chariots and adds them to his royal army; ARAB, II: 4, describes Sargon conscripting chariots, calvary and warriors from Carchemish at its defeat; ARAB, II: 102, describes Sargon conscripting chariots and calvary from Hamath at its defeat.

of Jerusalem to 701.[59] This date for the illness can also explain why this oracle names a palace administrator different from the one of 701.

The second section of this oracle is a stern word against Shebna the palace administrator and predicts that Eliakim will replace him. These facts would date section to before 701 at which time Eliakim was the palace administrator. If indeed Hezekiah was fatally ill when the events that are the subject of this oracle took place, then Shebna would have been responsible for the actions that the nation took. This would explain the attention given him in this oracle. The two sections would fit better in the events of 712.

The Oracle About Tyre--Isaiah 23

Commentators date the Oracle About Tyre widely. Some use an account by Josephus of a five year siege of Tyre that they allege is by Shalmaneser to date the events of the oracle to 727-722. There is no attestation for a siege of Tyre during the reign of Shalmaneser and there are problems trying to fit Josephus' names for the kings of Assyria and Tyre into Shalmaneser's reign.[60]

Another date for the oracle that some posit is 709. The oracle's description of Babylon's fall may refer to the time Assyria captured it in 710. There are historical events that could have precipitated Tyre's demise in 709 that the oracle says happened.[61] In that year seven districts of *Ia'* on the island of Cyprus submitted to Sargon and Midas of Phrygia entered into an

[59] Cogan/Tadmor, p. 261.

[60] See previous chapter on this matter.

[61] Hayes/Irvine, pp. 288-90.

alliance with him. These events would have hurt the trade of Tyre significantly. In addition, Sargon links the subduing of Tyre to the events at Cyprus.[62] However, this suggested date does not explain why Tyre should be destroyed, why Tarshish has no Phoenician port, why the people are to flee to Tarshish, and why the fortresses of Phoenicia are destroyed.

Some commentators see Sennacherib's 701 attack on the West as a possibility for this oracle. At that time the names of all of Phoenicia, except the island of Tyre, submit to Sennacherib.[63] There is other evidence from the annals that Sennacherib did not capture the island of Tyre immediately. Instead of the normal procedure of marching directly into southern Palestine Sennacherib encamped at mainland Tyre, called Ushu in Assyrian, something that he would have done if he met resistance from the island of Tyre. King Luli of Tyre, who had a dominion that extended to Sidon, fled to Cyprus and Sennacherib replaced King *Lulî* with *Tuba'lu*, who he named the king of Sidon instead of the king of Tyre. The flight of King *Lulî* agrees with the detail in the oracle that reports that some flee to Cyprus, and like the oracle says, in 701 such flight would have been in vain because Cyprus was in league with Assyria (see above). The submission of all Phoenicia to Sennacherib in 701 would explain why the oracle describes that Tyre is left without house or harbour because the Phoenician cities were Tyre's mainland ports. The oracle makes the comment that the land of the Chaldeans was wasted. This comment fits a date after 703 because that was when

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[62] ARAB, II: 61.

[63] ARAB, II: 118-9; the submission of Phoenicia to Assyria exclusive of Tyre agrees with Josephus' account.

Sennacherib captured Babylon and plundered Chaldea.[64] The oracle's depiction of Egypt anguishing over the fall of Tyre fits the troubles that the isolation of Tyre would bring Egypt in 701. At that point in Egypt's history Tyre was its major marketplace. At Isa 23:17 the oracle promises that after seventy years Tyre will again prosper and will help Judah. This agrees with a 701 subjugation of Phoenicia. Until 630, about seventy years, Assyria did not permit Tyre to engage in business.[65] After 630 Assyria's hold over Palestine waned and both Tyre and Judah began to flourish again.

Another date suggested is the 679-677 attack of Sidon and Tyre by Esarhaddon.[66] At this time Sidon was the greater power and the one Esarhaddon took pride in defeating.[67] This is at odds with the oracle, which gives the supremacy to Tyre. The oracle states that Tyre bestowed crowns and Tyre's traders were the ones renowned.

Some commentators date the oracle to 332 when Alexander the Great destroyed Tyre.[68] They say the 348 destruction of Sidon by Artaxerxes III Ochus would be what Isa 23:13 means when it says Assyria destroyed "it." Yet, the nearest antecedent of "it" is the "land of the Chaldeans" and its destruction did not happen in the fourth century.

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[64] ARAB, II: 116.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Clements, p. 192.

[67] ANET, pp. 290-91.

[68] Otto Eissfeldt, Einleitung in das Alte Testament, 3rd ed., (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1964), p. 434.

Some date the section about a seventy year state of humiliation, Isaiah 23:15-18, to 274. In that year Ptolemy II gave Tyre independence. The difficulties with this position are many. After Alexander conquered Tyre in 332 Tyre was the leading city of Phoenicia by 315, well before seventy years had passed.[69] In the fourth century Tyre was no giver of crowns and Sidon, not Tyre, was the greater power. Persia captured Tyre while the oracle suggests Assyria is the threat. Persia's attack of Sidon left few survivors and those that did survive went on to attack Tyre whereas the oracle does not speak of Sidon's destruction and the movement is to Cyprus. Contrary to Isa 23:13 Assyria and the land of the Chaldeans were not relevant to that time.

This oracle is most likely about the events of 701.

Conclusion

There are a number of significant observations that one can make from this review of the historical settings for the different oracles. The various oracles relate to the key Near Eastern players in the last third of the eighth century: Assyria, Babylon, the Medes, Syria, Ethiopia, Egypt, Elam, and the Arabs. They also relate to all other potential allies of Judah that are in her vicinity: Philistia, Moab, Ephraim, Edom, and Phoenicia. The list of nations alone corroborates an eighth century dating. The historical situation for all these oracles is always one where the target nation is about to suffer defeat. The instrument for this defeat is usually Assyria. In the case of Assyria it is not clear whom Yahweh will use. Even Judah will fall because of her refusal to turn to Yahweh. In every case Assyria is in the picture.

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[69] Erlandsson, p. 102.

The dating of the oracles shows a rough chronological progression. This is also true for the different parts within an oracle. Notice the dates in this list of oracles.

Babylon, part 1 (Isaiah 13)	before 729
Babylon, part 2 (Isaiah 14:1-23)	729-727
Babylon, part 3 (Isaiah 14:24-27)	729-727 (or before 701)
Philistia	727
Moab	720 or 716 (or before 732)
Egypt, part 1 (Isaiah 19:1-15)	before 716
Egypt, part 2 (Isaiah 19:16-25)	before 716
Egypt, part 3 (Isaiah 20)	712
Desert By the Sea	before 691 (or before 703 or 710)
Dumah	701 (or 712)
Arabia, part 1 (Isaiah 21:13-15)	before 691 (or before 701)
Arabia, part 2 (Isaiah 21:16-17)	692 (or 702)
Valley of Vision, part 1 (vv. 1-14)	712
Valley of Vision, part 2 (vv. 15-25)	712
Tyre	before 701

We expect that the Damascus Oracle will have to do with events in the last third of the eighth century. It should follow the uniform pattern of destruction for the topic of the oracle at the hands of Assyria. There is a grouping of the oracles into those with real names for its topic and those oracles that have a figure for their topic. The parts of an oracle do not always date to the same time but follow one another in chronological order. We could expect the same for the Damascus Oracle. This confirms what we

found in the previous chapter. The Damascus Oracle dates as follows: part one, Isaiah 17:1-11, dates to before 734; part two, Isaiah 17:12-14, dates to before 734 or before 701; and part three, Isaiah 18, dates to before 701.

PART III

INTERPRETING THE THEMES, METAPHORS AND THEME SEQUENCE OF ISAIAH 17-18

CHAPTER VI

THE THEMES, METAPHORS AND THEME SEQUENCE OF ISAIAH 17-18 IN THE LIGHT OF ISAIAH 1-16

To gain a better understanding of Isaiah 17 and 18 it is necessary to understand how the author wanted the readers to interpret his themes and metaphors.[1] We can uncover his intentions for the themes and metaphors by turning to the rest of Isaiah. How the author uses the various themes, metaphors and theme sequences in the Isaianic composition can reveal what they mean in Isaiah 17-18. This is especially so for Isaiah 1-16 since the author was conscious that the themes and metaphors that appear in Isaiah 1-16 would teach the readers how to read Isaiah 17-18.

The author of Isaiah did not present Isaiah 17-18 in isolation but within a greater collection of writings that make up Isaiah. This collection of texts show that the author was intentional about how he placed the material. This is immediately evident in the way that the author grouped together materials such as the OAN. This grouping of material makes clear that the author considered the placement of material in his overall strategy to communicate his thoughts. Since Isaiah 17-18 are within this composition the author knew that the readers would have information from the rest of the book to guide

[1] It is true that we cannot absolutely verify the author's intentions because we can no longer interview the author. We can access the portrait that the author presents of himself. This implied author is whom I will be referring to whenever I mention the author's intentions. Of course, in so far as the author reveals his own thoughts in the text the implied author is identical to the author.

their reading. In particular the readers would have the information of the material that precedes chapters 17 and 18. This prior material indicates how the author wanted the readers to meet these chapters for the first time. It is with this information that one should attempt to understand chapters 17 and 18 in the first place.[2] Scholars may seek to define the steps that preceded the creation of the book of Isaiah but the author gave directions to what Isaiah 17-18 means in its present form, arrangement and context. The book as it now stands satisfied the author that he had given readers the necessary directives to understand the message of the different texts.

Repetiton of vocabulary and phrases point to and strengthen common themes and metaphors. This chapter uses the findings of a careful search in Isaiah of all the words that appear in Isaiah 17-18 (see the Addendum). Before we look at the use in the first sixteen chapters of Isaiah of the themes and metaphors in Isaiah 17-18 let us draw some broad conclusions from the words that appear in Isaiah 17 and 18. First, there is very little in either chapter 17 and 18 to suggest that these chapters do not belong to the same linguistic setting as the rest of the writings of Isaiah. When we look at the various words that Isaiah 17 and 18 contain we find that all but a few appear in other passages of Isaiah. Outside chapters 17 and 18 about half of these words will appear in both Isaiah 1-39 and Isaiah 40-66. The same number of words will appear only in Isaiah 1-39, not in Isaiah 40-66. A very small

[2] Rolf Rentdorff in "How to Read Isaiah 1-39 Against Its Historical Background: Some Hermeneutical Reflections," Old Testament Essays 1/3 (1988): 6, 9, makes the observation that the only information that the reader has for certain is the present shape of the prophetic books. He says the authors wrote theological literature when they wrote the prophetic books and that included choosing the form that will convey the message. The reader should use this form and find the interrelationships in the book. Rentdorff says Ricouer called this the 'second naiveté' that knows a diachronic dimension to the material but reads it as a unity to understand its message.

number of words will appear only in Isaiah 40-66, not in Isaiah 1-39. The small list of words in Isaiah that occur only once appear in pre-exilic writings and very often in poetic literature such as Psalms and Job. A number of phrases and words in chapters 17 and 18 that appear elsewhere in Isaiah do not appear anywhere else in the Hebrew Bible outside Isaiah.

Not every place where a word or phrase from Isaiah 17-18 appears is equally significant. Sometimes a theme or metaphor from Isaiah 17-18 appears elsewhere with different vocabulary. My interest in this chapter is to find similar themes and metaphors in the material that precedes Isaiah 17-18. It is also to locate sequences of themes similar to what one finds in Isaiah 17-18. To ensure that there is no misinterpretation of this data I will also examine the material that follows Isaiah 17-18. Whereas the material in Isaiah 19-39 will not explain how the author wanted the readers to meet Isaiah 17-18 it will be especially useful for determining how dedicated the author was to the theme sequence of Isaiah 17-18. The material that precedes Isaiah 17-18 forms the basis of this chapter. The material that follows Isaiah 17-18 forms the basis of the next chapter. What will become clear is how strong and instructive the tie is between the ideas in Isaiah 17-18 and the rest of Isaiah. The significant discovery is how necessary it is to have both chapters 17 and 18 to appropriate the message of most themes and metaphors.

Themes

We will now examine where the themes of Isaiah 17-18 appear in Isaiah 1-16. The themes of Isaiah 17-18 are: the futility of the Syro-Ephraimite alliance; the remnant of Ephraim; Ephraim to discard its idols and

trust in Yahweh; Ephraim forsakes Yahweh and seeks security elsewhere; nations threaten Judah but are suddenly dispersed by Yahweh; the futility of political alliances; Yahweh calls the world to attention; Yahweh's silent waiting and sudden destruction of a nation; the nations bring tribute to Mt. Zion where Yahweh dwells.

The Futility of the Syro-Ephraimite Alliance

The title of the Damascus Oracle directs the readers immediately to what the earlier chapters have said about Damascus. The title invites the readers to recall what Isaiah has said about Damascus, particularly the image of Damascus joining with Ephraim in a failed alliance.

In Isaiah 17 the theme of the futility of the Syro-Ephraimite alliance involves the devastation of Damascus, of the cities of Aroer and of the fortification of Ephraim. It foretells that the remnant of Syria will be like that of Ephraim. The "glory" of Jacob will diminish like a fat man who becomes emaciated and there will be left to Ephraim a few survivors and many abandoned cities. Isaiah 17:11 predicts that for its alliance Ephraim will receive כְּאֵב אָנוּשׁ, "incurable pain." According to Isaiah 17:10-11 this is the result of Ephraim's foreign alliances and not for Ephraim's actions toward Judah. According to Isaiah 17:7-8 the result of this judgment will be Ephraim's conversion to Yahweh.

In the chapters preceding Isaiah 17-18 one finds the same theme in Isaiah 7-10. Only in chapters 7 to 10 does the author mention Damascus and Syria by name. Damascus and Syria always appear with either Ephraim or Samaria.

Chapter 7 describes the theme of the futility of the Syro-Ephraimite alliance in ways similar to chapter 17. Both chapters acknowledge the close relationship between Syria and Ephraim. Both chapters describe the fall of Syria and Ephraim. Chapter 7 begins by establishing the close relationship that exists between Syria and Ephraim. According to Isaiah 7:1-2 the allies Rezin of Syria and Pekah of Israel are approaching Jerusalem to attack it. This terrifies Ahaz and his court. Yahweh states that the alliance intends to divide Judah up between them, to overthrow Ahaz, and to install the son of Tabeel in Ahaz's place but the alliance will fail (7:6-7). Then in terms similar to those in Isaiah 17 chapter 7 describes what will happen to Syria and Ephraim. Isaiah 7 explains that both Syria and Ephraim will be עזב, "abandoned" (7:16; 17:2, 9; 18:6). Within sixty-five years Ephraim will no longer be a people (7:8). Chapter 7 expresses the hope for Judah in terms similar to chapter 17. The sign that Ephraim and Syria will suffer destruction is in the child Immanuel, which means "God is with us" (7:14-16). Isaiah 17:14 alludes to this promise when it identifies the audience that Yahweh will deliver as "us."

There is a correspondence between chapter 7 and chapters 17-18 in the topics that surround the Syria and Ephraim affair. After describing the destruction of Ephraim and Syria they both deal with an attack on Judah. According to chapter 7 after Assyria has destroyed Ephraim and Syria it will go on to attack Judah (7:17, 20). Both Isaiah 7 and Isaiah 17-18 make reference to Assyria and the extremities of Egypt and both assign the major credit for military aggression to Assyria.

In chapter 8 the "futility of the Syro-Ephraimite alliance" theme shares many aspects with that theme in Isaiah 17-18. Both agree on the fall of

Damascus and Samaria. The birth of Isaiah's son Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, "quick to the plunder, hurrying to the spoil," signifies that Assyria will plunder Damascus and Samaria (8:3-4). Both Isaiah 8 and Isaiah 17-18 indict Ephraim for its rejection of Yahweh and for its looking to alliances for security and both ignore Ephraim's guilt for attacking Judah.

Both chapter 8 and chapters 17-18 place the same themes after the theme of the futility of the Syro-Ephraimite alliance. Chapter 8 states that Ephraim faces Assyria's attack because it has rejected the security of Yahweh and has placed its trust in Syria (8:6). The chapter goes on to describe Assyria's attack upon the world. Then it describes Yahweh's announcement to the world and his encouragement to them to attack. It tells of the world's futile plans and Yahweh's deliverance of Judah because of "Immanuel." Next in Isaiah 8 Yahweh tells Isaiah not to fear the conspiracies that Jerusalem fears (8:12). Isaiah says that, although Yahweh has hidden His face from Jacob, he will trust in Yahweh (8:17). Isaiah, which means "Yahweh has saved," and Isaiah's children are the signs and symbols from Yahweh who dwells on Mt. Zion (8:18).

For the most part chapters 9 and 10 describe the futility of the Ephraim-Damascus alliance indirectly. Isaiah 10:9 does touch directly on this theme when it discloses a connection between Samaria and Damascus and Assyria's destruction of both countries. Otherwise chapters 9 and 10 describe the reason for Ephraim to hope, the intransigence of Ephraim toward dependence on Yahweh, and the misery Ephraim will face. Chapter 9 begins with the promise that in the darkest hour Yahweh will send a Child that will deliver Israel including the areas to the North of the Northern Kingdom. Then Isaiah 9 demonstrates Ephraim's intransigence by explaining how

Ephraim will not turn to Yahweh even after Syria has attacked Ephraim (9:11-13). Instead, Ephraim intends to do even more to advance itself without reliance on Yahweh, a defiance that attests to how wicked the people of Ephraim are. Therefore Yahweh will strike the leaders, the vigorous youth and the poor.

Isaiah 10 follows the pattern and uses the terms of Isaiah 17-18. In similar terms it indicates that Ephraim and Manasseh's leaders will have nowhere to leave their כָּבוֹד, "glory" (17:4; 10:3). They will either become captives or they will die. Like Samaria's terrible harvest of 17:11 Assyria claims to have overthrown Samaria's false gods (10:11). This is in part Yahweh's doing. Yahweh ordained Assyria for spoiling countries, not for destroying them. Therefore when Assyria has accomplished Yahweh's purposes Assyria will suffer Yahweh's judgment (10:11-12). First, however, like Isaiah 17:12-14 Assyria is destined to attack Judah and when it does many of Judah and Benjamin will flee (10:28-31). Jerusalem will escape unscathed (10:32). Like 18:5 before Assyria gets through with Judah Yahweh will ruin Assyria by lopping off the branches (10:33). Isaiah 10:20 indicates that a remnant from Israel will rely upon Yahweh (17:7-8).[3]

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[3] There are various opinions about the referents of 10:20: "In that day the remnant of Israel, the survivors of the house of Jacob, will no longer rely on him who struck them down but will rely on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel." (1) F. Delitzsch in F. Delitzsch and C. Keil, Commentary on the Old Testament., 10 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1975), vol. 7: Isaiah, by F. Delitzsch, two vols. in one, trans. James Martin, pp. 272-73 (hereafter cited as Delitzsch), considers Israel of 10:20 to be both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms of Israel and considers that the country that is both Israel's attacker and security is Assyria. So does John F. Sawyer in Isaiah, vol 1, The Daily Study Bible (Old Testament) (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984), p. 116, because of all the ambiguities. (2) Bernhard Duhm in Das Buch Jesaia. 5th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1968), pp. 101-102 (hereafter cited as Duhm), thinks Israel cannot be eighth century Judah because when Ahaz ruled Judah it trusted in Assyria and Assyria did not strike it down but when Hezekiah ruled Judah Assyria struck Judah down but Judah did not trust in Assyria. Duhm suggests Israel is second century Israel and that a second century writer replaced his contemporaneous foreign power Syria with Assyria. (3) H. Wildberger

The readers of Isaiah 1-16 come to chapter 17 already familiar with the aspects of the failed Syro-Ephraimite alliance that chapter 17 discusses. Chapter 17 fills out the description of the events pertaining to Damascus. The readers learn the fate of Damascus--it will cease as a city--and they learn the scope of the destruction--the cities of Aroer will be uninhabited. Through the comparison with Ephraim the readers also know the extent of Syria's destruction--like as Rephaim Valley harvested and gleaned--and they know the size of Syria's remnant--as a few berries on an olive tree. The readers

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in Jesaja, Part 2: Jesaja 13--27, Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament, 10/2 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978), p. 414, believes that the Israel of 10:20 is a reflection of Israel in the late Persian period. (4) August Dillmann in Der Prophet Jesaia, Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament., 5th ed. (Leipzig: Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1890), p. 111 (hereafter cited as Dillmann), identifies Israel with Judah whose attacker and defender was Assyria. (5) Gerhard F. Hasel in The Remnant: The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea from Genesis to Isaiah (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Andrews University Press, 1974), p. 323 (hereafter cited as Hasel), says the same but dates it after 701. By dating it after 701 the Isaianic author can say that Judah trusts in Assyria after it suffered Assyria's 701 strike. (6) Alec J. Motyer in The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1993), p. 117 (hereafter cited as Motyer), sees Israel as the Northern Kingdom whose attacker and defender was Syria. (7) R. E. Clements in Isaiah 1-39, New Century Bible Commentary (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1980), p. 114-15, also sees Israel as the Northern Kingdom but dates it to after 722 so that Assyria can be both the nation that struck the Northern Kingdom and to whom the Northern Kingdom must look. Of these different approaches I think we can dismiss those that try to say that when 10:20 says Israel relied on another nation it is referring to the time when Assyria controlled the Northern Kingdom (Clements). We can dismiss those that suggest that the Northern Kingdom relied on Assyria because that never happened (Delitzsch and Sawyer). We can dismiss those that demand that 10:20 says that the chronological order is that Israel was first struck down and then it relied on the one who struck it down. Isaiah 10:20 may simply be saying that Israel had once relied on a nation that later struck it down. This dismisses Duhm's argument and makes Hasel's dating unnecessary. We can also dismiss the suggestion that 10:20 refers to Ephraim's reliance on Syria (Motyer). In the first place, the context suggests that Judah defines what is meant by Israel because it is Judah that is last mentioned in 10:12. In the second place, the context and the connector "in that day" indicate that 10:20 happens at the same time as the fall of Assyria. One would not use the destruction of Assyria to signal that Ephraim will never again trust in Syria. In the third place, 10:20's metaphor of "striking" applies more readily to Assyria, who was the rod in Yahweh's hand, or to Yahweh himself (9:13) than to Syria, which 9:12 says "devoured" Ephraim. I believe we can interpret 10:20 to be at a time when Judah is not relying on Assyria. The point of 10:20 is that when Assyria falls Judah will never rely on Assyria again as Judah had done when Syria and Ephraim were attacking it.

come to chapter 17 expecting to find out more about Ephraim as happened in chapters 7-10 and indeed they find more. Chapter 17 indicates the nature of Ephraim's destruction--fortified cities will be abandoned--and indicates the spiritual outcome of these events--Ephraim will discard its idols and trust Yahweh. The readers expect that in conjunction with the Damascus experience there will be the punishment of Judah. Chapter 17 explains that the attack will be ferocious but the deliverance of the "us" in Judah, the faithful remnant, will be sudden and decisive. The readers anticipate the involvement of the "ends of Egypt's streams (or Nile)," Assyria's punishment, the continued dwelling of Yahweh on Mt. Zion, and the coming of the Child that will rule the world. One needs chapter 18 to learn about these. Isaiah 18 indicates the involvement of the farthest reaches of Egypt's rivers. As in chapters 7 and 10 Isaiah 18 ascribes military activities and destruction to Assyria but not to Egypt. Isaiah 18:7 reiterates the presence of Yahweh on Mt. Zion.

