

# **Isaiah 1:2-31**

## **A      Chapter 1**

The Vision and Call to Repentance

## **B      Chapters 2-4**

Glorious Mt. Zion — Judgment — Righteous Branch

## **C      Chapter 5**

Vineyard Parable and Assyrian Threat

## **Chapters 6-9:7**

Glory of Yahweh/3 Sons

## **C'      Chapters 9:8-10:34**

Extended Woes and Divine Judgment

## **B'      Chapter 11**

The Righteous Branch and Peaceful Kingdom

## **A'      Chapter 12**

Songs of Salvation and Praise

# Isaiah 1:2-31 — Overview

## Verses 2-9: Rebellious Children

- Israel has rebelled against God despite His care for them
- Their land is consumed like Sodom and Gomorrah
- A sinful people who have forsaken the LORD

## Verses 10-17: Empty Religion

- God rejects their sacrifices and festivals that lack true justice and righteousness

## Verses 18-20: A Choice

- Obedience leads to blessing
- Rebellion leads to judgment

## Verses 21-26: City of Faithfulness

- True justice and righteousness makes the city faithful

## Verses 27-31: Fire of Justice

- A sinful people who have forsaken the LORD
- Those who repent will be redeemed through justice and righteousness but those who don't...
- ...their land is consumed like Sodom and Gomorrah

## Isaiah 1:2-9

### Rebellious Children (2-4)

<sup>2</sup> Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth;  
for the LORD has spoken:  
“Children have I reared and brought up,  
but they have rebelled against me.  
<sup>3</sup> The ox knows its owner,  
and the donkey its master’s crib,  
but Israel does not know,  
my people do not understand.”  
<sup>4</sup> Ah, sinful nation,  
a people laden with iniquity,  
offspring of evildoers,  
children who deal corruptly!  
They have forsaken the LORD,  
they have despised the Holy One of Israel,  
they are utterly estranged.

### Totally Wounded (5-6)

<sup>5</sup> (a) Why will you still be struck down?  
(a') Why will you continue to rebel?  
The whole head is sick,  
and the whole heart faint.  
<sup>6</sup> From the sole of the foot even to the head,  
there is no soundness in it,  
but bruises and sores  
and raw wounds;  
they are not pressed out or bound up  
or softened with oil.

### Desolate Land (7-9)

<sup>7</sup> Your country lies desolate;  
your cities are burned with fire;  
in your very presence  
foreigners devour your land;  
it is desolate, as overthrown by foreigners.  
<sup>8</sup> And the daughter of Zion is left  
like a booth in a vineyard,  
like a lodge in a cucumber field,  
like a besieged city.  
<sup>9</sup> If the LORD of hosts  
had not left us a few survivors,  
we should have been like Sodom,  
and become like Gomorrah.

## Cosmic Introduction

The summoning of the heavens and the earth to witness the LORD's case is a callback to the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32. It was here where Israel was about to enter the promised land and Moses communicates all of the potential blessings and curses if they obey or disobey the LORD.

Isaiah is calling out that what is happening/about to happen to Israel is the fulfillment of his prophecy.

### Deuteronomy 32:1

<sup>1</sup> "Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak,  
and let the earth **hear** the words of my mouth.

This isn't the only comparison between Deuteronomy 32 and Isaiah 1 either, Isaiah pulls a ton from that passage to prove this point further.

Deuteronomy 32	Isaiah 1	Notes
<sup>1</sup> "Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak, and let the earth <b>hear</b> the words of my mouth.	<sup>2a</sup> Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the LORD has spoken:	Cosmic Witnesses
<sup>5</sup> They have dealt corruptly with him; they are no longer <b>his children</b> because they are blemished; they are a crooked and twisted generation.	<sup>2b-4</sup> "Children have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me... they are utterly estranged."	Estranged Children
<sup>22</sup> For a <b>fire</b> is kindled by my anger, and it burns to the depths of Sheol, devours the earth and its increase, and sets on fire the foundations of the mountains.	<sup>31</sup> And the strong shall become tinder, and his work a spark, and both of them shall <b>burn</b> together, with none to quench them.	Consuming Fire
<sup>32</sup> For their vine comes from the vine of <b>Sodom</b> and from the fields of <b>Gomorrah</b> ;	<sup>9-10</sup> "we should have been like <b>Sodom</b> ... you rulers of <b>Sodom</b> ! you people of <b>Gomorrah</b> !"	Sodom and Gomorrah
<sup>41</sup> Behold, I will repay. <b>Vengeance</b> is mine, and recompense,	<sup>24b</sup> "Ah, I will get relief from my ene- mies and <b>avenge</b> myself on my foes.	Vengeance on ene- mies

## Sodom and Gomorrah

The whole of verses 7-9 set up for the punchline of verse 10. We can get hints that Isaiah is making the comparison to Sodom and Gomorrah through "burned with fire" and "overthrown". "Overthrown" is only ever used elsewhere in the Bible with reference to God overthrowing Sodom and Gomorrah.

If this is the case, what is that saying about Israel? What is that saying about the about the "foreigners"?

### Isaiah 1:10-17

<sup>10</sup> **Hear** the word of the LORD, you rulers of **Sodom**!

Give ear to the teaching of our God, you people of **Gomorrah**!

<sup>11</sup> "What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices?" says the LORD;  
I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams  
and the fat of well-fed beasts;  
I do not delight in the blood of bulls,  
or of lambs, or of goats.

<sup>12</sup> When you come to appear before me,  
who has required of you this trampling of my courts?

<sup>13</sup> Bring no more vain offerings;  
incense is an abomination to me.  
New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations—  
I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly.

<sup>14</sup> Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates;  
they have become a burden to me;  
I am weary of bearing them.

<sup>15</sup> When you spread out your hands,  
I will hide my eyes from you;  
even though you make many prayers,  
I will not **listen**;  
your hands are full of blood.

<sup>16</sup> Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean;  
remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes;  
cease to do evil,

<sup>17</sup> learn to do good; seek **justice**, correct oppression;  
bring **justice to the fatherless**,  
**plead the widow's cause**.

## Bad Sacrifices

The LORD is saying that he's burdened by their sacrifices and who even asked them to do so, when there's a decent bit of Scripture pointing to *Him* being the one who commanded it in the first place!

There's something more needed than just their sacrifices and it all culminates in verses 16-17. None of their sacrifices or festivals mean anything to the LORD if they are devoid of social justice.

## Bloody Hands

Pretty cool poetry on line 15. The "hands full of blood" refers to prayerful hands that either could have:

- been covered in blood from all of the sacrifices they were making
- been covered in blood from murder (Gen. 4:10-11)

Justice	מִשְׁפָּט	mish.pat
<b>Definition:</b> God's right order in the world.		

People treated as equal before his eyes. The oppressed and poor are lifted up. The proud and murderers brought low.

So how are God's children supposed to clean themselves? Removing evil, doing good, seeking justice for orphans and widows

## Isaiah 1:18-20

<sup>18</sup> "Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD:  
    though your **sins** are like scarlet,  
        they shall be as white as snow;  
    though they are red like crimson,  
        they shall become like wool.

<sup>19</sup> If you are willing and **obedient**,  
    you shall eat the good of the land;

<sup>20</sup> but if you refuse and rebel,  
    you shall be eaten by the sword;  
    for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

### Just Obey?

How is Israel going to have their sins cleaned? Their hands are bloody and full of murder! It seems like v19-20 is repeating the message of "Obey Yahweh" as the solution?

Israels been given this instruction already before though! They've been told to show justice and righteousness, so will this one more command be exactly what they need? Or will they need someone to do this on their behalf? Reading further in Isaiah will show us through Whom this will be done for them.

## Isaiah 1:21-26

<sup>21</sup> How the faithful city has become a whore,  
she who was full of justice !

A Righteousness lodged in her,  
but now murderers.

B <sup>22</sup> Your silver has become dross ,  
your best wine mixed with water.

<sup>23</sup> Your princes are rebels and companions of thieves.

C Everyone loves a bribe and runs after gifts.  
(a) They do not bring justice to the fatherless,  
(a') and the widow's cause does not come to them.

<sup>24</sup> Therefore the Lord declares,  
the LORD of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel:  
“Ah, I will get relief from my enemies  
and avenge myself on my foes.

B' <sup>25</sup> I will turn my hand against you  
and will smelt away your dross as with lye  
and remove all your alloy.

<sup>26</sup> And I will restore your judges as at the first,  
and your counselors as at the beginning.  
A, Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness ,  
the faithful city.”

Righteousness

תְּצִדָּקָה

tse.da.qah

**Definition:** Right relationships with God and others

*“The meaning of tsedeqah is an ethical standard of right relationship. Biblical scholar J. Alec Motyer defines its use as “right with God and therefore committed to putting right all other relationships in life,” and “to do right by someone.”*

*Tsedeqah is the standard of right relationship between all people. And mishpat is the action you take to create the standard of tsedeqah. Biblical righteousness is about right*

*relationships in day-to-day conduct in family, work, and community”*

— Bible Project, *Justice Study Notes*, <https://bibleproject.com/videos/justice/>

## Isaiah 1:27-31

- <sup>27</sup> Zion shall be redeemed with justice ,  
**A** and her converts with righteousness .
- <sup>28</sup> But rebels and sinners shall be broken together,  
and those who forsake the LORD shall be consumed.
- B** <sup>29</sup> For they shall be ashamed of the oaks that you desired;  
and you shall blush for the gardens that you have chosen.
- B,** <sup>30</sup> For you shall be like an oak whose leaf withers,  
and like a garden without water.
- <sup>31</sup> And the strong shall become tinder,  
**A,** and his work a spark,  
and both of them shall burn together,  
with none to quench them.

## Desirable Trees

Only one other time in the whole Hebrew Bible does the word for "desire" (*קָנַת* – kha.mad) appear in reference to desiring trees. It is in Genesis 3:6 when Eve saw that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was desirable to make one wise.

Just like the root of all sin is a desire to ignore God's Words (not "shema" to Yahweh) and take our own wisdom for ourselves, so is Israel's sin here. As highlighted in prior sections, they're giving vain sacrifices that might seem good in their eyes, but they're missing the whole point – true worship requires justice and righteousness – right relationships between both God and others.

## Conclusion

So if this is the state of Israel, what hope do they have? How can this Israel be redeemed as Isaiah says will happen in v27?

In Chapter 2, we get a picture of what the result of this redemption and judgement will look like.

## THE SAUCE

*Deep dives & rabbit holes*

In v6, there is no "soundness" in Zion. The Hebrew word מְטֻמָּה me.tom has the same root for "unblemished" or "whole". This is the same word used of the spotless lamb sacrifice needed for their coverings. How could we compare the "blemished" nature of Israel in light of their "blemished" sacrifices?

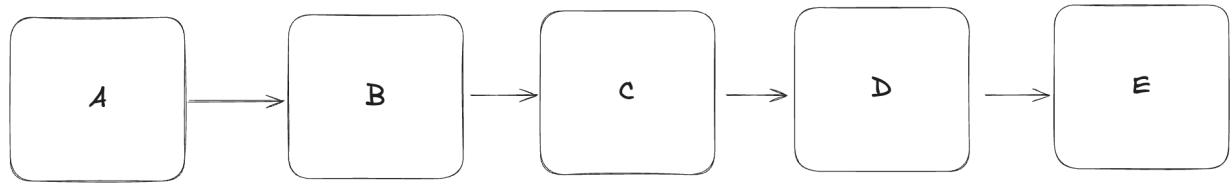
In v13, just about every other time the word "convocations" is used in the Hebrew Bible, it has the word "holy" before it. Not these convocations! Could look into other usages in the Scriptures or even read more of the Levitical laws showing how they're supposed to be done.

There's a lot of "courtroom" language in this passage. It's almost as if Yahweh is pleading His case. He picks this theme back up in chapter 5 as well – "What more could I have done?"

