

Isaiah 28-30

intro to Is 28-37

-following ch. 13-27's 'vision of divine purposes', Motyer's 'Isaiah turns to the reality of divine power.'; esp. important given his prophecies about Egypt and Assyria coming into relationship with God- 'To Isaiah's contemporaries this must have seemed both marvelous and unlikely...Isaiah, therefore, offers the greatest of his interim fulfillments (5x in chs. 13-27), a period of history in which divine sovereignty over Judah, Egypt, and Assyria would be demonstrated before their very eyes...The occasion is that of the Egyptian alliance in the days of Hezekiah.'

-but Egypt and Assyria are not mentioned by name until ch. 30, underlining Isaiah's desire to emphasize themes even more so than events

-Motyer's '[This] recalls chs. 6-12 in its blend of current politics and visionary pictures'; in the two parallel sections, 'Isaiah grapples with two identical historical and spiritual crises [Ahaz/Assyria; Hezekiah/Egypt]. He addresses himself directly to current leaders and policies, matching them all the while with related predictions of glory to come; balancing the fickleness of humankind coming under condemnation with the steadfastness of God holding firmly to his promises.'

-leads to chs. 36-37, where Motyer's 'the firm rock of history is offered as a secure foundation for the hopes just outlined.'

Isaiah 28's 'woe' to Ephraim (the primary tribe in the northern kingdom)

-1a's 'woe'- first of six 'woes' in this section (as in ch. 5); first three point to principles (28:1, 29:1,15); second three to historical applications (30:1, 31:1, 33:1)¹

-1-4's judgment vs. their pride and drunkenness

-1,3's 'wreath'- first as a symbol of beauty but then 'trampled underfoot'; 1,4's 'fading flower' (separated from its root), 'his glorious beauty', 'set on the head of a fertile valley' (Ephraim's name related to fruitfulness)

-1,3's 'drunkards', 1a,3's 'pride', 1b's 'the pride of those laid low by wine' (!; Amos 6:1-7)

-> MH's 'What an ill use they made of their plenty...making it the foods and fuel of their lusts...puffed up with pride by it...[and that] which should have been to God a crown of praise, was to them a crown of pride.'

-> 2's God will 'throw it forcefully to the ground'; 3's 'will be trampled underfoot' (like grapes into wine); 4's as a ripe fig picked and eaten

-2's 'forcefully' as lit. 'by hand' -> 3's by foot (25:10)

¹ See: Motyer, p. 228 for details.

-5-6's God, by contrast- 5b's 'a beautiful wreath for the remnant' (vs. 1,3); 5a's 'a glorious crown'

-6a's 'a spirit of justice to him who sits in judgment' (11:2-4) vs. 6b's 'a source of strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate' (26:1)

-7-13's judgment cont'd- vs. stupidity

-vs. 7's priests and prophets who 'stagger', 'reel', and 'are befuddled with' wine and beer; 8's 'tables...covered with vomit' (vs. Lev 10:9, Pr 31:4-5, Eccl 10:17, Eph 5:18)

-those who should have been most pure- and led by example

-Motyer's 'Was Isaiah an eyewitness at this scene?...It would have been easy to write a scenario for a leadership banquet celebrating the return of the ambassadors to Egypt (30:1-7), secure in the agreement they have signed (28:14-15), with Isaiah intruding a disgusted [spectator].'

-9-10's teaching elementary truths- 'do and do, rule on rule'; 'a little here, a little there'- in a word, basic principles, milk/meat

-first two phrases in Heb. as 'sav lasav sav lasav; kav lakav kav lakav'

-KSB's 'These Hebrew monosyllables, imitating the babbling of a child, mock the prophet's preaching.' (as if 'blah, blah, blah...')

-or MH's 'In the Heb., it is in rhyme; they made a song of the prophet's words and sang it when they were merry over wine.'

-11a's 'very well then...'- 11b's 'God will speak to this people...with foreign lips and strange tongues' (quoted in part in I Cor 14:21)

-W&Z's 'Isaiah said that if they did not want to listen to his lecturing, then they would be lectured by another people...'

-KSB's 'The Lord responds to their scoffing by imitating their mockery, to represent the unintelligible language of a conqueror.'

-12's had told them about His rest, but 'they would not listen'

-> 13a's 'the word of the Lord to them will become...' (ironically/justly resolves vs. 10!)- so that 13b's 'they will go and fall backward, be injured and snared and captured'

-LAB's 'Isaiah prophesied that the Assyrians would teach in a way they would like even less.'

-14-15's from Samaria to Judah: claim to security by Judah's leaders– in alliances, self-defense (II Kings 19:9?)

-irony: could have rightly claimed same if dependent on God

-15's 'covenant/agreement with death/grave [Sheol]'

-Motyer's 'What is in reality the security they have chosen? Nothing but signing their own death warrant...Outside trust in the Lord and his promises, there is only death; there is no alternative salvation.'

-MH's 'If we be at peace with God, and have made a covenant with him, we have in effect made a covenant with death that it shall come in the fittest time, that whenever it comes, it shall be no terror to us, nor do us any real damage...but to think of making death our friend, or being in league with it, while by sin we are making God our enemy and are at war with him, is the greatest absurdity that can be.'

-15,18's 'overwhelming scourge' as a mixed metaphor of flood and whips (8:6-8, 10:26)

-see also: irony of their underestimating, being too simplistic (vs. 28:9-10)

-16-17a's new kingdom

-anchored by 16's 'a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation'– God Himself &/or the Davidic monarchy, and ultimately, to Christ (Ps 118:22, Zech 3:9, 10:4, I Cor 3:10-11, Eph 2:20, I Pet 2:4-8)

-'stone' * 3 implies solid, worthy of trust; see also: 'tested' as lit. 'a stone of testing'– either one that has undergone testing or who imposes tests

-'cornerstone...foundation' implies only the substructure of the building, requiring their efforts in construction and their trust in the largely unseen

-17a's justice and righteousness as the standard– for building up His church (or the quality of life he expects from us) &/or judging His enemies

-17b-21's resulting in 18b's 'sheer terror' for those who are not following God

-17b, 18b, 19b's 'sweep' (19a's 'come' as 'sweeps by' also; same verb as Ex 12:12's 'Passover!'); 17b's 'overflow', 18b's 'beaten down', 19a's 'carry you away'; 18a's 'your covenant with death will be annulled...'

-all answering 15's confidence

-ironically, now based on 18b's 'their understanding' (vs. 28:9)

-20's bed and blanket provide no rest (vs. 28:12's 'rest'; was Isaiah tall?!; see: Princess and the Pea)

-GCM's 'These words are vibrant with holy sarcasm...[referring to] attempts made to find rest and security apart from God. Life cannot stretch itself out in perfect ease upon any other bed than that of the Divine govt; life cannot find warmth in any other covering than that of the righteousness of God.'

-Motyer's 'They have made their own bed and must now lie on it...'

-MH's 'Those that do not build upon Christ as their foundation, but rest in a righteousness of their own, will prove in the end thus to have deceived themselves; they can never be easy, safe, nor warm; the bed is too short, the covering too narrow; like our first parents' fig-leaves, the shame of their nakedness will still appear.'

-21a's Mount Perazim and Valley of Gibeon (II Sam 5:17-20, 5:22-25) as the final Davidic triumphs before Jerusalem is established as Israel's capital

-21b's 'the Lord will rise up...to do...his strange work'; MH's 'It is work that he is backward to: he rather delights in showing mercy.'

-22-29's call to repentance- trying to prevent a repeat of Samaria's prophesied sacking (28:1-13)

-22a's 'stop your mocking'- 'or your chains will become heavier'; more rebellion would lead to more bondage and greater difficulty in emerging from it

-24-28's farming analogies

-24-25's a time for preparing the soil- a rough process, but only a means to another end-- after that, a time for planting (I Cor 9:10)

-27-28's crops must be crushed to be ultimately fruitful-- and proper methods and extents must be chosen to properly thresh various produce

-MH's 'Afflictions are God's threshing-instruments, designed to loosen us from the world, to separate between us and our chaff, and to prepare us for use. And, as to these, God will make use of them as there is occasion; but he will proportion them to our strength; they shall be no heavier than there is need.'