The Remnant of Ephraim

Isaiah 17:5-6 dramatically illustrates the theme of the remnant of Ephraim. Ephraim and, according to 17:4, Damascus will remain with as little population as a great valley harvested and gleaned and as the olive trees thoroughly picked. Yet there will be a remnant. Isaiah 17:6 emphasizes this with the numbers of berries that are said to remain. The theme of the remnant of Ephraim is harsh but full of hope.[4] Isaiah 17:7-8 assumes that there is a remnant and depicts that remnant as spiritually healthy.

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[4]Hasel (pp. 396, 401), finds that the remnant is never only positive or negative. For example, Shear-Jashub (a remnant will return) is a threat for those who depend on politics and so will not make up the remnant, but is a promise for those who together with Isaiah trust in Yahweh.

By chapter 17 the readers have learned several things about the remnant of Ephraim in particular and about the remnant theme in general. In terms similar to Isaiah 17:3 and 6 the readers learn from Isa 11:11 that when the Branch of Jesse comes Yahweh will bring back for a second time the שְׁאֵר,"remnant," of Israel and Judah.[5] Isaiah 11:13 makes explicit that this includes Ephraim.[6] The remnant will come from Assyria, Egypt, Pathros--a part of upper Egypt, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, and the islands of the sea. The remnant will attack the Philistines to the West, the people to the East, Edom, Moab and Ammon. Yahweh will dry Egypt's sea so that the remnant can cross on dry ground. There will be a highway for the *remnant* that remains in Assyria (11:16). The time will be one where there is no fear on Yahweh's holy mountain (11:6-9). It will be a time when the nations will seek the Branch of Jesse that will be a banner to them (11:10). The remnant theme in chapter 11 emphasizes the magnitude of the effort to bring back the remnant. Only Yahweh can do it. Yahweh will bring the Branch, he will summon the exiles from the nations, he will work supernaturally to make a way clear.[7]

Chapter 9 implies a remnant for the Northern Kingdom in so far as there will be people in the land of Zebulun and Nephtali to see the light of the

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Hasel finds that "there is no time in his [Isaiah] work where the remnant image was used only in a positive or only in a negative sense."

[5]Hereafter whenever the word "remnant" is italicized it will represent a form of the Hebrew שאר.

[6]The first time was the exodus out of Egypt.

[7]Hasel (p. 347), points out that the return of the remnant says nothing about repentance and faith. This is because Isaiah can emphasize different aspects of the remnant theme each time it occurs.

coming of the Child. When that occurs the nation will grow and Yahweh will break the oppressor's rod (9:3-4).

Chapter 14 tells the readers that there will be a remnant left to Ephraim. The demise of Babylon and the death of the King of Babylon will prefigure a time when Yahweh will resettle Ephraim in Israel.[8] It will be a time when strangers will join Israel. Nations will bring Israelites back to Israel and Israel will take captive those that had captured them. It will be a time when the Lord will give the remnant rest from sorrow, from fear, and from hard bondage (14:3). Ephraim will taunt the king of Babylon, who is probably the same as the king of Assyria.

The remnant metaphor often appears for Judah. The metaphor first appears where 1:8 pictures the Daughter of Zion as a hut in a melon field or as a booth in a vineyard. This shows Jerusalem's singular survival in a ravished country. Isaiah 1:9 promises that Yahweh will leave Judah a remnant. According to Hasel the point here is not that Yahweh will make a purified remnant but that Yahweh is gracious. He could have annihilated the whole nation but he chose to spare some.[9] This is similar to the idea expressed in 17:5-6. Isaiah 7:22 falls into this category. It says that after the attack of Assyria upon Judah there will be some people left. What follows 7:22 does not make the point that Yahweh has made a purified group. It says that circumstances will demand that the survivors will lead a modest life of husbandry (7:25).

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[8] Cf. the chapter on the history of the last third of the seventh century where there is a discussion about the identification of 14:1 with Ephraim.

[9] Hasel, p. 316.

There are places where the remnant theme applies to Judah and like 17:7-8 where the remnant theme also involves the idea that the remnant will be a purified group. Isaiah 4:3 says that when Yahweh judges the daughters of Zion the שאר, "remnant," will be holy and the branch of the Lord beautiful.[10] Yahweh will spare them by his grace as the book that assures their survival makes clear (4:3). For this group of survivors the judgment will have served as a cleansing agent rather than as a destructive force.[11] Isaiah 6:13 also uses the remnant theme to describe how the judgment will act as a cleansing for a remant. The destruction of Judah is drastic. It will be in two stages so that even the remnant will have a remnant but that remnant will be holy. Some see in Isa 6:13 the hand of a later redactor that added the idea of surviving survivors because they find the notion so discordant to the description of destruction. On the other hand, Hasel points out there is nothing foreign in the idea of a surviving remnant. In Isaiah's inaugural vision he faces doom and salvation and it is the idea of the "holiness" of Yahweh that unites them.[12] The "holiness" that confronts Isaiah judges him but it also purifies him. Isaiah 6:13 states that after most of Judah is desolate the people

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[10] Some interpret the branch of Yahweh as the Messiah (e.g., Delitzsch [p. 152], who eliminates the possibility that the branch is the remnant because it is the pride of the people; John N. Oswalt in The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39, The New International Commentary On the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1986), p. 146 (hereafter cited as Oswalt), who cannot see any other reason for using the term "branch"); others interpret the branch of Yahweh as the planting of Yahweh (e.g., Dillmann [p. 39], who assumes Isaiah would be more explicit at its first reference to the Messiah); stilll others interpret the branch of Yahweh as the vegetation after devastation (Hasel [p. 264], who views "the fruit of the land" as a necessary parallel that demands that branch be taken as vegetation).

[11] Hasel, p. 270. Hasel points out that this age of the holy remnant is in direct continuity with the preceding age of the cut tree. The survivors will be in Jerusalem.

[12] Ibid., p. 243.

who remain will be a holy seed. Hasel notes that the designation "holy seed" suits Isaiah quite well because it is an opposite designation to the "seed of evildoers" at 1:4. The remnant root that remains at 6:13 is both a sign of judgment and of resurgent life.

In chapter 10 this alternation between a remnant as a sign of the severity of the judgment and as the promise of a purified people appears in reverse order and applies to Israel. Chapter 10 indicates that Assyria will face Yahweh's wrath. When that happens the *remnant* of Israel will rely on Yahweh (10:20-21). It will no longer rely on political alliances. Yet, although Israel has so many people as the sands of the seashore only a *remnant* will return (10:22-23). This negative side to the remnant hope expressed in 10:20-21 is not contradictory to the hope the remnant offers. Yahweh's judgment is an integral part of his salvation.[13]

Another way to promise a remnant is through a sign-act. At 7:3 Isaiah's son is a sign-act to assure Judah that there will be a remnant. The sign is Isaiah's son Shear-Jashub, whose name means "a *remnant* will return." The name contains the two aspects of doom and hope.[14] In the context of 7:2-9 Isaiah imbues the term *remnant* with a radical religious content. Only faith will be the criterion between the surviving remnant and the perishing masses (7:9). The promise of a child whose name is Immanuel, which means "God is with us," is the confirming sign (7:14). For Ahaz the sign-act "God is with us" contrasts a sign-act that would have assured Ahaz, one that would have said "God is with you." The Immanuel promise marks the point when

[13] Ibid., p. 329.

[14] Ibid., p. 279.

Ahaz had decided against trusting Yahweh. Immanuel is a sign that Ahaz is a part of those who will perish and that Isaiah and those who believe, the ones who make up the "us," are those who will have salvation.

Isaiah 17-18 also promises a remnant for Syria. From Isaiah 17-18 we know that Syria's *remnant* will compare with that of Ephraim. This suggests that Isaiah 17:5-6 also depicts Syria, a depiction of severe judgment and of some hope. Isaiah 1-16 also informs the readers of non-Israelite remnants. In these chapters the non-Israelite remnant serves only as a sign of the severity of Yahweh's judgment. When Assyria faces God's judgment God will leave the Assyrian forest with a tiny *remnant* of trees (10:19). On the other hand Babylon will have no *remnant* (13:20; 14:22). For Philistia Yahweh will even slay its *remnant* (14:30).[15] For the Moabite survivors and *remnant* Yahweh will send lions (15:9). The *remnant* of Moab will be few (16:14).

Isaiah 17-18 tells the readers some things that they did not know about Ephraim's remnant and repeats some things that they heard before. The readers meet in Isaiah 17 the first positive statement that there will be an Ephraimite remnant that is not exiled. Chapter 17 artfully describes what will *remain* of the Northern Kingdom. From the chapters that precede Isaiah 17-18 the readers have learned to expect the restoration of Ephraim to accompany the restoration of Judah. They expect nations to bring Ephraimite exiles back and Ephraim to make captives out of their captors. Before that can take place they know that Judah will have to suffer assault, Assyria will have to fall, and the king of Babylon must die. The readers are aware that the restoration of the remnant will be in association with the coming of the

[15] Ibid., p. 355.

Branch of Jesse. Chapter 17 at 17:12-14 explains the assault upon Judah. Chapter 18 is important because it tells the readers about some of the other expected events. Chapter 18 handles the destruction of Assyria and it describes how Zion's oppression will be reversed. The illustrious nation and presumably many lesser nations will bring gifts to Zion (18:7). The gift will include a people. This gift of people may relate to the earlier statements about the nations bringing Israel back or about Israel taking captive those that had taken Israel captive. More on the Branch of Jesse is not forthcoming in these two chapters. With what the readers know from chapters 1-16, chapters 17-18 are transparent.

Ephraim To Discard Its Idols and Trust in Yahweh

Isaiah 17:7-8 is a theme of hope in the midst of words of doom. According to 17:7-8 people will trust in their Creator, the Holy One of Israel, after Ephraim and Syria fall. People will no longer trust in the work of their hands and fingers, in altars, Asherim and sun pillars. According to chapter 17 the return to Yahweh is the result of judgment.

Prior to Isaiah 17-18 the readers have several times met the two halves of this theme--Ephraim discarding its idols and Ephraim trusting in Yahweh. Isaiah 2:12-22 makes statements about this theme.[16] The readers learn at 2:12 that Yahweh will humble every proud person. Using the same word as at 17:7, Isaiah 2:17 says that הָאָדָם, "humanity," will be abased and Yahweh

[16] This must include Ephraim because the description is world encompassing. According to most commentators Isaiah 2:12-22 refers to the whole world. See for example, Delitzsch, p. 122; Dillmann, p. 25; Oswalt, p. 125 (who sees two referents: the world and Judah). The ships of Tarshish at 2:16 shows that this clearly includes all the world.

alone will be lifted up.[17] When that happens הָאָדָם will cast out the idols of gold and silver that he made and he will flee before Yahweh's shaking of the earth (2:18-21). Isaiah 10 indirectly touches on the theme of discarding idols. Assyria boasts at 10:10-11 that it has humiliated all the idols in which the nations trusted. Such humiliation raises the readers' expectation that people will leave those idols.

The idea of Ephraim trusting in Yahweh appears particularly in Isaiah 9-12. Isaiah 9 informs the readers that Ephraim will turn to Yahweh when the Child comes. According to 9:1 until the Child is born Ephraim will be in darkness and the land of the shadow of death. Then the people of Israel, starting with those from the Northern Kingdom, will be able to ראה, "see," Yahweh (9:2).[18] From Isaiah 8 the readers had learned that this darkness over the Northern Kingdom is the result of an Assyrian attack. Isaiah 11-12 tells the readers that Ephraim will trust in Yahweh during the age of the Branch. When the Branch rescues the remnant of Ephraim the earth, and therefore Ephraim, will trust Yahweh and will be full of the knowledge of Yahweh (11:9). During this age the deeds of the "Holy One of Israel" will make the people of Zion safe (12:6). The declaration of those deeds on behalf of Zion sounds the high note of Isaiah 1-12. Ephraim and Judah will זכר, "remember," the deeds of Yahweh to the world (12:4). According to Isaiah 17:10 this is a reversal for Ephraim whose chief sin was that it forgot Yahweh and did not זכר, "remember," him (17:10).

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[17] Delitzsch (p. 125), says about the word הָאָדָם at 2:20 that it "is scarcely ever applied to a single individual (Josh. 14:15), excepting, of course, the first man, but generally to men, or to the human race."

[18] Same word as at Isaiah 17:7-8.

In the chapters preceding Isaiah 17-18 the themes of discarding idols and of trusting in Yahweh apply most clearly to Judah. According to Isaiah 2:8 Judah's land is full of idols (2:8). With the same phrases as Isaiah 17:8, Isaiah 2:8 says the house of Jacob bows down to the מַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו, "work of his hands," and to אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ אֶצְבְּעֹתָיו, "what his fingers have made." After Israel faces judgment at the hands of Assyria, the "Holy One" will take away Assyria's glory (10:17). Then the remnant of Israel and the house of Jacob will trust in the "Holy One of Israel" (10:20). Evidence of Judah not "seeing" Yahweh and Judah turning to idolatry is in various other places. In Isa 1:29 there is reference to the idol oaks and gardens that serve to give Judah spiritual delight. In chapter 5 the readers learn that some in Judah do not "see" the "work of Yahweh's hands" (5:12-13). For that reason Judahites will go into exile, many will die and will be humbled (5:13-15). This is how Yahweh will show them his holiness (5:16). Chapter 8 tells the readers that Judah's idolatry includes seeking the counsel of the practitioners of occultism (8:19-20).

Considering the foregoing, readers come to 17:7-8 expecting Ephraim will be one of the nations of the world that will discard its idols. The events that will precede this include Assyria dethroning Ephraim's idols through an Assyrian attack and include the Branch beginning his reign. Isaiah 17 gives some indication of the Assyrian attack on Ephraim. What is new about Isa 17:7-8 for the reader is that the discarding of the idols is tied to a time of trusting in Yahweh anew. From chapter 12 the readers expect during the age of the Branch that Ephraim will cause the world to remember Yahweh. Isaiah 17:8 makes clear that Israel will remember Yahweh for itself.

Isaiah 17:7-8 confirms that the restoration of Israel will include Ephraim. The readers expect that Ephraim's restoration will follow the birth of the Child and the coming of the Branch of Jesse and will bring world dominance. So by Isaiah 17-18 the readers await some positive statements about the supremacy of Judah and Ephraim after judgment. Here the readers find chapter 18 so necessary. Chapter 18 deals with the judgment on Assyria and the supremacy of Mt. Zion. Yahweh at Mt. Zion is the restoration of Israel.

Ephraim Forsakes Yahweh And Seeks Security Elsewhere

Isaiah 17:9-11 develops the theme of Ephraim forsaking Yahweh and seeking security elsewhere. There the author tells the readers that Ephraim will be like the abandoned fortress cities that it enjoyed taking over when Israel invaded Canaan. Ephraim will abandon its cities because Ephraim has forgotten Yahweh who is their real fortress צור, "rock." Instead Ephraim has entered into alliances with other countries.

The theme of forsaking Yahweh for another source of security appears in chapter 8. Yahweh criticizes Ephraim at 8:6 because it has rejected the gently flowing waters of Shiloah in favour of Rezin and Syria. Shiloah was Jerusalem's spring fed water supply and so is a metaphor for Yahweh. Continuing in the same vein of metaphor Yahweh says that the consequence of Ephraim's decision is the terrible alternative of the flood waters of a mighty river that is the king of Assyria (8:7). This flood will even cover Judah to the neck (8:8). Another metaphor from 17:10 then expresses the rejection of Yahweh. Ephraim and Judah's rejection of Yahweh means that Yahweh will

become for them a stone of stumbling and a צוּר, "rock," of offense (8:14). Isaiah 17:10 will also refer to Yahweh as the צוּר, "rock." However, since Judah has Immanuel, Isaiah confidently dares the nations to attack Judah. He knows that Yahweh will break the attackers into pieces if they do (8:9).

Chapter 9 contains the theme of Ephraim forsaking Yahweh to look for security in another. In this case Ephraim looks to itself for security and rejects Yahweh in a number of ways. Ephraim stubbornly refuses to return to Yahweh even after Yahweh has punished it (9:13). The prophets of Ephraim tell lies and Ephraim's leaders lead the people astray. The people reject Yahweh by their hypocrisy and by their evil and foul speech (9:17). They pass unjust laws that exploit the poor and weak (10:1-3). As result the leaders of Ephraim will die or become prisoners (10:4). Isaiah 9:20 is most alarming. One severe result of this rejection of Yahweh will be that Manasseh and Ephraim will devour their children.[19] The stanzas in this chapter demonstrate the intensity of Yahweh's judgment for Ephraim's rebellion. Four times a stanza ends with בְּכָל־זֹאת לֹא־שָׁב אַפּוֹ וְעוֹד יָדוֹ נְטוּיָה, "in all this his anger is not turning back and his hand is still stretched out" (9:12, 17, 21; 10:4).[20]

Chapter 14 attributes Ephraim's exile to its rejection of Yahweh. Isaiah 14:1 and 3 tell the readers that Babylon has exiled the Northern Kingdom. It was Babylon that gave the Northern Kingdom רגז, "trembling," and עִצֶּב,

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[19] זֶרַע = offspring.

[20] This expression also appears at 5:25 against Judah and with slight variation at 14:27 against Assyria (וְיָדוֹ הַנְּטוּיָה וּמִי יְשִׁיבֶנָּה, "and his hand is stretched out and who will turn it back"). The expression "his hand is stretched out" appears in Isaiah seven times: the times mentioned above and 14:26. According to 14:26-27 the hand of Yahweh is stretched out against every nation.

"sorrow" (14:3). The readers discover that the whole world will experience the same as Ephraim. The world will suffer desolation and will "tremble" at the hands of the King of Babylon, who is probably also the King of Assyria (14:16-17). Babylon will receive a taste of her own medicine. Yahweh will strike Babylon and make it so desolate that people will never inhabit it again (13:9, 20-22; 14:22-23).

Chapters 9 and 12 give a few other details about the time when Ephraim will quit its abandonment of Yahweh. Ephraim will stop rejecting Yahweh when the Child comes that will take David's throne. Then Yahweh will shine his light upon Ephraim and Ephraim will rejoice in Yahweh (9:3). According to Isaiah 11-12 Ephraim will be different when the Branch of Jesse brings back the remnant and inaugurates a reign of peace. Then both Ephraim and Judah will זכר, "remember," before the world the great things Yahweh has done. In 17:10 Ephraim would not "remember" Yahweh but instead it שכח, "forgot," Yahweh יִשְׁעֵךְ, who is "your salvation," and its מָעוֹז, "strong," Rock. Now in chapter 12 Ephraim together with Judah sings: אֵל יְשׁוּעָתִי אֶבְטַח...עָזִּי, "God is my salvation, I will trust . . . (He is) my strength" (12:2). At this time Yahweh will dwell in the midst of Zion (12:6).

The readers come to 17:9-11 with sufficient information to understand it. The foregoing text has made clear the great risk of rejecting Yahweh and turning to other nations. What 17:9-11 does is to elevate the sin of abandoning Yahweh. It connects this with the abandonment of Ephraim's cities. It reiterates the severe cost of foreign alliances under the figure of planting a crop.

Previous chapters have made the readers aware that Ephraim's rejection of Yahweh will entail the attack of Assyria and Assyria's

devastation as a part of an attack on Judah. Chapter 17 will deal with Assyria's attack upon Judah. The clear devastation of Assyria will wait for chapter 18. The readers also know that Ephraim will return to Yahweh and proclaim its faith to the world. Isaiah 18:3 and 5-6, where the world becomes aware of the deeds of Yahweh, and 18:7, where the world knows to come to Mt. Zion, touch upon this event. At 18:7 Yahweh will dwell at Mt. Zion.