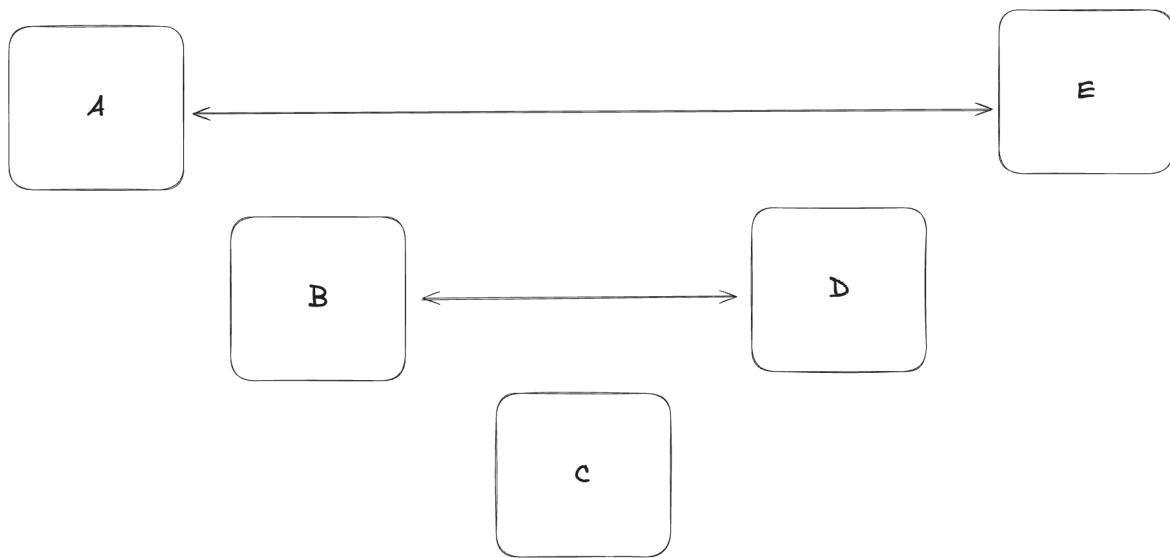
We'll probably end up touching on this later in Isaiah, but the concept of a "city" is usually not thought of in the way we do today. The very first city mentioned in the Bible was built by Cain after his sin and exiling.



- a) Education is Important
- a') Big Muscles are Importanter



vs



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Songs of Salvation and Praise

**Isaiah 9:8-10:34**

**Isaiah 9:8-21**

*Anger not Turned  
Away from Israel*

**Isaiah 10:1-4**

*Woe to Israel &  
Anger  
not Turned Away*

**Isaiah 10:5-34**

*Woes and Therefores  
to Assyria*

**Isaiah 10:1-4**

<sup>1</sup> Woe to those who decree iniquitous decrees,  
and the writers who keep writing oppression,

<sup>2</sup> to turn aside the needy from justice<sup>1</sup>  
and to rob the poor of my people of their right,  
that widows may be their spoil,  
and that they may make the fatherless their prey!

<sup>3</sup> What will you do on the day of punishment,  
in the ruin that will come from afar?

To whom will you flee for help,  
and where will you leave your wealth<sup>2</sup>?

<sup>4</sup> Nothing remains but to crouch among the prisoners  
or fall among the slain.

For all this his anger has not turned away,  
and his hand is stretched out still.

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1. Literally – “stretching out the needy from justice” the same word for God’s hand being stretched out

2. Literally – “glory”

## Robbing Poor of their Right

Isaiah's rebuke of Israel's leaders for robbing the poor and making widows and orphans their prey finds an echo in Jesus' confrontation with the religious leaders of His day:

*"And in the hearing of all the people he said to his disciples, 'Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, who devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.'"*

— Luke 20:45-47

While Jesus doesn't quote Isaiah 10 directly here, it seems that this section of Scripture was on His mind for a few reasons.

Consider the language Isaiah has been using throughout chapter 9 and into chapter 10: nations **devouring** Israel with **open mouth** (9:12), leaders causing people to be **swallowed up** (9:16), wickedness **devouring** like fire (9:18), and tribes **devouring** one another (9:19-21). Now in 10:2, these same predatory leaders make widows and orphans their "spoil" and "prey" ("shalal" and "baz" from ch 8)

When Jesus warns that the scribes and Pharisees "**devour** widows' houses," He employs this same visceral, predatory language. The repetition of "devour" throughout Isaiah 9-10, culminating in the exploitation of the vulnerable, creates a thematic thread that Jesus appears to draw upon. Jesus confronted religious leaders who, like their ancient counterparts, used their positions to exploit rather than protect the most vulnerable—all while maintaining an outward show of piety with their "long prayers" and religious garments.

The pattern remains consistent across centuries: those entrusted with leading God's people can become their greatest predators, **devouring** the very ones they should defend.

## Isaiah 9:8-10:34

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### Isaiah 9:8-21

*Anger not Turned  
Away from Israel*

### Isaiah 10:1-4

*Woe to Israel &  
Anger  
not Turned Away*

### Isaiah 10:5-34

*Woes and Therefores  
to Assyria*

## Isaiah 10:5-34 — Overview

Verses 5-15: **Assyria** is coming

Verses 16-19: **Therefore #1:** Yahweh will burn  
up **Assyria** but a remnant will remain

Verses 20-23: A **remnant** of Is-  
rael will trust Yahweh

Verses 24-27: **Therefore #2:** Don't be afraid of  
**Assyria**

Verses 28-34: **Assyria** is coming

## Isaiah 10:5-15

<sup>5</sup> Woe to **Assyria**, the **rod** of my anger;  
the **staff** in their **hands** is my fury!

<sup>6</sup> Against a godless nation I send him,  
and against the people of my wrath I command him,  
**A** to take spoil and seize plunder<sup>1</sup>  
and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.

<sup>7</sup> But he does not so intend,  
and his heart does not so think;  
but it is in his heart to destroy,  
and to cut off nations not a few;

<sup>8</sup> **for he says:**

”Are not my commanders all kings?

<sup>9</sup> Is not Calno like Carchemish?  
**B** Is not Hamath like Arpad?  
Is not Samaria like Damascus?

<sup>10</sup> As my **hand** has reached to the kingdoms of the idols,  
whose carved images were greater than those of Jerusalem and Samaria,  
<sup>11</sup> shall I not do to Jerusalem and her idols  
as I have done to Samaria and her images?”

**C** <sup>12</sup> When the Lord has finished<sup>2</sup> all his work on Mount Zion and on  
Jerusalem, he will punish the speech of the arrogant heart of the king  
of **Assyria** and the boastful look in his eyes.

<sup>13</sup> **For he says:**

”By the strength of my **hand** I have done it,  
and by my wisdom, for I have understanding;  
I remove the boundaries of peoples,  
and plunder their treasures;

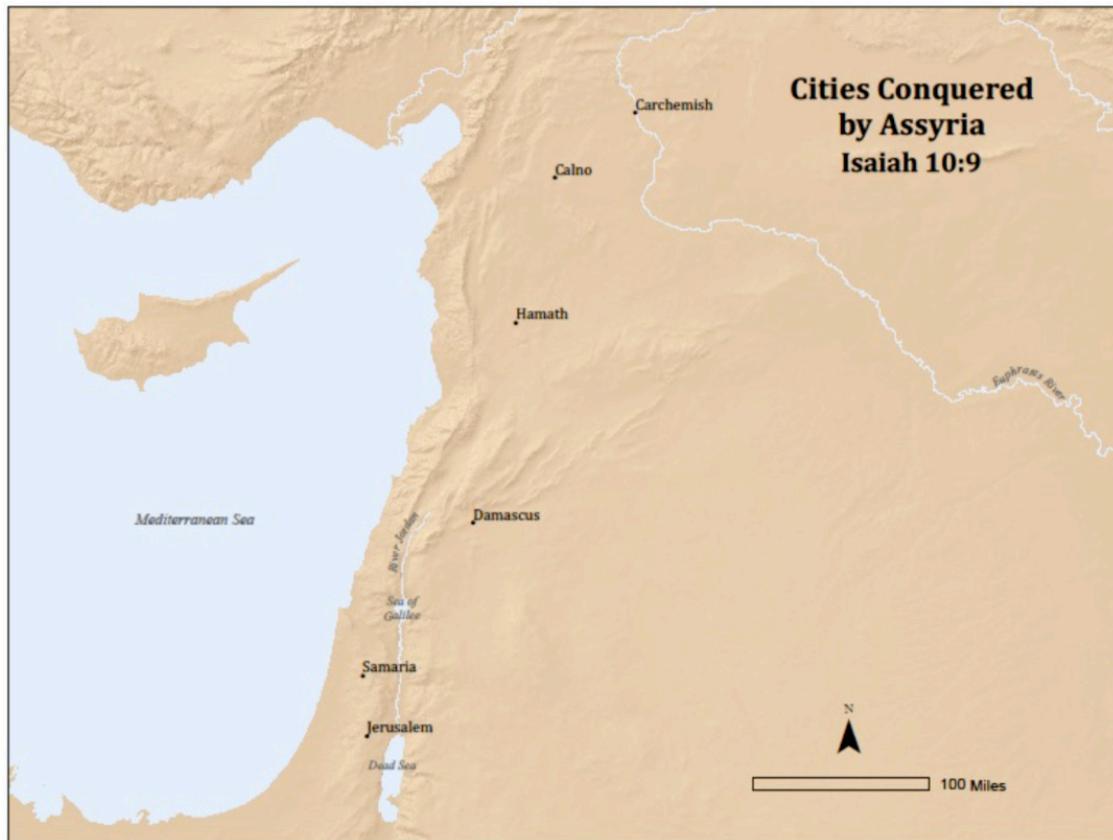
**B'** like a bull I bring down those who sit on thrones.

<sup>14</sup> My **hand** has found<sup>3</sup> like a nest  
the wealth of the peoples<sup>4</sup>;  
and as one gathers eggs that have been forsaken,  
so I have gathered all the earth;  
and there was none that moved a wing  
or opened the mouth or chirped.”

<sup>15</sup> Shall the axe boast over him who hews with it,  
**A'** or the saw magnify itself against him who wields it?  
As if a **rod** should wield him who **lifts it**,  
or as if a **staff** should **lift him** who is not wood!

1. shalal-shalal baz-baz – like Isaiah’s son from ch. 8
2. Lit. ”Cut off” – Motyer says it’s a tailoring/weaving term. Like snipping off a thread.
3. Reached
4. Compare with v10 what else His hand has reached to

### Cities Leading to Jerusalem (v9-11)



The natural question after this list would be: Where to next?

### Why Does Assyria Care About Jerusalem’s Idols?

Verse 10 raises an interesting question - why does Assyria compare the "kingdoms of the idols" and their "carved images" with those of Jerusalem and Samaria?

On one level, this could be about Assyria being an unwitting instrument of God, unknowingly showing His ultimate concern for true worship. God is using them to demonstrate that idolatry - whether in Damascus, Samaria, or Jerusalem - deserves judgment.

But there's probably something more happening here. Assyria is essentially declaring that they are the god Israel should now worship - that their military might proves their supremacy over all

deities, including Yahweh. Their conquests have become their theology: "We conquered nations with greater gods than yours, so your God must be even weaker."

This connects to the larger theme of who truly holds power and sovereignty. Assyria mistakes permission for power, confusing God's instrumental use of them with their own inherent authority. They don't realize they're simply a tool in the divine hand.

### The "Fruit" of Assyria's Pride

Let's look at how different translations handle verse 12, which is the center point (C) of this chiastic structure:

#### Isaiah 10:12

Translation	Text
<b>ESV</b>	When the Lord has finished all his work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, he will punish <b>the speech of the arrogant heart</b> of the king of Assyria and the boastful look in his eyes.
<b>NASB</b>	So it will be that when the Lord has completed all His work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, He will say, "I will punish <b>the fruit of the arrogant heart</b> of the king of Assyria and the glory of his haughty eyes."
<b>NIV</b>	When the Lord has finished all his work against Mount Zion and Jerusalem, he will say, "I will punish the king of Assyria for <b>the willful pride of his heart</b> and the haughty look in his eyes."
<b>KJV</b>	Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish <b>the fruit of the stout heart</b> of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks.
<b>NET</b>	When the sovereign master finishes judging Mount Zion and Jerusalem, then I will punish the king of Assyria for <b>what he has proudly planned</b> and for the arrogant attitude he displays.

The word "fruit" in the NASB and KJV is significant when we consider the garden imagery throughout Isaiah. What looks good in Assyria's eyes - their own wisdom, understanding, and accomplishments - is actually forbidden fruit.

Assyria is following in Adam's footsteps! They're reaching for knowledge and power that isn't theirs to take, trusting in their own understanding rather than acknowledging the true source of their success.

Like Adam, they see something that appears good and wise to their eyes, but in grasping for it, they're actually rebelling against God's authority. Will we trust in God's wisdom or our own?