-vs. rationalization that 'some people are worse than me...'

-26,29's all this from God (9:6) and God Himself oversees His vineyard (ch. 5, 27)

-not clear what God will do with Judah, but we know that He will act purposefully with perfect wisdom; Motyer's 'can the God who teaches purpose be less than purposeful himself?'

-> ch. 28 begins & ends with double refs to nature and ag, bracketing 7-22's mess

Isaiah 29's 'woe' to Jerusalem (Ariel, David's city)

-> a detailed answer to 28:23-29's generalities...

-1-4's judgment and devastation, incl.

-1b's continue to party and sacrifice at 'festivals'

- 'add year to year' may imply another year or so before prophecy would be fulfilled (32:10); in any case, implies religious observances were ritualistic and would not change the outcome

- on continued observance of sacrifice at festivals and other religious rituals, MH's 'Let Jerusalem know that her external performance of religious services will not serve as an exemption from the judgments of God.'

- but 2-3's judgment of Jerusalem by God thru the tool of the Assyrian siege of 701

- but again, not naming names- more about principles than events

- 2's 'altar hearth' translates Ariel- an interesting combo of God's favor and wrath (Ez 43:15-16); Motyer's 'It was the privilege and the peril of Zion to live in the presence of this fire, alike a danger to sinners (6:4-5) and the means of their salvation (6:6-7).'

- resulting in 4's 'from the ground/earth', 'out of the dust' * 2; 'brought low', 'mumble', 'ghostlike', 'whisper'

- Ariel can be trans. 'lion of God'- not anymore!

- followed by 5-8's miraculous deliverance: Judah's enemies reduced to 5's 'dust/chaff', by 6-7a's semi-apocalyptic description of the power of God- 7b-8's like a bad dream ending (Job 20:8, Ps 73:20) or like a dream in the former belief's unreality

- the power of God as Motyer's 'the audible, the visible, the invisible, with power to shake, remove, and consume...all a motif of power.'- but ironically, 'There was no noise or upheaval when the Lord dispatched Sennacherib!'

- 9-12's spiritual blindness- now and post-deliverance

- back to his ministry of hardening (6:8-9)

- post-deliverance blindness likely given their worldview (didn't believe God could deliver in the first place; Acts 12's 'prayer') and difficulty of seeing clear cause-and-effect (seeing it as random); again, more broadly, willing blindness leads to divine judgment

- 9's their participation, incl. 'blind yourselves'; 10's God's provision²- in silencing the prophets and seers (quoted in part in Rom 11:8)

- 11-12's the word of God as 'nothing but words'- can't 'read' or understand, or unwilling and unable to understand

- 13's pivotal critique- all talk ('mouth/lips'), no 'hearts'; 'their worship of me is made up

² 'Brought over' also trans. as 'poured out'- as with a drink offering. See: 1-2's Ariel/hearth. Motyer's 'With the drink offering, the sacrifice is complete.'

only of rules taught by men' (quoted in Mt 15:7-9, Mk 7:6-7); LAB's 'Religion had become routine instead of real.'

-MH's 'There are many whose religion is lip-labor only. They say that which expresses an approach to God and an adoration of him, but it is only from the teeth outward.'

-14-21's judgment, incl.

-14a's God's actions will 'astound' (Ex 15:11, Ps 78:12)

-14b's worldly wisdom/intellect will 'perish/vanish' (quoted in part in I Cor 1:19)

-15's futile attempt to hide one's actions from God- illustrated by 16's potter/clay analogy (45:9, 64:8; quoted in part in Rom 9:20; Ps 94:7)

-or more fig., Motyer's 'Isaiah is not describing actions but exposing attitudes...exposes their folly more than their culpability.'

-17's destruction so that Lebanon can again become a 'fertile field'- in a very short time (Assyrians driving people from the land; post-siege blessing- 37:30; or end-times)

-> 18-19's 'in that day...'- 'the deaf will hear the words of the scroll', 'the eyes of the blind will see' (32:3, 35:5; vs. 29:9-12; Acts 26:18), 'the humble/needy will rejoice in the Lord'

-Motyer's 'a picture of people with new faculties and new appetites, finding satisfaction in God's book...circumstances are changed, faculties are renewed, and the results are marvelous.' (Eph 5:8)

-19a's 'once more...will' lit. 'will add joy'- had joy before but will have more now

-> 20-21's social transformation- moving away from...

-20's three categories of sinners

-21's three aspects of 9th C. injustice- false witness, crooked lawyer, and corrupt judge

-'false testimony'- 24:10's 'tohu', here meaning trivial or no ground

-22-24's results³:

-22a's Abraham- Motyer's 'calling attention to age-old purposes...The implication of the Lord's providential care of Abraham is to ask would he have done all that if he had not intended to complete what he thus began? Indeed not...'

³ For Motyer's summary of chs. 28-29, see: p. 241.

-22b's 'Jacob will 'no longer...be ashamed' (50:7, 53:10; i.e., turning over in his grave); 23a's 'when they see among them their children...' (lit. singular- Jacob as nation, then person)

-23b's 'the work of my hands' (45:11)- they will keep God's name holy, acknowledge His holiness (resolving 15's 'hide'), and stand in awe of Him (8:13)

-Motyer's 'Their downward course, which so frightened their founding father, has been halted by the Lord's action.'

-24's the 'wayward in spirit will gain understanding'- becoming steady/faithful and 'those who complain will accept instruction' (teachable)

Isaiah 30's 'woe' to Judah (1's 'the obstinate children')

-> from principles to applications; Isaiah starts to name names (1-7's Egypt, 8-17's Judah, and 27-33's Assyria)- but blended with 18-26's eschatological fulfillment

-> here, building on first woe's theme of 28:16's one true foundation and salvation- trusting in God and His promises- vs. judgment and destruction

-1-5's condemnation of forming an alliance (lit. 'blanket'- as in 28:20- a protective covering⁴) with Egypt for security- will instead be 3,5's their 'shame/disgrace' (20:4-6) and 5's useless (II Kings 18:21, Ez 29:6-7)

-the event is not recorded elsewhere but fits historical context perfectly

-2's 'who go down' as lit. 'who journey [or set out] to go down'- more emphatic; irony of reversing Exodus journey from bondage to new life- incl. 4's Zoan as, ironically, where Israel had once served as slaves⁵ (Ex cite?)

-LaSor et. al.'s 'All foreign military alliances were anathema to the prophets, but especially those to Egypt, which were viewed as rejections of the Exodus. Israel's Lord had proved himself master of Pharaoh...To trust Egypt for help could only mean that Judah had turned their backs on the grandest event of their past and had lost confidence in the covenant God.'

-Motyer's 'From the feared killed (Assyria), they seek help in the proved killer (Egypt)! It is ever so when alternatives to the Lord's salvation are chosen.'

-confidence in their wisdom and strength- overturned; MH's 'The Creator is a rock of ages; the creature a broken reed. We cannot expect too little from man nor too

⁴ The word can also be translated to mean 'to weave a web'- as in the intrigue caused by such foreign policy maneuvers.

⁵ Hanes as much farther south, alluding to the Ethiopian king Shabako's control of both modern-day countries. Despite the apparently greater strength, not nearly enough!

much from God.'

-6-7's 'oracle concerning the animals of the Negev'– mostly about ripping Egypt as 6b's 'unprofitable', 7a's utterly useless, and labeled as 7b's 'Rahab the Do-Nothing'

-Rahab (51:9; Ps 87:4), the female compatriot of Leviathan (27:1), often represented by a (do-nothing) hippo

-travel thru the Negev as necessary if Assyria controlled the primary roads; ironic given belief in Egypt's power; in any case, exactly reverses the Exodus since God did not let them travel thru Philistia on the way out of Egypt! (Ex 13:17-18a)

-1-5's failings of worldly wisdom vs. 6-7's willing to incur tremendous risk and expense to court Egypt– for naught

-when God's help was a sure thing– and free (w/ repentance and trust)

-Motyer's 'While the politicians in Jerusalem were doubtless wondering, "How will our ambassadors fare?"', Isaiah suggests ironically, "Never mind them, what about the pack animals?", as though their welfare was the only important thing in a whole human waste of time.'