Nations Threaten Judah But Are Suddenly Dispersed By Yahweh

Isaiah 17:12-14 describes the theme of a multi-national attack upon Judah and the sudden deliverance by Yahweh. The attack is fiercesome. Judah is plundered and spoiled. Yahweh then attacks these nations and sends them fleeing with an attack that is sudden and complete. The people of Judah whom Yahweh delivers call themselves "us."

The theme of 17:12-14 first appears at chapter 7. Isaiah tells Ahaz that Ahaz will see terrible days and that Assyria, which Ahaz hired to protect Judah, will attack him (7:17-20). The devastation will be great. With this promise of devastation is also the promise of Immanuel (7:14). The faithful remnant of Judah will see Yahweh fight for them because of Immanuel, that is to say, "God is with us."

The theme of nations threatening Judah and then being suddenly dispersed is most closely followed in 8:8-10. There the readers learn that Judah will suffer destruction at the hands of Assyria. Isaiah 8:8 states that Assyria is like a mighty river whose water floods and covers Judah to the neck. Isaiah sarcastically invites all nations to attack. However, because of the promise of Immanuel, the attack of Assyria and, for that matter, the attack

of any other nation, will ultimately fail. In spite of this it is clear from 7:17-25 and 8:8 that Judah will suffer destruction.

The next appearance of the theme of an international threat to Judah and Judah's sudden divine deliverance is at 10:8-19 and 10:24-34. Yahweh says He will punish Assyria after Assyria has served Yahweh's purposes of afflicting Jerusalem. Isaiah 10:8-11 disclose Assyria's evil thoughts. They consist of Assyria's boastful recounting of the nations and gods that it has destroyed and of Assyria's intention to attack Jerusalem and belittle Jerusalem's God. Isaiah 10:28-32 depicts the flight of Benjamin before the Assyrians. Isaiah 10:12 states Assyria will attack Jerusalem and then Yahweh will stop Assyria. He will reduce Assyria to a small fragment of itself (10:16-19). Isaiah 10:26-27, 33-34 describe Yahweh's attack on Assyria in ways that are sudden. It will be like lopping off branches. It will be like Yahweh's deliverance of Israel at the slaughter of Midian and at the Reed Sea. The slaughter of Midian by Gideon was also the result of divine initiative (Judges 7).

The theme of the nations threatening Judah and then Yahweh suddenly dispersing them is Yahweh's plan for the world according to Isaiah 14:24-27. Yahweh reveals that when Assyria oppresses Judah Yahweh will break the power of Assyria (14:25). Yahweh will do this by felling Assyria on the hills of Judah.

One should note that the only other place where the phrase עַמִּים רַבִּים, "many nations," appears is at 2:3. At 2:3 the "many nations" come to Zion to learn of Yahweh. This will be after the judgment of Judah. This makes a neat contrast to the reason in Isaa 17:12 for the nations' first visit to Judah.

Isaiah 1-16 teaches in various places that the nations will attack Judah. The author makes clear from the outset that Judah will suffer desolation, cities will be burned, and that foreigners will spoil the land (1:7). Yahweh reiterates this in response to Isaiah, who wants to know when the people's spiritual tenor will change. Yahweh replies that it will not change until the cities lie in desolation and until not a person remains in them (6:11). Yahweh's program of Yahweh to punish Judah is direct and personal by chapter 5. In that chapter Yahweh promises to raise the banner and sound the whistle for the ends of the earth to come against Judah's sinners (5:26-30). Similar to 17:12 these nations will be like the כִּנְהֲמַת יָם, "roaring of the sea" (5:30). Here the land will be dark and in 17:14 evening is when Judah will feel their threat most acutely. At 7:1 Ephraim and Syria threaten Jerusalem. Their attempt fails and they eventually suffer destruction. Isaiah 7:18-20 describes the period before the devastation of Judah as a period for armies from Assyria and from the ends of Egypt to gather in the land. The destruction will take place at the hands of Assyria. Isaiah 9:4 indicates that the Child will come to deliver Judah and the Northern Kingdom.

The readers are aware that there will be an attack upon Judah and that Judah will take losses before Yahweh personally vanquishes the attackers. The readers know that Assyria will suddenly suffer defeat when its work against Judah and Jerusalem is complete. The readers find their expectations met in Isaiah 17-18. The divine blast at 17:13 fulfills the need for divine intervention. It takes chapter 18 to fulfill the prediction of Yahweh judging Assyria on Judah's mountains. It is also in Isaiah 18 that these events are explicitly cast into world prominence. That ties chapter 18 with the statement

of 14:26 that an act of judgment upon Assyria would be Yahweh's plan for the whole world.

The Futility of Political Alliances

Isaiah 18:1-2 is the theme of the futility of forming alliances to gain protection against Assyria. It describes the frantic political efforts of a nation on the other side of the rivers of Cush that seeks the cooperation of an illustrious nation. This illustrious nation is feared and powerful. Yet it too will pay homage to Yahweh at Mt. Zion. It will be the fall of Assyria that will precipitate its homage.

This theme is first mentioned in Isaiah 7 where it concerns an alliance between Syria and Ephraim. We discussed above the use of this theme in chapter 7. The text declares that the alliance of Syria and Ephraim failed in its effort to unseat Ahaz and in its attempt to withstand Assyria (7:1, 7). The outcome of the alliance will be desolation for both allies (7:16). The Syro-Ephraimite alliance receives attention again in chapter 8 and again at 10:9. Ephraim would have been safe if it would have chosen Yahweh (8:6). Although Ephraim will refuse to repent it could avoid coming troubles if it would learn from the chastisement that Yahweh sent through Syria and Philistia (9:13-14).

Ahaz activated an alliance with Assyria when he "hired" Assyria to fight off Syria and Ephraim (7:20). This, too, is futile. The result will be that Assyria will attack not only Syria and Ephraim but Judah as well. What Ahaz should have done is to obey Yahweh. Yahweh had told Ahaz not to fear but to believe and he offered Ahaz a sign to encourage him (7:9). Ahaz did not act in faith and asked for no sign.

Isaiah 8 describes a time when the air was full of conspiracy talk. This was frightening Judah but Yahweh tells Isaiah not to follow Judah's example (8:11-13). Instead Isaiah is to fear Yahweh. Yahweh will be a sanctuary to those who fear him (8:14). Isaiah gives himself as the example to follow in 8:17. He will wait and trust in Yahweh even though Yahweh is presently hiding his face. The best action is to trust in Yahweh even though this will not avert immediate trouble. As in Isaiah 18 Yahweh will fulfill his promise of deliverance on Mt. Zion (8:18).

Philistia seeks an alliance with Judah at 14:32. In the year of Ahaz's death Philistine messengers have come to Jerusalem. From Isaiah's response it is clear they seek a security arrangement with Judah. Isaiah tells the messengers that the poor of Zion will trust in Zion because they trust in Yahweh. Instead of security Philistia should expect destruction from a northern army, which is presumably Assyria (14:31).

The readers come to Isaiah 18 knowing that alliances will not work. The alliance between Ephraim and Syria should fail and the two nations will face devastation. Judah's dependence on Assyria will backfire. The readers might look for material on these alliances and will find it in chapter 17. The only advice that Yahweh has offered is to trust him and wait for his anger to pass. Isaiah 18:4 indicates the same. Yahweh will unfold his plan in his time. The readers know that in Zion there will be safety. Isaiah 18:7 confirms this. Essentially Isaiah 18:1-2 and 7 serve to give further examples for this theme.

Yahweh Calls the World to Attention

At 18:3 there is the theme of Yahweh calling the world to pay attention to see and hear the divine signals. The divine signal will be like the raising of the נֵס, "banner" on the mountain and will be like the blowing of the שׁוֹפָר, "trumpet." In the Hebrew Bible Yahweh is the only one who commissions the raising of the "banner." The "banner" is a sign or signal that people can see for a distance. Moses was a banner when he stood upon the mountain and signaled by raising his arms for the army to fight (Exod 17:15). The fiery death of Korah's rebellious group was a "banner" (Numbers 21:8, 9). The "trumpet" is also a public signal. It can announce religious observances such as the Day of Atonement (Lev 25:9) or signal the start or end of battles (Judg 6:34; 2 Sam 18:16). At 18:3 the whole world is to see and hear Yahweh's attack of Assyria.[21]

The author does not use this theme again to spread the knowledge of what Yahweh has done until 33:13. Then when Yahweh decides to arise against Assyria he calls the world to hear what he has done.

More often the chapters preceding Isaiah 17-18 use this theme to serve other functions. In chapter 5 Yahweh will lift a נֵס, "banner," to the distant nations and whistle for the ends of the אֶרֶץ, "earth" (5:26).[22] The message to

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[21] Most commentators agree that the world is being called to observe Yahweh's defeat of Assyria. See for example, J. A. Alexander in Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1974), p. 345; T. K. Cheyne in The Prophecies of Isaiah, 2 vols. (London: C. Kegan Paul & Co., 1880), p. 108; Delitzsch, p. 350; Duhm, p. 138; Georg Fohrer in Das Buch Jesaja, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1966), p. 223; Oswalt, p. 361; Christopher R. Seitz in Isaiah 1-39, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox, 1993), p. 148 (hereafter cited as Seitz), (but destruction of the world); Edward J. Young in The Book of Isaiah, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1965), p. 476 (volume one hereafter cited as Young).

[22] Same words as at Isa 18:3.

the world is to come and attack Israel. In chapter 8 Yahweh, possibly through His prophet, calls to the peoples and כֹּל מֶרְחַקֵּי־אֶרֶץ, "all the distant lands" (8:9).[23] The message to the nations is that they should attack Judah and that they will suffer defeat as a result (8:10). According to 8:8 Assyria is among the attackers. At 11:12 Yahweh raises a "banner" for the nations. The message is that the nations should bring back the Israelite exiles. At 13:2 Yahweh calls the nations of the world in terms similar to 18:3: נִשְּׂאוּ, "raising," a נֵס, "banner," on the bare הָר, "mountain." The message is to come and attack a country that is probably Babylon (13:5).

Two important passages are 12:4-5 and 14:26 because they concern the whole world and what the world should know. The more important passage is 14:26 because it concerns Yahweh's plan for כָּל־הָאָרֶץ, "all the world." The passage does not say that Yahweh is calling the world to know this but nevertheless it is a plan that concerns all. Yahweh's plan for the world is for him to destroy Assyria in Judah (14:26). At 12:4-5 Israel makes the world know of Yahweh's deeds. This is also not an explicit call from Yahweh for the world's attention. Yet, in as much as Israel intends to tell the world of Yahweh's deeds of deliverance a call to the world is implied. The worldwide knowledge of Yahweh's deeds of deliverance is the high point of the first twelve chapters of Isaiah.

By Isaiah 17-18 the readers are aware that Yahweh calls the world to attention in order to elicit an action such as an attack on Judah or Babylon, or to return the Israelite exiles back, or to show his deliverance of Judah. The readers know that when it comes simply to observing, Yahweh wants to

[23] Same words as at Isa 18:3.

announce to the world his deeds of deliverance. They know that Yahweh's plan for Assyria is a plan for everyone. Thus the readers will come to 18:3 expecting that to which Yahweh wants the world to attend is his deliverance of Judah or his plan for the world--the destruction of Assyria in Judah. The readers expect that this call to pay attention accompanies Assyria's attacks on Judah and Assyria's demise at Yahweh's hand. Isaiah 17-18 fulfills those expectations. The overt mention of a threat to Judah is in chapter 17. The unqualified destruction of Assyria is in chapter 18. Isaiah 18:7 confirms the expectation that it was Yahweh's victory that the nations will observe.

Yahweh's Silent Waiting and Sudden Destruction of a Nation

Isaiah 18:4-6 reveals Yahweh's perspective on the events of history. Before Yahweh acts there will be a time during which he silently watches for his plans to unfold. At the precise time determined by Yahweh he will strike the unnamed nation that is presumably Assyria.

The theme of Yahweh's silent waiting and sudden destruction appears first at chapter 8. Isaiah 8:6-8 states that it is Yahweh who will send Assyria against Ephraim, Syria and Judah. According to Isaiah 8:9-10 Yahweh will ultimately defeat nations such as Assyria that come against Judah. The reason that Yahweh will do this is that he is Immanuel, which means he is with the faithful remnant. Additional information from Isaiah 7-8 inform 8:6-10. Isaiah 7:17-18 indicate that Yahweh has a plan to call Assyria and someone at the end of Egypt's rivers to lodge in Judah. He will have Assyria devastate Judah (7:19; 8:7-8). Isaiah calls the action of Yahweh against Judah through Assyria "hiding his face" (8:17). In other words Isaiah pictures

Yahweh's action during Assyria's build-up as silence. This is what we find in Isa 18:4.

One finds the same theme in chapter 10. Assyria is Yahweh's rod of anger according to 10:5. Yahweh is sending Assyria to spoil and plunder Israel but Assyria plans to annihilate it (10:6-7). Yahweh's plan is to leave Assyria alone until it has accomplished what Yahweh wants done against Jerusalem and then Yahweh will punish Assyria (10:12). Yahweh will destroy Assyria's "stout men," that is, his army (10:16). Yahweh's destruction of the Assyrian army compares with the destruction of a forest at 10:19 and with lopping off boughs and cutting down trees and forest thickets at 10:34.[24] This sounds very much like 18:5. The two events that chapter 10 compares to Yahweh's action against Assyria--the Reed Sea crossing and the Midian conquest--indicate Yahweh's action will be sudden and supernatural (10:26). In Isa 10:12 the author portrays Yahweh as doing nothing to stop Assyria until Assyria has damaged Jerusalem to Yahweh's specification. This is like Isa 18:4 which pictures Yahweh as silent.

A similar theme appears at 14:24-27. Yahweh has a plan that will take time to unfold. Assyria will oppress the world and makes its way to the hills of Judah. On the mountains of Judah Yahweh will destroy it. This passage makes two points that compare with chapter 18 not made elsewhere. First, the demise of Assyria will be upon the mountains of Judah. At 18:6 the remains of the unnamed nation will lie scattered across the mountains for the birds and animals to eat. Second, Yahweh's action against Assyria is his plan

[24] Delitzsch, p. 270; Dillmann, p. 109; Seitz, p. 94; Motyer, pp. 116-17.

for the world. 18:3 also declares that Yahweh's act against the unnamed nation is of worldwide significance.

The readers come to chapter 18 ready to identify the theme of Yahweh's silent waiting and sudden destruction of a nation with Assyria. They are ready to interpret the agriculture metaphor of chapter 18 (see below the metaphor "Agriculture"). Chapter 18 ties together Yahweh's season of inactivity, Assyria's aggression and Yahweh's fatal strike against Assyria. Chapter 18 does this through the figure of the growing of grapes. The readers know that the theme of the demise of Assyria includes the detail that this will occur when Assyria attacks Ephraim and Judah. For this the readers will need chapter 17.

Nations Bring Tribute to Mt. Zion Where Yahweh Dwells

Isaiah 18:7 closes chapter 18 on the important note that the illustrious nation of 18:2 will bring gifts to Zion after Assyria's fall in Judah. This will be when Yahweh will be there.

The theme of the nations bringing tribute to Mt. Zion where Yahweh dwells first appears at 2:2-4. This begins the second major division of Isaiah that will stretch across chapters 2-12. The position of this theme would suggest that it is very important. Indeed, it is. This theme is the goal of history for all the chapters that follow. The time will come when all the nations will go to the mountain of Yahweh. Yahweh will instruct them there.

The theme appears again at 9:1-7. There the Child will reign upon the throne of David. His government will be over all and for all time. Both Isaiah 2:2-4 and 9:1-7 graphically illustrate the end of war: the beating of

swords into plowshares and the spears into pruning knives; the burning of the garments of war.

Chapter 11 indicates that the Branch of Jesse will come to rule on Yahweh's holy mountain (11:9). Then the Branch will bring justice to the world, the earth will be full of the knowledge of Yahweh, and the nations will rally to the Branch (11:4, 9-10). Peace will take on cosmic proportions as even the fiercest predators will cease to be a danger to the most defenseless.

Isaiah 18:7 is not a new theme. It belongs to a series of statements that present the personal and universal rule of Yahweh at Mt. Zion. At 18:7 the statement is the least detailed of these statements. It describes a representative nation coming to Mt. Zion. Yet, since it is the illustrious nation that comes one would expect that it would be in the best interest of lesser nations to do the same. Isaiah 18:7 says nothing about the end of war. It provides the readers with some answer as to the connection between Isaiah 17-18 and the idyllic age.

Conclusion

We have examined the themes of Isaiah 17-18 as they appear in the preceding chapters. We have found that the readers have sufficient information from those chapters to understand Isaiah 17-18 and even to expect the information that Isaiah 17-18 provides. We have also noted for each particular theme how because of the readers' knowledge of Isaiah 1-16 the readers will need both chapters to satisfy their expectations and queries.

Metaphors

Most of the metaphors that one finds in Isaiah 17-18 also occur in the chapters prior to Isaiah 17-18. It is instructive for understanding Isaiah 17-18 to see how these metaphors are applied in Isaiah 1-16. The metaphors that we will examine are: agriculture metaphors; tree metaphor; sea and mighty waters metaphor; rock metaphor; fat person metaphor.

Agriculture

One key metaphor is the agricultural. Chapters 17 and 18 use different facets of agriculture. The harvest aspect at 17:4-5 refers to the destruction of Ephraim and Syria. The olive gleanings in 17:6 refers to the remnant that will remain in Ephraim and Syria. The planting, growing and harvesting of a crop at 17:10-11 refers to Ephraim's alliance with Syria. The winnowing in 17:13 refers to Yahweh's dispersal of the nations that come to attack Judah. At 18:4-5 the growing of a crop refers to the progress of Assyria's ambitions and nature's nurture of a crop refers to Yahweh's support of Assyria's efforts. The premature pruning of 18:5 refers to Yahweh's judgment on Assyria.

Isaiah 17-18 uses its agricultural metaphors in a way consistent with what has gone on before. When it does not the new application or new metaphor illuminates parts of what the readers have gained from Isaiah 1-16. For example, the violating of a harvest that stands for Ephraim is expected by the readers of Isaiah 1-16. By chapter 17 the readers know that vineyard and crop are metaphors for other nations that especially includes Assyria and that these nations will also become like ruined crops. Chapter 18 handles the aspects of the metaphor that chapter 17 leaves unanswered. At Isaiah 17 the readers look for the denuding of Assyria because that needs to happen before

Israel's fortunes turn around. However, chapter 17 says nothing about the plants that are other nations. Chapter 18 answers that question and shows the stripping of a plant that stands for a great nation. Here Isaiah 18 goes beyond what Isaiah 1-16 has told the readers. It explains that it is Yahweh who has nurtured other countries. He is the light and the moisture. The greatness of the plant is at God's discretion. God will denude the vine that is another country at the moment it reveals it has fruit. That country will not see its glory. The branches of immature fruit will feed the raptors and wild animals. Isaiah 17 also uses metaphors in way different from what has gone on before. Compared to the way that the material is used in Isaiah 1-16 there is a reversal of roles in both the case of Ephraim growing a crop and in the case of Yahweh blowing away the enemy.

Harvest

In Isaiah 17:4-5 the crop is Ephraim and the harvest is a metaphor for Ephraim's radical destruction. The armies that attack and plunder Ephraim and Syria will be like harvesters who lop off and gather the heads of wheat. The desolation in Israel will be like the dramatic sight of the wide, lush Valley of Rephaim after harvesters have harvested and thoroughly gleaned it. Israel will have little left. The attack will leave as few people as there are olives when workers shake the olive tree of its olives. It is a drastic figure. This description of wheat fields and olive trees in Isaiah first appears here.

The "Song of the Vineyard" makes the same application of this metaphor (5:1-7). Isaiah 5:7 explains that the vineyard is a picture of the house of Israel and the delightful plants represent Judah. The house of Israel

represents at the very least the Northern Kingdom.[25] In the "Song of the Vineyard" Yahweh is the farmer preparing the ground and planting choice plants. He builds a watchtower and a winepress. Isaiah explains that Yahweh had awaited a vintage of justice but the fruit is oppression, which he signifies with bad grapes. So God has determined to destroy the vineyard, that is, to destroy Israel and Judah. It is conceivable that when this was first said it ingeniously drew the hearers into the story and made them pronounce judgment upon themselves. In that way the "Song of the Vineyard" performed a performative function.[26] The informative function, which explains the reason for the judgment, became the chief function after the judgment transpired. It is the informative function that the "Song of the Vineyard" shares with the ruined harvests of Isaiah 17:4-5.

In several places the metaphor of the ruined harvest applies to Judah. Isaiah 1:30 warns that Israel's sinners will be as a garden deprived of water and like an oak whose leaves are withering. Isaiah 3:14 compares Judah to a vineyard but in this case it is Judah who ruins the crop. The elders and leaders of Judah have despoiled that vineyard by exploiting Judah's poor. At 5:24 Judah is once again depicted as the vineyard that has failed. Judah has rejected God's word. This has manifested itself in self-indulgence and the

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[25] Motyer (p. 69), comments on Isa 5:7: "Before the fall of Samaria in 722 BC *the house of Israel* meant either the whole divided nation or its northern component...Isaiah thus addresses the whole nation and then narrows his vision to the specifically privileged *men of Judah*, who *are the garden of his delight*." Cf. Delitzsch, p. 165; Dillmann, p. 46; Seitz, p. 49; Kirsten Nielsen in There Is Hope for a Tree: The Tree Metaphor in Isaiah, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 65, trans. Christine and Frederick Crowley (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), p. 113 (hereafter cited as Nielsen), agrees with Motyer but thinks it possible that after 722 some may have reinterpreted Israel in Isa 5:7 to mean the Northern Kingdom.

