

Isaiah 13-18

Intro to Isaiah 13-27

-a new section; 13:1's first caption since 2:1

-Is 13-23 as a series of prophecies against all of the countries in that region (see: map; Jer 46-51, Ez 25-32, Amos 1-2, Zeph 2)

-about them, but prob. not delivered to them— primarily for Judah/Israel's benefit

-esp. its future faithful remnant; some near-term, non-obvious prophecies to be fulfilled, making it easier to trust the long-term prophecies, to have faith in a faithful God

-Motyer's 'This is of some importance for if God cannot demonstrate his management of history in what people see before them, why should they trust him for what they cannot see? Faith is not a leap in the dark but conviction reached on the basis of evidence.'

-to note that God was not just judging His own people (Jer 25:29)

-MH's 'To show them that, though judgment begins at the house of God, it shall not end there.'

-but more terror for the wicked in Judah and Israel (post-chs. 1-12)

-MH's 'If God would thus severely reckon with those for their sins that knew him not, and made no profession of his name, how severe would he be with those that were called by his name and yet lived in rebellion against him!'

-expanding on Isaiah's vision for the Davidic/Messianic king and the spread of the kingdom of God-- from Judah/Israel to the nations (Ps 46-48, 87, 95-100)

-as hints about Davidic king in chs. 1-6 (1:26, 2:4, 4:2) grew into a full-fledged portrait in chs. 7-12; so now, hints about a God who is sovereign over history and the world-wide spread of belief in God grows from hints in chs. 7-12 to a full-blown portrait in chs. 13-27

-> from local to world-wide salvation and judgment

-a total of 10 'oracles' in Is 13-23 (and then no more in Is)

-'oracle' as lit. 'lifting up one's voice'; can mean 'burden' or 'load' (Ex 23:5), but doesn't fit context

-organized into two sets of five, as editorial markers, to note, among other things (much more later): Motyer's 'This section is structured so as to reveal the people of God surrounded by the peoples of the world.'

-but in political context, the folly of completely fearing or relying on any of these nations vs. God

intro to Isaiah 13:1-14:27's 'oracle' (#1) vs. Babylon

- or vs. Assyria, since Babylon was part of Assyria at this time, and its kings later called themselves 'king of Babylon' when that city became the center of the empire's culture
 - see 14:24-27 and context (Ahaz had approached them for help vs. Aram & Israel)
- interesting that Isaiah begins with Babylon and treats it so prominently– Babylon as both historical city/empire and representative of arrogance, self-sufficiency (Pr 28:26), and organized worldly evil (Gen 11; Rev 17-18)

Isaiah 13

- 2-5's God using foreign troops to judge
 - 2's 'banner on a bare hilltop' (5:26, 11:10,12)
 - 3's 'my' (4x)-- not because God approves of everything they do but because He is harnessing their actions for His purposes
 - like 10:5-19, but here, a global emphasis on their activity and God's sovereignty
- 6-8's mourning, fear, and terror (Jer 6:24)
 - 7's 'hands...heart' representative of action and thought, inner and outer– totality
 - 8's 'woman in labor' as inevitable (I Thess 5:2-3)
- 9-16's apocalyptic
 - 9's 'The day of the Lord is coming– [defined as] a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger– to make the land desolate and destroy the sinners within it.'
 - 10's light/darkness (5:30, 14:1-2); sun/moon; 13's heavens/earth tremble/shake
 - 16a's 'Their infants will be dashed to pieces' (Ps 137:8-9, Hos 10:14, Nah 3:10)
- 17-18's Medes (and Persians; Dan 5:30, 6:8,12,15, Est 10:2)
 - blood-thirsty (13:15-16), uninterested in plunder; MH's 'They shall take no bribes...They shall show no pity.'
 - 17's divine direction; 18's human action
 - an amazing prophecy-- too amazing for some people (48:3)
 - see also: mentioning Medes without Persians!
- 19's the glory/pride of Babylon (vs. 4:2, 28:5's terms used for God; esp. as manifested by Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar) 'will be overthrown by God like S&G' (1:9-10)
 - Yancey's 'Today, archaeologists in Iraq must dig thru layers of dirt to find any remnant of Babylonian culture.' (p.190, *TBJR*)
- 20-22's desolation, only inhabited by wild animals (Rev 18:2)– destroyed by Assyria in 689, captured by Cyrus (M/P) in 539, Darius squashes revolt in 518 leading to desolation

Isaiah 14:1-23

-1-3's return from exile (by the faithful remnant)- released from 3's 'suffering, turmoil, and cruel bondage' (Ex 1:14), and joined by 1b's 'aliens'- world-wide emphasis (56:6-7, 60:10, 61:5)

-> 4-21's Israel's 'taunt' vs. the King of Babylon- 'the song of the fallen king'

- 'taunt' as Heb. 'masal' - better trans. as proverb or parable

- again, intermediate and eschatological

- king is unnamed- to keep it broad, and to enforce his trivial legacy

- Motyer's 'the general idea of a hostile world power is personalized into the imaginative portrayal of the end of the world king, and this, in turn, receives intermediate realization in the end of the Babylonian dynasty.'

- Motyer's 'No translation can reproduce the sweep and surge of this truly magnificent poem. It is the work of a master.'

-8's 'cedars of Lebanon' as what God planted (Ps 104:16); cutting it down represents arrogance, etc. (37:24)

-9-11's picture of former leaders rising to meet Babylon's fallen leaders, explaining that maggots and worms now replace their power and pomp (II Cor 4:16-5:5)

- indicates that in 'the grave' (Heb. Sheol), the dead are alive; they recognize each other; and there is continuity with but diminishment from their life on earth

- MH's 'True glory will go up with the soul to heaven, but vain pomp will go down with the body to the grave... Worms bred out of his putrefied body, which though he fashioned himself a god, proved him to be made of the same mold as other men. When we are pampering and decking our bodies, it is good to remember they will be worms' meat shortly.'

-12-15's picture of a star fallen from heaven:

-12a's 'O Morning Star'- bright, but easily pales in comparison to the sun

-12b's 'cast down to the earth' vs. 12c's had 'once laid low the nations'

-13-14's had told himself he would 'ascend to heaven', 'sit enthroned...on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain' (Ps 48:2), 'make myself like the Most High', etc.

-> but 15's 'you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit'

- Motyer's 'Thus the king reached for the apex of heaven and came to the *nadir* of the pit...' (38:18; Ps 88:3-6)

-> certainly has parallels with Satan (Job 38:7, Lk 10:18, Rev 12:1-9, 12a's 'O Morning Star' translated 'Lucifer' in Latin Vulgate), but probably meant for Sennacherib or Nebuchadnezzar- who were doing Satan's work! (MH's 'who when he would be more than a man, was justly turned into a [beast]'; Dan 4:30-33)

-16-17's on-lookers amazed at how the mighty ruler (over Nature and people) had fallen (Ps 82:6-7)

-18-20a's not exactly a decent burial

-Motyer's 'Stripped of his royal robes, the king now has nothing to clothe him but the bodies of those who died in the battle, heaped together ignominiously...His grave is unmarked and therefore unconsciously trampled underfoot...There is no one concerned to secure a suitably royal burial for the king.'