-> all this as a symptom of the larger problem...

-8-11's purposeful turning away from God, incl.

-8's command to write it (vs. 6-7?) down as a 'witness'– to shame the current audience; to profit future generations, incl. their children; to justify God in the severity of His judgments; to warn us (I Cor 10:11)

-9's 'rebellious people, deceitful children...unwilling to listen to the Lord's instruction'

-10-11's people don't want to hear 'what is right', but instead 'pleasant things' and 'illusions', and to 'stop confronting us' with 11a's 'this [holy] way/path' and 11b's with a Holy God (I Kings 22:13, Jer 23:17,26)

-rejecting the Truth and accepting (even demanding) falsehoods

-Motyer's 'Most of this they would not, of course, have said in the words here attributed to them. People do not openly request to be told what is wrong and illusory. Isaiah is putting their attitudes into words, verbalizing the implications of their actions and reactions.'

-Motyer's 'They did not want a supernatural message, nor a message of moral demand, but a ministry that left the surface of life unruffled, a ministry of trifles. They did not ask that preaching should cease but only that it be innocuous, void of moral imperatives and without the backing of the ultimate moral authority of the nature of God.'

-see: New Age; cite on 'itching ears'

-10a's irony of asking the seers not to see; MH's 'They had the light, but they loved the darkness instead. It was their privilege that they had seers among them, but they did what they could to put out their eyes– that they had prophets among them, but they did what they could to stop their

mouths.' (Rev 11:10)

-12-17's judgment delivered anyway (vs. 11's demand!) against Judah, incl.

-12's accusation: 'rejected this message' and 'relied on oppression/deceit'

-13-14's forthcoming judgment: 13's 'sudden'— a wall collapsing from its flaws and inherent weight, 14's 'shattered' (29:16)— smashed by an external force

-a picture of totality

-Motyer's 'iniquity both destroys itself and also invites judgment.'

-15-16's accusation: 15's offered 'rest', 'salvation', 'quietness', and 'strength' with 'repentance' and 'trust' (an interesting combo)— 'but you would have none of it' (MH's 'They would not so much as try the method prescribed')

-instead choosing 16's 'horses' (cites?) and fleeing as fast as they can (Ps 33:17, Mt 26:52); unfortunately, their pursuers would be fast as well!

-MH's 'The dogs are most apt to run barking after him that rides fast.'

-willing to do anything on X but intolerant of the suggestion of Y

-17's judgment: will be routed in fear, until 'you are left...like a banner on a hill' (!; Dt 32:30; vs. Lev 26:8)

-> from 1-17's human faithlessness to 18-33's God's faithfulness...

-18-26's future/ultimate mercy and grace, incl.

-18a's 'Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; he rises (Lk 15) to show you compassion'; 19b's 'as soon as he hears, he will answer you'; 19a's no more crying— after he hears their 'cry for help'

-GCM's 'Jehovah has to wait to be gracious. If in our folly, we refuse His way, then He compels us to take our own, and He waits until the disaster of our choice has taught us the folly of that choice.'

-20a's God had given them 'the bread of adversity and the water of affliction' (quite a menu!; a prison diet; Amos 8:11-12)

-but 20b's their 'teachers (or in context, 'Teacher') will be hidden no more'; 21's 'voices' all around them instructing them on what to do, incl. from behind— where one couldn't see (as the Spirit)— and left/right (MH's 'There are right-hand and left-hand errors, extremes on each side of virtue.')

-not just voices and teachers, but willingness to hear and follow;

Motyer's 'This divine self-revelation will be matched by powers of receptivity, eyes to see and ears to hear.'; MH's 'If God gives us not only the word, but the hearing ear-- not only the means of grace, but a heart to make a good use of those means-- we have reason to say, He is very gracious to us, and reason to hope he has yet further mercy in store for us.'

-Motyer's 'Divine care will be such that deviation right or left will be

at once corrected. In that perfect day, the Lord's people are still potential sinners but they come under a ministry of preservation in righteousness.'

-23a's rain and good crops (God's P and their P; vs. 30:20; reverses Gen 3 a la Amos 9:13); 23b-24's well-fed livestock (vs. 30:6-7); 25's 'streams of water'; 26a's totally bright moon and sun- no more darkness (vs. 24:23); 26b's 'binds up the bruises of his people and heals the wounds he inflicted'

-22's repentance: defile idols and 'throw⁶ them away like a menstrual cloth' (2:20, 31:7)

-threw away as far as possible vs. keeping them around or converting them to some other use (Acts 19:19)

-bookends: 18-21's spiritual blessing and 23-26's material blessings- from God-- surround this key verse of human response

-on the one hand..., on the other hand...

-how much God will do with our 'little' acts of repentance; MH's

'When we return to God...he will meet us with his favors.' (Ps 67:5-6, Mt 6:33)

-27-33's imminent judgment against the nations, incl.

-27's 'anger/wrath', 'fire/smoke'

-28a's 'his breath is like a rushing (28:15,18's 'overwhelming') torrent, rising up to the neck' (vs. 8:8!; for Sennacherib, saved to be murdered shortly afterwards)

-28b's 'he shakes the nations in the sieve of destruction' (Pampered Chef?); MH's 'he will sift them, not to gather out of them any that should be preserved, but so as to...shake them away at last; for it is a sieve of vanity...and they are found all chaff.'

-28c's 'he places in the jaws of the peoples a bit that leads them astray' (vs. 30:21; 10:7, 37:29)

-29's Judah rejoicing- reminiscent of Passover with 27's fire and cloud, 29's Rock (17:10; Ex 17:1-7), 30's lightning and hail (Ex 9:23), and this Song (Ex 15:21)

⁶ 'Defile' is plural while 'throw' and 'say' are singular; Motyer's 'the decision of all is also the decision of each.'

- 30a's God 'will cause men' to hear His voice and see His arm (vs. 26:11a)
- 30b's with anger, fire, and storms
- 31a's His voice will 'shatter Assyria with his scepter' (vs. 10:5); MH's 'Men are often angry when they can only threaten and talk big; but when God causes his glorious voice to be heard...the operations of his providences shall accomplish the menaces of his word.'
- 31b's 'His scepter...will strike them down'
- 32's 'punishing rod' (11:4) and 'fights them in battle with the blows of his arm'– all to music (!)
- 33's 'fire pit...deep and wide, with an abundance of fire and wood'– prepared for 'the king' (36:13) by the King– set 'ablaze' by the 'breath of the Lord' (66:24)
 - Topheth also known as Gehenna, pictures Hell
 - if lit., where Assyrian soldiers died &/or were buried/burned
 - > Motyer's 'Little did the Assyrians know that their imperial progress to Zion (10:8-11) was their funeral procession.'
- > 1-7's Egypt as no help bookends with 27-33's Assyria as no threat
- > the parallel woe in ch. 28 ended with Jerusalem's fate up in the air; not so with Assyria!

Isaiah 31-35

Isaiah 31 'woe' #2 for Judah (1's 'those who go to Egypt for help'– alliance)

→ within the context of Is 28-35...

-recaps ch. 30

-2nd application connected in theme to 29:1-14's 2nd woe: 29:1-8's God gets the last word, even if it seems to take awhile (applied to Assyrian crisis in 31:1-5); and 29:9-14's there needs to be a divine transformation to bring about the required change of heart (developed in 31:6-32:20)⁷

-the last of four chs. that begin with 'woe'– to God's people; MH's 'Men's relation to the church will not secure them from divine laws if they live in contempt of divine laws.'

-1-3's trusting in Egypt's military might, rather than God (30:1-7; Dt 17:16, Ps 20:7) and His wisdom (29:14)

-on the latter, MH's 'Is not God wise too?...But if they will not court God's wisdom to act for them, they shall find it act against them.'