[26] Nielsen, p. 116.

perversion of justice. The judgment that God will bring upon the Judahites for their sins is likened to buds turning to dust.

Growing a Crop

Isaiah 17:10 describes Ephraim as a farmer planting delightful plants and sowing foreign cuttings. The delightful plants are representative of plans that Ephraim makes independent of Yahweh.[27] The sowing of foreign cuttings refers to Ephraim making foreign alliances with such as Syria.[28] In 17:11 the farmer takes the necessary steps to make the planting grow and the seed sprout. The result is a failed harvest and unendurable misery. The failed harvest represents the miserable failure of Ephraim's efforts at self-advancement and self-preservation. Isaiah 17:10 describes the crop failure as abandoned fortress towns. Chapters 1-16 do not apply the metaphor of farmer to Ephraim but it does to Yahweh. In Chapter 5 the "Song of the Vineyard" contains two key words that appear in 17:10-11 נטע and נָטַע. It is the only other place in Isaiah that has נָטַע. It also has a synonym for the hapax legomenon at 17:10: the 5:7 נְטַע שַׁעֲשׁוּעָיו, "plants of delight," for the 17:10 נִטְעֵי מַעֲמָנִים. The author is apparently drawing a contrast between Yahweh's planting and Ephraim's planting. Ephraim erred in planting into the vineyard strange cuttings, that is, it has introduced other nations. Yahweh's tending should have satisfied Ephraim.

In chapter 18 the vine is Assyria.[29] Yahweh is likened to the natural ingredients of light and dew that nurture the crop (18:4). The nurture of the

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[27] Cf. Isa 9:13.

[28] Cf. Isa 7:1.

[29] See above "Yahweh's Silent Waiting and Sudden Destruction of a Nation."

crop represents Yahweh's part in the growth of Assyria. Isaiah 10:6 states this explicitly telling the readers that to punish the nations Yahweh has sent Assyria to plunder and spoil. In 18:5 the maturation continues to the point when the bud sheds the hood and the flower turns into an unripe grape. Then immediately before the grain harvest and long before the vintage the pruning knives go to work cutting off the branches. This represents the destruction of Assyria at the hands of Yahweh. The branches remain for the predator birds and animals to feed upon (18:6). The branches are the bodies of the fallen Assyrians that will strew the Judean hills. This is very similar to the 14:25 description of Yahweh's plan for the world.

Isaiah 18's depiction of Assyria answers the predictions of Isaiah 10 and 14. In chapter 10 Assyria is depicted as the crop that is the object of God's judgment. The judgment of Yahweh will appear like a fire that totally consumes Assyria's fruitful field and that leaves out of his glorious forest only a handful of the trees (10:18-19). According to 10:16, this consumption is a figure for the affliction of the "stout men," literally "fat men," that is Assyria's army. In chapter 14 the king of Babylon, who may also be the king of Assyria, is the refuse of a crop. Isaiah 14:19 uses the figure of tossing an abominable branch to describe Yahweh dishonoring the King of Babylon's corpse.[30]

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[30] Another nation that compares with a plant is Philistia. Philistia will be no crop since the prophet predicts that famine will destroy the root of Philistia (14:30). The root represents the remnant of the Philistines. There will be no remnant for Philistia.

Winnowing

Another aspect of the agriculture metaphor in Isaiah 17-18 is that of winnowing. Isaiah 17:13 describes the blowing away of chaff. This represents Yahweh's attack of the nations that have attacked Judah. This is the first time the winnowing metaphor appears in Isaiah. There is an interesting use of the same two words that 17:13 uses for blowing away the fine dust in chapter 5. At 5:28 the גַּלְגַּל, "dust of the chariot wheels," of Judah's attackers is like a סוּפָה, "windstorm" (5:28). At 17:13 Judah's attackers are not like a "windstorm" but like "dust" chased by a "windstorm." In both cases Yahweh instigates the "windstorm." In terms of the dust there is a complete reversal of roles. The dust that represents the conquering nations is now the fleeing defeated nations. Yahweh is the one in control and the nations' strength is dependent upon him.

Tree

A metaphor that interweaves the chapters leading up to chapters 17 and 18 is that of the tree and its branches. It is a powerful metaphor. The tree metaphor was effective because ancient people valued trees highly and understood its growth patterns.[31] K. Nielsen points out that the value of Isaiah's tree metaphor is that it lets Isaiah unite the two apparently contradictory ideas of salvation and judgment.[32] Isaiah uses the destruction of the tree to demonstrate Yahweh's judgment and he uses the natural force that trees have to sprout from stumps to demonstrate that salvation will

[31] Nielsen, p. 73.

[32] Ibid., p. 218.

appear where there was judgment. Applying the tree metaphor to a given situation transfers the idea of the pre-determined actions of a tree to a situation. It argues that nothing in life happens accidentally.[33] For some of the difficult passages Nielsen believes that the myth of God's Lebanon garden as constructed by Fritz Stolz can help to explain the author's use of the tree metaphor.[34] Stolz submits that in the Lebanon garden stands some trees, perhaps a world tree, that someone fells. In the Old Testament Yahweh is either the one who fells the trees or Yahweh is the punisher of the tree-feller, who has tried to usurp Yahweh's place. Nielsen is not ready to link this myth to Old Testament texts but she finds that the idea can help explain how Isaiah uses some of the tree metaphors. What I find significant is how Isaiah's use of the tree contrasts with the pattern of God's garden in the Lebanon myth. The book of Isaiah takes an approach which uses the tree metaphor to go beyond judgment to offer new life to the condemned.

In Isaiah 17-18 the tree metaphor appears at 17:5-6, 10-11 and 18:5. At 17:5-6 the olive tree is a figure for the land of Ephraim. The beating of the tree for its fruit represents Ephraim's destruction and the berries left on the tree represent the size of the remnant in the land.[35] Isaiah 17:10-11 describes

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[33] Ibid., p. 71. Nielsen tries to show that the tree metaphor serves to inform the reader of the political situation--an informative function--and serves to persuade the reader to accept the prophet's argument--a performative function. She also wants to show that the tree metaphor was often reinterpreted. This she shows by hypothesizing an original context for certain texts that gave these texts different referents from what they have now. She identifies texts she thinks generated new texts in Isaiah. She also does this by showing how post-biblical writers applied the texts to different situations.

[34] Ibid., pp. 82-84.

[35] Ibid., p. 72, does not include the olive gleanings as part of her discussion of Isaiah's tree metaphor.

Ephraim cultivating foreign cuttings. These cuttings represent Syria and the cultivation is in part Ephraim's alliance with Syria. Although 18:5-6 is part of the metaphor of the tending of a crop the tree metaphor is dominant enough to be a metaphor in its right. The cutter lops the branches off not as a part of normal crop care but to destroy the crop. The branches themselves become the focus of 18:6. The branches represent the slaughter of Assyrian soldiers on the hills of Judah. The lopping off is Yahweh's action against Assyria. The branches upon which the animals and raptors "summer" and "winter" is figurative of the corpses that lie out in the open after Yahweh's assault.[36]

A few places before Isaiah 17 compare Ephraim with a tree. We have mentioned above 5:1-7 where Ephraim is a part of the vineyard of Yahweh.[37] Yahweh plans to let Ephraim and Judah face external threats because they have failed to be loyal to him. In chapter 9 Yahweh will cut from Ephraim the כִּפָּה, "palm branch," and the reed (9:14). The palm branch is the elders and prominent men and the reed is the prophets (9:15). The wickedness of Ephraim is like a fire that will burn down its יַעַר, "forest" (9:18). That forest is Ephraim's land and people (9:19). By comparing the fire to both the wickedness of the people and to Yahweh's anger the author has bound up Yahweh's wrath with the people's wickedness.[38] At Isaiah 7:4 the kings of Syria and Ephraim are likened to smoldering stumps to illustrate how impotent they are who wish to oppose Judah.

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[36] See above at "Yahweh's Silent Waiting and Sudden Destruction of a Nation."

[37] See "Harvest."

[38] Nielsen, p. 189. This identification has a performative effect that persuades the people to accept Yahweh's judgment as a result of their sin.

Assyria receives the most frequent indictment through the metaphor of the tree. In chapter 10 Assyria is Yahweh's club but Assyria thinks it can determine its destiny. The author refers to Assyria's pride by asking the rhetorical question of whether a club can be the wielder of the one who wields the club and of one who is not made of עֵץ, "wood," (10:15). As a result of Assyria's pride Yahweh will burn Assyria's יַעַר, "forests," and fields until a child can write down the עֵץ, "trees," that remain (10:19). According to 10:16 these forests represent Assyria's army.[39] In chapter 10 Assyria must punish Judah and Jerusalem to God's satisfaction before the judgment of Yahweh will fall upon Assyria. Still Zion is not to fear the Assyrian invasion (10:24). Yahweh will act when Assyria is at Jerusalem's gates. Yahweh will lop off the פֹּארָה, "bough," and cut down the high trees (10:33-34). These trees and branches are the army of Assyria since they represent the strength of Assyria and the threat to Jerusalem.[40] In chapter 14 the king of Babylon, is likened to the abominable נֵצֶר, "branch," that is tossed out of its grave (14:19).[41]

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[39] Delitzsch, p. 272; Dillmann, p. 110. Nielsen (p. 195), posits that Isaiah 9:17-18 and 17:4-6 had the text producing effect of producing 10:16-19. She thinks that the suggestion of a remnant at 10:19 reveals that the text applied initially to Judah and then was later reinterpreted and placed in this context to refer to the king of Assyria. She argues that the intertwining of the images of forest fire and sick men parallels the fertility religion that connects the world of the gods and the world of the people. The king of Assyria claims to be god and so he will experience the forest fire that Yahweh has kindled. These images argue that imperatives prevail within the political world. Cf. Nielsen, p. 200.

[40] Duhm, p. 104; Oswalt, p. 275. Nielsen (p. 143), claims that 10:33-11:9 referred initially to lopping off the king of Judah and the coming of a new king in his place. With the rise of Assyria the text was reinterpreted by adding 10:5-32 to refer to the king of Assyria. In its present context the text means that the fall of the king of Assyria is a prelude to the coming of the new king.

[41] Nielsen (p. 163), points out that in a "fertility-cult context the felling of the tree is a link in a sequence ending positively in the god's resurrection." Here the use of the image is negative.

The sinners of Judah are the first that the author compares to a tree. They will be like an אֵלָה, "oak," with fading leaves (1:30). They use oaks and gardens in their worship and therefore will become no greater than those oaks and gardens. They will wither like them and burn up as they do (1:31).[42] Yahweh plans a day for the Judahite sinners when the אַלּוֹן, "oaks," of Bashan, the אֶרֶז, "cedars," of Lebanon and every proud thing will be humbled (2:13). These trees represent every object that shows humanity's pride.[43] The author compares Judah's fear at the news of the hostile approach of Syria and Ephraim with the shaking of a עֵץ, "tree," before the wind (7:2). After Yahweh purges Judah it will be a small remnant. That remnant compares to a small but vigorous stump of oaks, אֵלָה and אַלּוֹן (6:13).[44] A vine can refer to Judah. We have seen in the "Song of the Vineyard" how Judah is Yahweh's כֶּרֶם, "vineyard," and that Yahweh will remove the protective hedge and let his "vineyard" be destroyed (5:1-7). The elders and leaders ruin the "vineyard," meaning Judah, by exploiting Judah's poor (3:14).

Isaiah 1-16 prepares the readers to see two things in Isaiah 17-18. The readers are expecting to hear that the languishing or destruction of trees is a metaphor for the destruction of Assyria, Ephraim, Judah or nations and the readers expect the lopping of branches to signal the destruction of Assyria or the king of Babylon. Chapter 17 meets the expectation but it mercifully

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[42] Ibid., p. 207.

[43] Young, p. 127. Nielsen (p. 178), identifies these trees with the political leaders. She postulates that this context that polemizes against idol-worship uses the tree image because the trees of Lebanon and Bashan connote a holy tree.

[44] Nielsen (p. 153), asserts that there is nothing atypical about having a mixture of threats and punishments in Isaiah's *Denkschrift*. A consistent theme of prophetic teaching is apostasy, a doom that purifies, a remnant, and a link with the Davidic Messiah.

makes one other application for trees. As expected Ephraim's foreign cuttings will bear nothing but untold misery. Mercifully, the זַיִת, "olive tree," and its branches, which is representative of Ephraim, experience no harm. The important point is that the remaining fruit is minuscule. Yet the fruit is not null. This application of the tree metaphor poses questions for the readers about how this relates to what the readers know about the tree metaphor. Chapter 18 begins to give an answer. Chapter 18 takes the readers to a familiar application of the tree metaphor. It describes the lopping of branches reminiscent of earlier descriptions of Assyria's demise. It shows thereby that the type of mercy Yahweh showed Ephraim He will not show Assyria. Chapters 17 and 18 do not directly mention the idyllic age of the Branch although 18:7 suggests the glorious presence of Yahweh over Israel.

Sea and Mighty Waters

A metaphor that lies at the heart of 17:12-14 is that of the tumultuous sea and many waters. 17:12-13 describes the noise of the nations that attack Judah as the noise of the mighty ocean in terrible uproar. These verses call the natural forces of the ocean the "sea" and the "mighty waters." The readers coming to this metaphor will already have formed an opinion of what these forces represent.

Isaiah 5:30 uses this metaphor in an identical way. Using similar terminology to what is in Isa 17:12, Isaiah 5:26-30 introduces the readers to the metaphor with כִּנְהֲמַת יָם, "like the roaring of the sea" (5:30). The participants are the same as those of 17:12-13. The sound of the sea is the sound that the attacking nations make and the object of the attack is Judah. The section connects to 17:12-14 in other ways. As stated above it is this

section that applies the "dust of chariot wheels" and "storm wind" in ways that 17:13 will reverse. Chapter 5 gives the reason for the attack on Judah. Yahweh calls the nations to attack Judah for its scorn of Yahweh and injustice to its people.

With the same participants and much of the same vocabulary of 17:12-13--מַיִם רַבִּים, מֶרְחָק--chapter 8 uses this metaphor to describe the attack of Assyria upon Judah. This time instead of comparing the sound of a nation to the sea the author compares the nation to the waters. Isaiah 8:7 calls Assyria the מֵי...הָרַבִּים, "many waters," that will flood destructively over Syria, Ephraim and on into Judah. This is the poetic justice that Ephraim receives for rejecting the stream of Shiloah (Jerusalem's water supply) and choosing instead to rejoice in Syria. The prophet sarcastically taunts the nations that are מֶרְחָק, "afar," to attack Judah by threatening them with destruction if they do attack (8:9). The readers anticipate that before Yahweh destroys the nations that attack Judah Assyria and possibly other nations will attack both Ephraim and Judah.

The metaphor appears again in chapter 10 where Assyria is likened to the יַמִּים, "seas" (10:26). The participants are the same as 17:12-13. Assyria is the aggressor against Judah. Yahweh says that for the sake of Zion he will do to Assyria as he did to Egypt. Yahweh will rebuff Assyria as when Yahweh raises his staff over the seas. This has similarities to Yahweh's "strong blast" at 17:13.

With a different victim 13:4 uses the sound words of 17:12-13 in a similar way. The שְׁאוֹן, "crash," and the הָמוֹן, "roar," compare to the sound of nations preparing for battle. God gathers them to do battle for him. In this

case the object of the attack is Babylon. Here as in 17:12 they come from places מֵרָחָק, "afar off" (13:5).

Isaiah 17:12-13 succeeds in applying God's definitive authority over all things to the historical particularity of Judah. This it does through the figure of God exercising authority over the chaos of the sea. The readers know from chapters 5, 8 and 10 that the judgment awaiting the wicked of Judah is characterized by this metaphor. They know that Assyria is a key to the attack. The readers also expect that a part of Judah will escape. Isaiah 17:13-14 confirms that such will happen after Judah first comes face to face with grave peril.

Rock

The chief reason that Isaiah 17 gives for the judgment upon Ephraim is that it has not remembered Yahweh its fortress rock (17:10). The metaphor of rock appears in one other place in Isaiah 1-16. Using the same word Isaiah 8:14 states that Yahweh is the צוּר, "rock," that makes both houses of Israel fall. Yahweh tells Isaiah that those who fear Yahweh will find him a sanctuary. The houses of Israel do not fear Yahweh like that. Jerusalem or possibly both kingdoms of Israel fear conspiracy more than they fear Yahweh (8:12). As a result Yahweh will be a destructive rock to them. This implies that Yahweh could be a rock that would help them if they would be like Isaiah. Isaiah 17:10 uses rock as a sign of help. It is again the attitude of Ephraim that determines whether Ephraim will find Yahweh a rock that will help. Ephraim fears the foreign enemy more than Yahweh and seeks security through a foreign alliance. The result will be destruction for Ephraim.

Fat Person

In Isaiah 17:4's מִשְׁמַן בְּשָׂרוֹ יֵרָזֶה, "the fat of his (Jacob's) flesh will be made lean," the author compares Ephraim with a fat person who has become thin. The parallel colon states that Yahweh's judgment will make the "glory" of Ephraim poor. It seems then that the figure of the fat person refers to the things that give Ephraim national strength. Ephraim will become so poor through the coming destruction that little will remain of Ephraim's military, wealth, people and land. Of course the same applies to Syria because 17:3 equates the condition of Syria's remnant with the glory of the Israelites.

The same words that describe the emaciation of Ephraim in 17:4 apply to Assyria in chapter 10: כָּבוֹד, מִשְׁמַן, בָּשָׂר, רזה. At Isaiah 10:16 Yahweh will send בְּמִשְׁמַנָּיו רָזוֹן, "upon his (Assyria's) fat ones leanness." According to the parallel colon the כָּבוֹד, "glory," of Assyria is its "fat ones." Another couple of metaphors fill out the description of Assyria's loss of glory. The "glory" of Assyria's forests and fruitful fields will suffer the destruction of בָּשָׂר, "flesh," and soul (10:18). Yahweh will destroy the forests like a נסס, "sick man," who מסס, "wastes away" (10:18). The "fat ones" probably refer to Assyria's army.

It is perhaps significant that the author describes the destruction of Ephraim with almost the same metaphor that describes Assyria's devastation. This shows that Ephraim will receive the same menacing judgment as non-covenantal peoples. It is a dramatic reversal. Ephraim sought protection from Assyria but ended up just like Assyria.

Conclusion

The metaphors that are in Isaiah 17-18 usually have the same application at some point in the earlier chapters. There is little in Isaiah 17 or

18 that does not suit the previous chapters. Sometimes the change in application works to bring out the strength of the metaphor such as the metaphor of Yahweh as the rock of Ephraim or a significant contrast such as Ephraim's farming versus Yahweh's farming.

Theme Sequence

One of the features of Isaiah 17-18 that deserves examination is the similarity that exists between the sequence of the themes in Isaiah 17-18 and the sequence of the same themes outside of Isaiah 17-18. This both shows that the author was interested in making Isaiah 17-18 affirm a certain order of themes and that the author used both chapters 17 and 18 to do it. In other words for the author of Isaiah Isaiah 17-18 is unit. One finds almost identical sequences twice in the chapters preceding Isaiah 17-18. There are also smaller collections of the Isaiah 17-18 themes in the chapters preceding.

The sequence of themes often expresses the following scenario: Ephraim's destruction while allied with Damascus (17:1-6); Ephraim's fruitless search for security outside of Yahweh (17:9-11); the nations attack Judah but Yahweh promises to deliver (17:12-14); futile alliances (18:1-2); Yahweh addresses the world (18:3); Yahweh waits for Assyria to attack Judah and then Yahweh destroys Assyria (18:4-6); Yahweh's dwelling on Mt. Zion as the completion of Yahweh's aims and as the security of Israel (18:7).

Isaiah 7-8 embeds the same themes that one finds in Isaiah 17-18. It starts with the same theme--the futility of the Syro-Ephraimite alliance (7:1-16). This describes the alliance and the desolation of its members. Then 7:17-25 has the theme of an Assyrian attack upon Judah along with the promise in the form of "Immanuel" or "God with us" that Yahweh will be

with Judah. The "Immanuel" hope is also in Isaiah 17:14 when it says that the "us" can be confident about Yahweh's deliverance. The attack in 7:17-25 will have involvement from a people that are from the ends of Egypt. This reminds one of the nation in 18:1-2. Isaiah 8:1-7 echoes 17:9-11. It describes the theme of Ephraim rejecting Yahweh and choosing an alliance with Syria and it declares that Assyria will destroy both nations. In a non-figurative way Isaiah 8:8-10 echoes the theme of 18:4-6--Yahweh silently waits and then suddenly strikes. Isaiah 8:8-10 foretells that Assyria and the nations will attack Judah and that then Yahweh will destroy them. Like Isaiah 18:4, Isaiah 8:8-10 describes Yahweh encouraging the nations to make and carry out their plans. Isaiah 8:8-10 also includes a type of the 18:3 theme of calling the world to attention. Isaiah 18:12 speaks again of the futility of conspiracies when Yahweh tells Isaiah not to fear the conspiracies that so frighten the Judahites. Isaiah 8:17 is the theme of Yahweh silently waiting for his time to act but viewed from the human side. To Isaiah Yahweh is now hiding his face but Isaiah will trust him and wait for his deliverance. Isaiah 8:18 expresses the theme that Yahweh is on Mt. Zion ruling the world. On Mt. Zion Yahweh dwells and he gives his message. His message is given in the form of Isaiah and Isaiah's sons whose names represent salvation, the return of a remnant, and swift judgment. This is similar to the elevation of Yahweh and Zion at 18:7 that describes the homage of the illustrious nation to Yahweh on Mt. Zion.