-> since 20b's 'you have destroyed your land and killed your people'

-> 20c-21's end of offspring/kingdom (47:9); Sennacherib was assassinated by his sons who were forced to flee for their lives (II Kings 19:37)

-19a's rejected branch (vs. 14:8, 11:1!)

-> neither an impressive tomb nor a line of descendants on his throne to commemorate his life

-Yancey's 'Isaiah 14 should be chiseled over the gravestone of every tyrant in history.' (p. 190, *TBJR*)

-22-23's conclusion, divinely affirming the above: God would 'rise up' (vs. 21b's 'not to rise') and 'cut off...her name and...her offspring' and 'turn her...into swampland' (13:20-22)- using 'the broom of destruction' to sweep away *everything*

-> 24-27's prophecy vs. Assyria

-if Babylon, clearly well into the future; Isaiah's audience would have doubted or asked the relevance- so he turns now to focus on those countries which were contemporary problems for Judah, deliverance from which would be a present comfort and a pledge of future deliverance...

-interim fulfillment of the Day of the Lord- in 13:17-22's Babylon, but more immediately, in 14:24-27's Assyria

- but Motyer argues that this is a continuation of 13:1-14:23, given...

-his big picture (more later)

-no 'oracle' (as a marker)

-the bookends-- 13:2-16's day of the Lord as 'universal purpose declared' and 14:24-27's the end of Assyrian power as 'universal purpose exemplified and validated'; 13:17-22, 14:3-23's overthrow of Babylon- the kingdom and its king-- around 14:1-2's future security of God's people; see also: 13:2 banner held forth bookends with 14:27's 'outstretched hand'

-24's 'The Lord Almighty has *sworn...*' (!; Heb 6:17-18)

-25a's 'I will crush the Assyrian in my (*3) land' (revisited; 37:36-37)

-25a's broken oppressors -> 25b's broken oppression/yokes/burdens

-> 26's 'This is the plan...for the whole world'; Motyer's 'Things are now on a universal scale. The Assyrian incident is the model for the eschaton.'

Isaiah 14:28-32 'oracle' (#2) vs. the Philistines

-28's 'in the year King Ahaz died' (715 BC)

-also, the first year Hezekiah reigned; good news to greet a good king

-context: the change of kings probably the catalyst for a visit from a Philistine delegation, probably backed up by Egypt and looking to stir up trouble w/ Assyria

-parallels 6:1's only-other oracle dated by a king's death when Ahaz ultimately depended on Assyria vs. God; here, God/Isaiah reiterating His promises and exhorting the new king to faithfulness vs. alliances

-29's command not to rejoice since 'the rod that struck you is broken'– refers to...

-David's line following the death of Ahaz (29's root a la 11:1,10), given David's success with the Philistines-- but interesting that the line of David would produce a snake!

-to Assyria– but its root would be even more devastating (14:5; Sargon in 711 BC)

-29's rod/snake (Ex 4:2-5, 7:10-12); 30's 'firstborn' (Ex 4:22-23, 11:4-5)

-29's vs. 30's 'root'!

-31's 'cloud of smoke' from troops marching

intro to Isaiah 15-16 'oracle' (#3) vs. Moab

-refers to crises in 715 (Sargon) &/or 711 (Sennacherib), but verb tenses are as if it has already happened (historical or future certain); if lit., refers to an historical event where a Moabite delegation approached Judah for an alliance

Isaiah 15

-1-5's list of towns (10:9,28-32; Jer 48:18), each pair going from south to west (as if fleeing), incl. 5's Zoar as the town to which Lot ran

-9's blood at Dimon (II Kings 3:22-23)

-in sum, passionate mourning by Moabites and God (15:5) thru Isaiah's lament¹

-God's sympathy in the midst of requisite punishment (16:11, 22:4; Lk 19:41)

-w/ app. to us, GCM's 'The man who talks of the punishment of the wicked without a sob in his heart is not in close fellowship with God.'

¹ NIV omits 'for' in 15:5,6,8, and substitutes 'but' in 15:9.

Isaiah 16

-1-4a's fear and flight² (as far as Sela– in Edom, 50 miles south of Moab!), but 4b's attacks as temporary, followed by 5's 'In love a throne will be established; in faithfulness a man will sit on it– one from the House of David (9:7)– one who in judging seeks justice and speeds the cause of righteousness'³

-1a's 'send lambs as tribute' (as earlier– II Sam 8:2, II Kings 3:4)– would have been safe if they had gone to Jerusalem and relied on God

-in context, Motyer's 'The Moab oracle corrects any impression that the hope expressed in the Davidic promises is exclusivist.'; also reveals a true security in Zion (vs. Philistine/Egyptian alliance)

-> but 6-8's past pride (14:13) and future defeat/wailing implies that they refused the offer of salvation

-Motyer's 'The entry fee was too high, for they could only enjoy Zion's security at the price of owning Zion's king...But keeping their pride intact, they remained in unrelieved misery.'

-5's love, faithfulness, justice, righteousness vs. 6's pride, conceit, insolence, boasts⁴

-> 9-11's 'So I weep...'– the Lord/Isaiah's response of lament over futility of 6's pride and 12's idolatry vs. gloating over Babylon

-9's 'as Jazer⁵ weeps'– with Moab vs. 15:5's for Moab

-13-14's judgment/defeat within three years (20:3, 37:30; either 732, 715, or 701)

-three years precisely– as if a contract; Motyer's 'Moab's pay-day has been fixed.'

-import of Isaiah's audience seeing near-term prophecies fulfilled (revisited)

-but time for Moab to repent (a la Nineveh)

² Motyer's 'We find Isaiah eavesdropping at a Moabite cabinet meeting at Sela...[where] presumably the government has fled. In the panting, breathless Hebrew which he writes we catch the panic of the leaders, one saying one thing, another something else.' After 16:5, 'So far the reply has taken up and imitated the excited speech of the envoys but now this gives way to a majestic rhythm affirming the Davidic hope.'

³ See: bookends-- Moab's ruin (15:1, 16:13-14); the grief of Moab and the Lord (15:2-9, 16:7-12); Moab's plea for shelter vs. its pride (16:1-4a,6); centering around the offer of security in Zion (16:4b-5).

⁴ 'Boast' as related to Heb. for 'invent, devise'– Motyer's 'therefore to live in a world of unreality. Isaiah's implication is that the way of faith is the way of realism, of facing facts as they are. To reject the way of faith for self-confidence is to retreat into a dream world– except that its consequences are far from dream-like.'

⁵ Note 8-9's name reversals as bookends.

Isaiah 17 'oracle' (#4) vs. Damascus (Aram)

-implicitly includes Israel– given their alliance (7:3-9, 8:1-4); see: 3a's Ephraim⁶, 4's Jacob

-in context of Is 13-20, Motyer's 'As the Lord organizes history for the good of his people (Babylon) and purposes to keep the Davidic promises (Philistia), opening them to the Gentiles also (Moab), his action under all these headings are holy and just. Sin is not overlooked. The Lord's concern for his people is a holy concern. Consequently, divine judgment touches them also.'