-on 3a's 'men and not God...flesh and not spirit', GCM's 'Man's true resources are not found in man but in God...the strength which accomplishes is not carnal but spiritual.' (w/ app. to our trusting and expecting too much from men)

-on 3b's 'hand', Motyer's 'The merest movement of his hand is sufficient to dispose of Judah and its supposed helper, Egypt.'

-4-5's God entering the battle as 4's lion and 5's bird (Mt 23:37, Dt 32:10-12)

-irony of 4's shepherds (Gen 46:34)

-the bird reference is a bit odd; Motyer speculates that Judah had been saying God would be as much use as a sparrow– 'But the sparrow-strength of the Lord is stronger than men (I Cor 1:25)'

-in any case, represents his gracious gentleness toward disobedient people

-5b's 'pass over' (Ex 12); MH's 'The Assyrian army was to be routed by a destroying angel, who should pass over Jerusalem, though that deserved to be destroyed, and draw his sword only against the besiegers.'

-6-9's call to repent now, esp. wrt idolatry (30:22)– in the face of God's promises about history and the futility of their current faith

-8's 'Assyria will fall by...a sword [that is] not of mortals' (!)' see: Assyria's decline after the debacle at J in 701

-9's 'their stronghold' as lit. 'their rock'– their king (vs. 30:29b's Rock); Motyer's 'The Lord passes over in deliverance; Assyria passes off the stage of history.'

⁷ The two woes are connected also thru wording; see: Motyer's p. 254.

Isaiah 32

-> looking into Hezekiah's reign but with an eye to the Messiah; Motyer's 'It is part of the purpose of biblical eschatology to allow the ultimate vision to brighten the intermediate dark days.'

-1-8's new kingdom (9:7, 11:4, 16:5)

-1's leaders, ruling with R&J (Pr 8:15)- Motyer's 'Sound moral principle is allied to sound moral practice.'

-see also: 8's noble man as bookend

-2-5's common people, incl.

-2's 'each man will be like' a shelter/refuge from the wind/storm (25:4), streams of water in the desert, and the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty (lit. 'exhausted') land' (wow!)

-on 'each man', Motyer's 'for once, a barrel without a bad apple'

-on 'streams of water', MH's 'in him, we find rivers of water for those who hunger and thirst for righteousness'

-'rock' vs. MH's 'a tree, which sun or rain may beat thru' and as a rock takes the beating for those it protects (as God/Christ is to us; as we are to be to others)

-3's ears/eyes functioning; 4a's 'mind of the rash will know and understand; 4b's 'the stammering tongue will be fluent and clear' (vs. 29:9-12; Ps 45:1, Lk 24:45, I Jn 5:20a)

-5's 'the fool' (defined by what he lacks) and 'the scoundrel' (defined by what he has and misuses) will not be praised

-vs. 6-7's current standard: 6's 'fool' and 7's 'scoundrel', incl. 6b,7b's purposefully withholding from the needy (prob. leaders)

-9-14's judgment pronounced to the women of Jerusalem (3:16-26; Amos 6:1-7), incl.

-10a's 'in little more than a year...' (29:1)

-'women' represent the culture as a whole, but also targeted at them specifically
-having to specify women or they'd assume critique of men only

-9's 'complacent/secure' -> 10,11a's 'tremble', 11a's 'shudder', 11b-13's mourning
-11b's sackcloth as both what they need to do to repent- and what they will do if they don't repent, going off into slavery/exile (20:2-4); MH's 'This is meeting God in the way of his judgments, and saving a correction by correcting our own mistakes. Those only shall break that will not bend.'

-10b,12,13's loss of prosperity; MH's 'The abuse of plenty is justly punished with scarcity.'

-14's fortress/city to become 'deserted' (6:11-13a)

-resulting in 15-20's sudden transition to a new administration– 15a's when 'the Spirit is poured upon us from on high' (44:3; Ez 36:26-27, 37:14, Joel 2:28-29, Zech 12:10, Acts 2:___)

-15b's land renewed– or more fig. for regenerated life ('land' as Joshua's Canaan or Solomon's prayer)

-16's J&R everywhere

-17's R results in (inward) 'peace', 'quietness and confidence forever'

-GCM's 'The processes of R, in the midst of lawlessness, are necessarily those of wrath and a curse...but the work of R...is peace and its effect is quietness and confidence. These are the conditions of true joy.'

-see also: 18's (outward) 'peace', 'secure', 'rest' (33:20)

-> 19-20's epilogue recapping the reversal: 19's though the forest and city are 'leveled', 20's 'how blessed you will be...' (30:23-26)

-forest as prob. fig. for Assyria (10:18-19,33-34) and city refers to Jerusalem (32:12-14); more broadly, the world's opposition to God (2:12-13) and life organized in a way opposed to God (24:10)

-the point: Motyer's 'Both judgment and glory lie ahead and now is the time to choose'

Isaiah 33

-> concludes chs. 28-35 and parallels chs. 24-27 which concluded chs. 13-27

-1's woe to the destroyer/betrayer (21:2a, 24:16b), promising destruction when they are done

-fitting since Assyria had reneged on their agreement with Judah (II Kings 18:13-16), appropriately punished by S's own sons who assassinate him in his temple (Rev 18:6)

-2-6's prayer and praise

-2's prayer for grace, 'strength every morning' and 'salvation in time of distress' (incl. 'we long for you')

-3's praise to God for His power, 4's working thru men-- 'plunder...pounce' after the fact; MH's 'He that spoiled the cities of Judah shall have his own army destroyed by an angel and his camp plundered by those whom he had made a prey of.'

-5's praising God for His power and govt of R&J

-6a's praising Him because 'He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge' (11:2)

-6b's 'the fear of the Lord is the key to this treasure' (Pr 1:7a, 15:33)

-7-14's judgment:

-7-9's effects:

-7's brave men (soldiers) and envoys weep (ambassadors)– as they realize their efforts will be for naught (37:3)

-Motyer's 'Neither human power nor human wisdom have proved sufficient.'

-8's civil activity dissolves and broken treaty

-9's formerly-fertile land 'withers' (19:6b)

-Motyer's 'the climax of what began as thorns in Gen 3:18. The start of sinful people's corruption of God's fair earth was as small as the first weed, but its end is a withered world.'

-10,13's God will arise and be praised (13's 'far away...near' implies totality)– again, appealing to those who would trust in God (2:2-3)

-11-12's helplessness of their activity, incl. 11's 'conceive chaff...give birth to straw' (MH's 'not only worthless...but combustible and proper fuel for the fire')– and lit by their own breath (noting that sin leads to earthly and eternal consequences!; or taking it as a second level of damage)

-> Motyer's '33:1-2 is rooted in the time of the Assyrian threat and thus anchored in contemporary history, but by verse 12, the canvas is widening and thereafter, the themes are eschatological.' (Ps 46-48, 74, 83)

-14's 'sinners in Zion are terrified'

-in real time, at the Assyrian attack and destruction (11-12's fire) and hopefully realizing they cannot live in God's presence

-for us, MH's 'Sinners in Zion will have a great deal to answer for above other sinners; and their place in Zion will be so far from being their security that it will aggravate both their sin and their punishment...Those who rebel against the commands of the word cannot take the comforts of it in a time of need.'

-> all this to warn the believers and later convert others

-15-24's future kingdom, incl.

-15-16's righteous man defined and rewarded (Ps 15, 24:3-4)

-15's 'keep' as lit. 'shake'– as in dismissing the offer, or more likely, in fear

-15's character leads to 16's earthly and 17's heavenly

-17,20's prosperous new king (4:2; Hezekiah post-sackcloth and eventually, 21-22's 'the Lord'– Messiah) and His Zion

-vs. 18-19's removal of old, corrupt officers from oppressive countries

-based on 21-22's with God in charge– as...