## Isaiah 10:16-19

- <sup>16</sup> Therefore the Lord GOD of hosts  
will send wasting sickness among his stout warriors,  
and under his glory a burning will be kindled,  
like the burning of fire.
- <sup>17</sup> The light of Israel will become a fire,  
and his Holy One a flame,  
and it will burn and devour  
his thorns and briers in one day.
- <sup>18</sup> The glory of his forest and of his fruitful land  
the LORD will destroy, both soul and body,  
and it will be as when a sick man wastes away.
- <sup>19</sup> The remnant of the trees of his forest will be so few  
that a child can write them down.

### Assyria's Purifying Fire - A Parallel to Isaiah 6 and Isaiah 4

What's happening to Assyria here looks remarkably similar to what Isaiah experienced in chapter 6 and what Israel goes through in chapter 4. In Isaiah 6, the prophet encounters purifying fire from the altar that cleanses him and prepares a remnant for service. In Isaiah 4:2-4, the "branch of the LORD" will be beautiful, and those who remain in Jerusalem will be called holy after "the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning."

Now in chapter 10, Assyria faces the same pattern: "The light of Israel will become a fire, and his Holy One a flame" (v. 17). Just like Israel, Assyria will be burned down to a remnant - "so few that a child can write them down" (v. 19).

Isaiah's prophetic vision treats Assyria with the same framework he uses for Israel! The instrument of judgment will itself be judged, purified, and reduced to a remnant. God's dealings with the nations mirror His dealings with His own people. Both face fire, both have remnants, both are subject to the same holy standards.

## Isaiah 10:20-23

<sup>20</sup> In that day the **remnant** of Israel and the survivors of the house of Jacob will no more lean on him who struck them, but will lean on the **LORD**, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.

<sup>21</sup> A **remnant** will return, the **remnant** of Jacob, to the mighty God.

<sup>22</sup> For though your people Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a **remnant** of them will return. Destruction is decreed, overflowing with righteousness.

<sup>23</sup> For the Lord **GOD of hosts** will make a full end, as decreed, in the midst of all the earth<sup>1</sup>.

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1. Land

## The Abrahamic Promise Still Stands

Verse 22 contains a crucial reference: "For though your people Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will return." This directly echoes God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 22:17 - "I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore."

In their coming exile and captivity, Isaiah isn't declaring that God's covenant with Abraham is null and void. The promise still stands - there will still be a people who are fruitful and multiply. But Israel cannot use their chosen status as a crutch. Being Abraham's descendants doesn't exempt them from obedience and reverence toward God.

This connects powerfully to Paul's wrestling with this same tension in Romans 9-11. The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable, yet faith and obedience still matter. God's faithfulness to His promises doesn't mean His people can presume upon His grace. The remnant theology here anticipates Paul's "remnant according to the election of grace" (Romans 11:5). God will preserve a people, but being ethnically descended from Abraham guarantees nothing apart from faith.

## Isaiah 10:24-27

<sup>24</sup> Therefore thus says the Lord GOD of hosts : "O my people, who dwell in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrians when they strike with the rod and lift up their staff against you as the Egyptians did.

<sup>25</sup> For in a very little while my fury will come to an end, and my anger will be directed to their destruction.

<sup>26</sup> And the LORD of hosts will wield against them a whip, as when he struck Midian at the rock of Oreb. And his staff will be over the sea, and he will lift it as he did in Egypt.

<sup>27</sup> And in that day his burden will depart from your shoulder, and his yoke from your neck; and the yoke will be broken because of the fat<sup>1</sup>."

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1. or "oil" – confusing in the Hebrew as well. Could be a picture of an ox so fat from such little work that the yoke breaks

### The Rod Reversed: God's Weapon Turned

Tracking the repeated words of "rod" and "staff" here can be helpful. In verse 5, Assyria is "the rod of my anger" and "the staff in their hands is my fury." The rod and staff are in God's hands, being wielded through Assyria against Israel.

But now in verse 26, everything reverses: "the LORD of hosts will wield against them a whip... And his staff will be over the sea, and he will lift it as he did in Egypt."

The rod and staff that was Assyria in God's hand now becomes a different rod and staff - this time wielded *against* Assyria. The instrument becomes the target. The weapon becomes the enemy.

## Isaiah 10:28-34

- <sup>28</sup> He has come to Aiath;  
he has passed through Migron;  
at Michmash he stores his baggage;
- <sup>29</sup> they have crossed over the pass;  
at Geba they lodge for the night;  
Ramah trembles;  
Gibeath of Saul has fled.
- <sup>30</sup> Cry aloud, O daughter of Gallim!  
Give attention, O Laishah!  
O poor Anathoth!
- <sup>31</sup> Madmenah is in flight;  
the inhabitants of Gebim flee for safety.
- <sup>32</sup> This very day he will halt at Nob;  
he will shake his **fist**<sup>1</sup>  
at the mount of the daughter of Zion,  
the hill of Jerusalem.
- <sup>33</sup> Behold, the Lord **GOD of hosts**  
will lop the boughs with terrifying power;  
the great in height will be hewn down,  
and the lofty will be brought low.
- <sup>34</sup> He will cut down the thickets of the forest with an axe,  
and Lebanon will fall by the Majestic One.

---

1. Hand

### Poetry of Threat, Not Literal Warpath

The towns listed in verses 28-32 are all located at the northern border of Judah - situated between the northern and southern kingdoms. This geographic detail is significant because historically, when Assyria actually invaded, they came up from the *south* of Jerusalem (see Isaiah 36:1-2, where Sennacherib comes from Lachish, which is southwest of Jerusalem).

This passage isn't giving us a literal military campaign route or a step-by-step warpath. Rather, it's poetry that describes the imminent threat of Assyria. The crescendo builds with each town mentioned, getting closer and closer to Jerusalem, creating a sense of mounting dread. By verse 32, they're at Nob - "he will shake his fist at the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem."

This is poetic geography serving theological purpose - showing how close the threat is, how real the danger feels, how the noose is tightening around God's holy city. It's meant to evoke fear and urgency, not to be a historical chronicle of troop movements.

## **Israel and the Nations: The Same Pattern**

Throughout Isaiah, there's a consistent pattern: Israel and the nations are put on analogy. They share the same problem (rebellion against God), face the same consequences (judgment and exile), and remarkably, even share the same hope (restoration through a remnant).

Look ahead to Isaiah 19:19-25, where Egypt and Assyria will be blessed alongside Israel: "In that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, whom the LORD of hosts has blessed, saying, 'Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my inheritance.'"

This is radical theology. God's standards apply to everyone. His judgment falls on both His people and the nations. And His mercy extends to both as well. The same God who disciplines Israel with the rod of Assyria will discipline Assyria. The same God who preserves a remnant of Israel will preserve a remnant of Assyria. This universalizing of God's character - His justice and His mercy applying to all peoples - runs throughout the entire book of Isaiah.

## **Beyond the Victor's Gods**

*"In 10:5-34 the amazing doctrine is stated that the gods are not necessarily on the side of the victors and that defeat for us is not defeat for God. Although this understanding has been a part of the western philosophy of history for sixteen hundred years, it is still difficult for us to translate it into feelings. Like our ancient Near Eastern forebears we instinctively believe that the victor's gods are God indeed and that the defeated's god is unmasked as a charlatan. Against this, Isaiah envisions a God who is not the prisoner of history, who is not the alter ego of either victor or vanquished, but who guides all events to an outcome in keeping with his own joyous and beneficent plan. All are under his hand. He is neither the possession nor the manifestation of any of his creatures. This is the doctrine of transcendence, a truth of unparalleled importance for life and understanding. Isaiah was not the first to formulate it (contra the older evolutionary theory of Israelite religion), for it is implicit in the first three commandments of the Decalog, but it may be fair to say that he was the first to apply it to the historical process in a thoroughgoing way."*

— John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39*

**A      Chapter 1**  
The Vision and Call to Repentance

**B      Chapters 2-4**  
Glorious Mt. Zion — Judgment — Righteous Branch

**C      Chapter 5**  
Vineyard Parable and Assyrian Threat

**Chapters 6-9:7**  
Glory of Yahweh/3 Sons

**C'      Chapters 9:8-10:34**  
Extended Woes and Divine Judgment

**B'      Chapter 11**  
The Righteous Branch and Peaceful Kingdom

**A'      Chapter 12**  
Songs of Salvation and Praise

## Isaiah 11 — The Root of Jesse/Second Exodus

Verses 1-10: Who is the Shoot of Jesse? and What is His Reign Like?

Verses 11-16: How Will He Accomplish This Reign?

### Isaiah 11:1-5 — Who is the Shoot of Jesse?

<sup>1</sup> There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of **Jesse**,  
and a branch from his **roots** shall bear fruit.

<sup>2</sup> And the **Spirit** of the LORD shall rest<sup>1</sup> upon him,  
the **Spirit** of wisdom and understanding,  
the **Spirit** of counsel and might<sup>2</sup>,  
the **Spirit** of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

<sup>3</sup> And his delight<sup>3</sup> shall be in the fear of the LORD.

He shall not **judge** by what his eyes see,  
or decide disputes by what his ears hear,

<sup>4</sup> but with **righteousness** he shall **judge** the poor,  
and decide with equity for the meek<sup>4</sup> of the earth;  
and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,  
and with the **breath** of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

<sup>5</sup> **Righteousness** shall be the belt of his waist,  
and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

---

1. c.f. Luke 3:22

2. Callback to 9:1-7 with Mighty Counselor

3. lit. "smelling" ריח [riach]

4. the afflicted

## What Comes from the Stump?

Compare the end of chapter 6 with the "seed" coming from the stump and this passage.

*And though a tenth remain in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak, whose stump remains when it is felled. The holy seed is its stump. (Isaiah 6:13)*

Like we talked about in chapter 7 when comparing the signs for Ahaz and Hezekiah, the Messiah is very closely intertwined with His followers — they are inseparable in God's plan of redemption.

## From Jesse, not David

Israel doesn't need another king from David — they all failed.

What Israel needs is a brand new David. Contrast these characteristics of the Root of Jesse with what Ahaz has looked like in the previous passages:

Ahaz	The Root of Jesse (Messiah)
Misplaced fear	Right fear (fear of the LORD)
No wisdom	Spirit of wisdom and understanding
Led to exile	Leads back from the exile

## Weapon of Destruction

His Word is what's doing the destroying here (v.4). It's "decreasing" as well as creates (Genesis

- 1). The same divine word that spoke creation into existence now speaks judgment and restoration. John picks this image up in Revelation 19:15, describing Jesus' return:

*"From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron."*

— Revelation 19:15

## Isaiah 11:6-9 — What is His Reign Like?

<sup>6</sup> The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,  
and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,  
and the calf and the lion and the fatted calf together<sup>1</sup>;  
and a little child shall lead them.

<sup>7</sup> The cow and the bear shall graze;  
their young shall lie down together;  
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

<sup>8</sup> The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra,  
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> They shall not hurt or destroy  
in all my holy mountain;  
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD  
as the waters cover the sea.

---

1. even a tempting, fat cow won't do

2. Genesis 3:15

## Knowing Yahweh Leads to Peace

Like chapter 2, what does learning the instruction of the LORD and learning Who He is lead to? Not continuing wars or conquests but peace. The knowledge of God transforms creation itself, reversing the curse and restoring the harmony of Eden.

## Isaiah 11:10-12 — Jesus as the Banner/Signal

<sup>10</sup> In that day the root of Jesse<sup>1</sup>, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples —  
of him shall the nations inquire,  
and his resting place shall be glorious.

<sup>11</sup> In that day the Lord will extend his hand yet a second time<sup>2</sup> to recover the remnant that remains of his people,  
from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Cush, from Elam,  
from Shinar, from Hamath, and from the coastlands of the sea.

<sup>12</sup> He will raise a signal for the nations  
and will assemble the banished of Israel,  
and gather the dispersed of Judah  
from the four corners of the earth.

---

1. In v.1, the Messiah is a "shoot from the stump of Jesse" and a "branch from his roots." By v.10, He has become simply "the root of Jesse" — no longer just a descendant, but the very source itself. The branch has become the root.

2. When was the first? Keep reading

### Jesus as the Banner

In Exodus 17:8-15, when Israel fought the Amalekites, Moses raised his staff as a banner of victory. When raised on high hilltops, a banner was used to rally the troops and signal where God's presence was leading.

John 12:32 shows Jesus has the same understanding of his death and resurrection:

*"And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."*

— John 12:32

This Banner answers the question posed in chapter 2: What's causing the nations to "river up" to the mountain of Yahweh?