-> 5's defeated and plundered as if reaping and gleaning a grain harvest (Rev 14:15-16)

-> but 3b's 'remnant of Aram' (!; and bookended with the equally surprising 18:7a), and in 4's Israel 6's 'some gleanings will remain as when an olive tree is beaten, leaving two or three olives on the topmost branches'– the faithful remnant (revisited)

-Motyer's 'the unexpected reality of hope'

-MH's 'Mercy is here reserved in a parenthesis, in the midst of judgment...'

-7-8's 'In that day, men (of 'both' remnants) will look to their Maker' vs. man-made idols– and implicitly, from their alliances (another type of idolatry)

-9-10a's strong cities will be abandoned (Lev 26:31) as useless without their Rock⁷ and Fortress; 10b-11's finest/imported plants/vines will be for naught⁸ (irony given ch. 5)

-12-14's plans of the oppressors and the suffering of the oppressed are nothing and temporary (10:33-34; Ps 2:1)

-14's evening/morning as lit. if referring to 37:36-37 (Ps 30:5, 46, esp. 46:5); well-suited for Sennacherib's defeat or more generally as comment on worldly rule

Isaiah 18 prophecy vs. Cush/Ethiopia

-> Motyer argues that this is connected to ch. 17– 'the same international flavor'; see also: no 'oracle' and 17:12, 18:1's 'Oh' (Heb. 'hoy'; vs. 18:1's 'Woe to...' in NIV)

-1's 'whirring wings'– locusts, often used to represent armies

-2's 'smooth-skinned'– typically shaved

⁶ Probably bookended with 2a's Aroer– either in Gad (Num 32:34) or an unknown Aramean city chosen for its assonance in Heb.

⁷ God as 'Rock' represents both stability and strength, but is also dynamic (Ex 17).

⁸ May also refer to futility of Canaanite fertility rituals.

-2's 'envoys/messengers'– context: in 715 BC, an Ethiopian, Piankhi, was ruling Egypt; again, Egypt looked to build alliances vs. Assyria

-Motyer's 'We can picture the scene, then, like this: Pharaoh's envoys reach Jerusalem, and Isaiah takes the opportunity to publicize what he would wish them to say to the world...Seen on its own terms, the world knows no security but collective strength...[But true] security can only be found in the Lord (17:7,10)...This is a microcosm of the Lord's plan for the world. He rules all the nations (17:12-14), and it would be better for the ambassadors...to take a different message to the far parts of the earth: to wait on the Lord (18:3)...'

-4a's 'the Lord says...' (see: 4's 'I' = 5's 'he'-- Isaiah speaks for God, interchangeable with God's words)

-vs. 4b's He will 'remain quiet' for awhile; MH's 'Though he might seem for a time to sit by as an unconcerned spectator, yet he would certainly and seasonably appear.'

-5's will soon 'cut off the shoots' and 'cut off the branches'– as easily as if doing a little landscaping (but 4c's fig. for difficult to discern)

-in context, Assyrian power and Egyptian alliances will all be for naught

-> 7's their conversion, praise, and gifts (II Chron 32:23, Ps 68:31)-- resolving 2's 'people tall and smooth-skinned...' (unknown when historically except Acts 8:27 and Copts; perhaps millennial)

Isaiah 19-23

intro to Isaiah 19-20's 'oracle' (#5) vs. Egypt

-> from Assyria's broken 'rod' (10:5,33-34; 14:5,29) to Egypt's broken 'reed' (given 19:6, 36:6 and other river refs; Ez 29, esp. 29:6-7)

-esp. important given possibility of Judah/Egypt alliance (30:2, 36:6; Jer 43:7), after 715 BC when Aram/Israel are off the scene; Isaiah tries to persuade Judah/Hezekiah from entering into such arrangements⁹

Isaiah 19

-1a's God's judgment (Ps 18:9-13), results in...

-1b's fearful idols and men (Ps 76:12)

-2's civil strife (indivs., cities, kingdoms)

-3's fear and futile idolatry

-4's dictatorship- handed over to and ruled by 'a cruel master...a fierce king' (Egyptian or Assyrian- Esarhaddon after 671)

-in any case, ironic given how Egypt had dealt with Israel; MH's 'paid in their own coin'

-5-6's the Nile¹⁰ dries up and 'stinks' (37:25; more Ex refs; Ez 29:3-5, Zech 14:18), resulting in economic collapse:

-7's ag failure and soil erosion

-8's poor fishing (Num 11:5, Ps 105:29), reducing food and trade

-9's poor flax farming, sacking 10's textile industry¹¹; MH's 'The decay of trade weakens and wastes a nation and by degrees, brings it to ruin.'

-see also: reduced defenses

-11-13's their political advisors/wise men¹² are beyond useless (ironic given their famed wisdom; Ps 107:17, Pr 10:21)

-14's 'dizziness...stagger...as a drunkard staggers around in his vomit' (28:7-8)

-15's 'nothing Egypt can do- head or tail, palm branch or reed' (9:14-15)

-> 19:1-15's bookending: 1,14-15's helplessness; 2-4's social vs. 11-13's political collapse; 5-10's economic collapse

⁹ 19:1-4 has 7 references to Egypt, as if pounding in the judgment.

¹⁰ In 19:5-10, 5x incl. 3 in a row in 19:7 and 4x synonyms.

¹¹ Motyer argues that this should be translated fig. as 'pillars of society' (p. 165).

¹² More repetition: 3x wise, princes, counsel, 4x Egypt, 2x fool.

-16-17's 'in that day, the Egyptians will be like women....shudder with fear', given what God would do for Judah

-historical context: Motyer's 'at the time of Sennacherib's invasion (701 BC), Egypt made its sole attempt to redeem its promises to Judah...[but] was repulsed at Elketeh, north of Ashdod. But almost immediately, by divine intervention and without human hand, the power which defeated them was itself utterly humbled.'

-> 18-25's surprising results- then, pre-Pentecost to some extent (see: Halley's *BC* on Septuagint translated into Greek by the prominent Jewish population in Alexandria at its temple) post-Pentecost (tradition holds that Mark preached effectively among the Egyptians; see also: the Copts) &/or millennial

-in sum, MH's 'Out of the thick and threatening clouds of the foregoing prophecy, the sun of comfort here breaks forth, and it is the sun of righteousness. Still God has mercy in store for Egypt, and he will show it, not so much by reviving their trade and replenishing their river again, as by bringing the true religion among them.'

-the dominance of God's kingdom; all people are worthy of God's grace (imagine Isaiah's audience!)