-21's protector ('broad rivers' vs. J's current water 'defense'– 'the brook of Kidron'!; and no ships– implying security &/or the self-

sufficiency of the new Zion)

- 22's judge, lawgiver, and king (w/ app. to our/their need to accept His judgments, to be obedient and loyal
 - represents three branches of American govt; need for all three to be in alignment to be most effective
- vs. 23's current picturesque scene of a civil mess with plunder being carried off, 'even [by] the lame' (implies how much plunder there would be!; II Kings cite?)
 - picturing weak Jerusalem (who, by implication, gains the victory thru God's grace) *or* a decimated Assyria! (or both)
- 17's land vs. 21-23's water– implying totality
- 24's no sickness or sin (57:18-19, 58:8; Jer 33:6)
 - if viewed as a couplet, MH's 'Sin is the sickness of the soul.'
 - former esp. remarkable in light of the siege and the usual trouble with communicable diseases (vs. irony that Assyria is thought to have been sacked by same)– and the combo!

Isaiah 34

- 1-15's judgment vs. the nations, esp. Edom (Jer 49:7-22, Lam 4:21)– incl.
 - > Edom had been perennially hostile to God's people (not Gen 33, but Num 20:14-21, I Sam 14:47, Ps 137:7, Amos 1:11, Obad 10-14) and came to represent opposition to God and His people (11:14b, 63:1; Num 24:18, Ps 60:8, 83:5-6)
 - see also: Herod as an Idumean– or Edomite!
 - fittingly, David as the only one to conquer them (II Sam 8:13-14, I Kings 11:15; Ez 34:23 -> Ez 35) vs. later rebellions (I Kings 11:14-17, II Kings 8:20, 14:7,10)
 - 3's 'mountains will be soaked (lit. 'dissolve'– Motyer's 'a novel and dreadful soil erosion') with their blood'; 7b's 'land will be drenched with blood' and 'dust will be soaked with fat' (Rev 14:20)
 - MH's 'These expressions are hyperbolic and made use of because they sound very dreadful to sense (it makes us even shiver to think of such abundance of human gore), and are therefore proper to express the terror of God's wrath, which is dreadful beyond conception and expression.'
 - 4's apocalyptic (some pre-M's see this as Rev 6:12-13's 6th seal or as heaven)

-5-6's 'sword' (Motyer's 'an instrument of person-to-person destruction'; Ez 21:9-11)- 'drunk its fill' (Ez 39:17-20), 'covered in (lit. 'nourished with') blood [and] fat' (reserved for God- Lev 3:16-17, 7:22-27); 5's judgment til destruction (Rev 19:11,15) and 6's sacrifice⁸

-an appropriate picture/punishment; MH's 'No more is made of slaying an army of men than of butchering a flock of lambs and goats...Men have by sin lost the honor of human nature and made themselves like the beasts.'

-9's Edom's 'streams/dust/land' turned into 'pitch/burning sulfur/blazing pitch'- a la S&G (Obad 18)

-10's destroyed forever (applied to Babylon in Rev 19:3)

-11-15's desolation (13:20-22; Zeph 2:14, Mal 1:3) and a list of solitary and unclean birds (Rev 18?)

-11's 'chaos...desolation' (Gen 1:2); MH's 'Sin will soon turn a paradise into a chaos'

-MH's 'What a dismal change sin makes; it turns a fruitful land into barrenness, a frequented city into a wilderness.'

-16-17's closing promises, incl. 16b's 'his Spirit will gather them together'; 16a's no one missing and 17's land allotted, distributed, and possessed forever

-last two verses as a segue to ch. 35...

Isaiah 35's heaven (on earth?)

-> Motyer's 'the visionary climax' of this final woe⁹ (parallels 29:15-24)

-1-2,6b-7's land restored

-'water/streams/pool/springs'- abundant water as a picture of the Holy Spirit (32:15 vs. 33:9; 41:18, 43:19-20, 44:3-4; Ps 46:4, 63:1, 96:12, Jn 7:37-39) and hearkening back to Ex 17's temporary provision

-7b's 'in the haunts where jackals lay' as lit. 'in the home of jackals'- reversing a completely inhospitable setting

-Motyer's 'Here Isaiah describes transformation, reversal, and restoration.'

-or land can be applied fig. to people (Jn 15:16, Acts 8:8, Rom 1:13, Col 1:6)

⁸ 7's 'wild oxen' imply totality- that which would not be 'sacrificed'.

⁹ Motyer goes off on the NIV in p. 272's ftn: 'It makes nonsense of poetical analysis to translate *midbar* and *araba* respectively as *desert* and *wilderness* in verse 1 and respectively as *wilderness* and *desert* in verse 6. The same criticism applies to the translation of *ranan* in this passage. It is *shout for joy* in verse 2 and 6 but *singing* in verse 10. The omission of "small" (!) words like *Behold* (4) and *For* (6) is, unfortunately, par for the NIV course.

-3-4's the faithful remnant rejuvenated and exhorted to 'be strong and do not fear'
(reminiscent of Josh 1- with a Promised Land ahead)

-5-6a's handicapped (spiritually &/or physically) healed (32:3, 33:24, 42:7; as Jesus and the disciples)

-MH's 'Wonders shall be wrought on men's bodies...greater wonders shall be wrought on men's souls.'- healing the spiritually blind, deaf, mute and lame

-8-10a's highway (2:2-3, 11:16, 40:3)- 'the Way of Holiness'

-for the 'redeemed', 'the ransomed of the Lord who have returned'

-vs. 'the unclean', 'wicked fools', 'ferocious beasts' (II Kings 17:24-26, I Pet 5:8)

-used to come into Zion where there will be praise, 'everlasting joy' and 'gladness'
(51:11; Ps 126; Ps 23:6) vs. 10b's 'sorrow and sighing'

Isaiah 36-37

Intro to Is 36-39

-parallels II Kings 18:13-20:21¹⁰– important enough to be mentioned twice!

-a two-story historical interlude between two major parts of the book– the first closing out the focus on Assyria– and Judah's response to its threats-- in chs. 1-35; the second setting the table for Isaiah's emphasis on Babylon/exile in chs. 40-66

-note: stories are not chronological, because it serves Isaiah's literary purposes

-in both, Hezekiah prays (in dealing with enemies & sickness); MH's 'As Jerusalem was distressed, so Hezekiah was diseased, that God might have the glory of the deliverance of both, and that prayer too might have the honor of being instrumental in the deliverance.'

-in the two stories, Hezekiah as more a man of faith, and then more a man of pride; in sum, a reformer king who doesn't persevere as one would hope

intro to Is 36-37

-Isaiah goes from prophet to historian– from fore-telling future events to forth-telling the historical events that fulfilled those prophecies: Sennacherib/Assyria's siege at Jerusalem in 701 which ended so abruptly in death for the attackers

-note: Sennacherib's ascent to the throne in 705 had been met by the usual rebellions, esp. Babylon/Merodach-Baladan, Egypt, and Hezekiah/Judah

-Motyer's 'Contrary to the received political wisdom, Isaiah saw the security of the Lord's people not in politics and armed alliances, but in confidence in the Lord's promises. It is the function of chapters 36-37 to prove the earthly (and earthy) realism of this position...The Lord needs no help from Egypt, nor is he perturbed by Assyria. he is truly Lord of the nations.'

-1a's in his 14th year¹¹ (701 BC)

-1b's Sennacherib/Assyria capture Judah's fortified cities

-comports well with Sennacherib's own account-- that he captured 46 cities, took 200K people "captive", made Hezekiah "like a bird in a cage", but (surprisingly) does not say he took Jerusalem

¹⁰ II Kings is consistently longer than Isaiah. Motyer's 'The theory which best fits the facts is that both Isaiah and Kings had access to annals and records and used them to suit their own purposes as historians.' Interestingly, II Kings preserves the reversed order of Isaiah 36-37, 38-39, which seems to indicate Isaiah's precedence. See also: Jer 52 with II Kings 24-25. Add Miller & Hayes, p. 349, pt. # 2.

¹¹ Does not include his co-regency with Ahaz from 729-715.