Also, this banner in v12 will reverse the exact "signal/banner" used in 5:26, where God raised a signal for distant nations to come as instruments of judgment against Israel. Now, the signal gathers the scattered remnant *home*.

Compare v11 with:

*"He will raise a signal for nations far away, and whistle for them from the ends of the earth; and behold, quickly, speedily they come! None is weary, none stumbles, none slumbers or sleeps, not a waistband is loose, not a sandal strap broken; their arrows are*

*sharp, all their bows bent, their horses' hoofs seem like flint, and their wheels like the whirlwind. Their roaring is like a lion, like young lions they roar; they growl and seize their prey; they carry it off, and none can rescue."*

— Isaiah 5:26-29

## Isaiah 11:13-16 — How Will He Accomplish This Reign?

<sup>13</sup> The jealousy of Ephraim shall depart,

and those who harass Judah shall be cut off;  
Ephraim shall not be jealous of Judah,  
and Judah shall not harass Ephraim.

<sup>14</sup> But they shall swoop down on the shoulder of the Philistines<sup>1</sup> in the west,

and together they shall plunder the people of the east.  
They shall put out their hand against Edom and Moab,  
and the Ammonites shall obey them.

<sup>15</sup> And the LORD will utterly destroy

the tongue of the Sea of **Egypt**,  
and will wave his hand over the River  
with his scorching **breath**,  
and strike it into seven channels,  
and he will lead people across in sandals.

<sup>16</sup> And there will be a highway from **Assyria**

for **the remnant that remains of his people**,  
as there was for Israel  
when they came up from the land of **Egypt**.

---

1. Figurative language — Philistines didn't have a distinct national identity in Isaiah's day

### Tongue of Egypt into 7 Channels

The "tongue of the Sea of Egypt" is the Gulf of Suez — the narrow body of water extending from the Red Sea up along the Sinai Peninsula. God's scorching breath (**רוּחַ**, *ruach* — the same word for "Spirit" at the start of this chapter and the same word used in chapter 4 with the spirit/breath of fire) will break it into seven channels or wadis.

A *wadi* is a dry riverbed in desert regions that only fills with water during seasonal rains. The imagery here suggests God will make the impassable sea as easy to cross as walking through dry desert channels.



*The "Tongue" of the Sea of Egypt  
(Gulf of Suez)*



*A Wadi  
Dry riverbed that fills during rains*

## The Second Exodus

There's going to be a new Exodus. Just as God brought Israel out of Egypt through the Red Sea, He will bring the remnant back from exile with even greater miraculous intervention. The reference to "as there was for Israel when they came up from the land of Egypt" (v.16) deliberately echoes the first exodus.

This sets up chapter 12, which mirrors the Song of the Sea from Exodus 15. After Moses led Israel through the Red Sea, they sang a song of thanksgiving and victory. After the Root of Jesse leads the remnant through the second exodus, they will sing a similar song:

*"You will say in that day: 'I will give thanks to you, O LORD, for though you were angry with me, your anger turned away, that you might comfort me.'"*

— Isaiah 12:1

The end of chapter 11 flows seamlessly into chapter 12's song of praise, completing the pattern: judgment → deliverance → thanksgiving.

**A      Chapter 1**  
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Songs of Salvation and Praise

## Isaiah 12 — Songs of Salvation

Verses 1-2: Song 1

Verse 3: Y all will be Rescued

Verses 4-5: Song 2

### Isaiah 12 — Songs of Salvation

<sup>1</sup> You will say in that day:<sup>1</sup>

"I will give thanks to you, O LORD,  
for though you were angry with me,  
your anger turned away,  
that you might comfort me.

<sup>2</sup> "Behold, God is my salvation;

I will trust, and will not be afraid;  
for the LORD GOD is my strength and my song,  
and he has become my salvation."

<sup>3</sup> With joy you<sup>2</sup> will draw water from the wells of salvation.

<sup>4</sup> And you will say in that day:<sup>3</sup>

"Give thanks to the LORD,  
call upon his name,  
make known his deeds among the peoples,  
proclaim that his name is exalted.

<sup>5</sup> "Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously;

let this be made known in all the earth.

Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion,  
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel."

---

1. Singular

2. Plural

3. Plural

## Comparison with the Song of the Sea

This chapter mirrors the Song of the Sea from Exodus 15. After Moses led Israel through the Red Sea, they sang a song of thanksgiving and victory. After the Root of Jesse leads the remnant through the second exodus (chapter 11), they sing a similar song.

Compare the opening and closing of Isaiah 12 with Exodus 15:

*Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the LORD, saying,*

*"I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously;  
the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.  
The LORD is my strength and my song,  
and he has become my salvation;  
this is my God, and I will praise him,  
my father's God, and I will exalt him.  
The LORD is a man of war;  
the LORD is his name..."*

— Exodus 15:1-3

*Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambourines and dancing. And Miriam sang to them:*

*"Sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously;  
the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea."*

— Exodus 15:20-21

Note how both songs begin with thanksgiving to the LORD and end with singing and rejoicing. The pattern of deliverance leading to praise is central to Israel's identity.

## Salvation (3x) and Isaiah's Name

The word "salvation" appears three times in this short chapter (vv. 2, 2, 3), emphasizing the central theme of deliverance. This is significant because Isaiah's own name means "Yahweh is salvation" (*יהוָשׁוּעַ*, Yeshayahu).

The entire scroll of Isaiah is framed around this theme of God's salvation:

- Chapters 1-39: Judgment and the need for salvation
- Chapters 40-55: The coming of salvation through the Servant
- Chapters 56-66: The consummation of salvation in the new creation

Isaiah 12 serves as a hinge point in the first section, celebrating the salvation that God will accomplish through the Root of Jesse.

## **How Can the Holy One Dwell in the Midst?**

The final verse declares: "for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel" (v. 6). But how can the Holy One of Israel be directly in the midst of sinful inhabitants?

We learned the answer in Chapter 6. When Isaiah encountered God's holiness in the temple, he cried out, "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips" (6:5).

The solution? Atonement. The seraph touched Isaiah's lips with a burning coal from the altar, saying, "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for" (6:7).

Only through atonement can the Holy One dwell among unholy people. This points forward to the ultimate atonement that the Suffering Servant will accomplish (Isaiah 53), making it possible for God to dwell in the midst of His people forever.

# Isaiah 13-14

## Isaiah 13-14 — Overview

### 13:1-5: God Announcing Judgment on Babylon

- A hand stretches out from a mountain to summon a judgment that destroys the whole land

### 13:6-22: Day of the LORD Against Babylon

- Wrath and anger bring Babylon low
- Stars become darkened
- Land inhabited by wild creatures

### 14:1-2: God Will Have Compassion on Israel

- God makes their masters their servants

### 14:3-23: Trash Talk Against Babylon

- Wrath and anger bring Babylon low
- Stars become darkened
- Land inhabited by wild creatures

### 14:24-27: God Announcing Judgment on Assyria

- A hand stretches out from a mountain to summon a judgment that destroys the whole land

## Isaiah 13:1-5

### The Oracle Against Babylon

<sup>1</sup> The oracle<sup>a</sup> concerning **Babylon** which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.

<sup>2</sup> On a bare **hill** raise a signal<sup>b</sup>;  
cry aloud to them;  
wave the **hand** for them to enter  
the gates of the nobles.

<sup>3</sup> I myself have commanded my consecrated ones,  
and have summoned my mighty men to execute my **anger**,  
my proudly exulting ones.

<sup>4</sup> The noise of a multitude in the **mountains**,  
like that of many people!  
A tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together!  
The LORD of hosts musters  
the army for battle.

<sup>5</sup> They come from a far country,  
from the end of heaven—  
the LORD and his weapons of indignation,  
to destroy the **whole land**<sup>c</sup>.

<sup>a</sup>lit. "Burden"

<sup>b</sup>c.f. ch 2, 5, 11. All about raising a signal on a mountain/hill

<sup>c</sup>c.f. ch 5:26

### Why Address Babylon in Isaiah's Day?

They weren't that big of a deal. Babylon is a picture of all evil in the scriptures. Reference the tower of Babel story (Genesis 11) as the origin of this nation. Super relevant for chapters 13-14.

In v4 we have the nations gathering together on a mountain just like chapter 2, except this time, there's no weapons getting destroyed here.

## Isaiah 13:6-16

### The Day of the LORD

<sup>6</sup> Wail, for **the day of the LORD** is at hand!

It will come as destruction from the Almighty<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Therefore all **hands** will be limp,  
every man's heart will melt,

<sup>8</sup> and they will be amazed.

Pangs and sorrows will take hold of them;  
they will be in pain as a woman in childbirth.  
They will be amazed at one another;  
their faces will be like flames.

<sup>9</sup> Behold, **the day of the LORD** comes,  
cruel, with **wrath** and **fierce anger**,  
to make the **land** a desolation  
and to destroy its sinners from it.

<sup>10</sup> For the **stars** of the heavens and their constellations  
will not give their light;  
the sun will be dark at its rising,  
and the moon will not shed its light.

<sup>11</sup> I will punish the world for its evil,  
and the wicked for their iniquity;  
I will put an end to the pomp of the arrogant,  
and lay low the pompous pride of the ruthless.

<sup>12</sup> I will make man more rare than fine **gold**,  
and mankind than the **gold** of Ophir<sup>b</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> Therefore I will make the heavens **tremble**<sup>c</sup>,  
and the **earth** will be shaken out of its place,  
at the **wrath** of the LORD of hosts  
in the day of his **fierce anger**.

<sup>14</sup> And like a hunted gazelle,  
or like sheep with none to gather them,  
each will turn to his own people,  
and each will flee to his own **land**.

<sup>15</sup> Whoever is found will be thrust through,  
and whoever is caught will fall by the sword.

<sup>16</sup> Their children also will be dashed to pieces before their eyes;  
their houses will be plundered  
and their wives ravished.

<sup>a</sup>Wordplay of Destruction - shod; Almighty - shad-dai

<sup>b</sup>Part of Solomon's trade route. Every use of Ophir in the Bible is about gold.

<sup>c</sup>Note the repeated word. It's mentioned 3 times (translated "stirred up" in 14:9) in reference to the heavens, earth, and sheol.

## Isaiah 13:17-22 (cont.)

### The Desolation of Babylon

<sup>17</sup> Behold, I am **stirring up** the Medes against them,  
who have no regard for silver  
and do not delight in **gold**.

<sup>18</sup> Their bows will slaughter the young men;  
they will have no mercy on the fruit of the womb;  
their eyes will not pity children.

<sup>19</sup> And **Babylon**, the glory of kingdoms,  
the splendor and pomp of the Chaldeans,  
will be like Sodom and Gomorrah  
when God overthrew them.

<sup>20</sup> It will never be inhabited  
or lived in for all generations;  
no Arab will pitch his tent there;  
no shepherds will make their flocks lie down there.

<sup>21</sup> But wild beasts<sup>a</sup> will lie down there,  
and their houses will be full of howling creatures;  
there ostriches will dwell,  
and there wild goats will dance.

<sup>22</sup> Hyenas will cry in its towers,  
and jackals in the pleasant palaces;  
its time is close at hand  
and its days will not be prolonged.

<sup>a</sup>v21-22 are like a distorted inversion of chapter 11

### Cosmic Decreation

Whatever is going on here doesn't seem *only* isolated to Babylon, even if they are the primary audience. There's a cosmic scale of undoing Genesis 1 - land desolation, sun moon and stars losing light, etc.

### Cruelty?

Reading v16 makes me personally a little uncomfortable knowing it's Yahweh behind these things, but that's no different of a problem of evil today. Either God is in control or He's not. Here Isaiah highlights that Yahweh is the one "stirring them up", but He is not to blame for the

atrocities that the Medes will be doing here. Isaiah (nor any other biblical author) never exposit too much on how this tension can be resolved, but just say along with Joseph, "What you meant for evil, God meant for good"

## No Mercy?

Verses 17-22 didn't happen literally like described here as Babylon ended up surrendering without a fight to Cyrus and the Persians (who took over the Medes). This is more representative of the evil beneath Babylon and all the world powers against God.

### Isaiah 14:1-2

#### Mercy on Israel

<sup>1</sup> For the LORD will have compassion on Jacob and will again choose Israel, and will set them in their own **land**, and sojourners will join them and will attach themselves to the house of Jacob.

<sup>2</sup> And the peoples will take them and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel will possess them in the **LORD's land** as male and female slaves. They will take captive those who were their captors, and rule over those who oppressed them.