-18's Egyptian allegiance to God, even speaking 'the language of Canaan'

-'speak' as key type of true religion (6:5,7,9; Jas 1:26)

-fig. of their conversion &/or more lit. given need to know enough Hebrew to engage in Jewish religion (Zech 14:16-19)

-see also: the impact of Israelites fleeing Babylonian army, settling in Egypt, and regaining their faith

-may refer to translation of the OT into the LXX at Alexandria, by the command of the Egyptian king, Ptolemy- the first time it was translated into another language

-19's altar and monument to God (Josh 22)

-former as fig. given single altar at Jerusalem; latter as perhaps fig. (MH's 'As soon as a stranger entered upon the borders of Egypt, he might perceive what God they worshipped')

-former indicating private worship and latter as national policy

-20's God will rescue them when they cry out (!; the language of Judges)

-21's worship and vows to God

-21's 'known *and* acknowledge/know'; MH's 'It is promised not only that the Lord shall be known to Egypt, but that the Egyptians shall know the Lord...The Lord is known to our nation, and yet I fear there are many of our nation that do not know the Lord.'

-22's God will strike them but heal them when they respond

-combo of the two key concepts here, both sides of the divine action

-vs. lack of response to 10 plagues!

-> Motyer points to 'five marks of true religion': 19-20a's externals (altar/monument),

20b's prayer to God ('cry out'), 21a's revelation from God, 21b's service to God– both public expression and personal commitment, and 22's discipline from God (Pr 3:11-12)

-> in the 5th oracle, a *five*-fold answer to Egypt's *five*-fold problem (culminating in 16's 'in that day') itself couched in 18-25's 5x 'in that day' prophecies:

-an overarching fear of the Lord (19:1,16-17) vs. 'language of Canaan' and allegiance to Him (19:18)

-civil war (19:2) vs. unity with God (19:19)

-crying out to idols (19:3) vs. God (19:20)

-a fierce king (19:4) vs. the Healing Lord (19:22)

-judgment (19:5) vs. worship and relationship with God (19:21)

-> from 18's *five* cities¹³ to 19's entire country to the entire world; Motyer's 'Egypt is a case in point of the Lord's purpose to unite the world in his worship.'

-see also: 23-25's Assyria joins Egypt and Israel in faithfulness to God and unity with each other! (11:6-9,16; Gen 12:3)

-in context, follows 4th oracle and 17:3, 18:3,7's Gentiles drawn to God in Zion; on what terms will the Gentiles have this relationship with God and Israel?

-Isaiah starts his answer with an extreme– Egypt, the first and most memorable enemy of God's people– and then later ties in Assyria, Israel's contemporary enemy; Motyer's 'If these two can be brought into co-equality with Israel, then the world will be one indeed!'

-prefigures Jew/Gentile unity

-23's 'highway' implies trade/correspondence and peace/security between people and access to God

-23's fellowship (vs. 17's fear) ratified by God acknowledging His relationship with them– 25's 'Egypt my people (vs. Israel!; Ex 5:1), Assyria my handiwork (10:5's rod), and Israel my inheritance (as a gift to others?)'

-MH's 'Though Egypt was formerly a house of bondage to the people of God, and Assyria an unjust invader of them, all this shall now be forgiven and forgotten, and they shall be as welcome to God as Israel.'

Isaiah 20 vs. Egypt & Cush

-1's 'in the year...' that Sargon's troops took Ashdod– a Philistine capital, sponsored by Egypt (711 BC)

-Isaiah's third intermediate-term prophetic word in Is 13-20 (14:24-27, 16:13-14)

¹³ On the possible meanings of 'five cities', see: Motyer, p. 168.

-> not about Ashdod per se, but about Judah depending on Egypt vs. Assyria- or alliances in general

-2-4's God commands Isaiah to walk around 'stripped and barefoot' for three years 'as a sign' against Egypt and Cush- that their people would be led away in the same way by Assyria

-> Egypt was not destroyed, but was defeated at Ashdod, and again later at Elketeh (in 701)- with captives being led away as described here

- 'stripped' as lit. 'naked' (II Chron 28:15, Mic 1:8); see also: 4b's 'with buttocks bared', but 3's 'barefoot' seems to imply other clothing

-> in any case, sackcloth conveyed one message (Zech 13:4, Mt 3:4, 11:8); not being in prophetic uniform conveyed another!

-note difficulty and seeming illogic of the task (see also: Hosea; Hos 9:7b's 'the prophet is considered a fool, the inspired man a maniac')

-MH's 'This was a great hardship upon the prophet; it was a blemish to his reputation, and would expose him to contempt and ridicule...It might likewise be a prejudice to his health...[But] When we are in the way of our duty, we may trust God both with our credit and with our safety...If the dress was scandalous, yet the design was glorious, and what a prophet of the Lord need not be ashamed of.

-see also: MH's 'a proof of his obedience to God in a most difficult command, and so shame the disobedience of his people to the most easy and reasonable precepts.'

-see also: although he certainly took some grief, at least in private, must have been respected enough for this to have some punch (vs. Lot in S&G)

-5-6's meant to shame those who had relied on Egypt and Cush for (false) security vs. Assyria: 'How then can we escape?' (futility and despair) -> should rely on God instead

-in context, given that Assyria did not attack Judah and Hezekiah, Isaiah was probably effective

-> in context, why tell this story? vividly illustrates to his audience that Egypt and Assyria, the two countries from 19:23-25 (and the most powerful of their time), were indeed in God's hand

chs. 13-20 revisited and compared to chs. 21-23 (will revisit pattern again in chs. 24-27)

-both begin with Babylon- political and religious downfall; kings/armies and idols

-Philistia and Edom- both look forward, near-term and indefinite future

-Moab and Arabia- both Gentiles wanting security, one refusing it from Judah/Zion and

the other trying to be self-reliant

-Aram/Israel and Judah– the people of God seeking security in alliances and self-effort

-Egypt and Tyre– both having remarkable turn toward God

-> in each set, the people of God (as 4th) are surrounded by the pagan nations–
geographically, BPM&E as NWE&S; BEA&T as NSE&W
-their position as both vulnerable and central; on whom would they depend? and
how would they impact those around them?

Isaiah 21:1-10's 'oracle' #1 (of the 2nd set of five) vs. Babylon (revisited)

-1's identified as 'the desert by the Sea'

-four of the five oracles in this set use cryptic titles– not that places cannot be identified, but indicative of Isaiah's focus on topics and principles over historic events and entities

-1's 'desert'– as in what Babylon (21:9) was spiritually and would be turned into post-judgment/defeat

-1's 'Sea'– as lit. for Persian Gulf, waters of Tigris and Euphrates; or fig. for evil

-1-5's vision

-2b's Media– the Medes, and Elam (22:6)-- a modest part of the Persian army that sacked Babylon

-3's 'racked with pain' (Dan 8:27, 10:16-17); 4's had longed for the 'twilight' of the Babylonian empire, but the devastation was 'a horror' to him (ironic, vs. Hab)

-5's eat/drink– as when the Persians sacked Babylon (Dan 5) or when Merodach-Baladan visited Hezekiah; in any case, complacency and far too casual about war

-Motyer's 'on the deeper level...is a picture of a church content with the pleasures of this world' (Rev 18:4's 'come out of her, my people')

-6-10's God and watchman (Ezekiel)

-expected trouble, but got this message instead!