Although the themes of Isaiah 7-8 are not always identical with those in Isaiah 17-18 they are similar and the overall sequence is the same: the futility of the Syro-Ephraimite alliance; the nations threaten Judah and Yahweh promises deliverance; the futility of political alliances; Yahweh's call

to the world to attention; the attack of Judah's enemies that roughly parallels the silent watching of Yahweh in 18:4 and sudden destruction of Judah's enemies; the rule of Yahweh from Mt. Zion. The major differences are threefold. Isaiah 7-8 interjects the theme of Ephraim forsaking Yahweh and seeking security elsewhere between the two occurrences of the theme of Judah's threats. Isaiah 17-18, on the other hand, interjects the theme of the futility of a Cush alliance between the theme of Judah's threats. Second, Isaiah 7-8's first description of Judah's demise does not include a description of Yahweh's attack upon Judah's enemies whereas the description in Isaiah 17-18 does. Third, Isaiah 7-8's call to the nations to attack Judah is not the same as the call to the world to watch Yahweh defeat a great nation.

The second place in Isaiah 1-16 where most of the themes of Isaiah 17-18 appear is Isaiah 9-10. Starting with 9:8 the following pattern emerges. Isaiah 9:8-12 states the theme: Yahweh judges Ephraim because Ephraim has not heeded Yahweh's discipline. The judgment is similar to the judgment in Isaiah 17:4-6. Isaiah 9:13-21 has the theme: Ephraim rejects Yahweh so Yahweh destroys Ephraim. This is similar to the theme of 17:9-11. Isaiah 10:5-11 explains that Assyria is Yahweh's tool of destruction against Ephraim. Isaiah 10:12-20 has the theme: Yahweh will judge Assyria after Assyria has attacked Judah. This is like the theme of Isaiah 17:12-14 and reminds one of the silence of Yahweh that Isaiah 18 depicts. Isaiah 10:20-23 has the theme of the survival of a remnant in Judah and a return to Yahweh that echoes the promise of 17:7-8, 14 and 18:7. Isaiah 10:24-34 has the theme: Judah must endure the Assyrian invasion and then Assyria will face destruction. This is similar to the theme in 18:4-6 of Yahweh silently watching and suddenly destroying Assyria.

In Isaiah 9-10 we notice the pattern: Ephraim's self-sufficiency is futile; Ephraim forsakes Yahweh and seeks security elsewhere; nations, in this case Assyria, threaten Judah and Yahweh destroys them; Judah will again trust in Yahweh; Judah must endure Assyria's hostilities awhile, similar to Yahweh's silent watching, and then Yahweh will suddenly destroy Assyria. The similarity to Isaiah 17-18 is obvious. The main differences are that there is no mention of Ephraim discarding its idols, there is no mention of the alliances that is the theme for two of the sections of Isaiah 17-18, and the return of a remnant to Yahweh involves Judah and not Ephraim.

When only a few of the themes of Isa 17-18 appear together a similar pattern emerges. Isaiah 1:24-2:4 has the themes of Yahweh punishing Judah before he restores it and of the nations coming to Zion to worship Yahweh. Isaiah 17-18 follows the same pattern for Judah and Ephraim: Ephraim will be destroyed (17:1-5); a remnant will survive (17:6); Ephraim will turn to Yahweh (17:7-8); Judah will be attacked and delivered (17:12-14); Mt. Zion will receive homage from the greatest powers (18:7).

Neither Isaiah 7-8 nor Isaiah 9-10 have all of the themes of Isaiah 17-18 but they have most of them. The significant feature is that even with the two sections sharing so many themes the sequence of the themes are almost identical. Even in the case of only a few themes present the themes in common span both chapters 17 and 18.

Addendum: Analysis of the Incidence of the Words and Phrases of Isaiah 17-18 in the Rest of Isaiah

This analysis exludes הִיה, אַיִן, הלך, אמר, יְהוָה, עָם, גּוֹי, אֶרֶץ, prepositions, pronouns, and the *waw* conjunctive.

The first chart lists the words and phrases from Isaiah 17-18 that appear elsewhere in Isaiah. This comprehensive chart is followed by a series of charts that give the words and phrases from Isaiah 17-18 that appear in various sections of Isaiah: Isaiah 1-12; 13-16; 19-23; 24-39. Then there is a list of those words and phrases that appear only in Isaiah 1-39 and a list of those words and phrases that appear only again in 40-66. Near the end are charts that list the words and phrases from Isaiah 17-18 that appear nowhere else in Isaiah but do appear elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible and those words and phrases that appear nowhere else.

Words and Phrases Elsewhere in Isaiah (*only in Isaiah*)

17:1	מַשָּׂא	13:1; 14:28; 15:1; 19:1; 21:1, 11, 13; 22:1, 25; 23:1; 30:6; 46:1, 2.
17:1, 3	דַּמֶּשֶׂק	7:8, 17; 8:4; 10:9.
17:1, 14	הִנֵּה	3:1; 5:7, 26, 30; 6:7, 8; 7:14; 8:7, 18, 22; 10:33; 12:2; 13:9, 17; 19:1; 20:6; 21:9; 22:13, 17; 24 - 39 (18X); 40 - 66 (29X).
17:1; 18:5	סוּר Ho. " Hi.	Qal: 6:7; 7:17; 10:27; 11:13; 14:25; 30:11; 49:21; 52:11; 59:15. Hi.: 1:16, 25; 3:1, 18; 5:5, 23; 10:13; 25:8; 27:9; 31:2; 36:7; 58:9.
17:1, 2, 9	עִיר	1:7, 8, 26; 6:11; 14:17, 21, 31; 19:2, 8; 22:2, 9; 23:16; 24 - 39 (15X); 40 - 66 (12X).
17:1	מַפֶּלָה	מַפֵּלָה -- 23:13; 25:2
17:2, 9; 18:6	עזב Qal	Qal: 1:4, 28; 10:3, 14; 32:14; 40 - 66 (10X). Ni.: 7:16; 27:10; 62:12.
17:2	עֶדֶר	32:14; 40:11.
17:2	רבץ Qal	Qal: 11:6, 7; 13:21; 14:30; 27:10. Hi.: 13:20; 54:11; 65:10.

17:2	חרד Hi.	Qal: 10:29; 19:16; 32:11; 41:5.
17:3	שׁבת Hi.	Qal: 14:4; 24:8; 33:8. Hi.: 13:11; 16:10; 21:2; 30:11.
17:3	מִבְצָר	25:12; 34:13.
17:3	אֶפְרַיִם	7:2, 5, 8, 9, 17; 9:9, 21; 11:13; 28:1, 3.
17:3	מַמְלָכָה	9:6; 10:10; 13:4, 19; 14:16; 19:2; 23:11, 17; 37:16, 20; 47:5; 60:12.
17:3	שְׁאָר	10:19, 20, 21, 22; 11:11, 16; 14:22; 16:14; 21:17; 28:5.
17:3	אֲרָם	7:1, 2, 4, 5, 8; 9:12.
17:3, 4	כָּבוֹד	3:8; 4:2, 5; 5:13; 6:3; 8:7; 10:3; 16, 18; 11: 10; 14:18; 16:14; 21:16; 22:18, 23, 24; 24:23; 35:2; 40 - 66 (16X).
17:3, 9	בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	27:12; 31:6; 66:20.
17:3, 6	נְאֻם	1:24; 3:15; 14:22, 23; 19 -39 (5X); 40 - 66 (12X).
17:3; 18:7	יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת	1 - 16 (27X); 19 - 39 (26X); 40 - 66 (6X).
17:4, 7, 9	בַּיּוֹן הַהוּא	1 - 12 (18X); 19 - 23 (12X); 24 - 39 (11X); 52:6.
17:4	דלל Ni.	Qal: 19:6; 38:14.
17:4	יַעֲקֹב	2:3, 5, 6; 8:17; 9:8; 10:20, 21; 14:1; 27:6, 9; 29:22, 23; 40 - 66 (27 X).
17:4	מִשְׁמַן	10:16.
17:4	בָּשָׂר	9:20; 10:18; 22:1; 31:3; 40 - 66 (12X).
17:4	*משמן בשרו ירזה*	*במשמניו דזון -- 10:16.*
17:5	אסף Qal	Qal: 4:1; 10:14; 11:12; 58:8. Ni.: 13:4; 16:10; 43:9; 49:5; 57:1; 60:20. Pi.: 52:12; 62:9. Pu.: 24:22; 33:4.
17:5, 11; 18:4, 5	קָצִיר	9:3; 16:9; 23:3; 27:11.
17:5	קָמָה	37:27.
17:5	זְרוֹעַ	9:20; 30:30; 33:2; 40 - 66 (12 X).
17:5	שִׁבֹּלֶת	27:12.
17:5	קצר (I)	37:30.
17:5	לקט Pi.	Pu.: 27:12.

17:5	רְפָאִים	14:9; 26:14, 19.
17:6	שׁאר	4:3; 11:11, 16; 24:6, 12; 37:31; 49:21.
17:6	עֹלְלוֹת	24:13.
17:6	נֹקֶף	24:13. נקף -- Qal: 29:1; Pi.: 10:34; Hi.: 15:8.
17:6	זַיִת	24:13.
17:6	כְּנֹקֶף זַיִת	24:13.
17:6	רֹאשׁ	1 - 12 (10X); 15:2; 19:15; 28 - 39 (6X); 40 - 66 (9X).
17:6	סָעִיף	2:21; 27:10; 57:5.
17:6	פרה	11:1; 32:12; 45:8.
17:6	יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	21:17; 24:15; 37:21.
17:7	הָאָדָם	2:17, 20, 22; 6:12.
17:7, 8	שעה Qal	Qal: 22:4; 31:1; 32:3. Hithp.: 41:10, 23.
17:7	עשׂה Qal pt.	Qal pt.: 5:5; 10:23; 19:10; 22:11; 27:11; 29:16; 40 - 66 (9X).
17:7	עַיִן	1:15, 16; 2:11; 3:8, 16; 5:15, 21; 6:5, 10; 10:12; 11:3; 13:16, 18; 29:10, 18; 30:20; 32:3; 33:15, 17, 20; 35:5; 37:17, 23; 38:3, 14; 40 - 66 (17X).
17:7	קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל	1:4; 5:19, 24; 10:20; 12:6; 29:19; 30:11, 12, 15; 31:1; 37:23; 40 - 66 (12X).
17:7, 8; 18:3	ראה Qal	Qal: 5:12, 19; 6:1, 5, 9, 10; 9:2; 14:16; 21:3, 6, 7; 22:9, 11; 26:10; 28:4; 29:15, 18, 23; 30:10, 20; 32:3; 33:15, 17, 19, 20; 35:2; 37:17; 38:5, 11; 39:4; 40 - 66 (24X). Ni.: 1:12; 16:12; 47:3; 60:2. Hi.: 30:30; 39:4.
17:7	ראה + עַיִן	6:5, 10; 29:18; 30:20; 32:3; 33:15, 17, 20; 37:17; 40:26; 44:18; 49:18; 52:8, 10; 59:15; 60:4; 64:3.
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17:7, 8; 18:3	ראה Qal	Qal: 5:12, 19; 6:1, 5, 9, 10; 9:2. Ni.: 1:12.
17:7	ראה + עַיִן	6:5, 10.
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17:8	*מַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו*	*2:8; 5:12.*
17:8	*אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ אֶצְבְּעֹתָיו*	*2:8.*
17:9	שְׁמָמָה	1:7; 6:11.
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17:10	זור (I) Qal	Qal: 1:7. Ni.: 1:4.
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17:14	חֵלֶק	9:3.
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18:1	כּוּשׁ	11:11.
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18:2, 7	משׁך Pual	Qal: 5:18.
18:2, 7	ירא Ni.	Qal: 7:4; 8:12; 10:24.

18:3	כל + "world"	2:2, 12, 14, 15; 6:3; 7:19; 8:9; 10:14; 12:5.
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18:5	גמל	3:9; 11:8.
18:5	כרת Qal	Ni.: 11:13. Hi.: 9:13; 10:7.
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17:7, 8; 18:3	ראה Qal	Qal: 14:16. Ni.: 16:2.
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17:11	חלה Ni.	Pu.: 14:10.
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17:12, 13	שְׁאוֹן	13:4.
17:12	שְׁאוֹן לְאֻמִּים	שְׁאוֹן מַמְלְכוֹת גּוֹיִם -- 13:4
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18:2, 7	משך Pual	Ni.: 13:22.
18:3	תֵּבֵל	13:11; 14:17, 21.
18:3	כל + "world"	14:7, 9, 10, 18, 26.
18:3	נֵס	13:2.
18:3	נְשֹׂא־נֵס	שְׂאוּ־נֵס -- 13:2.
18:3	*נְשֹׂא־נֵס הָרִים*	*הָר־נִשָּׂא שְׂאוּ־נֵס -- 13:2.*
18:4	שָׁקַט	14:7.
18:4	עָב	14:4.
18:5	תמם	16:4.
18:5	כרת Qal	Qal: 14:8. Hi.: 14:22.
18:7	מָקוֹם	13:13; 14:2.
18:7	הַר־צִיּוֹן	הַר בַּת־צִיּוֹן -- 16:1.

Words and Phrases in Isaiah 19-23 (*only in 19-23*)

17:1	מַשָּׂא	19:1; 21:1, 11, 13; 22:1, 25; 23:1.
17:1	הִנֵּה	19:1; 20:6; 21:9; 22:13, 17.
17:1, 2, 9	עִיר	19:2, 8; 22:2, 9; 23:16.
17:1	מַפֵּלָה	מַפֵּלָה -- 23:13.
17:2	חרד Hi.	Qal: 19:16.
17:3	שׁבת Hi.	Hi.: 21:2.
17:3	מַמְלָכָה	19:2; 23:11.
17:3	שְׁאָר	21:17.
17:3, 4	כָּבוֹד	21:16; 22:18, 23, 24.
17:3, 6	נְאֻם	19:4; 22:25.
17:3; 18:7	יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת	19 -23 (15X).
17:4, 7, 9	בַּיּוֹן הַהוּא	19 - 23 (12X).
17:4	דלל Ni.	Qal: 19:6.
17:4	בָּשָׂר	22:1.
17:5, 11; 18:4, 5	קָצִיר	23:3.
17:6	רֹאשׁ	19:15.
17:6	יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	21:17.
17:7	שׁעה	22:4.
17:7	עשׂה Qal pt.	19:10; 22:11.
17:7, 8; 18:3	ראה Qal	Qal: 21:3, 6, 7; 22:9, 11.
17:8	מִזְבֵּחַ	19:19.
17:9, 10	מָעוֹז	23:4, 11, 14.
17:10	שׁכח Qal	Ni.: 23:15, 16.
17:10	זכר Qal	Ni.: 23:16. Hi.: 19:17.
17:11, 14	בֹּקֶר	21:12.
17:11	זֶרַע	23:3.
17:12	המה	22:2.
17:12, 13; 18:2	מַיִם	19:5, 8; 21:14; 22:9, 11; 23:2.
17:12; 18:2	יָם	19:5; 21:1; 23:2, 4, 11.

17:13	נוס	20:6.
17:13	רוּחַ	19:3, 14.
17:13	סוּפָה	21:1.
17:14; 18:7	עֵת	20:2.
18:1	כּוּשׁ	20: 3, 4, 5.
18:2	שׁלח Qal	Qal: 19:20; 20:1.
18:2	עַל־פְּנֵי־מַיִם	19:8.
18:2	קַל	19:1.
18:2, 7	יראNi.	Ni.: 21:1.
18:2, 7	*מְבוּסָה*	*22:5.*
18:3	כּל + "world"	23:9, 17.
18:4	אָמַר יְהוָה אֵלַי	אָמַר אֵלַי אֲדֹנָי -- 21:6. אָמַר אֲדֹנָי אֵלַי -- 21:16.
18:4	נבט	22:8, 11.
18:4	עַב	19:1.
18:5	כרת Qal	Ni.: 22:25.
18:6	יַחְדָּו	22:3.
18:7	יבל	23:7.
18:7	מָקוֹם	22:23, 25.

Words and Phrases in Isaiah 24-39 (*only in 24-39*)

17:1	מַשָּׂא	30:11.
17:1	הִנֵּה	24 - 39 (18X).
17:1; 18:5	סוּר Ho. " Hi.	Qal: 30:11. Hi.: 25:8; 27:9; 31:2; 36:7.
17:1, 2, 9	עִיר	24 - 39 (15X).
17:1	מַפֵּלָה	מַפֵּלָה -- 25:2.
17:2, 9; 18:6	עזב Qal	Qal: 32:14. Ni.: 27:10.
17:2	עֵדֶר	32:14.
17:2	רבץ	27:10.
17:2	חרד Hi.	Qal: 32:11.
17:3	שׁבת Hi.	Qal: 24:8; 33:8. Hi.: 30:11.
17:3	*מִבְצָר*	*25:12; 34:13.*

17:3	אֶפְרַיִם	28:1, 3.
17:3	מַמְלָכָה	37:16, 20.
17:3, 4	כָּבוֹד	24:23; 35:2.
17:3, 9	בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	27:12; 31:6.
17:3, 6	נְאֻם	30:1; 31:9; 37:34.
17:3; 18:7	יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת	24 - 39 (11X).
17:4, 7, 9	בַּיּוֹן הַהוּא	24 - 39 (11X).
17:4	דלל Ni.	Qal: 38:14.
17:4	יַעֲקֹב	27:6, 9; 29:22, 23.
17:4	בָּשָׂר	31:3.
17:5	אסף Qal	Pu.: 24:22; 33:4.
17:5, 11; 18:4, 5	קָצִיר	27:11.
17:5	*קָמָה*	*37:27.*
17:5	זְרוֹעַ	30:30; 33:2.
17:5	*שִׁבֹּלֶת*	*27:12.*
17:5	*קָצַיר (I)*	*37:30.*
17:5	*לקט Pi.*	*Pu.: 27:12*
17:5	רְפָאִים	26:14, 19.
17:6	שְׁאָר	24:6, 12; 37:31.
17:6	*עֹלֵלוֹת*	*24:13.*
17:6	*נֹקֶף*	*24:13*
17:6	*זַיִת*	*24:13*
17:6	*כְּנֹקֶף זַיִת*	*24:13*
17:6	רֹאשׁ	28:1, 4; 29:10; 30:17; 35:10; 37:22.
17:6	סָעִיף	27:10.
17:6	יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	24:15; 37:21.
17:6	פרה	32:12.
17:7	שעה	31:1; 32:3.
17:7	עשׂה Qal pt.	27:11; 29:16.
17:7	קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל	29:19; 30:11, 12, 15; 31:1; 37:23.
17:7	עַיִן	29:10, 18; 30:20; 32:3; 33:15, 17, 20; 35:5; 37:17, 23; 38:3, 14.
17:7, 8;	ראה Qal	Qal: 26:10; 28:4; 29:15, 18, 23; 30:10, 20; 32:3;

18:3		33:15, 17, 19, 20; 35:2; 37:17; 38:5, 11; 39:4. Hi.: 30:30; 39:4.
17:7	ראה + עַיִן	29:18; 30:20; 32:3; 33:15, 17, 20; 37:17.
17:8	מִזְבֵּחַ	27:9; 36:7.
17:8	*אֲשֵׁרָה*	*27:9.*
17:8	*חַמָּן*	*27:9.*
17:8	*הָאֲשֵׁרִים וְהַחַמָּנִים*	*אֲשֵׁרִים וְחַמָּנִים -- 27:9.*
17:9, 10	מָעוֹז	25:4; 27:5; 30:2, 3.
17:10	צוּר	26:4; 30:29.
17:10	Qal זכר	Qal: 38:3. Hi.: 26:13; 36:3, 22.
17:10	נטע	37:30.
17:10	זור (I)	25:2, 4; 28:21; 29:5.
17:10	זרע	28:24; 30:23; 32:20; 37:30.
17:11	בְּיוֹם	27:8; 30:25, 26.
17:11, 14	בֹּקֶר	28:19; 33:2; 37:36; 38:13.
17:11	Hi. פרח	Qal: 35:1, 2; 66:14. Hi.: 27:6.
17:11	Ni. חלה	Qal: 33:24; 38:1, 9; 39:1.
17:12; 18:1	הוֹי	28:1, 29:1, 15; 30:1; 31:1; 33:1.
17:12	הֲמוֹן	29:5, 7, 8; 31:4; 32:4; 33:3; 60:5; 63:15.
17:12; 18:2	יָם	24:14, 15; 27:1.
17:12, 13	שְׁאוֹן	24:8; 25:5.
17:12, 13	לְאֹם	34:1.
17:12	*מַיִם כַּבִּירִים*	*28:2.*
17:12, 13; 18:2	מַיִם	25:10; 28:2, 17; 30:14, 20, 25; 32:2, 20; 33:16; 35:6, 7; 36:12, 16; 37:25.
17:12, 13	Ni. שׁאה	Hi.: 37:26.
17:13	נוס	24:18; 30:16, 17; 31:8; 35:8.
17:13	מֶרְחָק	30:27; 33:17.
17:13	Pual רדף	Qal: 30:16.