## Rulers in Their Land

Verses 1-2 were fulfilled in the short term in Ezra 1:1-4 where the survivors were assisted by the nations with gold and such. In the long term, we see a fulfillment in Matthew 5:5 and Revelation 5:9-10. In the garden, Adam and Eve in Genesis 1:28 were called to subdue the earth and rule it - God's people again will do so in eternity.

*"In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing:*

*Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the LORD, the God of Israel—he is the God who is in Jerusalem. And let each survivor, in whatever place he sojourns, be assisted by the men of his place with silver and gold, with goods and with beasts, besides freewill offerings for the house of God that is in Jerusalem. "*

— Ezra 1:1-4

*"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."*

— Matthew 5:5

*"And they sang a new song, saying, Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth. "*

— Revelation 5:9-10

## Isaiah 14:3-15

### Taunt Against the King of Babylon

<sup>3</sup> When the LORD has given you rest<sup>a</sup> from your pain<sup>b</sup> and turmoil and the hard service<sup>c</sup> with which you were made to serve,

<sup>4</sup> you will take up this taunt against the king of **Babylon** :  
"How the oppressor has ceased,

the insolent fury ceased!

<sup>5</sup> The LORD has broken the staff of the wicked,  
the scepter of rulers,

<sup>6</sup> that struck the peoples in **wrath**  
with unceasing blows,  
that ruled the nations in **anger**  
with unrelenting persecution.

<sup>7</sup> The **whole earth** is at rest and quiet;  
they break forth into singing.

<sup>8</sup> The cypress trees rejoice at you,  
the cedars of Lebanon, saying,  
'Since you were laid low,  
no woodcutter comes up against us.'

<sup>9</sup> Sheol beneath is **stirred up**  
to meet you when you come;  
it rouses the shades<sup>d</sup> to greet you,  
all who were leaders of the **earth** ;  
it raises from their thrones  
all who were kings of the nations.

<sup>10</sup> All of them will answer  
and say to you:  
'You too have become as weak as we!  
You have become like us!'

<sup>11</sup> Your pomp is brought down to Sheol,  
the sound of your harps;  
maggots are laid as a bed beneath you,  
and worms are your covers.

<sup>12</sup> "How you are fallen from heaven,  
O Day Star, son of Dawn!  
How you are cut down to the ground,  
you who laid the nations low!

<sup>13</sup> You said in your heart,  
'I will ascend to heaven;  
above the **stars** of God  
I will set my throne on high;  
I will sit on the **mount** of assembly  
in the far reaches of the north<sup>e</sup>;

<sup>14</sup> I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;  
I will make myself like the Most High<sup>f</sup>

<sup>15</sup> But you are brought down to Sheol,  
to the far reaches of the pit.

## Isaiah 14:16-23 (cont.)

### The Fall of Babylon's King

<sup>16</sup> Those who see you will stare at you  
and ponder over you:

'Is this the man who made the **earth** **tremble**,  
who shook kingdoms,

<sup>17</sup> who made the world like a desert  
and overthrew its cities,  
who did not let his prisoners go home<sup>a</sup>?"

<sup>18</sup> All the kings of the nations lie in glory,  
each in his own tomb;

<sup>19</sup> but you are cast out, away from your grave,  
like a loathed branch,  
clothed with the slain, those pierced by the sword,  
who go down to the stones of the pit,  
like a dead body trampled underfoot.

<sup>20</sup> You will not be joined with them in burial,  
because you have destroyed your **land**,  
you have slain your people.

"May the offspring of evildoers  
nevermore be named!

<sup>21</sup> Prepare slaughter for his sons  
because of the guilt of their fathers,  
lest they rise and possess the **earth**  
and fill the face of the world with cities."

<sup>22</sup> "I will rise up against them," declares the LORD of hosts, "and will cut off  
from **Babylon** name and remnant, descendants and posterity," declares the  
LORD.

<sup>23</sup> "And I will make it a possession of the hedgehog, and pools of water, and I  
will sweep it with the broom of destruction," declares the LORD of hosts.

<sup>a</sup>Like Pharaoh (see v3)

### Day Star, Son of Dawn

There's an interesting history with how this passage has been read back to refer to the fall of Lucifer (light-bearer, from this passage), but I think there's more going on here with how this imagery is in conversation with the stories of the Canaanite gods. The Day Star itself is likely

referring to Venus where there's this last star that holds on just long enough before the sun finally rules back over it. This is also in conversation with the ancient Canaanite story of how the storm god, Baal, died and then Athtar tried to take the throne on the mount of Zaphon. He couldn't though since he was too weak, so he was cast down.

King of Babylon is described the same way here → Grasping for power wrongfully and being humbled in the process. This fall of Babylon is likely not so figurative to describe Satan but also not so literal to just be talking about one Babylonian ruler. It seems hand-in-hand with something like Revelation 18 where Babylon is both the nation and rule, but also (sometimes more-so) about the evil powers behind it. This is why we can rejoice at evil being destroyed and "gloat" like Israel is doing here. It's not an isolated nation, it's a biblical pattern.

### **Fill World with Cities?**

Cities were not put in the greatest light starting with the first city built by Cain and the continuation of them in the Bible. They ultimately get redeemed though in Revelation.

*"In days to come Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots and fill the whole world with fruit."*

— Isaiah 27:6

*"And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."*

— Revelation 21:2

## Isaiah 14:24-27

### Judgment on Assyria

<sup>24</sup> The LORD of hosts has sworn:  
"As I have planned,  
so shall it be,  
and as I have purposed,  
so shall it stand,  
<sup>25</sup> that I will break the Assyrian in my **land**,  
and on my **mountains** trample him underfoot;  
and his yoke shall depart from them,  
and his burden from their shoulder."  
<sup>26</sup> This is the purpose that is purposed  
concerning the **whole earth**,  
and this is the **hand** that is stretched out  
over all the nations.  
<sup>27</sup> For the LORD of hosts has purposed,  
and who will annul it?  
His **hand** is stretched out,  
and who will turn it back?

### Why Bring Assyria In On This?

What God is doing to Assyria here is what He'll do to Babylon as well.

# **Isaiah 2:1-5**

## **A      Chapter 1**

The Vision and Call to Repentance

## **B      Chapters 2-4**

Glorious Mt. Zion — Judgment — Righteous Branch

## **C      Chapter 5**

Vineyard Parable and Assyrian Threat

## **Chapters 6-9:7**

Glory of Yahweh/3 Sons

## **C'      Chapters 9:8-10:34**

Extended Woes and Divine Judgment

## **B'      Chapter 11**

The Righteous Branch and Peaceful Kingdom

## **A'      Chapter 12**

Songs of Salvation and Praise

## Chapters 2-4

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2:1-5  
Mountain of  
Yahweh

2:6-22  
High brought  
Low

3:1-4:1  
Leadership  
Crisis

4:2-6  
Branch of  
Yahweh

## Isaiah 2:1-5

### The Word of Isaiah (1)

<sup>1</sup> The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

### The Mountain of Yahweh (2-5)

<sup>2</sup> It shall come to pass in the latter days  
that the mountain of the house of the LORD  
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,  
and shall be lifted up above the hills;

and all the nations shall flow to it,

<sup>3</sup> and many peoples shall come, and say:  
“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,  
to the house of the God of Jacob,  
that he may teach us his ways  
and that we may walk in his paths.”

For out of Zion shall go forth the law,  
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

<sup>4</sup> He shall judge between the nations,  
and shall decide disputes for many peoples;  
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares,  
and their spears into pruning hooks;  
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
neither shall they learn war anymore.

<sup>5</sup> O house of Jacob,  
come, let us walk  
in the light of the LORD.

## Mountain of Yahweh

The mountain of Zion itself for sure isn't the tallest mountain in the Ancient Near East – it isn't even the tallest mountain in the range of mountains around it!

So what is Isaiah getting at with the mountain being the highest above the hills?

Mountains in the Ancient Near Eastern cultures signified a spot where heaven and earth met. Think about famous stories where there are "mountaintop" moments throughout the Bible.

One of the predominant examples is Moses on Mt. Sinai receiving the Law. It's almost as if this vision of Mt. Zion where the nations stream up to receive the instruction of Yahweh is a second Sinai of sorts. It's the ultimate "heaven and earth" spot.

## Streaming Nations

The word for "flow" in verse 2 is the verb form of the noun "river". Here we have a reversal of Genesis 2 where instead of the river coming from an Eden-like mountain to water the nations, the nations themselves are now flowing **to** the Eden-like mountain.

*"A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is the Gihon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates." — Genesis 2:10-14*

Here, in a seemingly abrupt passage in the Eden story, we see something vitally important for the purposes of understanding this section of Isaiah.

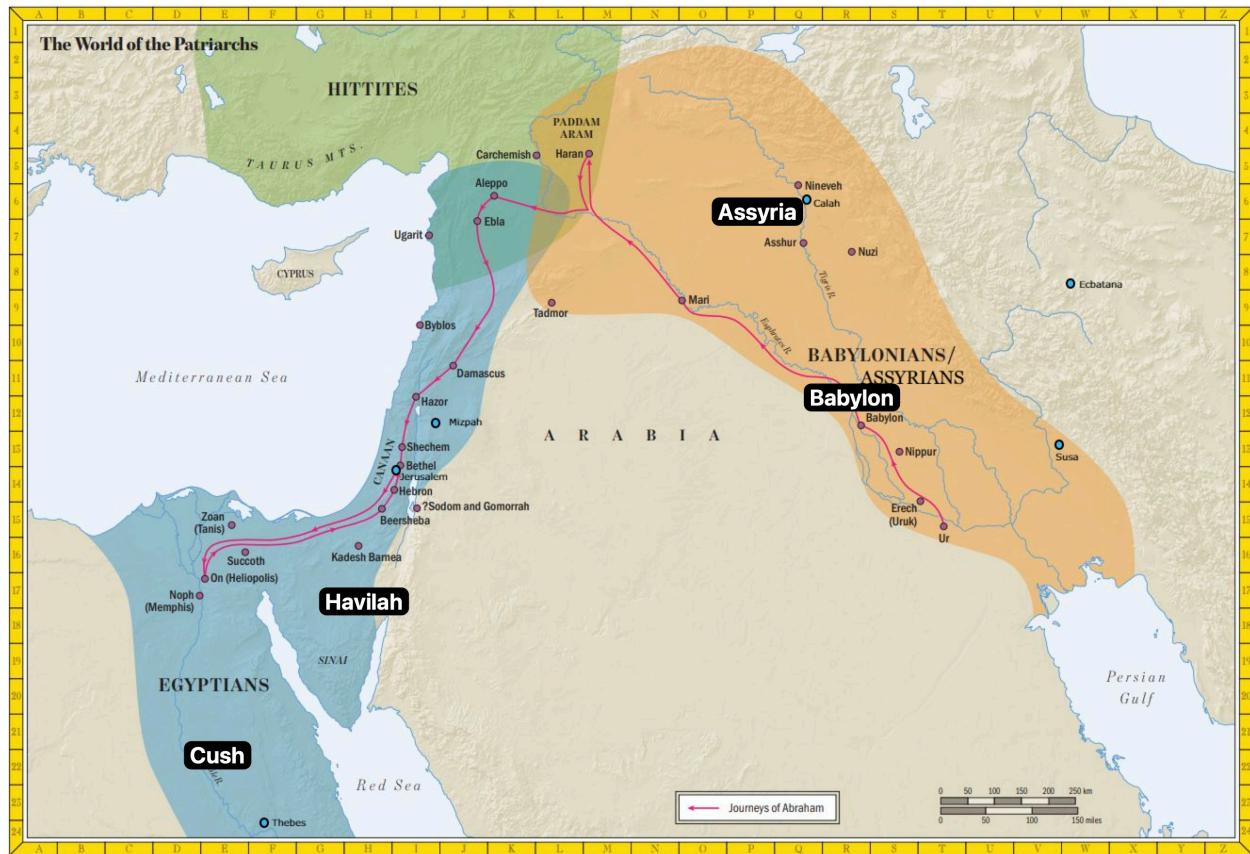
The river of Eden splits off into 4 parts that each water a different area extremely relevant to the biblical story:

- **Havilah** - Pishon (meaning: 'gusher') waters the area where Ishmael's descendants will settle (Gen. 25:18). Probably south and east of Canaan.
- **Cush** - Gihon (meaning: 'bursting forth') waters the land of Cush, where the Ethiopians and Egyptians would be.
- **Assyria** - Tigris flows and waters Assyria.
- **Babylon** - The Euphrates River doesn't even mention the name of where it flows, the readers would know.