-8's indefinite time-frame

-9's prophecy of defeat fulfilled in 710-702 as Merodach-Baladan (see: ch. 39's alliance, paralleling ch. 19's Egypt; if so, a relevant message for Hezekiah) is driven out of Babylon, in 689 when the city is sacked by Assyria and in 539 when captured by the Medes & Persians¹⁴ (paraphrased in Rev 14:8, 18:2)

-> near-term: Babylon as a friend now– but don't ally with them (devastating to contemporary plans); and intermediate: would be an enemy later– but don't be afraid (hopeful)

-10's ref to Judah taken into captivity– thru threshing (beaten) and winnowing (wheat/chaff)

¹⁴ On the debate here, see: Motyer, p. 172.

Isaiah 21:11-12's 'oracle' #2 vs. Edom¹⁵

-either an answer for an individual Edomite or an imaginative response to a crisis (prob. Sargon in 715)

-11's Seir = Edom, both meaning red- the descendants of Esau!

-12's morning/night

-relief followed by suffering

-night of Assyrian oppression ending for a short time before the Babylonian empire began in earnest

-along with 'come back yet again', GCM's 'The central burden [for Edom] is indefinite as to a message, and that very indefiniteness *is* the message...To such an inquiry, the reply of the prophet was intentionally indefinite. There was no answer, except that there were signs of morning and of night...the answer of revelation is that there is morning coming, and night also. Men by their own attitudes and choices decide whether they will come to the morning or pass to the night.'

Isaiah 21:13-17's 'oracle' #3 vs. the Arabs¹⁶

-14,16's same Heb. words used in parallel passage about Moab- fugitives, pomp/splendor, 'servant bound by contract', survivors/few

-13's 'thickets' to hide- from Assyrians who began attacking them in 732 or from the Babylonians who did so under N (Jer 25:17,23-24) or from general anarchy and subsequent thievery

-17's bringing a 'bow' to 15's 'sword' fight

-16's 'one year' (vs. Moab's 3 years- 16:14)- as SR fulfillment of prophecy and allowed op to repent (a la Nineveh)

¹⁵ Parallels Philistine oracle; there, they misunderstood, but here, they don't get it at all; Motyer's 'fits the development of the pattern of the oracles in chapters 13-27. As history moves forward, greater darkness envelops the world.'

¹⁶ See: Motyer, p. 178.

Isaiah 22:1-14's 'oracle' #4 vs. Jerusalem (22:9-10)

-1's identified as 'the Valley of Vision'– where God had spoken [vs. 21:1's Babylon as desert], but ironically, where people had failed to listen (Mt 11:20-24); see also: valley as metaphor for struggle (Ps 23:4), and can't see in a valley [got on 1's roofs to try!]

-either a past action or a certain future action¹⁷; on latter, seems to fit being sacked by Babylon in 586 or the unsuccessful Assyrian siege in 701

-again, 4th out of set of 5; again, surrounded by the nations, but not just about the other nations– MH's 'now let Jerusalem hear her own doom'

-1-3,5-7's defeat leads to– and bookends-- 4's Isaiah's lament (15:5, 21:3-4)

-2's death, but not by sword may indicate disease (as would probably sack Assyria) or famine from siege or devastation of country-side

-3's fleeing leaders (as Zedekiah– II Kings 25:4)

-8a's 'the defenses of Judah are stripped away' (1:8; lit. 'When He removed Judah's protective covering'; II Chron 32:1)– 8b's weapons, 9,11a's stored water (Hezekiah built the later pool– II Kings 20:20, II Chron 32:2-4,30), and 10's strengthened walls (II Chron 32:5)¹⁸

-everything except 11b's 'but you did not look to the One who made it, or have regard for the One who planned it long ago' (31:1; although II Kings 18:5, II Chron 32:6-8 for Hezekiah)

-'salvation' by faith/trust vs. own works!

-many of these people were active in religious practice– w/ app. to faith intellectually vs. experientially; w/ app. to practicing our faith thru ritual vs. difficult circumstances

-> w/ app. to our committing one of two mistakes– not doing everything we can; or doing all we can independent of God (I Cor 15:32)

-12's called to mourn, but 13's party instead, incl. 'let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die' (56:12)

-'the Lord, the LORD Almighty'– Adonai Yahweh (4 of 5 refs in chs. 13-23 are in ch. 22 on Jerusalem)

-> 14's 'this sin will not be atoned for...till your dying day'– pride, self-sufficiency, etc.

¹⁷ See: Motyer, p. 180-181 as he argues for the latter.

¹⁸ Strengthened walls by tearing down houses– apparently promotes social good vs. individual property rights.

22:15-19's prophecy vs. Shebna

-> in sum, a colorful judgment on an officer, Shebna, for...

-16,18's pride; see: Shebna as both 15's 'steward' and 'in charge'– subject to greed and power, covetousness and inappropriate ambition

-in context, perhaps fostering 12-13's inappropriate revelry &/or 8-11,18b's self-sufficiency

-Shebna as prob. a foreigner since his father is not identified; tradition holds that he secretly worked for/toward Assyria; GCM assumes he was the leader of the faction seeking help from Egypt

-> in any case, MH notes that it is odd that Isaiah talks about this at all

-Shebna represents what Judah is

-God cares about indivs as well as nations; the offer of salvation and the threat of judgment extends to individuals as well

-again, import of fulfilling near-term prophecy (36:3)

-MH's 'a confirmation in general of the hand of divine Providence in all events of this kind, which to us seem contingent and to depend upon the wills and fancies of princes' (Pr 21:1)\

22:20-25's prophecy concerning Eliakim

-> in sum, Shebna replaced by 'Eliakim, son of Hilkiyah' (before 701, with Shebna demoted to secretary; 36:3)

-21's his faithfulness to the people, 21b's 'father' and 22a's 'on his shoulders' (9:6)

-22's 'key' (as fig. for authority to legislate and regulate)

-22's 'what he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open' (quoted in Rev 3:7; Mt 16:19)

-23's peg is solid, but 25's he too would eventually 'be sheared off and will fall' (w/ app. to being so solid that there is a risk of people following the great man vs. the great God)

-> 22:15-25 in sum, Motyer's 'Thus, human beings are neither self-sufficient nor sufficient for others.' (2:22)

Isaiah 23's 'oracle' #5 vs. Tyre (& Sidon; Ez 26)

-from Is 13's Babylon to the east- to Is 23's Tyre to the west

-T&S as the primary seaports on the east side of the Mediterranean; former not captured until 572 by N and not sacked until 332 by Alex the Great

-rarely a violent enemy for Israel or others (but Ps 83:7 and other prophets; vs. Ps 45)- more focused on MB trade and wealth (w/ app.), and thus, a temptation in other ways (w/ app.)