17:13	מוֹן	29:5.
17:13; 18:3, 6	הָרִים	34:3; 37:24. כָּל־הָר -- 30:25.
17:13	רוּחַ	25 - 39 (16X).
17:13	סוּפָה	29:6.
17:14; 18:7	עֵת	33:2, 6; 39:1.
17:14	טֶרֶם	28:4.
17:14	חֵלֶק	30:10; 33:23; 34:17.
17:14	גּוֹרָל	34:17.
17:14	בזז Qal	Qal: 33:23. Ni.: 24:3.
18:1	כְּנַף	24:16; 30:12.
18:1, 2, 7	נְהָרִים	33:21.
18:1	כּוּשׁ	37:9.
18:2	שׁלח Qal	Qal: 36:2, 12; 37:2, 4, 9, 17, 21; 39:1. Piel: 27:8; 32:20. Pual: 27:10.
18:2	כְּלִי	22:24; 32:7; 39:2.
18:2	גֹּמֶא	35:7.
18:2	מַלְאָךְ	30:4; 33:7; 37:9, 14, 36.
18:2	קַל	30:16.
18:2, 7	ירא Ni.	Qal: 25:3; 29:13; 35:4; 37:6.
18:3	תֵּבֵל	24:4; 26:9, 18; 27:6; 34:1.
18:3	*יֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֵל*	*26:9, 18.*
18:3	כל + "world"	24:7; 25:6, 7, 8; 28:22; 29:7,8; 34:1, 2, 4: 37:11, 16, 18, 20.
18:3	שׁכן Qal pt.	Qal pt.: 26:19; 33:5. שָׁכֵן -- 33:24.
18:3	נֵס	30:17; 31:9; 33:23.
18:3	*חֹקֵעַ שׁופר*	*יָחְקַע בְּשׁוֹפָר -- 27:13.*
18:3	שׁמע Qal	subj.=nation: Qal: 33:13; 34:1. Hi.: 30:30.
18:4	אָמַר יְהוָה אֵלַי	31:4. יְהוָה אָמַר אֵלַי -- 36:10.
18:4	שׁקט Qal	Hi.: 30:15; 32:17.
18:4	*צָחָה*	*32:4.*
18:4	עָב	25:5.
18:4	*טַל*	*26:19.*
18:5	תמם Qal	Hi.: 33:1.

18:5	גמל	29:9.
18:5	כרת Qal	Qal: 28:15; 37:24. Ni.: 29:20.
18:6	יַחְדָּו	33:3.
18:6	בְּהֵמָה	30:6.
18:7	מָקוֹם	26:21; 28:8; 33:21.
18:7	הַר־צִיּוֹן	24:23; 29:8; 31:4; 37:32.

Hapax Legomena in Isaiah But Found Elsewhere

17:1	מַפָּלָה	Ju 14:8; Pr 29:16; Ez 26:15, 18; 27:27; 31:13, 16; 32:10.
17:2	עֲרוֹעֵר	Nu 32:34; Dt 2:36; 3:12; 4:48; Jos 12:2; 13:9, 16, 25; Ju 11:26, 33; 1S 30:28; 2S 24:5; 2K 10:33; 1C 5:8; Je 48:6; 19.
17:4	רזה Ni.	Qal: Zp 2:11.
17:9	חֹרֶשׁ	2C 27:14; Ez 31:3. Also חֹרְשָׁה.
17:10	זְמוֹרָה	Nu 13:23; Ez 8:17; 15:2; Na 2:2.
17:11	נֵד	Ex 15:8; Jos 3:13, 16; Ps 33:7, 78:13.
17:11	אנשׁ (I) Qal	Qal: Jb 34:6; Je 17:9, 16; Mi 1:9. Ni.: 2S 12:15.
17:14	עֶרֶב	e.g., Gn 1:5...
17:14	בַּלָּהָה	Jb 18:11, 14; 24:17; 27:20; 30:15; Ps 73:19; Ez 26:21; 27:36; 28:19.
18:1	עֵבֶר + מִן	(25X).
18:2	הָלְאָה	Gn 19:9; 35:21; Lv 22:27; Nu 15:23; 17:2; 32:19; 1S 10:13; 18:9; 20:22, 37; Je 18:2, 7; Je 22:19; Ez 39:22; 43:27; Am 5:27.
18:4	חֹם	Gn 8:2; 18:1; 38:13, 25; Jos 9:12; 1S 11:9, 11; 21:6; 2S 4:5; Jb 24:19; 37:17; Je 17:8.
18:5	בֹּסֶר	Jb 15:33; Je 31:29, 30; Ez 18:2.
18:5	נִצָּה	Job 15:33.
18:5	נְטִישׁוֹת	Je 5:10.
18:7	שַׁי	Ps 68:30; 76:12.

Phrases Not Otherwise in Isaiah But Found Elsewhere

17:2	לַעֲדָרִים...וְרָבְצוּ	רָבְצוּ...עֲדָרִים -- Zp 2:14.
17:2	וְרָבְצוּ וְאֵין מַחֲרִיד	וְרָבְצוּ וְאֵין מַחֲרִיד -- Zp 3:13. וְרָבַצְתָּ וְאֵין מַחֲרִיד -- Jb 11:19. וְאֵין מַחֲרִיד -- Lv 26:6; Dt 28:26; Je 7:33; 30:10; 46:27; Ez 34:28; 39:29; Na 2:12; Mi 4:4.
17:5	עֵמֶק רְפָאִים	Jos 15:8; 18:16; 2S 5:18, 22; 23:13; 1C 11:1; 14:9.
17:9	מִפְּנֵי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	Ex 1:12; Nu 22:3; Jos 5:1, 6:1, 13:6; Ju 11:33; 1K 14:24; 21:26; 2K 16:3; 17:8; 21:2, 9; 2C 28:3; 33:2, 9.
17:10	אֱלֹהֵי יִבְעֶדְךָ	יִשְׁעֵנוּ...א -- 1C 16:35; Ps 24:5; 65:5; 79:9; 85:4. יִשְׁעִי...א -- Ps 25:5; 27:9; Mi 7:7; Hb 3:18. יִשְׁעִי צוּר...א -- 2S 22:47.
17:10	צוּר מָעֻזֶּךָ	צוּר מָעוֹז -- Ps 31:3.
17:11	וּכְאֵב אָנוּשׁ	אָנוּשׁ מַכְאֹבֶךָ -- Je 30:15.
17:12	יַמִּים...שְׁאוֹן לְאֻמִּים הֲמוֹת	שְׁאוֹן יַמִּים...הָמוֹן לְאֻמִּים -- Ps 65:7.
17:13	מַיִם רַבִּים	Ps 29:3; 77:19; 93:4; 144:7; Je 51:13, 55; Ez 1:24; 17:5, 8; 31:5, 15; 32:13; 43:2.
18:1	מֵעֵבֶר לְנַהֲרֵי־כוּשׁ	Zp 3:10.
18:6	בָּהֲמַת הָאָרֶץ	Je 15:3. בַּהֲמוֹת אֶרֶץ -- Jb 35:11.
18:7	שֵׁם־יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת	1S 17:45; 2S 6:2, 18.

Words and Phrases Occurring Nowhere Else in the Hebrew Bible

17:1	מָעִי	but עִי -- Jb 30:24; Ps 79:1; Je 26:18; Mi 1:6; 3:12.
17:6	גַּרְגְּרִים	
17:6, 9	אָמִיר	
17:10	נַעֲמָן	
17:11	תְּשַׁגְשְׁגִי	if < שגה -- Qal: Ps 92:13; Jb 8:7, 11. Hi.: Ps 73:12.
18:1	צְלַצַל	
18:2, 7	מִן־הוּא וָהָלְאָה	
18:2, 7	קַו־קָו	but קָו(II) -- 28:17; 34:11, 17; 44:13. קָו(I) --28:10, 13.
18:2, 7	בָּזָא	

18:3	שֹׁכְנֵי אֶרֶץ	
18:4	אֵלַי־אוֹר	
18:5	זַלְזַל	
18:5	תזז	
18:6	עֵיט הָרִים	
18:6	קַיִץ	
18:6	חרף (I)	

Words and Phrases Otherwise in Isaiah 1-39 But Not in Isaiah 40-66

17:1, 3	דַּמֶּשֶׂק	
17:1	מַפָּלָה	
17:3	שׁבת	
17:3	מִבְצָר	
17:3	אֶפְרַיִם	
17:3	שְׁאָר	
17:3	אֲרָם	
17:4	דלל	
17:4	מִשְׁמַן	
17:5, 11; 18:4, 5	קָצִיר	
17:5	קָמָה	
17:5	שִׁבֹּלֶת	
17:5	קצר (I)	
17:5	לקט	
17:5	רְפָאִים	
17:6	עֹלֵלוֹת	
17:6	נֶקֶף	
17:6	זַיִת	
17:6	כְּנֹקֶף זַיִת	
17:6	יְהִיָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	
17:7	הָאָדָם	
17:8	מעשׂה ידיו	
17:8	אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ אֶצְבְּעֹתָיו	
17:8	אֲשֵׁרָה	
17:8	חַמָּן	

17:8	הָאֲשֵׁרִים וְהַחַמָּנִים	
17:9, 10	מָעוֹז	
17:10, 11	נָטַע	
17:12	עַמִּים רַבִּים	
17:12	כְּהֲמוֹת יַמִּים	כְּנַהֲמַת־יָם -- 5:30.
17:12	שְׁאוֹן לְאֻמִּים	שְׁאוֹן מַמְלְכוֹת גּוֹיִם -- 13:4
17:12	מַיִם כַּבִּירִים	
17:12, 13	שׁאה	
17:13	מַיִם רַבִּים	מֵי...הָרַבִּים -- 8:7.
17:13	גַּלְגַּל	
17:13	כְּגַלְגַּל לִפְנֵי סוּפָה	גַּלְלִיו כַּסּוּפָה -- 5:28.
18:1	כְּנַף	
18:1, 2, 7	נְהָרִים	
18:2	גּמֶא	
18:2	עַל־פְּנֵי־מַיִם	
18:2	קַל	
18:2, 7	מְבוּסָה	
18:3	תֵּבֵל	
18:3	יִשְׁבֵי תֵּבֵל	
18:3	שכן Qal pt.	
18:3	נְשֹׂא־נֵס	
18:3	תִּקְעָ שׁוֹפָר	
18:4	אָמַר יְהוָה אֵלַי	
18:4	מָכוֹן	
18:4	צַח	
18:4	טַל	
18:5	תמם	
18:5	פֶּרַח	
18:5	מַזְמֵרָה	
18:7	הַר־צִיּוֹן	

Words and Phrases Otherwise in Isaiah 40-66 But Not in Isaiah 1-39

17:10	יֵשַׁע	45:8; 51:5; 61:10; 62:11. But יְשׁוּעָה -- 25:9.
17:11	כְּאֵב	65:14.
18:2	ציר	57:9.

18:2, 7	מרט Pual	Qal: 50:6
18:6	עִיט	46:11.

Words and Phrases in Both Isaiah 1-39 and Isaiah 40-66

17:1	מַשָּׂא	
17:1	הִנֵּה	
17:1; 18:5	סוּר Ho. " Hi.	
17:1, 2, 9	עִיר	
17:2, 9; 18:6	עזב	
17:2	עֵדֶר	
17:2	רבץ	
17:2	חרד	
17:3	מַמְלָכָה	
17:3, 4	כָּבוֹד	
17:3, 9	בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	
17:3, 6	נְאֻם	
17:3; 18:7	יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת	
17:4, 7, 9	בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא	
17:4	יַעֲקֹב	
17:4	בָּשָׂר	
17:5	אסף	
17:5	זְרוֹעַ	
17:6	שׁאר	
17:6	רֹאשׁ	
17:6	סָעִיף	
17:6	פרה	
17:7	שׁעה	
17:7	עשׂה Qal pt.	
17:7	קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל	
17:7	עַיִן	
17:7, 8; 18:3	ראה	

17:7	רֹאֶה + עַיִן	
17:8	מִזְבֵּחַ	
17:8	אֶצְבַּע	
17:9	שְׁמָמָה	
17:10	שׁכח	
17:10	צוּר	
17:10	זכר	
17:10	נטע	
17:10	(I) זור	
17:10	זרע	
17:11	בְּיוֹם	
17:11, 14	בֹּקֶר	
17:11	זֶרַע	
17:11	פרח	
17:11	חלה	
17:12; 18:1	הוֹי	
17:12	הֲמוֹן	
17:12	המה	
17:12; 18:2	יָם	
17:12, 13	שְׁאוֹן	
17:12, 13	לְאֹם	
17:12, 13; 18:2	מַיִם	
17:13	גער	
17:13	נוס	
17:13	מֶרְחָק	
17:13	רדף	
17:13	מוֹץ	
17:13	רוּחַ	
17:13	סוּפָה	
17:14; 18:7	עֵת	
17:14	טֶרֶם	
17:14	חֵלֶק	

17:14	שסה	
17:14	גּוֹרָל	
17:14	בזז	
18:1	כּוּשׁ	
18:1	עֵבֶר	
18:2	שׁלח	
18:2	כְּלִי	
18:2	מַלְאָךְ	
18:2, 7	מִשְׁךְ	
18:2, 7	ירא	
18:3	כּל + "world"	
18:3	נֵס	
17:13; 18:3, 6	הָרִים	
18:3	שׁמע	
18:4	שׁקט	
18:4	נבט	
18:4	עַב	
18:5	גּמל	
18:5	כרת	
18:6	יַחְדָּו	
18:6	בְּהֵמָה	
18:7	יבל	
18:7	מָקוֹם	

CHAPTER VII

THE THEMES, METAPHORS AND THEME SEQUENCE OF ISAIAH 17-18 IN THE LIGHT OF ISAIAH 19-39

To lay out how Isaiah 19-39 uses the themes and metaphors of Isaiah 17-18 is important for various reasons. The use of the themes and metaphors of Isaiah 17-18 in the chapters that follow Isaiah 18 can help clarify what the author intended by them. Isaiah 19-39 can serve as a check on what we found when we reviewed the data of Isaiah 1-16. The review of the themes and metaphors in chapters 19-39 will show what role the author gives Isaiah 17-18 in later material. It can also reveal something about the degree to which Isaiah 17-18 is integral to the book of Isaiah. Isaiah 19-39 is as important as Isaiah 1-16 in determining whether the theme sequence of Isaiah 17-18 represented a unit in the mind of the author.[1] As we did for Isaiah 1-16 we will look at the sequence of the themes of Isaiah 17-18 when they appear in proximity. The evidence will show again that the themes of both chapters 17 and 18 appear together and that the author saw the material of these two chapters making up one unit.

[1] When I speak about the intentions of the author I am referring to the implied author.

Themes

The Futility of the Syro-Ephraimite Alliance

The Syro-Ephraimite alliance does not receive mention in Isaiah 19-39 but the judgment upon Ephraim is there just the same. Isaiah 28 describes the destruction of Ephraim in terms similar to 17:4-6. Isaiah 28:1-6 is a classical woe oracle with *Scheltrede* and *Drohwort*.[2] Whereas 17:4 calls Ephraim's flesh מִשְׁמַן, "fat," 28:1 says Ephraim is at the head of שְׁמָן, "fat," valleys. Isaiah 17 describes the destruction of Ephraim with the harvesting and gleaning of grain fields and olive trees. Isaiah 28:2 describes the destruction of Ephraim as Yahweh sending a destroyer to Ephraim who will come as hail, storms and as a mighty downpour (28:2). Ephraim will be "trodden under feet" (28:3). It will disappear like the flower that fades and like the early fig that one eats when one sees it (28:4).

The Remnant of Ephraim

The remnant theme in Isaiah 19-39 applies primarily to Israel or Judah but as above it is chapter 28 that applies the theme to Ephraim. In Isaiah 28 as in Isaiah 17 the remnant theme follows the description of Ephraim's destruction. Using the word that appears at 17:3 Isaiah 28:5 states that

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[2] Most commentators delimit the section to 28:1-6. Cf. F. Delitzsch and C. Keil, Commentary on the Old Testament., 10 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1975), vol. 7: Isaiah, by F. Delitzsch, two vols. in one, trans. James Martin, I: 6 (volume 1 of Isaiah hereafter cited as Delitzsch); August Dillmann, Der Prophet Jesaia, Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament., 5th ed. (Leipzig: Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1890), p. 252 (hereafter cited as Dillmann); Alec J. Motyer, The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1993), p. 230 (hereafter cited as Motyer); Christopher R. Seitz, Isaiah 1-39, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox, 1993), p. 209 (cited hereafter as Seitz); Edward J. Young, The Book of Isaiah, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1965), I: 271 (volume 1 hereafter cited as Young).

Ephraim will have a שְׁאָר, "remnant." This remnant will no longer see Samaria as its crown of glory but will see Yahweh as a crown of glory and a beautiful wreath. Isaiah 17:7-8 also speaks of this time as a time when people will trust in Yahweh as their salvation. In Isaiah 28:6 has a similar concept when it states that the one who judges will find in Yahweh the spirit of justice and the one who defends the city will find his strength in Yahweh.

Otherwise the remnant theme applies to Israel or Judah. Isaiah 27:12 applies it to Israel. Chapter 27 has more of the vocabulary of 17:1-11 than any other chapter. It describes much of the same activities as 17:1-11 but at the beginning of the chapter it offers the hope that Yahweh will defeat Israel's enemies and at the end of the chapter that Yahweh will gather the exiled back to Jerusalem. This passage is interesting because it describes the remnant theme as a reversal of what happened to Ephraim in Isaiah 17. In Isaiah 17 Ephraim's demise was likened to the gleaning of wheat and the harvesting of olives that left little. At 27:12 Yahweh will get Israel back from Egypt like one gleaning and harvesting olives. A remnant is promised in Isaiah 30 and 37. Isaiah 30:17 indicates that when judgment falls upon Israel causing all to flee at least one will still remain. In Isaiah 37's narrative of the events surrounding Assyria's threat to Jerusalem Yahweh assures Hezekiah that a remnant from Judah will take root (37:31-32). Like Isaiah 17-18 Yahweh will first destroy Assyria according to Yahweh's initiatives and then he will bless Judah.

The nations will have a remnant left after Yahweh brings devastation to the earth. According to 24:13 what remains of the nations will be like the beaten olive tree and like the gleanings after the grape harvest. Here, as was

the case for the nations in Isaiah 1-16, the remnant theme is a negative one indicating how terrible the destruction will be.

Ephraim To Discard Idols and Trust in Yahweh

The theme of Ephraim discarding idols and trusting in Yahweh is present at 27:9 and indirectly present at 28:5-6. Most commentators see Jacob in 27:9 refer to all of Israel.[3] The language and idea in any case is very similar to Isa 17:8 and at least a few commentators like John Sawyer and H. Wildberger interpret Jacob as exclusively Ephraim. After describing the destruction of Israel's enemies, 27:9 explains in words similar to 17:8 that Israel will purge away its sin when it destroys its altars (מִזְבֵּחַ), Asherahs (אֲשֵׁרָה) and sanctuaries (חַמָּן). Not like Isaiah 27 that matches Isaiah 17:7-8 so well, Isaiah 28 describes Ephraim turning to Yahweh but not discarding idols. At 28:5-6 the remnant will no longer look to Samaria as its source of pride but will look to Yahweh instead. Yahweh will become for the remnant everything that Samaria had been--glorious, a crown, beautiful, a wreath.

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[3] Cf. J. A. Alexander, Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1974), p. 440 (hereafter cited as Alexander); T. K. Cheyne, The Prophecies of Isaiah, 2 vols. (London: C. Kegan Paul & Co., 1880) I: 154 (volume hereafter cited as Cheyne); Delitzsch, pp. 458-59; John N. Oswalt, The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39, The New International Commentary On the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1986), pp. 495-96 (hereafter cited as Oswalt); Alec J. Motyer, The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1993), pp. 223-24; Christopher R. Seitz, Isaiah 1-39, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox, 1993), p. 198. Some see the referent as the post-exilic Jews: Dillmann, p. 246; Bernhard Duhm, Das Buch Jesaia, 5th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1968), p. 192 (hereafter cited as Duhm). Young, pp. 246-47, sees the referent as Judah; John F. Sawyer in Isaiah, vol 1, The Daily Study Bible (Old Testament) (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984), p. 226 (hereafter cited as Sawyer), and H. Wildberger in Jesaja, Part 2: Jesaja 13--27, Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament, 10/2 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978), pp. 1019-21, see the referent as Ephraim.

The theme of discarding idols and turning to Yahweh appears several times in Isaiah 19-39 with Judah instead of Ephraim as the subject. Isaiah 30:22 says that Yahweh will wait to show mercy to Israel. When he shows mercy the people in Zion will walk in the ways of Yahweh and desecrate and discard their golden and silver idols. Isaiah 31:7 says that the people will turn to Yahweh and discard the idols of silver and gold and "what your hands have made," words that also appear in 17:8. Like Isaiah 17-18 this verse is followed by a description of the destruction of Assyria.

Ephraim Forsakes Yahweh and Seeks Security Elsewhere

The theme of Ephraim forsaking Yahweh and seeking security elsewhere may appear at Isaiah 28. Otherwise although the theme appears with some frequency it always applies to Judah. Like Isaiah 17, Isaiah 28 follows up the theme of Ephraim turning to Yahweh with a theme having to do with forsaking Yahweh and looking for security elsewhere. However, most commentators describe Isaiah 28:7-13 as pertaining to Judah.[4] The forsaking of Yahweh shows itself in the misguidance of Ephraim's prophets and priests (28:7-13). The result will be that the people will fall and go into captivity. Like Isaiah 17, Isaiah 28:7-13 describes a grave consequence for rejecting Yahweh. It differs with Isaiah 17 in that it does not mention seeking security in a foreign alliance.

Isaiah 30:1-6 develops the theme of forsaking Yahweh and looking for security elsewhere in the same way as Isaiah 17 except that the protagonists are Judah and Egypt and not Ephraim and Aram. In Isaiah 30:1-6 Judah has

[4] Except Oswalt (p. 506), who would place 28:7-13 with 28:1-6.

rebelled against Yahweh and placed its trust in Egypt (30:1,6). Therefore Yahweh will destroy both Judah and Egypt.