-see: II Kings 18:14-15 for Hezekiah's message to Sennacherib, apologizing for joining alliance and offers to pay tribute to end aggression- accepted but then Assyria reneges (21:2b, 24:16, 33:1)

--> 2-4a's Sennacherib threatens Hezekiah thru intermediaries, incl. 3b's meeting location identical to 7:3!

36:4-10's message

-4's why are you so confident-- to rebel vs. Assyria?

-the beginning of the smack talk, but a very good question!

-5a's why depend on own strength and strategy? (28:11-12!)

-see also: 8-9's sarcastic taunts: 8's 'I will give you 2K horses if you can put riders on them' and 9's couldn't beat one of our soldiers

-> 5b's must be depending on someone else...

-6's why depend on Egypt/Pharaoh-- "that splintered reed of a staff which pierces a man's hand...if he leans on it" (20:3-6, 30:1-7, 31:1-9; Jer 37:7, Ez 29:6-7)

-if they were doing this here (and when they did other times), an anathema to God-- military/political allegiances of any sort (vs. trusting God) and esp. with Egypt (from where God had delivered them)

-irony that even the Assyrians agreed with Isaiah and God that this was a bad plan!

-7,10's why depend on the Lord

-7's the one whose high places Hezekiah had supposedly removed-- apparently confused about the purpose of his reforms (II Kings 18:1-7, II Chron 29-31) or trying to drive a wedge between him and opposing religious factions

-10's (probable) blasphemy: do you think I'd do this without "word from the Lord? The Lord himself told me to march against this country and destroy it." (II Chron 35:21)

-MH's 'The enemies of God's people endeavor to conquer them by frightening them, esp. by frightening them from their confidence in God.'

-interesting that the earthly power assesses other earthly power well (Egypt) but vastly underestimates divine power

--> purpose: intimidation; psychological warfare

36:11-20's message (cont'd)

-11's request for the Assyrian to speak in Aramaic (the diplomatic language of the day- Ezra 4:7, Dan 2:4) vs. Hebrew-- so the laypeople would be unable to understand, trying to avoid panic

- 12's refusal-- speaking to the king and his people, all of whom "will have to eat their own filth and drink their own urine (KJV's 'piss')-- speaks of diet/hardship under a siege
- 13's this time shouting-- 'called out'! (II Chron 32:18b's purpose: "to terrify the people and make them afraid in order to capture the city")
- 14's "do not let Hezekiah deceive you; he cannot deliver you"
- 15c's "do not let Hezekiah persuade you to trust in the Lord" (30:15); He will not deliver you
 - 18-20a's list of Aramean cities (and more to the point, Samaria-- whose god was supposedly God) whose gods had failed to deliver them from Assyria's hands (10:8-11); 20b's so how can God deliver you? (Ex 5:2's Pharaoh, Dan 3:15's N)-- good logic except for fallacy of composition!
- 16-17's "do not listen to Hezekiah"; unlike what he's told you, we promise a pleasant, peaceful, and prosperous deportation (Dt 8:7-9!)
 - sure beats 12's eat filth and drink urine!
 - but MH's 'When Satan would tempt men from trusting in God, and cleaving to him, he does so by insinuating that in yielding to him they may better their condition; but it is a false suggestion and grossly absurd...' (a la Gen 3)

36:21-37:4's response for Hezekiah & Co.

- 21's people remain silent, as commanded by the king (vs. panic); MH's 'It is sometimes prudent not to answer a fool according to his folly.'
- 22's advisors and 1's Hezekiah tear their clothes (in private)-- because of their apparent plight &/or the blasphemies against God
 - MH's '[He] intended to frighten Hezekiah from the Lord, but it proves that he frightens him to the Lord.'
- 2's sends two of the officials (Eliakim & Shebna-- 22:15-24) and the 'leading priests' to Isaiah, all in sackcloth with 3-4's request for prayer (along with 3b's pseudo-birth, MH's 'the midwife of mercy') based on 4a's hopefully "the living God" has heard these blasphemies and will "rebuke" him (I Sam 17:26, Ps 74:22)
 - MH's "not for their merit's sake, but for God's own honor's sake...[for their] leveling him with deaf and dumb idols"

37:5-7's response from Isaiah

- 6's "do not be afraid"
- 7's God would cause Sennacherib to return home (after hearing a report; vs. Jer 51:46) where the king would be assassinated 20 years later-- in 681 (10:12; II Chron 32:21b)
 - ironically, this short prophecy would accomplish much more than the commander's long rant/threats

-on what Isaiah didn't do, Motyer's 'They asked Isaiah to pray but he did not do so. There is no hesitation, no turning to God, no waiting on him, but only a simple belief that what the Lord said once he meant.' (w/ app. to specific promises)

37:8-13

-8's troop movement and 9's report (37:7) of Egyptians coming to fight Assyria¹²
--> 10-13's follow-up threatening letter from Sennacherib-- to convince Hezekiah they weren't withdrawing permanently and to keep them from taking encouragement from Egypt's supposed approach

- worse yet that the threat is coming from him directly- and that it's in writing
- sets this up as a competition between kings and their gods/God vs. Assyria/King
- implies Hezekiah's response to the first threat- no reference to Egypt, but only 10's trust in God; Motyer's 'Hezekiah has come to a straight-forward, personal, and unequivocal faith.'

37:14-20's Hezekiah's prayer

-14's Hezekiah reads the letter and takes it to the temple, "spreading it out before the Lord" (as if God needed to read it!; symbolically submitting the matter to God, with nothing to hide)

-15-20's bold/direct and respectful prayer (W&Z's 'one of the finest...in Scripture'):

-16's description of God: "O Lord, God of Israel"; "enthroned between the cherubim" (power and presence); "you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth" (vs. Assyria's view of Him as an impotent and local god)

-17's request: hear, see, listen to Assyria "insult the living God [vs. dead idols]" (37:4)

-18-19's acknowledgement that the Assyrians had trashed other countries and their gods, but they were "only wood and stone, fashioned by men's hands" (2:20, 40:18-20, 41:7, 44:9-20; Jer 10:3-11, Ps 115:3-8, 135:15-18, Acts 17:29-31)

-20a's request: "deliver us from his hand" (Ps 3:7, 31:2, 71:2-4)

-20b's purpose: "so that all kingdoms on earth may know that you alone, O Lord, are God" (Josh 4:24, I Sam 17:46)

--> Motyer's 'Like all true prayer, Hezekiah's is preoccupied with God: who he is (16), his honor (17), his uniqueness (18-19) and the revelation of his glory to the world (20).'- even while petitioning God

¹² Egypt had lost to Assyria at Elketeh, and such an attack was unlikely. The identified leader was commander of the army at this time, but king when Isaiah wrote this.

-again, note what Hezekiah did not do (vs. 37:1-2's tear his clothes– faith/trust-- and ask Isaiah to pray)

37:21-29's Isaiah's prophecy to Hezekiah about Assyria (10:5-19)

-21's Isaiah's (rel. quick, direct, and unsolicited!) I have heard your prayer...

-tremendous faith answered tremendously; Motyer's 'His adoption of the way of faith opens the door whereby he speaks to God and God speaks to him. These two things are causally connected.'

-MH's 'Those who receive messages of terror from men with patience, and send messages of faith to God in prayer, may expect messages of grace and peace from God for their comfort, even when they are most cast down...The correspondence between earth and heaven is never let fall on God's side.'

-Motyer's 'Thus, the way of believing prayer is the truly practical way of dealing with the harsh realities of this world.'

-22's "the Virgin Daughter of Zion"- a personification of Jerusalem, implying it had never been (and would not be) violated/conquered

-23's who do you think you're messing with?

-on 'raised' and 'lifted', see: 6:1's 'high and exalted'

-24b-25's supposed power of Assyria (14:13-14), incl. trees perhaps as fig. for conquered leaders and 25b's claim to have dried up Egypt's water with ease of stopping a trickle with one's foot (although he had only beaten them in battle at Elketeh, not conquered them- or even entered- the country; see also: 24-25's 7x 'I/my')

-MH's 'Those who boast of themselves and their own achievements reflect upon God and his providence.'