-see also: Solomon taking Phoenician wives and importing Ashtoreth from Sidon (I Kings 11:1,5)

-> 3,5,10's Egypt, linking it to #5 in the first set of oracles; Egypt as political and powerful, Tyre as spiritual and subtle

-1-5's profitable trading center shut down, causing 5's anguish (Rev 16)

-6-14's God shutting down their partying and pride (focus on that despite the certain presence of many other sins)

-13's Babylon as a 'country of no account' at that time

-15-18's Tyre surprisingly resurrected- to an extent

-15a's would 'be forgotten' for 70 years, before 17a's God deals with her

-70 years as fig. or lit.; if lit., refers to 70 years when Assyria greatly reduced its activity (700-630) or to Judah forgetting about Tyre while in exile (605-536)

-17b's would 'return to her hire as a (fig.) prostitute and will ply her trade' (15b-16; Neh 13:16, Eph 5:5, Jas 4:4) all around the world (doing services for the highest bidder, regardless of the ethics)

-18's 'Yet her profit/earnings will be set apart' for God and His people- thru MB trade and devotion of resources by Israel (Dt 23:18) or Exodus-like plunder (Ex 12:35-36)

-later on, hopefully thru Tyre's repentance/service (I Kings 17)

Isaiah 24-27

Intro to Is 24-27

- often called 'Isaiah's Apocalypse' (see: 'in that day' 7x)
 - describes worldwide judgment and salvation-- key theme: city destroyed and city established
 - eschatological themes but not esp. apocalyptic in style; Motyer's 'a mosaic on a grand scale...no overt headings...no plain pointers to history. The whole is impressionistic, rhapsodic and full of song; an eschatological cantata on the theme of world-wide overthrow...'
- the 3rd cycle in Is 13-27, but not a set of oracles-- follows five-fold themes in Is 13-20, 21-23 (how to cover this well-- hand-out; on the board??)
 - first: that God preserves His people while judging and overthrowing the world, represented by Babylon (24:1-20)
 - second: God's certain promises, although fulfilled in the indefinite future with seeming delay (24:21-23; vs. 14:28-32's Philistia and 21:11-12's Edom)
 - third: the Day of the Lord for all people (Jew or Gentile) on Mt. Zion-- except for those self-excluded by pride, who are deluded, defeated, and denied access to the feasting on the Lord's mountain (25:1-12)
 - fourth: the faithful people of God, now depending on God vs. alliances and self-sufficiency, and thus, safe in His care (26:1-20)
 - fifth: the final, worldwide gathering (27:1-13; vs. 19:24-25's Egypt/Assyria, 23:18's Tyre)
- overall structure of chs. 24-27:
 - bookending¹⁹ centered around 25:6-12's Mount Zion
 - two themes-- 24:1-25:5's focus on the world vs. 25:6-27:13's on God's people
 - the world drawn to Mt. Zion, while the people of God 'begin' there!
 - fulfills 2:2-5's hope in Zion's magnet for the whole world (2:3's 'come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord' by Gentiles; 2:5's 'come let us walk in the light of the Lord' for Jews)
 - see: 'all' (25:6-7's 'all peoples', 25:7's 'all faces', 25:8's 'all the earth')

¹⁹ 24:1-13, 27:7-13's harvest from a destroyed and gleaned world vs. people; 24:14-16a, 27:2-6's song of the world/people remnant; 24:16b-20, 27:1's sinful world vs. evil spiritual forces overthrown; 24:21-23, 26:7-21's waiting world/people of God; 25:1-5, 26:1-6's song of the ruined vs. strong city.

Isaiah 24

-1-3's destruction of the 'earth' (16x in ch. 24), incl.

-1,3's 'laid waste', 1's devastate, 3's 'plundered', 3's 'completely...totally'; 1's God as active vs. 3's earth as passive

-1b's 'scatter'– as with Babel (Gen 11:4,8,9) and Noah's post-flood (Gen 9:19)

-2's list of six pairs (Hos 4:9)

-covers religious, domestic and commercial– implying totality

-each appearing to be former with power over latter (including last two over each other!)– social distinctions and earthly resources will make no difference

-priest/people implies both were equally sinful– at least given their respective knowledge and responsibilities (Hos 4:4-9)

-MH's 'All are subject to the same diseases of body, sorrows of mind, afflictions in relations, and the like...[And] whether men have little or much, they shall lose it all. Those of the meaner rank smart first by famine; but those of the higher rank go first into captivity.' (as under Babylon)

-4-6's judgment, incl.

-4's 'wither' * 2 (24:7; 15:6, 16:8, 34:4)– vs. 1-3's destruction

-from total and sudden to incomplete and gradual, but more suffering

-from external to internal, as in sin; Motyer's 'the vision of a blighted nature is suitable, humankind communicating their contagion to the world.'

-5's 'the earth is defiled by its people' (lit. &/or fig.; Gen 3:17, 6:5-7, Num 35:33-34, Jer 3:1,2,9; Rom 1:18-32)– because of their disobedience²⁰, resulting in 'breaking the everlasting covenant' (55:3, 61:8; Gen 9:16, Lev 24:8, Dt 31:20, II Sam 23:5, Ps 105:10)

-6b's 'only a few are left' (13:12)– as with Noah

-MH's 'He has an incontestable right to pass sentence upon it and an irresistible power to execute that sentence.'

-7-12's details, incl.

-7's 'dries up...withers' (24:4)– the source of joy killed off by the 'contagion'

-> 7-12's song as 15 lines of mostly three words each in Heb.; Motyer's 'The feeling is as of a series of hammer blows, as if he were watching the city being brought to ruins.'

²⁰ Motyer's 'Transgression against revealed truth' and 'introducing an innovative morality' (latter given that word for statutes is derived from 'to carve', implying permanence).

- 7-9,11's party-pooped (5:11-13, 22:2,13, 23:7 for Judah); MH's 'Great laughter commonly ends in a sigh.' (Eccl 2:1-2)
 - destroying 'wine' and 'vine'– fruit and root
 - 7,9,11's references to wine indicate a worldly lifestyle and outlook; wine may be used to parallel Noah (Gen 9:20,25)
 - irony that they are both depending on and destroying earth's produce at the same time (w/ app.); Motyer's 'Their beer is flat! To want nothing but this world is to end up with nothing but want.'
- 10,12's city desolate
 - this city as the accumulation of 7-9,11's individuals– or fig. for all cities, esp. Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, Jerusalem, Rome, etc.-- or more broadly, world power that opposes God
 - on the latter, Motyer's 'Thus, Isaiah looked thru the Babylon he knew (chs. 13-14) to the ongoing spirit of Babylon ever-present in world history (21:1-10), and finally to the ultimate Babel where at length, humankind's self-sufficiency would bring their whole world about their ears.'
 - 10's 'desolate' as Heb. 'tohu' (Jer 4:23)– 'empty', 'meaningless', or 'chaos' as in Gen 1:2)
 - 10b's 'every house is barred'– implies fear; Motyer's 'Life in the city of meaninglessness is a lonely and scary thing.'
 - 11's 'cry out for wine'– in context– as turning to old but useless remedies²¹
 - 12's decimated and defenseless
- 13's transition– from 12b's beaten-down gate to 13's beaten trees, gleanings (17:6), and surviving 'remnant' (6b's 'very few')
 - MH's 'Here is mercy remembered in the midst of wrath.'; Motyer's 'Isaiah is the master of the unexpected note of hope.'
 - Motyer's 'The verses have an almost eerie quality, as if we could see the few picking their way thru the ruins, singing to the Righteous One as they go.'...