So from this list we see all of the major players in the drama of Israel all experiencing the blessing flowing from the mountain of Eden.

In Isaiah 2, written to a people currently at odds or in hot water with most of the regions mentioned in Gen 2, we see a reversal where these nations are the ones now "rivering" back up to the mountain of the LORD to receive his instruction.

It's the redemption of a lost Eden!



## Swords to Plowshares

Note how the weapons typically meant for war and destruction are turned into farming equipment used for production and growth.

All of this flows from the nations rivering up to the mountain of Yahweh to learn his instruction.

Contrary to the world's stereotypical view of the Old Testament, the output of learning God's Law and instructions should be a people transformed from using instruments of destruction of life to instruments of cultivation of life.

## Torah and Light Wordplay

Isaiah employs a beautiful wordplay between instruction and illumination throughout this passage. The Hebrew reveals this connection:

Instruction

תּוֹרָה

*to.rah*

Light

אֹורֶךְ

*or*

Notice how verse 3 declares that from Zion "shall go forth the *torah*" and "the word of the LORD from Jerusalem." This divine instruction flows outward from the mountain to teach the nations God's ways.

But then in verse 5, there's a callback to Israel herself: "O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the *light* (*אֹורֶךְ*) of the LORD." The very people through whom God's instruction was meant to flow to the nations are themselves called to walk in His light.

This reflects Israel's original calling - to be a light to the nations (Isaiah 49:6), demonstrating God's ways so that all peoples might stream to His mountain. The wordplay suggests that God's *torah* and His *light* are intimately connected: His instruction illuminates the path of righteousness for both Israel and the nations.

Centuries later, Jesus would echo this very imagery in the Sermon on the Mount, calling His followers to be "the light of the world" and "a city set on a hill" (Matthew 5:14). Just as Isaiah envisioned nations streaming to Zion to receive God's instruction, Jesus commissioned His disciples to be that illuminating presence in the world - living examples of God's *torah* written on their hearts, drawing others to the mountain of the Lord through their transformed lives.

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## THE SAUCE

*Deep dives & rabbit holes*

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This passage is almost copy/paste of Micah 4:1-5. Who wrote it first? Did the LORD reveal it to both individually or did the prophets know each other?

How does this passage relate to the Tower of Babel? Who's making the Highest Mountain to the heavens?

## Chapters 2-4

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2:1-5  
Mountain of  
Yahweh

2:6-22  
High brought  
Low

3:1-4:1  
Leadership  
Crisis

4:2-6  
Branch of  
Yahweh

## Isaiah 2:6-22 – The Day of the LORD

<sup>6</sup> For you have rejected your people,  
the house of Jacob,  
because they are full of things from the east  
and of fortune-tellers like the Philistines,  
and they strike hands with the children of foreigners.

<sup>7</sup> **Their land is filled with** silver and gold,  
and there is no end to their treasures;

**A** **their land is filled with** horses,  
*idols,* and there is no end to their chariots.

*rocks,* <sup>8</sup> **Their land is filled with** **idols**;  
*and* they **bow down** to the work of their hands,  
*terror* to what their own fingers have made.

<sup>9</sup> So man is humbled,  
and each one is brought low—  
do not forgive them!

<sup>10</sup> **Enter into the rock**  
and hide in the dust  
from before the terror of the LORD  
and from the splendor of his majesty .

<sup>11</sup> **The haughty looks of man shall be brought low,**  
**B** **and the lofty pride of men shall be humbled,**  
**and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.**

<sup>12</sup> For the LORD of hosts has a day  
against all that is proud and lofty,  
against all that is lifted up—and it shall be brought low;

<sup>13</sup> against all the cedars of Lebanon,  
lofty and lifted up;

**C** <sup>14</sup> against all the lofty mountains,  
and against all the lifted up hills;

<sup>15</sup> against every high tower,  
and against every fortified wall;

<sup>16</sup> against all the ships of Tarshish,  
and against all the beautiful craft.

<sup>17</sup> **And the haughtiness of man shall be humbled,**  
**B** **and the lofty pride of men shall be brought low,**  
**and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.**

<sup>18</sup> And the **idols** shall utterly pass away.

<sup>19</sup> And people shall **enter the caverns of the rocks**  
and the holes of the ground,  
**from before the terror of the LORD**  
**and from the splendor of his majesty**,  
when he rises to terrify the earth.

**A** <sup>20</sup> In that day mankind will cast away  
*idols*, their **idols** of silver and their **idols** of gold,  
*rocks*, which they made for themselves to **worship**,  
*and* to the moles and to the bats,  
*terror* <sup>21</sup> to **enter the caverns of the rocks**  
*x2* and the clefts of the cliffs,  
**from before the terror of the LORD**  
**and from the splendor of his majesty**,  
when he rises to terrify the earth.

<sup>22</sup> Stop regarding man  
in whose nostrils is breath,  
for of what account is he?

## Money, Tanks, and Idols

In verses 7-8 we see, in a nice poetic form, what the land of Jacob is really filled with and what kinds of things they're placing their hope in – money (silver and gold), military prowess (horses and chariots), and idols.

It's a stark contrast to verse 4 where Israel is destroying their military tools into productive equipment for the communities benefit.

This is where the "real" Israel is at.

## Don't Forgive Them?

So what's going on in verse 9 though? How will we be able to get to v1-5 if there's no forgiveness for the house of Jacob?

*...It seems to express the prophet's deep despair over his people's condition. He seems almost afraid that God might relent and, in violation of his own justice, forget their heinous sins. As such, this phrase exposes the problem of sin. It cannot be simply forgotten, it must be punished; otherwise, the whole chain of cause and effect upon which the world is built would be broken. But the punishment for playing god can be no less than banishment from God, a denial of God's purpose in creating human beings-fellowship with himself. What might the solution be? Chs. 1-39 never really answer the question. Only in the second part of the book does the answer come (43:1-7; 44:21-22; 52:7; 53:12; 59:15-21; 53:1-6). But whatever the answer, it is not to be found in acting as if the sin had not been committed."*

— John Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39*

Forgive

נָשַׁא

na.sa

**Definition:** "to raise" or "to lift up"

The word "na.sa" is in direct contrast to the bowing down to the idols they're worshiping and the whole theme of this section of bringing low that which is high.

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## THE SAUCE

*Deep dives & rabbit holes*

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Why is God against the trees? Is this a metaphor for the people? Is this because this is what they were worshiping back in chapter 1?

The "Ships of Tarshish" have a significant role in the Hebrew Bible. Yahweh "bringing them low" has a lot more significance than just "destroying ships"

There's probably more we could do with the Tower of Babel imagery here as well.

## Chapters 2-4

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2:1-5  
Mountain of  
Yahweh

2:6-22  
High brought  
Low

3:1-4:1  
Leadership  
Crisis

4:2-6  
Branch of  
Yahweh

## Isaiah 3:1-4:1 — Overview

### Verses 1-7: God Taking Away (Men)

- All supports and leaders removed from Jerusalem and Judah
- Boys and infants will rule, causing social chaos

### Verses 8-15: Why God is Taking Away (Men)

- Jerusalem stumbled because they defy God's glorious presence
- Leaders have oppressed the poor and devoured the vineyard

### Verses 16-17: Why God is Taking Away (Women)

- Daughters of Zion are haughty and vain
- Their pride will be brought low through humiliation

### Verses 18-4:1: God Taking Away (Women)

- Removal of all finery and luxury items
- Desperation leads to reversing social norms

## Isaiah 3:1-7

### All Supports Removed (1-3)

- <sup>1</sup> For behold, the **Lord GOD** of hosts  
is taking away from Jerusalem and from Judah  
support and supply,  
    all support of **bread**,  
    and all support of water;
- <sup>2</sup> the mighty man and the soldier,  
    the judge and the prophet,  
    the diviner and the elder,
- <sup>3</sup> the captain of fifty  
    and the man of rank,  
the counselor and the skillful magician  
    and the expert in charms.

### Children Will Rule (4-5)

- <sup>4</sup> And I will make boys their princes,  
    and infants shall rule over them.
- <sup>5</sup> And the people will oppress one another,  
    every one his fellow  
    and every one his neighbor;  
the youth will be insolent to the elder,  
    and the despised to the honorable.

### Leadership Crisis (6-7)

- <sup>6</sup> For **a man will take hold of his brother**  
in the house of his father, saying:  
"You have a cloak;  
    you shall be our leader,  
    and this heap of ruins  
    shall be under your rule."
- <sup>7</sup> **In that day** he will speak out, saying:  
    "I will not be a healer;  
in my house there is neither **bread** nor cloak;  
    you shall not make me  
    leader of the people."

## Leader -> Healer

Healer

חֶבֶשׁ

cha. ash

**Definition:** "to bind up" or "to wrap wounds"

In verses 6-7 we see a clear comparison between being the leader of Israel and being a "cha.vash". It's the same usage in 1:6 about there being sores abounding in Israel with no one to do this healing work.

It's not until 61:1 that the full picture of this healing leader that's needed comes in to view in the passage Jesus read from when kicking off his ministry.

*"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,  
because the LORD has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor;  
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;"*

— Isaiah 61:1

## Isaiah 3:8-15

### Jerusalem's Defiance (8-9a)

<sup>8</sup> For Jerusalem has stumbled,  
and Judah has fallen,  
because their speech and their deeds are against the LORD,  
defying his glorious presence.

<sup>9a</sup> For the look on their faces bears witness against them;  
they proclaim their sin like Sodom;  
they do not hide it.

### Righteous vs Wicked (9b-12)

<sup>9b</sup> Woe to them!  
For they have brought **evil** on themselves.

<sup>10</sup> Tell the righteous that it shall be **well** with them,  
for they shall **eat the fruit** of their deeds.

<sup>11</sup> Woe to the wicked! It shall be **ill** with them,  
for what their hands have dealt out shall be done to them.

<sup>12</sup> **My people**—infants are their oppressors,  
and women rule over them.

O **my people**, your guides mislead you  
and they have swallowed up the course of your paths.

### Divine Judgment Against Leaders (13-15)

<sup>13</sup> The LORD has taken his place to contend;  
he stands to judge peoples.

<sup>14</sup> The LORD will enter into judgment  
with the elders of his people and its princes:  
"It is you who have devoured the vineyard,  
the spoil of the poor is in your houses.

<sup>15</sup> What do you mean by crushing **my people**,  
by grinding the face of the poor?"  
declares the Lord GOD of hosts.

## Echoes of Chapter 1

This passage strongly echoes themes from Isaiah 1, often using specific words that only show up in either chapter 1 or this chapter. This shows the continuing pattern of God's judgment on Jerusalem and Judah.

Isaiah 1	Isaiah 3	Notes
<p><sup>6</sup> From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but bruises and sores and raw wounds; they are not pressed out or <b>bound up</b> or softened with oil.</p>	<p><sup>7</sup> In that day he will speak out, saying: "I will not be a <b>healer</b>";</p>	Need for Healing
<p><sup>9</sup> we should have been like <b>Sodom</b>, and become like Gomorrah. <sup>10</sup> Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of <b>Sodom</b>!</p>	<p><sup>9</sup> they proclaim their sin like <b>Sodom</b>; they do not hide it.</p>	Sodom Comparison
<p><sup>19</sup> If you are willing and obedient, you shall <b>eat the good</b> of the land; <sup>20</sup> but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by the sword</p>	<p><sup>9b</sup> Woe to them! For they have brought <b>evil</b> on themselves. <sup>10</sup> Tell the righteous that it shall be <b>well</b> with them, for they shall <b>eat the fruit</b> of their deeds. <sup>11</sup> Woe to the wicked! It shall be <b>ill</b> with them</p>	Good vs Evil Outcomes
<p><sup>17</sup> learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice <b>to the fatherless</b>, <b>plead the widow's cause.</b></p>	<p><sup>14-15</sup> "It is you who have devoured the vineyard, <b>the spoil of the poor</b> is in your houses. What do you mean by <b>crushing my people</b>, by <b>grinding the face of the poor?</b>"</p>	Injustice Against the Poor
<p><sup>3</sup> The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master's crib, but Israel does not know, <b>my people</b> do not understand.</p>	<p><sup>12</sup> My people—infants are their op- pressors, and women rule over them. O <b>my people</b>, your guides mislead you and they have swallowed up the course of your paths.</p>	"My People" - Failed Understanding
<p><sup>20</sup> but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be eaten by <b>the sword</b>; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.</p>	<p><sup>25</sup> Your men shall fall by <b>the sword</b> and your mighty men in battle.</p>	Death by the Sword

## Sin of Sodom

What is the "sin like Sodom" in this passage that's being fleshed out? How does Isaiah see what Israel's sin is like and why would he compare it to Sodom?