There are other places where the theme of forsaking Yahweh and of looking elsewhere for national security appears but these places are quite different from Isaiah 17. Isaiah 28:15 indicates that the peoples' abandonment of Yahweh shows itself in the Jerusalemites making a covenant with death and seeking security in their lies and falsehood (28:15). As a result Yahweh will bring destruction (28:18). In 22:11 the prophet charges Jerusalem for hoping in its efforts to secure its water supply and boost its defenses rather than hoping in the Maker of the water supply. As a result of this and other acts of defiance Yahweh decrees death for all. Isaiah 29:13-16 explains that the people of Jerusalem have turned their heart away from Yahweh and have put their trust in the plans and deeds that they try to hide from Yahweh. Yahweh intends to show that their wisdom is foolish. Isaiah 30:11-12 explains that the people of Israel are rejecting the prophets' message of Yahweh and are trusting instead in their oppression and their deceit. Thus Yahweh will destroy them with their plans.

Nations Threaten Judah But Are Suddenly Dispersed by Yahweh

The theme of the nations threatening Judah and then being dispersed by Yahweh is the dominant theme of the themes of Isaiah 17-18. It also appears throughout Isaiah 19-39.

Chapter 29 describes the attack of Jerusalem in terms very similar to 17:12-14. Hordes of nations will attack Jerusalem. Yahweh's attack upon Jerusalem's enemies will be with such signs as thunder, earthquake, great

noise and fire. Isaiah 17:13 similarly chose to show Yahweh's action as a force of nature--a mighty blast. Isaiah 29:7 says the enemies will vanish so quickly and completely that the whole thing will seem like a dream or vision in the night. This is similar to the statement in 17:14 that at night there is trouble but by morning they vanish. Also very similar is how chapter 29 describes Judah's attackers after Yahweh strikes. The attacking nations will become like "fine dust" and מוץ, "chaff," the same word as in 17:13.

Many other passages refer to the theme of the nations threatening Israel or Judah and being suddenly dispersed by Yahweh. Chapter 27 expresses this theme in ways similar to Isaiah 17. Chapter 27 begins by describing Yahweh's attack on Israel's enemies. Like 17:12, Isaiah 27:1 depicts the enemy that Israel faced as the sea. What Yahweh will do is to strike the Leviathan of the sea on behalf of Israel (27:1). Like Isaiah 17, Isaiah 27 implies that Israel has suffered some affliction. Isaiah 27:6-7 rhetorically asks if Yahweh struck Israel as hard as Yahweh struck those that struck Israel. Isaiah 31:1-6 scolds Israel for going to Egypt for help. Like Isaiah 17:12-14 Yahweh will fell both Israel and Egypt but then Yahweh will come down to fight for Zion. Yahweh will succumb the enemies of Jerusalem as swiftly as a bird flies across Mt. Zion (31:5). Chapter 33 is primarily the theme of Yahweh's deliverance of Jerusalem from enemies as is Isaiah 35:3-4. Chapters 36-37 describe in detail an historical event that parallels Isaiah 17:12-14. Here the enemy against Judah is Assyria. According to 37:36 Yahweh's swift judgment of Judah's enemies is explained as the supernatural intervention of angels that slew 185,000 of the Assyrian army near Jerusalem. Isaiah 38:6 records the prophecy of the same event.

The Futility of Political Alliances

After Isaiah 17-18 the theme of the futility of political alliances appears again in several places.

In chapter 20 this theme appears in term very similar to Isaiah 18. Chapter 20 describes the futility of the Egypt and Cush alliance and and the futility of other nations allying with Egypt and Cush. Yahweh calls the prophet to demonstrate his message by walking naked for three years. This is to show the fate of Egypt and Cush.

The theme of the futility of political alliances is most developed in chapters 30 and 31. In chapter 30 the pattern follows very closely that of Isaiah 18. Yahweh pronounces a "woe" upon Israel for allying with Egypt. Through various means Yahweh tries to point out the foolishness of relying upon Egypt. What Judah should do is to wait upon Yahweh. In words that remind one of the Isaiah 18 theme of Yahweh's silent watching and sudden destruction of Assyria Isaiah 30:18 says: "Therefore Yahweh will wait" and will show Judah mercy. According to 30:27-33 Yahweh will show mercy to Judah by destroying other nations, especially Assyria. Isaiah 31 reiterates Isaiah 30 both in the theme of the futility of Judah allying with Egypt and in the theme of Yahweh's silent watching and sudden destruction of Assyria.

There are a number of other passages that show the futility of alliances. Although chapter 21 is difficult to interpret it makes clear that despite the maneuvers of various countries Babylon still falls. In 36:5-6 Assyria taunts Judah for relying upon Egypt. In chapter 39 Hezekiah by displaying his kingly wealth to Merodach-baladan shows that he desires an alliance with Babylon. The prophet warns that an alliance with Babylon will be fatal and he predicts that enemies will carry all the king's wealth away.

Yahweh Calls the World to Attention

The theme of Yahweh calling the world to attention appears in various ways. Only in 33:13 does Yahweh directly tell the world to pay attention. Here Yahweh wants the world to see what he has done to Assyria. He calls to those far and near to hear what he has done and to acknowledge his power. The background to this situation is one where the whole world was reeling under what appears to have been the oppression of Assyria. In this context Yahweh decided it was time to act and his action was to destroy Assyria. In Isaiah 34:1 the prophet addresses the nations to come and hear what Yahweh will do. He will destroy the armies of the world and he will slaughter Edom. Their carcasses will lie upon the mountains. This is to uphold the cause of Zion.[5]

The theme of Yahweh calling the world to attention without a direct address appears often. The theme of Yahweh calling the world to attention follows the theme of the futility of an alliance between Judah and Egypt in 30:30 and 31:9. At 30:30 the prophet says that when Yahweh strikes Assyria and delivers Judah he will make his voice heard and he will make the blows by his arm seen. What follows 30:30 is very much like the end of Isaiah 18. After Judah's deliverance the people of Judah will sing and rejoice like those who go to Mt. Zion playing a flute. In another song, the song of chapter 26, the singer indicates that Yahweh will call the world to attention through his actions against his enemies (26:9).

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[5] Delitzsch (p. 70), considers this to refer to the eschaton since the text mentions the destruction of the heaven and the earth (34:4). Edom is representative for all that opposes God's people. Motyer (p. 270), and Seitz (pp. 236-38), hold a similar view. Duhm (pp. 248-50), sees the description of world destruction as a way to speak of Yahweh's judgment of Edom. Dillmann (p. 301), sees Edom as one part of the greater judgment of the world.

There are a couple of references to non-verbal announcements to the world that are interesting because they use the same media to get the message out as Isa 18:3 uses and they concern events that sound similar to Isaiah 18. According to 31:9 Yahweh's נֵס, "ensign," which is the same word as in 18:3, is that which makes Assyria retreat from Jerusalem. In Isaiah 18 the world is to pay attention to Yahweh's defeat of Assyria. According to Isaiah 27:13 when the יִתָּקַע בְּשׁוֹפָר, "the trumpet will be blown," a phrase similar to 18:3, Yahweh will bring back Israel from Egypt and Assyria. This is like the nations coming to Zion and bringing a people with them in 18:7

Yahweh's Silent Watching and Sudden Destruction of Assyria

The theme of Yahweh's silent watching and sudden destruction of Assyria is one that appears frequently. One can see the theme in Isaiah 30, a chapter that has many points in common with Isaiah 18. First there is a futile alliance between Judah and Egypt and there is a destruction for Judah. Then 30:18 says that Yahweh will wait to show Judah mercy. The mercy will include a judgment on nations and on Assyria in particular (30:27-33). Many will see this judgment and know that it is Yahweh's doing.

Isaiah 31 implies the silent waiting of Yahweh before he strikes. First, Yahweh is hostile toward the Judah-Egypt alliance and as a result he mutes his protection (31:3). He will actually be the one responsible for their defeat. Isaiah 31 then explains that Yahweh will do battle on Mt. Zion and will deliver Jerusalem (31:4-5). He will supernaturally defeat Assyria from Jerusalem (31:8-9).

There are a number of other places that use this theme of Yahweh's silent watching and the sudden destruction of Assyria. Isaiah 33:1-3 echoes it

when it describes Assyria as plundering the earth while Yahweh takes his time in acting. This is plain from the longing of people for Yahweh to show his favour (33:2) and from Yahweh's own statement that shows that only after a period of time does he say he will arise to intervene. Then Yahweh directly addresses the world to behold his power (33:13). He displays his power when he vanquishes Assyria (33:19). If I may straddle two chapters one can see the theme in Isaiah 26-27. The prophet tells the people to wait in their rooms until Yahweh's punishment of the world is over (26:20-1). Then Yahweh will punish Leviathan (27:1). The historical narrative of Isaiah 36-37 describes the theme of Yahweh's silent watching and sudden destruction of Assyria. Isaiah 36:1 describes Assyria's capture of all the fortified cities of Judah. Yahweh finally acts after much prayer and at the time when Egypt diverts Assyria away from its siege of Judah. Yahweh's action is a supernatural destruction of the Assyrian army.

Nations Bring Tribute to Mt. Zion Where Yahweh Dwells

Isaiah 19-39 presents in various ways the theme of the nations bringing tribute to Mt. Zion. Within the OAN section there are two pertinent passages. Isaiah 19:18-25 tells of a time when Egypt and Assyria along with Israel will worship Yahweh. This worship will include sacrifices and vows. According to Isaiah 23:18 when Yahweh restores Tyre it will dedicate its profits to Yahweh and will send them to those who live before Yahweh.

Isaiah 19-39 typically concludes Yahweh's acts of judgment with Yahweh's reign on Mt. Zion. According to 25:2-3 and 6 nations will honor Yahweh and meet him at Mt. Zion after Yahweh destroys the foreigners' fortified city. This implies that they will bring tribute to Yahweh because that

is how a nation shows honour. According to 24:23 Yahweh will reign on Mt. Zion when he completes the punishment of the world's kings. When Yahweh restores Israel he will gather the exiles back and they will worship him on Mt. Zion according to 27:13. After the destruction of Assyria Zion will be the place of Yahweh according to 33:20-1.

Metaphors

We will now identify in Isaiah 19-39 the various metaphors Isaiah 17-18.

Agriculture

Harvest

In Isaiah 17-18 the harvest metaphor applies to Ephraim and Syria and depicts the destruction they will face. In Isaiah 19-39 the harvest metaphor appears once and applies to the world. At 24:13 with the phrases that one finds at 17:6 the destruction of the world is like the כְּנֹקֶף זַיִת, "the shaking of the olive tree," and like the עֹלְלוֹת, "gleaning grapes," after the vintage. As in Isaiah 17 a remnant remains that is here represented by gleaning grapes.

Growing a crop

The metaphor of growing a crop that appears throughout Isaiah 17-18 does not appear with the same application in Isaiah 19-39. The closest application is Isa 37:27. There Assyria compares its conquest of the nations of the world with plants that never make it to harvest. In poetic justice Isaiah 18:4-5 says Assyria is the plant that never makes it to harvest because Yahweh conquers it.

Isaiah 17:10-11 Ephraim's efforts are met with dismal failure. In contrast in Isaiah 27:2 and 6 Yahweh will reverse the effects of the failure after the judgment of Israel is over. Instead of extinction Israel will be the new vine planting that takes root, buds, blossoms, and fills the world with its fruit. Yahweh will water it and guard it. A similar application appears at Isaiah 37:31 where Judah's remnant is the plant that will again take root and bear fruit.

Winnowing

In 17:13 מוֹץ, "chaff," is the figure for Judah's enemies when Yahweh disperses them. מוֹץ, "chaff" appears at 29:5 under the same conditions. Yahweh will threaten Jerusalem and will then come against Jerusalem's enemies. Jerusalem's enemies will be "chaff" when Yahweh attacks them. As in 17:13 Yahweh will come as a סוּפָה, "windstorm." Isaiah 33:11 uses a synonym of chaff to say the same thing. It says that when Zion and the world is under attack Yahweh will decide to act against Assyria. Assyria will be "chaff" on the day of Yahweh's attack. Isaiah 27:12 implies that the nations are chaff. At 27:12 Yahweh will thresh the nations and sift out Israel. Israel is the cleaned grain--it is what remains after winnowing. By implication the nations would be the chaff.

Threshing is an action that may tie together the judgment and salvation that Judah faces from Yahweh. Threshing begins the procedure for which the purpose is to get clean grain. The last step to clean grain is the separation by winnowing of the chaff from the grain. Isaiah 21:10 identifies Judah with threshed grain. Here threshing is a metaphor for the judgment that Judah is facing. A very different application of the threshing aspect is at Isaiah 28:23-

29. It points out that the type of threshing done to extract fruit vary with each type of plant. This is an illustration for the deliberate and careful thought Yahweh takes of Judah. Though threshing is painful it yields a good fruit. That which is not good is blown away as chaff in the winnowing.

Tree

Isaiah 17-18 uses the tree metaphor to describe the land of Ephraim (17:6), the foreign nations with which Ephraim allies (17:10-11), and Assyria (18:5-6). Isaiah 19-39 applies the tree metaphor primarily to Israel and Judah although these chapters do know of an application of the tree metaphor to the nations.

Isaiah 27:2 and 6 compare Israel to a vine. After the judgment of Israel has taken place Yahweh says he will again care for the vine and the vine will be fruitful.[6] A similar application of the tree metaphor is at 37:31. The happy future for Judah after Yahweh destroys Assyria is like a plant that will take root and bear fruit. At 32:19 there is a peculiar reference to hail falling on the forest. It is peculiar because the hail falls when Israel has restoration and enjoys God's peace. The hail probably is a reference to the internal purification of Israel.[7] The boast of Sennacherib that so offends Yahweh includes the claim that he has felled the trees of Lebanon (37:24). Since in

[6] Kirsten Nielsen in There Is Hope for a Tree: The Tree Metaphor in Isaiah, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 65, trans. Christine and Frederick Crowley (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), p. 116-17 (hereafter cited as Nielsen), sees 27:2-6 as a new production based on 5:1-7. She postulates three phases of the prophetic message of 5:1-7: the original use of 5:1-7; the eighth and sixth century use of 5:1-7; the 27:2-6 version. 5:1-7 and 27:2-6 are antithetical. In Isaiah 5 the owner afflicts the vineyard, and the vineyard is the problem. In Isaiah 27 the owner protects the vineyard from outside threats.

[7] Ibid., p. 116; Oswalt, p. 588.

37:25 the statement that he dried up the Nile is figurative it is likely that the trees of Lebanon are a figure for Yahweh's land of Israel.[8] In that case the felling of the trees is a figure for Assyria's attack upon Judah.

Isaiah 24:13 refers two examples of the tree metaphor to the nations. The details of the first tree metaphor and its application are identical with the details of 17:6--the olive tree harvest and its gleanings to depict judgment--but in 17:6 the referent is Ephraim. This indicates that the judgment that befalls Ephraim will befall the nations. The second tree metapor of Isaiah 24:13 compares the destruction of the nations with what remains on a vine after the vintage. In this way it has similarities to the denuding of the vine in 18:5-6. Assyria in 18:5-6 is simply an example of the more general statement that is made here.

Sea and Mighty Waters

In Isaiah 17:12-13 the metaphor of the sea and mighty waters applies to the nations that are attacking Judah. If we broaden this application to include Ephraim as a target of the nations' attack then this application appears thrice in Isaiah 19-39. At Isa 28:17 Yahweh's judgment of Judah through Assyria and other nations compares with flood waters. At Isa 28:2 Yahweh's judgment of Ephraim through Assyria is like a "driving rain" and a "flooding downpour." In both cases the "water" is the attacker nations. Along similar lines is Isa 27:1 where the sea is the habitation of Leviathan that threatens Judah.

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[8] Delitzsch, p. 101; Dillmann, p. 326. Nielsen (p. 172) sees here the myth of Lebanon's holy trees. She thinks that this shows the king Sennacherib acts in a way that Yahweh reserves for himself and that this reveals the king's hubris.

There are other applications of this metaphor. According to Isa 21:1 Babylon is like the "Desert of the Sea" according to the *maśśâ'* superscription. At Isa 30:28 in a passage about Yahweh's attack upon Assyria Yahweh's breath is likened to a flooding torrent. In the idyllic age every person will be like a stream in the desert according to 32:2. The idyllic age will be a time when Zion will be like a place of broad rivers and streams (33:28).

Rock

In 17:10 Yahweh is a fortress צור, "rock," that Ephraim has forgotten. Isaiah 19-39 uses this metaphor to define Yahweh in a description of how Judah has a restored attitude toward Yahweh or in an exhortation to trust in Yahweh. Rather than forget the rock as Ephraim does in 17:10 the time will come when Judah will trust the rock. That will happen after Yahweh delivers Judah and establishes himself on Mt. Zion. Isaiah 26:4 says that the people of Judah will sing after Yahweh delivers them. Their song will be that they should trust in Yahweh who is the eternal צור, "rock." Isaiah 30:29 has a similar setting to Isa 26:4. Here Yahweh has delivered Jerusalem from Assyria. When that happens the people of Jerusalem will sing as they do when they go to worship Yahweh the צור, "rock" of Israel.[9] Several places use the rock metaphor in conjunction with an exhortation to trust in Yahweh. Yahweh will place a cornerstone in Zion (28:16). Those who trust in it will never be discouraged. Isaiah 33:16 says that the person who trusts in Yahweh will have a fortress rock for his fortress and will escape Yahweh's

[9] Most commentators agree that rock of Israel refers to Yahweh. Cf. Young, p. 366; Duhm, p. 227; Delitzsch, p. 41.

judgment. An entirely different application of the rock metaphor is Isa 32:2. In the idyllic age each person will be like the shadow of a great rock in the desert.

Theme Sequence

When themes from Isaiah 17-18 are in proximity it can be instructive to see if there is a pattern to the sequence of themes that relates to the pattern in Isaiah 17-18. Chapters 27, 28-29, 30, 31, and 36 all have a number of the Isaiah 17-18 themes.

If we allow the themes that Isaiah 27 applies to Israel fairly reflect the themes that Isaiah 17 applies to Ephraim then Isaiah 27 has four or possibly five of the themes of Isaiah 17-18. These themes are: Israel discards its idols (27:9); Israel forsakes its Maker and suffers desolation (27:10-11); Yahweh's silent waiting and sudden destruction of Assyria (27:11); Yahweh calls the world to attention (27:13); the rule of Yahweh on Mt. Zion (27:13).[10] The destruction of Assyria aspect of the third theme is definitely present. Isaiah 27:12 definitely describes the destruction of Assyria but along with verse 11 it may be suggestive of the theme of quiet waiting and sudden destruction of Assyria. According to verse 11 there is a time when Yahweh has no compassion for Israel and then according to verse 12 there will come the time when Yahweh will punish Israel's enemies. The fourth theme is superficially the same as the one that appears in Isaiah 17-18 but it differs in purpose.

[10] Commentators are divided over whether 27:10-11 refers to one of the cities of greater Israel (Delitzsch, pp. 458-59; Duhm, p. 192; Sawyer, p. 226; Young, pp. 246-47) or to the might of the world (Alexander, p. 440; Cheyne, p. 154; Dillmann, p. 246; Motyer, pp. 223-24; Oswalt, pp. 495-96; Seitz, p. 198). If one chooses the latter interpretation then it would reflect the theme of the nations threatening Israel and then being dispersed. In that case the series of themes still agrees with that of Isaiah 17-18.

Yahweh's call for the attention of the world functions in 27:13 as a call for the exiled of Israel to come to Jerusalem but in Isaiah 18 it functions as a call to pay attention to Yahweh's defeat of Assyria. This theme is also out of order with the sequence in Isaiah 17-18. One can explain this easily enough as the difference between when the signal goes out and when the call predicting the signal goes out. The sequence of these themes is essentially that which one finds in Isaiah 17-18 and for which one needs both chapters 17 and 18.

In Isaiah 28-29 one finds these themes of Isa 17-18: the destruction of Ephraim (28:1-4); the remnant of Ephraim (28:5); Judah (Ephraim in Isaiah 17) rejects Yahweh and seeks security elsewhere (28:7-15); nations attack Judah and Yahweh suddenly disperses the attackers (29:1-8). These themes in substance are very close to what one finds in Isaiah 17. The sequence is identical.

Chapter 30 has many of the themes of Isaiah 17-18. One major difference is that Judah takes the place of Ephraim in two of the themes. In 30:8-17 Judah's foreign alliance replaces Ephraim's. In 30:20-22 Judah's idolatry replaces Ephraim's. What was Ephraim's sin is now Judah's. If we see the themes of chapter 30 and chapters 17-18 as approximate even when Judah takes the place of Ephraim we will find a similar sequence in themes. The minor differences in sequence will be due in part to the fact that Isaiah 30 only deals with Judah. To follow the sequence of Isaiah 17-18 keeping all the themes and then replacing Ephraim with Judah would produce redundancy. For example, the attack upon Ephraim and the attack upon Judah would become two statements about the attack upon Judah. The Isaiah 17-18 themes that are in Isaiah 30 are as follows: the futility of the Judah-Egypt alliance, which approximates the Syro-Ephraimite alliance (30:1-7); Judah

forsakes Yahweh and seeks security elsewhere (30:8-17); Yahweh waits for Judah to call (30:18-19); Judah discards its idols and trusts in Yahweh (30:20-22); Yahweh delivers Judah (30:27-29); Yahweh calls the world to attention (30:30); Yahweh defeats Assyria (30:31-33). The theme in Isaiah 30 of Yahweh delivering Judah does not need to describe the attack upon Judah as happens in Isaiah 17 where the theme appears as "the threat of nations against Judah and Yahweh's sudden deliverance." That is because Isaiah 30 has presented the attack in the theme of "Judah forsakes Yahweh and seeks security elsewhere."