²¹ Motyer observes that 11's three lines are quicker than 7b-9's six lines in the parallel: 'This is deliberate...the poem seems to tumble to a quick conclusion.'

-14-16a's praise, incl.

-14b's west and 15a's east as 16a's 'from the ends of the earth' (Rev 21:24)

-14a's (true) 'joy'– vs. 24:7,8,11 and 7-12's song of the world coming to an end

-MH's 'When the mirth of carnal worldlings ceases, the joy of the saints is as lively as ever; when the merry-hearted do sigh because the vine languishes, the upright-hearted do sing because the covenant of grace, the fountain of their comforts, and the foundation of their hopes, never fails.'

-connected to 14b's 'acclaim the Lord's majesty', 15a's 'give glory to the Lord', 15b's 'exalt the name of the Lord', 16a's 'singing Glory to the Righteous One' (41:2, 53:11)

-on the latter, Motyer's 'Theologically, it is noteworthy that the incoming remnant are primarily aware of the righteousness of the God who has saved them. In other words, his saving mercies are grounded in the satisfaction of his justice, not in the expression of his love.'

-16b-18a's personal 'withering' (21:2-4; parallels 4,7's world 'withering')

-16b's 'woe to me' (6:5; Jer 9:1-2)– Isaiah's pain in considering those who are lost, despite the joy and salvation accepted by others

-16c as lit. 'For betrayers betray: with betrayal, betrayers betray'; Motyer's 'Possibly only Isaiah would dare to multiply the same word like this and achieve such literary effect. What sounds overdone in English is very powerful in Hebrew.'

-17-18a's terror/pit/snare * 2 (Heb. 'pahad, wapahat, wapah'; Jer 48:42-44, Amos 5:19, 9:1-4)

-MH's 'It is a common instance of the calamitous state of human life that when we seek to avoid one mischief, we fall into a worse, and that the end of one trouble is often the beginning of another.'

-18b-20's cause of the destruction (bookends with 1-3's effect)

-18b-19's 'floodgates (lit. 'windows') of the Heavens' above (Gen 7:11, 8:2) and earthquake below– implies totality; the earth again reduced to 10's 'tohu'

-19's NIV omits 3x 'utterly'

-20's 'reels' as Heb. 'noa!'; Motyer's '[This] passage opens by recalling the flood and ends by virtually naming...Noah, whose drunkenness reintroduced the curse.'

-20's 'hut in the wind' (only other OT ref in 1:8; 22:8); in combo with drunkard– internal and external

-21-23's 'in that day...'– the indefinite future (paralleling 2nd oracles) is now resolved

-from 1-20's world to 21-22's prison time (Hades/Sheol?) for world rulers (Rev 20:2,7) and Motyer's 'alludes to guilty spiritual forces who will be dealt with'

-23's 'for the Lord Almighty will reign...'; MH's 'Then it shall appear, beyond contradiction, that the Lord reigns, which is always true, but not always evident.'

Isaiah 25

-> an expansion on 24:16a's 'singing Glory to the Righteous One'

-1-5's praise, starting with 1's opening- for 'perfect faithfulness' because God has 'done marvelous things, things *planned long ago*' (Ps 145:10-13), including...

-2's destroy cities (Ps 46:8), causing 3's honor and reverence (Phil 2:10-11)

-4's protect the needy- 'refuge, shelter, shade'-- against 4,5's 'the ruthless'- with remarkable ease

-MH's 'As God weakens the strong that are proud and secure, so he strengthens the weak that are humble...'

-on the powerful as 'noise' (Jer 46:17) and 'heat', MH's 'It is like the heat of the sun scorching in the middle of the day; but where is it when the sun has set?'

-perhaps refers to deliverance from Babylonian exile, but MH's it 'seems to look further- to the praises that should be offered up to God by the gospel church for Christ's victories over our spiritual enemies and the comforts he has provided for all believers.'

-6-10a's 'on this mountain' *3 (NIV omits 10a's 'for...')

-6's a feast prepared (Ex 24:11's reps only vs. Heb 12:22-24's all; Rev 19:7-9; Mt 22:1-14, etc.) with rich food (55:1-3) and the best/strongest wines for 'all peoples' (esp. Jew/Gentile; again, fulfills 2:2-5)- celebrating victory over death, injustice, and sin and the joy of eternity with God

-MH's 'a feast...supposes abundance and variety; it is a continual feast to believers, it is their own fault if it be not.'

-> from 6's positive/provision to 7-8's negatives/destruction

-7's 'destroy the shroud/sheet that enfolds/covers all peoples/nations'- representing death &/or ignorance (reveals/unveils truth)

-> 8's 'swallow up death' (quoted in I Cor 15:54; Ps 49:14, Hos 13:14), 'wipe away tears' (Rev 7:17, 21:4), and 'remove the disgrace from his people'

-> 9's trust, 'rejoice and be glad'- back to praise

-9-10a's 'they'²² from 1-5's 'I'- as 12:1,4; Motyer's 'This enables us to see the world-wide pilgrimage entering the gates of Zion one by one, but within Zion's walls becoming the company of the saved with a common testimony.'

-> all this as a picture of Jerusalem post-Sennacherib's siege &/or Christ's 1st or 2nd coming

²² Motyer argues that this retains some of the singular as well, arguing for 'each will say...'

- but 10b-12's judgment vs. Moab– not 'on this mountain'!
- 'Moab' as lit.; Motyer's 'Moab is mentioned here by name to remind us that eschatological disaster happens to real people.'
 - 'Moab' as fig. for all who struggle with this and are enemies of God) for their pride and self-sufficiency (12's 'high fortified walls')
 - Motyer's 'The same pride which held Moab back from seeking security in the divine promises in an earthly crisis (16:6) will exclude Moab from partaking of the heavenly promises.' (w/ app.)
 - see also: 10's 'under him' as also 'in his place'-- Moab's choice
 - 10c's 'as straw is trampled down in manure' (!)
 - Moab didn't humbly see itself as 'straw'?!; any pride remaining after being trampled into manure?!
 - 11's 'as a swimmer spreads out his hands to swim'– Motyer's 'Moab will (of course!) [look for] strength in himself to swim out...a superb illustration of a go-it-alone policy'
 - see also: 11b's self-sufficiency in 'the cleverness of their hands'
 - 10a's God's hand vs. 10b's God's foot!; 10a's God's hand (singular) resting vs. 11a's their hands (plural) swimming; 10a's 'on the mountain' vs. 12b's 'to the very dust'
 - all this as a type of Christ's victories– over death, worldly powers (Col 2:15), Satan's strongholds (II Cor 10:4), and ultimately (Ps 110:1)

Isaiah 26²³

- 1-4's secure city/nation²⁴ available to those who 2b's 'keep faith' in the Lord²⁵– given 2a's righteousness imputed to them (1:26)²⁶ and 3's 'perfect (true vs. false/pseudo) peace' (lit. 'peace peace') available to them in J&S&G (Ps 112:6-8a, Phil 4:7)
 - in the pattern of five, refers to God's people finally finding the security they sought– in Him (vs. 17:1-3,9, 22:9-10's failure of cities given unreliable alliances and ineffective self-reliance)

²³ See: Motyer (p. 213, ftn #1) on general interpretations of ch. 26.