-but 26-27's poetically pre-ordained (lit. 'did') by God himself, and as good as done- both underlining His sovereignty

-28-29a's but I know where you live and I know what you've said and done (Ps 121:8, 139:1-4)

--> 29b's "I will put my hook in your nose and my bit in your mouth"- as with catching fish and controlling horses; Assyrians did both to their captives (30:28b; II Chron 33:11, Ez 19:9, 29:4, 38:4, Amos 4:2) and "I will make you return by the way you came"

--> style of all this parallels Assyrian boasts and mockery- talking smack!

37:30-32's sign to Hezekiah¹³

-30's two years of food naturally and third year by their effort¹⁴ (Lev 25's Sabbath/Jubilee

¹³ MH's 21-29's "confusion and shame to Sennacherib and his forces" vs. 30-35's "salvation and joy to Hezekiah and his people"

¹⁴ See: NIVSB note on II Kings 19:29.

years?)

- 31-32a's "remnant...band of survivors" who "will take root below and bear fruit above"
 - lit. for land and fig. for its people
 - here, later (post-exile), &/or end-times? (10:20-22, 11:11,16; Mic 4:7, Rom 11:5)
 - on the latter phrase, MH's "Such is the prosperity of the soul: it is taking root downwards by faith in Christ, and then being fruitful in fruits of righteousness."
- > 32b's "the zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this" (9:7b)
 - invoking a sign to try and avoid the conclusion that Assyria's defeat was merely a happy coincidence (7:14, 38:7)

37:33-35's prophecy about Sennacherib/Assyria's attack

- 33's threatened attack would not come to pass (8:6-10); 34's return/retreat to Assyria (37:29b)
- > 35a's "I will defend this city and save it"
 - 35b's "for my sake and for the sake of David my servant"-- for His honor and truth/promise

37:36-38

- W&Z's 'almost anticlimactic, occupying only three verses'
- 36's "that night the angel of the Lord" killed 185K soldiers (10:33-34, 30:27-33, 31:8-9, 33:1,18-19)
 - just one angel (prob. the pre-incarnate Christ)! with little effort from Him and little from Jerusalem/Hezekiah-- except trust
 - the Greek historian Herodotus reports that an army of field mice ate their quivers, bows and shield handles; story implies they carried the (bubonic) plague; at the least, he recognizes a miracle of some sort (LaSor et. al., p. 281's ftn.)
 - MH's 'Angels are employed, more than we are aware of, as ministers of God's justice, to punish the pride and break the power of wicked men.'
- 37's Assyria withdraws to Nineveh, largely done as a world power and never again threatening Palestine-- to be replaced by Babylon
- 38's king assassinated by two of his sons while worshiping an idol (20 years later)-- not protected by it, even in its own temple
- > ironically, this deliverance (as all others) became a LR problem since the people became convinced that God would always deliver them; LaSor et. al.'s "Thus God's act of rescue became grounds for complacency and compromise." (w/ app.)
- > Ps 76 penned here? (use to close if time)

Isaiah 38-39

Intro to Is 38-55

-Motyer's 'Isaiah made it to be his priority to face the political errors of his day with the vision of the coming Messianic king, but the reality of sin and the need for forgiveness remain, and it is to this that Isaiah turns in the second book of his trilogy.'

-same pattern as the way he dealt with the Assyrian crisis (chs. 28-35)- developing the principles of divine action, application to historical and far-future events, and the ultimate eschatological acts of God¹⁵

-review intro to chs. 36-39, 36-37, 38-39- this section opens with a historical prologue, which predicts the Babylonian exile

38:1-8's illness and healing

-1a's "in those days..."-- non-chronological, pre-Assyria's defeat¹⁶ (given 6's promise of defense, part of 19's relief; 5's 15 more years places this in 702; M-B's [39:1] defeat later in 702 places this early in that year)

-1b's Hezekiah's seemingly fatal illness

-perhaps what had ailed-- or would ail-- the Assyrians (vs. chs. 36-37)

-perhaps caused by Hezekiah's pride and efforts at self-defense (22:8b-11)

-1c's sobering 'put your house in order'

-MH's 'Our being ready for death will make it come never the sooner, but much the easier; and those that are fit to die are most fit to live.'

-> called out of the game, w/o being given a reason why! (very upsetting- w/ app.)

-2-3's Hezekiah's passionate prayer to God (Jas 5:13-16)

-goes to God

-prays toward the wall- for concentration or facing the temple?

-invoking his faith, devotion and obedience- and appealing to his good works vs. solely asking for God's grace as his servant

-doesn't ask for his life-- but given 38:10, etc., didn't want to die...

¹⁵ Motyer's 'The undeveloped references to atonement, salvation and redemption in chs. 6-35 (6:7, 25:9, 35:9-10) provide the topic announced in 40:1-2; the promises of forgiveness in 43:22-44:23 are fulfilled in chs. 48-55; and the allusion to divine conquest in chs. 40-55 becomes the foremost idea in chs. 56-66 (63:1-6).'

¹⁶ Perhaps to keep Assyria's part in the story more coherent. (Chronicles is arranged geographically-- from temple outward.) If so, the order: religious reforms, prep for Assyria incl. tunnel, Is 22's pride and self-sufficiency, H's illness and cure, II Chron 32:24-26's pride revisited, Babylon's visit as a test, curse, Assyria attacks and is driven off by God.

- worried about God's judgment?! (39:17)
- worried about his successor (not having a son or his son's youth (soon to serve as co-regent; II Kings 21:1's 12 years old?, Is 39:7?; NIVSB notes claim different things in Kings and Is!)
- his people's fate (given Assyrian threat)
- a lament that he'd have to stop in the middle of a good work (reforms)?
- 4-6's quick answer to prayer (longer and more dramatic in Kings), incl.
 - 5a's "have seen your tears" (Ps 6:6-10, Heb 5:7)
 - 5b's 15 years added to his life
 - underlines God's sovereignty– clicking on 15 more years!
 - w/ app. to the mixed blessing of knowing when you will die; MH's "We have not the instance of any other that was told beforehand just how long he should live; that good man no doubt made a good use of it; but God has wisely kept us at uncertainties, that we may be always ready" (see also: was Manasseh born during this time?)
 - 6's Jerusalem would be delivered from Assyria (again, pre-chs. 36-37)
 - > Hezekiah had prayed, given his record, with tears; God only addresses the prayer and the tears– not H's faithfulness, but God's!
 - Motyer's 'It is clear that Hezekiah came short of understanding the simple reality of faith expressing itself in prayer, resorting also to the bargaining power of good works.'
 - see also: 21's fig poultice for human part of the healing– a common remedy of that time; God's P and their P as well
- 7-8's sign (7:14; Jud 6:17,36-40, I Cor 1:22) of his healing
 - II Kings 20:8 says he would be healed in 3 days-- fig. for resurrection– but given 22's request, why couldn't he just wait three days?!
 - testing God (didn't ask for a sign when told he would die!) or suddenly remembering God's anger at his father's refusal to ask for same?
 - W&Z's 'Hezekiah's question did not evidence a lack of faith. In fact it was the opposite. Believing that he would be healed, he asked God for confirmation of His word.'
 - vs. Motyer's 'Thus Hezekiah had a double resting-place for faith (the Lord's word and the Lord's act), but still he could not quite feel convinced so he sought the fuller sign. But as the sequel now shows, having asked for a sign to support his faith, he failed to maintain his walk of faith. Ahaz faithlessly refused to ask (7:10); Hezekiah asked but faithlessly failed to act conformably.'
 - II Kings 20:9-10's option: shadow forward or backward ten steps (note the

precision!); chooses latter given supposed difficulty-- but it's all the same to an omnipotent God!

-to be fulfilled on 'the stairway of Ahaz'-- a sundial-- local or universal miracle? gradual or sudden? permanent or temporary? (Ex 10:21-23, Josh 10:12-14)

-W&Z's 'Perhaps the earth's rotation was reversed or perhaps the sun's rays were somehow refracted.'