Most of the prophets when referring to the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah see something more than just sexual immorality – it was a neglect and care for the outsider.

*"Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom,  
pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters,  
neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.  
And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me:  
therefore I took them away as I saw good."*

— Ezekiel 16:49-50

## Isaiah 3:16-17

### Haughty Daughters of Zion

<sup>16</sup> The LORD said:

Because the daughters of Zion are haughty  
and walk with outstretched necks,  
glancing wantonly with their eyes,  
mincing along as they go,  
tinkling with their feet,

<sup>17</sup> therefore the Lord will strike with a scab  
the heads of the daughters of Zion,  
and the LORD will lay bare their secret parts.

## Isaiah 3:18-4:1

### Removal of 21 Items (18-23)

<sup>18</sup> **In that day** the Lord will take away  
the finery of the anklets, the headbands, and the crescents;  
<sup>19</sup> the pendants, the bracelets, and the scarves;  
<sup>20</sup> the headdresses, the armlets, the sashes,  
    the perfume boxes, and the amulets;  
<sup>21</sup> the signet rings and nose rings;  
<sup>22</sup> the festal robes, the mantles, the cloaks,  
    and the handbags;  
<sup>23</sup> the mirrors, the linen garments,  
    the turbans, and the veils.

### Beauty Replaced with Shame (24-26)

<sup>24</sup> Instead of perfume there will be rottenness;  
    and instead of a belt, a rope;  
and instead of well-set hair, baldness;  
    and instead of a rich robe, a skirt of sackcloth;  
    and branding instead of beauty.  
<sup>25</sup> Your men shall fall by the sword  
    and your mighty men in battle.  
<sup>26</sup> And her gates shall lament and mourn;  
    empty, she shall sit on the ground.

### Desperation and Role Reversal (4:1)

<sup>1</sup> And seven women shall take hold of one man **in that day**, saying,  
"We will eat our own **bread** and wear our own clothes,  
only let us be called by your name;  
**take away** our reproach."

## Taking Away Reproach

Again we have hope in men which the end of chapter 2 specifically told us not to do!

Where else can Israel find hope for this? This, again, leads the reader to keep going when they reared in chapter 25:8 that there is some ultimate hope when it's Yahweh Himself who will be the one to take away reproach, not men.

*"He will swallow up death forever;  
and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces,  
and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth,  
for the LORD has spoken."*

— Isaiah 25:8

## Chapters 2-4

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2:1-5  
Mountain of  
Yahweh

2:6-22  
High brought  
Low

3:1-4:1  
Leadership  
Crisis

4:2-6  
Branch of  
Yahweh

## Isaiah 4:2-6

### The Branch of the LORD (2-3)

- <sup>2</sup> In that day the branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious,  
and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and honor  
of the survivors of Israel.
- <sup>3</sup> And he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy,  
everyone who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem,

### Divine Cleansing and Protection (4-6)

- <sup>4</sup> when the Lord shall have **washed away** the filth of the daughters of Zion  
and **cleansed** the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst  
by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of **burning**.
- <sup>5</sup> Then the LORD will create over the whole site of Mount Zion  
and over her assemblies  
a cloud by day, and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night;  
for over all the glory there will be a canopy.
- <sup>6</sup> There will be a booth for shade by day from **the heat**,  
and for a refuge and a shelter from the **storm and rain**.

## Sprout of Yahweh

Sprout

תְּמָךְ

*tse.mach*

**Definition:** "branch", "shoot", or "growth"

*tse.mach* is the same word used in reference to the fruit trees that sprout in Eden (Gen 2:9). This imagery evokes the idea of new life and growth emerging from what seemed dead or cut off.

Elsewhere this term is used in the prophets as an explicit Messianic reference (Jer 33:15, Zec 6:12), but the immediate context leads some folks to see it as describing the glorious land and Eden-like abundance that the remnant will have.

Given that Isaiah picks up on a Messianic hope for Israel and uses similar terms for Him just a few chapters later (Isaiah 11:1,10), assuming this "sprout" is only a reference to the abundant land is a bit limiting.

## Recorded for Life

Verse 3 isn't the first time we've seen in the Hebrew Bible about a scroll that Yahweh is keeping that tracks who's been recorded for life. In Exodus 32:32-33, Moses offers to have his name blotted out of the book that Yahweh has written if it would save the people.

*But now, if you will forgive their sin, please forgive it; but if not, please wipe me out of your book that you have written.*

*And the LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot out of my book."*

— Exodus 32:32-33

This imagery likely stems from the Ancient Near East practice of keeping a record of the living and the dead, where the king would have a "census" scroll of his subjects. To be removed from this list likely meant either exile or death.

Yahweh Himself has his own scroll in which those who are the holy ones are written for life. Likely not just physical life, but a pure heart that will see the Glory of the LORD.

## Washed away...by Fire?

In Verse 4, after the fruitful, Eden-like land, we have another early Genesis image with a flood of judgement washing away the filth of the daughters of Zion.

The only thing though is this washing away and "cleansing" (another word for washing, always used in association with water), is done by a "spirit of judgment" and a "spirit of burning"?

Spirit

רוּחַ

ru.ach

**Definition:** "wind," "breath," or "spirit." It's the invisible life-energy that animates and sustains all living things.

So this phrase of "spirit of burning" could also imply a fire wind of sorts that is "cleaning house" so to speak, leaving the holy remnant in Zion.

## Tabernacle Glory

Create

בָּרָא

ba.ra

**Definition:** "to create" or "to shape"

On to Verse 5! The use of the word "create" (ברא – ba.ra) seems like a direct callback to main acts of "ba.ra" in Genesis 1. This new creation will be for not only Mount Zion itself, but also all of her (now) holy people.

Her people get a very similar showing of Yahweh's divine presence in the "cloud by day"/"fire by night" that is a direct hyperlink to the installation of the Tabernacle where Yahweh's glory that was leading them through the wilderness now was resting on the newly established tabernacle as His dwelling place.

*Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. Throughout all their journeys, whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the people of Israel would set out. But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel throughout all their journeys.*

— Exodus 40:34-38

Now, in Isaiah's vision, this Tabernacle glory of Yahweh is available now to all of Zion and her people within it! God's dwelling place isn't just confined to a tabernacle or temple, it's now over all her assemblies in the form of a...wedding tent?

The word "canopy" is a wedding tent (only ever used elsewhere in Psalm 19:5 and Joel 2:6). Instead of a regional temple, the whole mountain is a wedding tent where the ultimate union with the branch and His holy ones will occur.

## Safe from the Storm

In the final verse we see that the "wind of burning" and the "washing away" are still occurring in some way, except Zion's assemblies will all be safe from the storms around. It doesn't quite seem like the "final" image given in chapter 2 where there's no more war.

Just like in 1 Peter 1:5, God's people here are being guarded by His power for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

This should give every reader in Jesus a hope and assurance of the "already" and the "not yet".

*Isaiah believed that the final encampment of God's people would be in the new Zion. There, at last, their journey would end. But notice the democratization of the ancient ideal which takes place here. In the final encampment the glory of the Lord's presence fills the whole camp, and the protecting cloud, like a vast canopy or pavilion (cf. Exod. 40:34), covers the entire site and all who are assembled there (5). There will no longer be any need for the tabernacle or temple, for the glory of the Lord will be directly accessible to all. And those with whom God is present in this way will be perfectly secure for ever (6). This is no out-of-date dream, but one which Jesus prayed to be realized (John 17:24), and which the apostle John sets before us again at the climax of the Bible as the vision of our own future in God which should still inspire us and draw us on (Rev. 21:22-27). We, too, are pilgrims.*

— Barry Webb, *The Message of Isaiah*

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## THE SAUCE

*Deep dives & rabbit holes*

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Why is it ok for the fruit of the land to be the pride of the survivors of Israel? It's the exact same word used in Isaiah 13:11 – "I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will put an end to the pomp of the arrogant, and lay low the pride of the ruthless."

The "booth" (Hebrew: *sukkah*) in verse 6 directly connects to the Feast of Booths (Sukkot), where Israel was commanded to dwell in booths made from their "threshing floors" and "winepresses" and all people (servants, orphans, widows, foreigners, etc.) were to be blessed and joyful for seven days (Deuteronomy 16:13-15).

**A      Chapter 1**  
The Vision and Call to Repentance

**B      Chapters 2-4**  
Glorious Mt. Zion — Judgment — Righteous Branch

**C      Chapter 5**  
Vineyard Parable and Assyrian Threat

**Chapters 6-9:7**  
Glory of Yahweh/3 Sons

**C'      Chapters 9:8-10:34**  
Extended Woes and Divine Judgment

**B'      Chapter 11**  
The Righteous Branch and Peaceful Kingdom

**A'      Chapter 12**  
Songs of Salvation and Praise

# Isaiah 5:1-30 — Overview

## Verses 1-7: Judgment on the Vineyard (A)

- A beloved's vineyard that **planted** choice vines but **yielded wild grapes**
- God **looked for justice** but found **bloodshed and outcry**

## Verses 8-14: Two Woes and Two Therefore (B)

- **Woe** to greedy land-grabbers and indulgent party-goers
- **Therefore** exile and death await the people

## Verses 15-17: Divine Justice (C)

- Human pride humbled,  
God exalted in **justice** and  
**righteousness**
- Desolation where the rich once  
lived

## Verses 18-25: Four More Woes and Two Therefore (B')

- **Woe** to the provocative, morally confused,  
proud, and corrupt
- **Therefore** God's anger burns against His people

## Verses 26-30: Judgment on the Land (A')

- God signals distant nations to come as His instrument of judgment
- **Darkness** and distress cover the land

## Isaiah 5:1-7 (A)

### The Song of the Vineyard (1-2)

<sup>1</sup> Let me sing for my beloved  
my love song concerning his vineyard:  
My beloved had a vineyard  
on a very fertile hill.  
<sup>2</sup> He dug it and cleared it of stones,  
and planted it with choice vines;  
he built a watchtower in the midst of it,  
and hewed out a wine vat in it,  
and he looked for it to yield grapes,  
but it yielded wild grapes.

### The Appeal to Judah (3-4)

<sup>3</sup> And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem  
and men of Judah,  
judge between me and my vineyard.  
<sup>4</sup> What more was there to do for my vineyard,  
that I have not done in it?  
When I looked for it to yield grapes,  
why did it yield wild grapes?

### The Judgment (5-6)

<sup>5</sup> And now I will tell you  
what I will do to my vineyard.  
I will remove its hedge,  
and it shall be devoured;  
I will break down its wall,  
and it shall be trampled down.  
<sup>6</sup> I will make it a waste;  
it shall not be pruned or hoed,  
and briars and thorns shall grow up;  
I will also command the clouds  
that they rain no rain upon it.

### The Interpretation (7)

<sup>7</sup> For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts  
is the house of Israel,  
and the men of Judah  
are his pleasant planting;  
and he looked for justice,  
but behold, bloodshed;  
for righteousness,  
but behold, an outcry!

## Expectation vs Reality

Wild Grapes

בְּאַשְׁרִים

be...shim

**Definition:** "stink fruit"

In verses 2 and 4, we see at the end you have this expectation of what he looked for to yield grapes, but it instead yielded wild grapes or stink fruit. The next time you see this "he looked for" statement it's at the end of this little section in verse 7, when he is looking for justice and righteousness, but behold bloodshed and outcry. There's some wordplay going on here too:

Justice

מִשְׁפָט

mish.pa

Bloodshed

מִשְׁפָח

mis.pach

Righteousness

צַדְקָה

se.da.qah

Outcry

צַעֲקָה

se.a.qah

Hebrew scholar Robert Alter in his translation of the Hebrew Bible gives the following to try and capture this:

*"He hoped for justice,  
and, look, jaundice,  
for righteousness,  
and, look, wretchedness."*

— Robert Alter, *The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary*

### **”What More Could God Do?”**

The rhetorical question in verse 4 strikes at the heart of the tension between God’s sovereignty and human responsibility and agency. God gives a rhetorical statement here, implying that there is nothing else that he could do for the people themselves.