²⁴ Motyer notes that NIV's 'strong city' is lit. 'city of strength', implying intrinsic and permanent vs. potentially fleeting and man-made.

²⁵ Motyer: 'it stresses the givenness of the city. The people do not create it; it is there awaiting their occupation.'

²⁶ It cannot refer to their own righteousness– theologically, and in context, given 16a's need for discipline and 18's admitted ineffectiveness.

- 4a's 'trust in the Lord forever'– alluding to perseverance in faith despite difficulties and complacency; speaks to S
- 5-6's prideful reduced (Ps 31:23) as the poor and oppressed get to 'trample it down' (49:24-26, 51:22-23; vs. 3:14-15; Ps 147:6, Mal 4:3, Rom 16:20a)
 - may have had a place in mind, but in this context, more of an idea
 - past/future status of God's people points to His power and grace
- 7-9's His obedient, humble people– in the face of life's difficulties, traveled by faith
 - 7a's God makes 'the way of the righteous smooth' (40:3-4, 42:16, 45:13; Pr 3:5-6)
 - 'smooth' in avoiding trouble and going thru trouble effectively; on latter, Motyer's 'This is the voice of faith, not a description of experience.' (Ps 26:12, 107:7, 119:165)
 - especially in looking back; Motyer's 'places rough in prospect are [relatively] smooth in retrospect'
 - 9b's those who learn righteousness by His judgments²⁷ (Ps 94:12-13a)
 - vs. 10-11's blindness in the face of ('common' &/or special) grace (see: Isaiah's hardening ministry, underlining God's justice in judging for abused mercies), God's majesty, God's hand 'lifted high' in 'zeal for [His] people'
 - all shown thru a combo of God's P and our P
 - on 11b, MH's 'They will not see, but they shall see.'
 - 7b,8a's they 'wait for [God]...the desire of [their] hearts'; 9a's 'my soul/spirit yearns/longs for you in the night/morning'
 - 12's they recognize God's gracious provision, even in their efforts (vs. sheer self-sufficiency)
- 13-15's God delivering on security for the nation, incl. 15's 'enlarged the nation' *2 (54:2-3)– vs. human leaders (Israelite or foreign) who had failed
 - resulting in 13b's their honoring Him and 15b's bringing honor to Himself
- 16-21's God delivering His people
 - from 16a's distress, 16c's weakness²⁸ ('could barely whisper a prayer'; but see: implied hope in God's grace), and 17's pain

²⁷ Oddly, 'people of the world' are believers here (vs. 10a; 26:18b)

²⁸ The NIV takes this to be from the discipline itself, whereas Motyer and the NASB take it to be from their sorrow in response.

-despite 16b's temporary discipline, 20b-21's temporary wrath against sin, esp. bloodshed (Gen 4:10, 9:5-6), and 18a's futility ('gave birth to wind' despite labor pains) applied to 18b's Israel's failure to bring salvation (42:6, 49:6b)

-20a's 'shut the doors' promises protection (bookends with 2's 'open the gate'; Ex 12:22-23); 20b's 'for a little while' promises a limited time (II Cor 4:16-18, Rom 8:18, I Pet 1:6-7)

-> in any case, 19a's 'your dead will live; their bodies will rise' - a physical resurrection for Christ and then us (25:6-9; vs. 25:12's 'dust'; Ez 37:10-12; Job 19:26, Ps 16:10, Dan 12:2,13; I Cor 15:50-54, Phil 3:21, Rev 11:11)

-GCM's 'even though we dwell in dust, the dust is not the last word.'

-21b's 'sins...bloodshed' as most internal 'sin' word in Heb. with most flagrant

-21b's 'disclose...conceal' (Mt 10:26, Rom 2:16; I Cor 4:5)

-> bookends: 1-4's secure in peace vs. 20-21's secure from wrath, 5-6's reduced to dust vs. 16-19's brought out of the dust; 7-9's pathway smoothed by God vs. 12-15's peace established by God - all centered around 10-11's blindness of those who refuse!

Isaiah 27

-1's judgment of Leviathan (30:7, 51:9's 'Rahab'; Job 3:8, 41:1, Ps 74:13-14, 104:26) the 'gliding/coiling serpent' (Gen 3:1!) - by sword

-in Aramean literature, a seven-headed monster; on using non-C cultural refs, see also: Paul and other exs. in Isaiah (see: Motyer or my notes on 51:9-11)

-a picture of sufficient power - to defeat natural and supernatural foes; likewise, the threefold description of the sword matches the threefold depiction of the beast; Motyer's 'an image of power matching the task'

-2-6's fruitful vineyard watched over by God (Ps 80:8-19, Jn 15:16, Col 1:6b)

-vs. 5:1-7; Motyer's 'In the earlier passage, the emphasis lay on what Israel-Judah made of the Lord's vineyard, but here it is on what the Lord will yet make of Jacob-Israel, his vineyard-people.'

-4's wishing that briars and thorns would fight in rebellion (hot/cold vs. lukewarm) - vs. 5's wish that they would come to Him in repentance, to 'make peace'

-6b's 'fill all the world with fruit' vs. 14:21b's Babylon's failure to 'fill the face of the earth with cities'

-7-9's judgment/discipline²⁹ for Judah– as less severe/final than for the world and as atonement for sin (Dan 11:33-35), esp. 9b's idolatry (see: impact of Babylonian exile)– as 9a's 'full fruitage' (Jn 15:6)

-MH's 'However it may seem to us, there is really a vast difference between the afflictions and deaths of good people and the afflictions and deaths of wicked people.'

-vs. 10-11's judgment for those who do not repent, using tree/vine/branch popular metaphors– 'a people without understanding' (and thus, no faith/trust– 26:10-11) who have put themselves beyond God's 'favor'

-12,13's 'in that day...' (matches 27:1,2)– the return of the faithful remnant from Babylon to Egypt– by 12's gentle ('one-by-one') threshing (21:10) and 13's trumpet (Lev 25:9, Zech 9:14, Mt 24:31, I Cor 15:52, I Thess 4:16)

-the latter as MH's 'applicable both to the preaching of the gospel, by which sinners are gathered into the grace of God...and also to the archangel's trumpet at the last day, by which saints shall be gathered to the glory of God.'

-or 12's threshing revisits 27:2-6; 13's trumpet lines up with 27:1's sword -> both oracles of divine harvesting– some to salvation, others to judgment

-again, specific names used to close this out (as with 25:10's Moab); as before, Motyer's 'Just as eschatological judgment falls on real people, so here does eschatological blessing. Isaiah relates the eschaton to the map of his own world. From the ends of the earth, and even from the supreme oppressors themselves, there will be those whom the atonement trumpet calls to Zion.'

-a perfect way to close out Is 24-27 and Is 13-27...

²⁹ Motyer: 'The Hebrew is rhythmic and beautiful but at the expense of clarity.'