-MH's 'The sun is a faithful messenger of time...but he that sets that clock a going can set it back when he pleases, and make it to return; for the Father of lights is director of them [as well].' (see also: H's 15 years)

-> in any case, Motyer's 'It would be as improper for us to be dogmatic about how this was done as to deny what is plainly stated.'

-> tremendous irony given 7:10-14-- esp. since Isaiah had offered him a sign as high as the heavens!

-Isaiah purposefully develops the parallel; Motyer's 'Hezekiah stands, as surely as Ahaz ever did, at the point of perilous decision wherein the way of faith will prove to be the way of salvation.'

38:9-20's Hezekiah's account after-the-fact (II Chron 29:30)

-> the primary added account from Isaiah that's not in Kings or Chronicles

-> MH's 'It is good to write a memorial of the affliction, and of the frame of our hearts under it...'

-10a's 'in the prime of my life' (!)

-12's analogies to a tent 'pulled down' (II Cor 5:1-4) and a weaver cutting the last thread (10:12)

-just that easy!

-implies judgment of the life that has been woven-- or Phil 1:6 for God's P in this

-15a's surprising response to 14's weak prayers

-15b's 'I will walk humbly all my years...'

-16-17a's perspective, incl. 'by such things men live' (ironic) and 'surely it was for my benefit that I suffered such anguish' (Ps 73:17; benefits of suffering)

-17b's 'In your love you kept me from (lit. 'you have loved my soul out of') the pit of destruction; you have put all my sins behind your back' (43:25, 44:22; Ps 30:9, 51:1,9, 103:12, Jer 31:34b, Acts 3:19)-- vs. 18's not (Ps 6:5, 88:10-12)

-both w/ app. to God and us

-MH's 'The pardon does not make the sin not to have been, or not to have been sin, but not to be punished as it deserves. When we cast our sins behind our back, and take no care to repent of them, God sets them before his face, and is ready to reckon for them; but when we set them before our face in true repentance...God

casts them behind his back.'

-indicates a rel. clear understanding of sin and salvation

-19b's value but limits of passing the essence of one's faith to the next generation (see: Manasseh); MH's 'Parents may give their children many good things...but they cannot give them grace.'

-> bookends: contrast of 20a's 'all the days of our lives' with 10a's 'in the prime of my life', and 20b's 'temple of the Lord with 10b's 'gates of death'

-> but note II Chron 32:24-26's back-sliding; MH's 'The impressions, one would think, should never have worn off, and yet, it seem they did (w/ app.!). Thanks-giving is good, but thanks-living is better.'

-> w/ app. to saving faith in the OT; Hezekiah understood his problem- under wrath and without hope with unforgiven sin, but was rescued by faithful prayer and the divine willingness and response of God to forgive him

-> within this show of faith, ch. 39's test of faith emerges (II Chron 32:31b's during this event, "God left him to test him and to know everything that was in his heart" (Gen 22:1, Dt 8:16)...

39:1-8's visitors from Babylon

-1's Merodach-Baladan brings letters and a gift to Hezekiah-- because of his illness

-almost certainly seeking a military alliance as well

-trying to figure out the sun/shadow miracle given their idolatry of the sun (II Chron 32:31a)

-MH's "The most plausible idolatry of the heathen was theirs that worshiped the sun; yet that was hereby convicted of the most egregious folly and absurdity, for by this it appeared that their god was under the check of the God of Israel." (see also: Nineveh's post-eclipse response to Jonah)

-2's Hezekiah shows visitors "everything" (39:4; II Chron 32:27-29¹⁷)

-to show them the extent to which he could oppose Assyria; ironically, showed them his limits as well

-or showing off? see also: MH's "It is not said that he showed them the temple, the book of the law, and the manner of his worship."

-in any case, Motyer's 'beyond the response that a mere convalescent gift requires'

-3-4's Isaiah asks for details of the visit and Hezekiah only reveals their location, not their agenda (doesn't seem bothered, but only answers 2nd Q!; I Sam 15)

¹⁷ His relatively impressive wealth gives evidence for this as pre-701 payment of tribute.

-5-7's prophecy: someday, they will take all of this to Babylon and some of Hezekiah's descendants would become eunuchs for Babylon's king (II Kings 24:15, II Chron 36:20, Jer 20:4-5, 27:22)

-again, the irony and justice that Hezekiah had sided with Babylon and would end up very much on its side– and a fitting conclusion in that the things in which he took so much pride would be taken

-not prudent but nothing overtly evil about this

-at the least, overly hospitable and improperly motivated; trying too hard to impress the Babylonians (Gal 1:10)

-at the most, trusting Babylon vs. God

-a remarkable prophecy, given that one would most greatly fear the Assyrians at this point!

-8's reply: 'the word of the Lord...is good', thinking it wouldn't bother him during his lifetime (!)

-encouraged and now reproved by Isaiah; Hezekiah graciously accepts both (Jn 16:7-8; w/ app. to ministers, etc.)

-selfish or gracious (better-than-I-deserve) acceptance of God's judgment and thankfulness for intervening peace? (vs. seeming Assyrian threat?!)

-> Motyer's 'His about-face in relation to all that went before in ch. 38 could not be more complete.' (faith-of-the-moment; Dion's 'totally negates 38:10-20') vs. MH's bad idea, but the sort of thing even wise people do when they fail to take things to God

future stuff...

-Is 40-48, M&H, p. 441

-Is 40-55, Miller, p. 204-225; and note parallels in 42:1-4, 49:1-6, 50:4-9, 52:13-53:12; Motyer's 'chapters 40-55 raise two interlocking questions: does banishment to Babylon mark the end of the history of the Lord's people, and if so, does this mean that they have been guilty of a sin beyond the power and readiness of the Lord to redeem?...The "feel" of chapters 40-55 is that of reading a book, a conscious literary production, and one designed to answer precisely these two questions...Its units are crafted with supreme literary artistry and not a word is out of place.'

-on the four so-called 'Servant Songs' in chs. 40-55 -> who is the servant? later fulfilled in Jesus (Acts 8:35), but who was it to Isaiah & Co.?

-Israel initially (41:8ff; 42:1's agenda, 42:19,24's failure; Cyrus called for Israel/servant- 45:4, 48:1)

-joined by another in ch. 49 (49:3's Israel and 5's 'him'; see: chs. 50-51¹⁸)- Isaiah or a more righteous Israel

-in 52:13-53:12, Isaiah and the people are joined by another- the true Israel, the obedient servant (65:1), at least eventually fulfilled in Christ (Phil 2:7-8)

-see also: ch. 14's satanic servant vs. ch. 53's obedient servant

-Is 56-66, Miller, p. 227-230; and note parallels in 59:21, 61:1-3, 61:10-62:7, 63:1-6

-on 'Messiah'- Heb. 'masiah', meaning 'anointed'; translated into Gr. 'christos' (see: Christ, christen); labeling Jesus as 'the Christ' was meant to denote him as the Jewish Messiah

-not until inter-testamental times that the term became a title- 'the anointed' (Pss. Sol. 17:36, 18:8, I Enoch 48:10, 42:4); see also: NT times of Jesus the Christ (Jn 1:20, Mt 16:15ff, Acts 2:36)

-'Messiah' came to mean 'the Son of David' who would appear as a messianic king (Mt 21:5,9, 22:42, Acts 1:16, 2:25, 2:29-31,34-36), as a re-continuance of the Davidic dynasty (II Sam 7:11-16, 23:5; Ps 2, 45, 72, 89, 110; Is 9:1-6ff, 11:1, Jer 33:14-20ff, 23:5ff, 30:9, Ez 34:23ff, etc.)

-see also: messianic kingdom- of greater scope and length and of different type (11:2-9)

¹⁸ LaSor et. al. (p. 393): 'The attempt of Bible editors to put some passages in quotation marks may help to point out this characteristic [Ch. 51 reads at times like the preaching of the prophet, yet at others it seems that God himself is speaking to the people], but the lack of agreement about where quotations begin and end permits no great confidence in the results.'