The major differences between the themes sequence in Isaiah 30 and Isaiah 17-18 are that the theme of Yahweh waiting in silence appears much sooner and the Judah discards its idols theme is a little later. One can explain the different placement of the waiting in silence theme with the fact that Isaiah 30 describes the troubles of only one nation. Since the earlier themes recounted the trials of Judah not Ephraim the comment about Yahweh's wait needs to come earlier in Isaiah 30. The placement of the theme of discarding the idols after the theme of rejecting Yahweh and seeking security elsewhere may reflect the fact that in this case it applies to Judah and not Ephraim. It is clear that the themes and the theme sequence of both chapters 17-18 are necessary to complete the comparison with Isaiah 30.

Chapter 31 is an abbreviation of chapter 30. It has almost the same Isaiah 17-18 themes as Isaiah 30. If we allow for the substitution of Judah for Ephraim as we did for Isaiah 30 the sequence of similar themes is as follows: the futility of the Judah-Egypt alliance, which approximates the Syro-Ephraimite alliance (31:1-3); the nations attack Judah and Yahweh fights for Jerusalem (31:4-5); Judah, which takes the place of Ephraim in Isaiah 17,

discards its idols and trusts in Yahweh (31:6-7); Yahweh defeats Assyria (31:8-9); Yahweh calls the world to attention (31:9). Like Isaiah 18 the signal that Yahweh wants the world to see is the signal of Yahweh's attack of Assyria. The major differences between this sequence list and the one in Isaiah 17-18 is the placement of Yahweh's call to the world and the placement of the discarding of idols. The call to the world theme is later simply because it reflects the actual signals and not the call to look for the signals. Isaiah 31 uses the theme to show the sign already in use. In Isaiah 17 the theme of Ephraim discarding the idols and trusting in Yahweh comes after Yahweh has judged Ephraim. This is essentially the idea behind the placement here but with Judah as the judged nation. The discard of idols theme must wait for Judah's judgment. Other than these differences the sequence follows that of Isaiah 17-18.

Isaiah 33 uses many of the same themes that are in Isaiah 17-18 themes. It begins by touching on the theme of the nations attacking Judah and Yahweh scattering the attackers. Judah is in distress because of Assyria (33:1-2). Like 17:14 Yahweh is Judah's strength in the בֹּקֶר, "morning." He scatters the attacking nations because Yahweh cares about Zion (33:3-5). Isaiah 33 next touches on the futility of treaties (33:8).[11] This reminds one of the theme of the futility of alliances. The theme of Yahweh's call for the attention of the world appears next. The call is for the nations to recognize his power (33:13). It goes out when he decides to act (33:10-12). This implies there was for Yahweh a time of silence. The Assyrian will disappear according to 33:19. Then somewhat reminiscent of 18:7 Zion will be a place

[11] Motyer (p. 265), considers Assyria to be the one who disdains his treaties. Cf. 33:1 that describes Assyria in those terms.

where Yahweh is present and the inhabitants will divide the spoil of nations. The themes that approximate the Isaiah 17-18 themes is as follows: nations threaten Judah but are suddenly dispersed by Yahweh; futility of political alliances; Yahweh's silent waiting; Yahweh calls the world to attention; sudden destruction of Assyria; the nations bringing tribute to Mt. Zion where Yahweh dwells. This sequence follows closely the sequence of Isaiah 17-18. Here the call to the world goes out after Yahweh decides to act. However, as we said above this is a reflection of the difference in the stage of the theme--the difference between announcing that there will be a call and doing the calling.

In the Isaiah 36-37 historical narrative of Assyria's attack upon Judah one finds many of the themes of Isaiah 17-18. Since Isaiah 36-37 is a narrative of Assyria's assault upon Judah one would expect the themes to follow a chronological pattern rather than a previous literary pattern. Yet it is instructive to note what themes of Isaiah 17-18 are important enough to appear. The obvious one is the theme of the nations attacking Judah. This is the topic of Isa 36:1 that introduces Isaiah 36-37 with the fact that Assyria captured all the fortified cities of Judah. At 36:6 the theme of the futility of alliances appears as Assyria tells Hezekiah that his alliance with Egypt is self-injurious. The words of Assyria to Hezekiah that the gods of Samaria could not save it reminds the reader of the futility of Ephraim's alliances (36:19). At 37:20 Hezekiah raises in his prayer the theme of Yahweh addressing the world. He tries to persuade Yahweh to deliver Jerusalem by reminding Yahweh that this act will tell all the world that he alone is God. The remnant theme, albeit not of Ephraim but of Judah, appears at 37:31. In 37:31 Yahweh promises Hezekiah a remnant for Judah that will prosper. Isaiah

37:36-37 completes the theme of the sudden destruction of Assyria. Yahweh's angel kills 185,000 Assyrian soldiers and Assyria retreats. The themes of Isaiah 17-18 that one finds in Isaiah 36-37 are as follows: nations threaten Judah; the futility of political alliances; futility of the Syro-Ephraimite alliance; Yahweh calls the world to attention; the remnant of Judah, which substitutes for Ephraim; the sudden destruction of Assyria.

Conclusion

One can see that the themes and metaphors of Isaiah 17-18 are not unique to these chapters. They appear frequently enough to make Isaiah 17-18 an integral part of the book of Isaiah. The sequence of themes follows a pattern that simulates the pattern in Isaiah 17-18. The themes in these sequences come from both Isaiah 17 and Isaiah 18 and the sequences span both chapters 17 and 18. There is no doubt that the author presented the two chapters as one unit.

CHAPTER VIII
CONCLUSION

In the previous pages we have shown how the events recorded in Isaiah 17 and 18 fit into the last third of the eighth century. We have shown that readers can understand the themes and metaphors of Isaiah 17 and 18 from material that precedes these chapters and that Isaiah 1-39 demands that Isaiah 17 and 18 be read together. The translation notes have addressed the specific issues regarding vocabulary and grammar. What remains is to bring this information together in one place and to explain the flow of thought in Isaiah 17-18.

Isaiah 17 begins with a superscription that draws the attention of the readers to the events of the Syro-Ephraimite alliance. The superscription tells the readers that this oracle is about Damascus. Just like the superscriptions over Isaiah 13:1 and 22:1 this oracle includes material that goes beyond the immediate name of the topic. Damascus' threat was the occasion for a number of prophecies in Isaiah 7 and 8. The first was that Damascus and Ephraim would fail in their attempts to overthrow Ahaz. After Ahaz refused to believe in Yahweh's word concerning Damascus further prophecies spelled out that Judah would be invaded by Assyria and Egypt. Judah would suffer at the hands of Assyria but a remnant from Judah would survive. They explained that Damascus and Ephraim would fall before Assyria but that the attackers of Damascus, Ephraim and Judah would themselves fall by the hand of Yahweh. In the meantime there is a time of waiting upon the Yahweh

who is at Zion until the storm passes. Isaiah 17 and 18 follows this pattern of explaining the events that surrounded the Damascus affair.

The oracle begins by giving the hearer the hope that those who will threaten Judah will face their demise. Judah's enemies, Aram and Ephraim, will face destruction. The image that 17:1 uses to describe their fall is significant because the same image appears at the end of Isaiah 18. At the beginning of the oracle a city, Damascus, goes out of existence and at the climactic end of the oracle another city, Zion, prospers and receives the illustrious nation's gifts. The description of Damascus as a ruinous heap will apply to Samaria and the cities of Ephraim, who 17:9 and 11 say will be desolate and whose harvest will be a heap, too.

The coming devastation will leave the cities of Aroer forsaken, which cities Aram held or Ephraim still possessed. This may foreshadow Assyrian deportation. Whatever events the Aroer cities foreshadow it is clear that the consequences of Damascus' efforts will be the wrecking of its surroundings. The place will not be suitable for habitation but only for grazing flocks. This image will appear again at 17:9 after the interlude of hope and in 18:6 when the fallen of Assyria are forsaken (עזב) to the animals and raptors. Isaiah 18:6 will bring the oracle round circle from the destruction of Judah's enemy, Damascus, to the destruction of Judah's greatest enemy, which Yahweh will use against Damascus.

The oracle ties the destinies of Ephraim and Aram together. Ephraim's decision to join with Aram binds it to Aram's judgment. With the fall of Damascus the fortress of Ephraim and the kingdom of Aram will end. This echoes the thought of 7:8-9 that the head of Aram is King Rezin and the head of Ephraim is Samaria. The fall of the king of Aram and the city of Samaria

will mean the fall of Aram and Ephraim. The glory of Aram's remnant, the country which is the greater of the two nations, will be like that of Ephraim, the lesser of the two. There is a poetic delay when 17:3 does not explain what that glory will be like. The catchword כָּבוֹד at 17:4 shows that the answer follows.

Isaiah 17 and Isaiah 18 share a common style. They both prefer comparative clauses. No other chapter in Isaiah's OAN has more than either of these chapters. The preposition *kaph* appears fifteen times in Isaiah 17-18 almost as often as the twenty-three in the rest of the OAN. This rich use of comparative clauses is why these chapters enjoy so many metaphors.

In masterful strokes the oracle tells the readers through metaphors the almost absolute annihilation of Ephraim and by extension of Aram. Israel is compared with a man who goes from health to skin and bones. This reminds the readers of the description of the fall of Assyria (Isaiah 10:16-18) and indicates that Ephraim by its decision to ally with non-covenantal people will face the scourge reserved for non-covenantal people. Since by all rights the words that originally applied to Assyria should find their home in Assyria there is here a reminder that Assyria must fall. Along with the fall of Assyria the other prophesied events should happen. Jerusalem must survive and the remnant of Israel must return to their land full of Yahweh's glory. Indeed 17:12-14 explains the survival of Jerusalem. Chapter 18 describes the fall of Assyria and bespeaks the glory of Yahweh in Israel. In 18:7 Yahweh has his abode in Zion and great nations come there to give him glory.

In the next metaphor Israel's experience is likened to cutting and gathering the lushest fields and to going through these fields a second time to glean anything that the harvesters overlooked. The transposition of objects in

17:5 shows the completeness of the harvest act by talking in terms of gathering the uncut grain and harvesting, that is, cutting, the cut grain. The name of the valley, Valley of Dead Men, adds to the specter of this image of Ephraim's and Aram's future. It also points out that the rhetorical audience is Judah. A third and final metaphor compares Ephraim's remnant to the olives that remain after one shakes the olives off an olive tree at harvest. The series of small numbers in collocation stretch out the discomfort of hearing just how few will remain. These illustrations make up the second section of the oracle that the nominal declaration "the utterance of Yahweh" demarcates. Such a radical illustration of destruction in agricultural imagery will appear near the end of the oracle to describe the destruction of Assyria. Yet the suffering of Ephraim will not be without some hope. 17:3 admits a remnant for Aram. 17:6 promises a remnant for Ephraim and Aram in the illustration of a few olives on the tree. That the trees suffer no harm is a hopeful sign after a series of statements about the destruction of trees in Isaiah 1-16. The declaration that this is what the "God of Israel" says is in itself a declaration of covenantal commitment and a reason for hope.

The next verses describe the hope that the mention of the divine name "God of Israel" evokes, for it is the plan of Yahweh to use judgment to save some of his chosen. A remnant will survive that will have learned from the fiery trials. The ones who come through the judgment will be different. They will discard the altars and pillars made for Asherah and Chamman. This introduces the first of the two charges against Ephraim in Isaiah 17-18. They will trust Yahweh and they will look to him who is the "Holy One of Israel." The oracle will end with the fulfillment of this prediction and with the nations turning to Yahweh. In Isaiah 18 the nations will first pay attention to Yahweh

when he destroys Assyria. Then at 18:7 the worship of Yahweh on Mt. Zion will take place and even those of other lands will come to worship him there.

Since this note of hope comes before another description of Ephraim's sins and awaited judgment it would seem to be out of place. This alternation between weal and woe is, however, a common characteristic of Isaiah and so must serve an important purpose.[1] The purpose it serves is to reveal the goal of Yahweh. Yahweh wants the restoration of Israel and that is foremost a spiritual transformation in each individual (אָדָם). By placing this statement between statements of judgment the author places the judgment theme in a context of Yahweh's ultimate goal. Judgment is not an end in itself. This says much about the nature of Yahweh who seeks to restore rebellious sinners. By singling out idolatry, 17:7-8 indicates idolatry's central place among the evidences of Ephraim's alienation from Yahweh.

After this note of hope the oracle tells the readers in still stronger tones the judgment upon Ephraim and the nature of Ephraim's sin. For the first time the oracle directly addresses Ephraim. This serves to emphasize and make these words the key to this opening part. At the root of all of Ephraim's sins is its failure to remember, to rely on, Yahweh as its salvation and security. Ephraim's decision to look to other nations instead of to Yahweh will give it the humiliating destiny of non-Israelite nations. This will be reversed at the end of the oracle when nations will look to Yahweh at Mt. Zion. For now Ephraim's cities will become like the cities of those nations Yahweh cleared out of Canaan on behalf of Israel. Had the oracle not promised a future for

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[1] For example, Isaiah 4; 9; 28. A similar pattern appears in other ancient Near Eastern texts that further supports that this pattern is both ancient and deliberate. Alan R. Millard finds a weal and woe pattern in Babylonian prophetic writings in "The Old Testament in its Ancient World: Aspects of Prophetic Writings," Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology 7/2 (1989): 98.

Ephraim as Yahweh's people in the previous verse, this could have signaled the annulment of the covenant and the annihilation of Ephraim as Yahweh's people.

Ephraim's rejection of Yahweh is the reason for Ephraim's other great sin--security through an alliance with Damascus. The image that the oracle uses to describe Ephraim's pursuit of success without Yahweh is one that depicts Ephraim as a farmer who plants with choice plants and imported shoots. At first the plants will show signs of promise but the harvest will be endless sorrow. Ephraim is wrong to use such plants, that is, to enter into such foreign alliances. Intertextually the readers know from Isaiah 5 that Ephraim is already in the most favoured position as Yahweh's choice plant. Ephraim's farming is petty compared to Yahweh's cultivation of Ephraim. Ephraim has nothing to gain and all to lose through its independent efforts. The end of the oracle will mirror this event. In Isaiah 17 Ephraim nurtures its planting and in Isaiah 18 Yahweh nurtures a plant. Ephraim's labours will bring it grief but Yahweh's efforts will bring about his will--judgment for all.

To this point a rough chiasm has been created between the start of the oracle and the end of the oracle. The oracle begins by telling of the destruction of a city, the forsakenness of a region, destruction illustrated by the harvesting of crops, the promise that some will see Yahweh, and the nurture of illicit crops that will backfire. The oracle ends describing the promise that the world will see Yahweh act, the nurture of crops by Yahweh, destruction illustrated by cutting the plants, the forsakenness of a devastated army, and the success of a city.

In its first section the oracle explains what Isaiah 7 means when it says that Aram and Ephraim will fail in their plans to overthrow Judah. It

gives more space to Ephraim because in the first place Yahweh wants to restore Ephraim and Judah (17:7-8). Yet, the Damascus affair involves not only Aram and Ephraim but also means trouble for Judah according to the record of Isaiah 7. Ahaz's refusal to believe will result in Assyria, Egypt and other nations overrunning Judah. What of the future of Judah in the midst of attacks from Aram, Ephraim, Assyria and possible others? The oracle deals with this in its next section. It continues to be sympathetic to Judah and tells the readers what these acts of aggression will mean. Attacks upon Judah will spell trouble for the attackers. The nations will attack like the fiercesome waters of the sea. Then Yahweh will disperse them as he did on the day that he led Israel out of Egypt. The nations' retreat will take but a moment. Their resistance will be like that of chaff and fine dust on mountains before a stormwind. Isaiah 5:28 told the readers that the attack of the nations would be like a stormwind and now in Isaiah 17 what confronts the nations is the stormwind and the nations are like chaff. The example of horrible visions that beset people at night further illustrates the attack upon Judah. The nations are like the terror of the night that vanishes with the morning. Their attack will end so decisively that it will seem to have been a dream. The oracle makes clear that Judah will endure plundering and spoiling at the hands of the nations but Yahweh will save the ones who make up the speaker's "us"--the remnant of Judah. That sounds another note of hope before descending again into the dreary world of vicious foreign aggressors.

The "us" indicates the oracle's initial or ideal audience. This is the key to the rhetorical purpose of the oracle. Isaiah 17:5 suggested the same when it used for its illustration the Valley of Rephaim that lies immediately South

West of Jerusalem. The holy remnant of Judah, made such by Yahweh, will survive, its enemies will be defeated, and Yahweh will be its helper.

The Damascus affair was within the context of greater world events that were pressing in upon Judah. The meaning of these events for the remnant of Judah is the message of the third part. Isaiah 7 had mentioned how Judah turned to Assyrian help against the aggression of Aram and Ephraim. It foretold that Assyria would go on to attack Judah and that the this would involve the ends of Egypt. Isaiah 8 was also about the threat that Aram and Ephraim were to Judah. In the context of the Damascus affair Isaiah 8 foretold that Assyria would attack Judah. It told how every whiff of conspiracy unsettled Judah. It included the prophecy that Yahweh was the only one anyone should fear. Yahweh had hidden his face but he would in time act on behalf of the holy remnant of Judah. The third part of the Damascus oracle explains these events, some of the conspiracies, the attack of Assyria, and what it means for Yahweh to both hide his face for awhile and to promise to deliver those that wait upon him.

Isaiah 18 tells the readers that alliances that may tempt Judah are futile and that Cush cannot be an aid. Conspiracy is in the air and the land of whirring wings that is on the other side of the rivers of Cush is looking for help. The Assyrian threat is causing a flurry of activities even at the ends of the world. The land is a land of hectic activity. The oracle gives the illustrious nation a long and complimentary description. The oracle reports with direct discourse the command by the land of whirring wings to its messengers to petition the greatest power in the world next to Assyria. This great power is presumably Cush since the land of whirring wings is on the other side of the rivers of Cush. Historically we know of a time when Assyria

so perturbed the Cushite pharaoh of a unified Cushite-Egypt at Memphis that he called for Cush's military might. Napata then sent armed forces to Memphis. The oracle bemoans efforts like this. Then the oracle abruptly ends the recounting of the efforts of the land of whirring wings. This information serves only as the backdrop to the main point. The focus shifts instantly from one country to the whole world.

The central theme of the third part of the oracle is the message to the world. The oracle proves this by declaring for the third time in the Damascus oracle the divine origin of these words along with the only direct quotation of Yahweh. For the second and final time the prophet makes a direct address. The world is to pay attention when Yahweh gives the signal. His action will be a public event. Yahweh says that he will be silent and observe the world stage like the heat and the dew affect grape vines. The suspense builds as the readers consider that this can only mean that Yahweh will not only permit but also will nourish the amassing of Assyrian might. The crop would flourish under such conditions. Yet since the only thing that has prospered during Yahweh's silence has been Assyria, this can only mean that Yahweh will promote the continued growth of Assyria. Then what the world is waiting for happens. When the vines reveal their fruit, which are the berries at their earliest stage, Yahweh will lop off the branches. With the certainty of a prophetic perfect the oracle states that this is as good as done. This is Yahweh's boast when he without mediation judges upon the Judean mountains the greatest power on earth. At the very moment when Assyria attacks Judah Yahweh will destroy Assyria. This shows two things to the reader. First, no one can halt the course of Assyria's progress. Yahweh himself nurtures it. Nations such as the land of whirring wings only misspend

their frantic maneuverings. Judah and the world will suffer under the hand of Assyria and alliances will not help. Second, Assyria will meet its end no matter what it does because it will be by a divine action. Not only should Ephraim trust in Yahweh but so should the world.

The result of the destruction of the Assyrian soldiers on the hills of Judah will bring the second greatest power to Zion to worship Yahweh.[2] Possibly the illustrious nation comes in gratitude for deliverance from Assyria but surely it comes to ensure that Yahweh not do to them what he did to Assyria. Its gifts will include a people, who are probably the scattered people of Israel. There is synecdoche in the coming of this great nation. Prudence would dictate that every country inferior to the homage bringer, which is the rest of the world, will eventually bring their tribute. This event is a complete reversal of the beginning of Isaiah 18 that had a nation coming in humility to the illustrious nation. It completes the thought of 17:7-8 that declared that after Yahweh's judgment the remnant of Ephraim would worship Yahweh. Now it is clear that all the world will do the same. Some nations had honoured Assyria and other nations had honoured Cush but in the end Yahweh alone receives honour. Zion will be the focal point for this homage and the dwelling place for the name of Yahweh. The oracle began with the disappearance of the city of Damascus that opposed Zion and ends with the prosperity of Zion. Judah's remnant will enjoy the blessing of Yahweh in their midst. Both the Syro-Ephraimite alliance against Assyria and alliances with Cush against Assyria are futile and foolish. Yahweh remains the King who alone defeats Assyria.

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[2] Cf. 2 Chr 32:23.

The oracle in artful fashion places the events of that initial Syro-Ephraimite threat into the context of Yahweh's overall plans for the world. The first portion of the oracle explains what Syro-Ephraimite threat meant for Yahweh's plans for that portion of Israel that would turn on the rest of Yahweh's people. The second portion explains what this threat and the world conditions of that time meant for Yahweh's plans for Judah. The third portion explains what these events meant for Yahweh's plans for the world. In every part the remnant of Judah stands as the beneficiary of Yahweh's actions.

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