## Isaiah 5:8-14 (B)

### First Woe: Greed (8-10)

- 8 **Woe** to those who join house to house,  
    who add field to field,  
until there is no more room,  
    and you are made to dwell alone  
        in the midst of the land.
- A** 9 The LORD of hosts has sworn in my hearing:  
“Surely many houses shall be desolate,  
    large and beautiful houses, without inhabitant.
- 10 For ten acres of vineyard shall yield but one bath,  
    and a homer of seed shall yield but an ephah.”

### Second Woe: Indulgence (11-12)

- 11 **Woe** to those who rise early in the morning,  
    that they may run after strong drink,  
who tarry late into the evening  
    as wine inflames them!
- B** 12 They have lyre and harp,  
    tambourine and flute and wine at their feasts,  
but they do not regard the deeds of the LORD,  
    or [see the work of his hands](#).

### Two Therefore's (13-14)

- 13 **Therefore** my people go into exile  
**B'**       for lack of knowledge;  
          their honored men go hungry,  
          and their multitude is parched with thirst.
- 14 **Therefore** Sheol has enlarged its appetite  
**A'**       and opened its mouth beyond measure,  
and the nobility of Jerusalem and her multitude will go down,  
    her revelers and he who exults in her.

## **Whose Land?!**

Leviticus 25:23 says, "The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine. For you are strangers and sojourners with me."

The land ultimately belongs to God! And yet they want to take more and more at the expense of the needy – and what does it give them? Loneliness and isolation – kind of an ironic natural consequence of taking all the land for yourself.

## **Ancient Measurements**

- Acre: area a pair of oxen could plow in a day
- Bath: 6 gallons (22 liters)
- Homer: 6 bushels (220–230 liters)
- Ephah: 0.6 bushels (22–23 liters)

## **Why are they being Exiled?**

Due to a "lack of knowledge" Judah is being Exiled. From earlier sections like 1:12-15, we see that just because God's people know the right actions to take, their lack of knowledge of the true holy nature of Yahweh is what led them to their destruction.

### Isaiah 5:15-17 (C) —

- <sup>15</sup> Man is humbled, and each one is brought low,  
and the eyes of the haughty are brought low.
- <sup>16</sup> But the LORD of hosts is exalted in **justice**,  
and the Holy God shows himself holy in **righteousness**.
- <sup>17</sup> Then shall the lambs graze as in their pasture,  
and nomads shall eat among the ruins of the rich.

### Justice and Righteousness

The center section of this whole chapter shows that Yahweh Himself is the one who is full of what Israel was meant to produce: justice and righteousness.

## Isaiah 5:18-25 (B')

### Third Woe: Provocation (18-19)

18 **Woe** to those who draw iniquity with cords of falsehood,  
who draw sin as with cart ropes,  
19 who say: “Let him be quick,  
let him **speed his work**  
**that we may see it** ;  
let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near,  
and let it come, that we may know it!”

### Fourth Woe: Moral Confusion (20)

20 **Woe** to those who call evil good  
and good evil,  
who put **darkness** for light  
and light for **darkness**,  
who put bitter for sweet  
and sweet for bitter!

### Fifth Woe: Pride (21)

21 **Woe** to those who are wise in their own eyes,  
and shrewd in their own sight!

### Sixth Woe: Corruption (22-23)

22 **Woe** to those who are heroes at drinking wine,  
and valiant men in mixing strong drink,  
23 who acquit the guilty for a bribe,  
and **deprive the innocent of his right** !

### Two Therefore (24-25)

24 **Therefore**, as the tongue of fire devours the stubble,  
and as dry grass sinks down in the flame,  
so their root will be as rottenness,  
and their blossom go up like dust;  
for they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts,  
and have despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

25 **Therefore** the anger of the LORD was kindled against his people,  
and he stretched out his hand against them and struck them,  
and the mountains quaked;  
and their corpses were as refuse  
in the midst of the streets.  
For all this his anger has not turned away,  
and his hand is stretched out still.

## Isaiah 5:23

Translation	Text
<b>ESV</b>	who acquit the guilty for a bribe, and deprive the innocent of his right!
<b>NASB</b>	Who declare the wicked innocent for a bribe, And take away the rights of the ones who are in the right!
<b>NIV</b>	who acquit the guilty for a bribe, but deny justice to the innocent.
<b>KJV</b>	Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!
<b>NET</b>	They pronounce the guilty innocent for a payoff, they ignore the just cause of the innocent.

### Isaiah 5:26-30 (A')

- <sup>26</sup> He will raise a signal for nations far away,  
and whistle for them from the ends of the earth;  
and behold, quickly, speedily they come!
- <sup>27</sup> None is weary, none stumbles,  
none slumbers or sleeps,  
not a waistband is loose,  
not a sandal strap broken;
- <sup>28</sup> their arrows are sharp,  
all their bows bent,  
their horses' hoofs seem like flint,  
and their wheels like the whirlwind.
- <sup>29</sup> Their roaring is like a lion,  
like young lions they roar;  
they growl and seize their prey;  
they carry it off, and none can rescue.
- <sup>30</sup> They will growl over it on that day,  
like the growling of the sea.  
And if one looks to the land,  
behold, **darkness** and distress;  
and the light is **darkened** by its clouds.

## Who's Really Destroying the Land?

When Yahweh "raises a signal" (something to watch for as we go), which is what causes the enemies to destroy the land.

While Israel may have often thought that Yahweh was absent in their terror and exile, He was not only there with them, but also the catalyst in the first place.

Yahweh is in control from start to finish.

## Chaos abounds

Two of the main chaotic forces in the Hebrew Bible are the waters and the darkness. Genesis 1:2 starts off stating that these chaotic forces are what God overcomes in creating this world.

Here we see these chaotic forces at coming in for a prime de-creation. But if this is true, then what hope does Israel have to become the "Glorious Mountain" or the "Eden-like Wedding Tent"?

What can make them new again?

## THE SAUCE

*Deep dives*

This passage may sound familiar as it has the exact same intro to one of Jesus's parables about a vineyard as well in Matthew 21:33-46. Both passages feature a carefully tended vineyard that fails to produce proper fruit for its owner. Taking the context here from Isaiah into account, reading Christ's parable becomes quite a bit more straightforward knowing what He's referencing. Comparing and contrasting these two passages could be "fruitful".

**A      Chapter 1**  
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The Righteous Branch and Peaceful Kingdom

**A'      Chapter 12**  
Songs of Salvation and Praise

## Isaiah 6-9:7

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**Isaiah 6**  
*Isaiah's Call & Commission*

**Isaiah 7**  
*Immanuel*

**Isaiah 8**  
*Maher-shalal-hash-baz*

**Isaiah 9:1-7**  
*The Prince of Peace*

### Isaiah 6 — Overview

#### Verses 1-5: Vision of the Holy King

- Isaiah sees the LORD on His throne with seraphim crying "Holy, holy, holy"

#### Verses 6-8: Cleansing and Commission

- A seraph cleanses Isaiah's lips with a coal from the altar
- Isaiah responds to God's call: "Here I am! Send me."

#### Verses 9-13: The Hard Message

- God gives Isaiah a difficult message of judgment
- The people will hear but not understand until the land is desolate

## Isaiah 6:1-5

A

*Seen* <sup>1</sup> In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high the and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple.

*King*

B

*Holy,*

*Holy,*

*Holy*

<sup>2</sup> Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. <sup>3</sup> And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" <sup>4</sup> And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.

A'

*Seen* <sup>5</sup> And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I the dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"

*King*

## The Real King

King Uzziah had reigned for 52 years when he died, making him one of the longest-reigning kings of Judah. His death marked the end of an era of prosperity and stability. But in this moment of political uncertainty, Isaiah sees the true King - the LORD of hosts - seated on His eternal throne.

Right before King Uzziah died though, we read the following story in 2 Chronicles 26:16-21:

### 2 Chronicles 26:16-21

<sup>16</sup> "But when he was strong, he grew proud, to his destruction. For he was unfaithful to the LORD his God and entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. <sup>17</sup> But Azariah the priest went in after him, with eighty priests of the LORD who were men of valor. <sup>18</sup> And they withheld King Uzziah and said to him, "It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Go out of the sanctuary, for you have done wrong, and it will bring you no honor from the LORD God." <sup>19</sup> Then Uzziah was angry. Now he had a censer in his hand to burn incense, and when he became angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead in the presence of the priests in the house of the LORD, by the altar of incense. <sup>20</sup> And Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and behold, he was leprous in his forehead! And they rushed him out quickly, and he himself hurried to go out, because the LORD had struck him. <sup>21</sup> And King Uzziah was a leper to the day of his death, and being a leper lived in a separate house, for he was excluded from the house of the LORD. And Jotham his son was over the king's household, governing the people of the land.

One of the reasons Isaiah could be explicitly calling out that this occurred the day of King Uzziah's death could be contrasting what Isaiah himself is going through here in God's holy place vs how King Uzziah treated it.

It's also maybe "ironic" in a way that as a leper, you'd have "Unclean" come out of your lips in order to let others know to stay away. Here Isaiah says he has the same – the remedy isn't to "burn incense" for yourself, it's to have God's atoning mercy given to you.

## Guarding the Thresholds

### **Genesis 3:22-24**

<sup>22</sup> "Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—" <sup>23</sup> therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. <sup>24</sup> He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life."

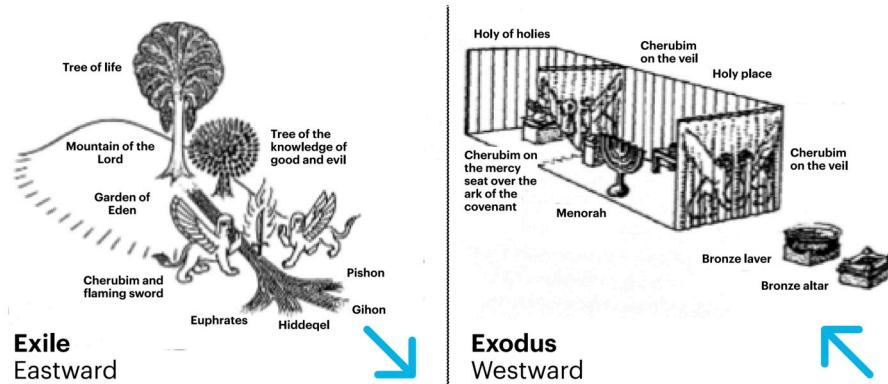


Image adapted from Morales, Michael L. (2015). *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?: A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus*. IVP Academic.

Adapted from Morales, Michael L. (2015). *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?: A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus*. IVP Academic. By BibleProject for Classroom: Adam to Noah (2020).

This isn't the first time we read about angelic beings who guard the sacred space of God. Here we have the guardians of the tree of life set up where Adam and Eve forfeited their right to have perfect communion with God Himself.

Now, Isaiah is "back in the garden" so to speak, by being directly before Yahweh. But he still needs to "pass through the cherubim" in order to be cleansed and begin his ministry.

These are guardians of the "entryway" or "threshold" which is probably why the foundations of the thresholds are specifically called out in v4.

## Isaiah's Response to Holiness

Why does Isaiah say he's "lost" in response to what he's just witnessed? It's helpful to compare translations when doing a deeper study. If you see a big difference in wording in the translations, odds are the underlying Hebrew word has a bit more nuance than can easily be communicated with just a single word or two in English.

### Isaiah 6:5a

Translation	Text
ESV	And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost;"
NASB	"Then I said, "Woe to me, for I am ruined!"
NIV	"Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined!"
KJV	Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone;
NET	I said, "Woe to me! I am destroyed,"

Lost

מַכְהָה

*da.mah*

**Definition:** Ceased, cut off, or destroyed. Crushed into nonexistence

What does the holiness of God even mean? It's his "otherness" – He's set apart in that He's filled with such extreme goodness and purity. Kind of like the sun that can be incredibly powerful and dangerous, but is also the source of life.

This is why Isaiah is so terrified – how can he be able to live in the presence of a Holy God? He's unclean, sinful, and impure. Just like Adam and Eve in the garden, Isaiah is confronted with the reality of his sinfulness in the presence of God's holiness.

## Isaiah and the "People"

After he spent just about all of chapters 1-5 roasting Israel and clearly painting their need for judgement, when confronted with the holiness of Yahweh directly, he doesn't just say "Woe is Israel", he identifies his individualistic role within the larger community.

## Isaiah 6:6-8

<sup>6</sup> Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. <sup>7</sup> And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.”  
<sup>8</sup> And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here I am! Send me.”

## Holiness Transfer

*“Instead of the temple becoming contaminated by Isaiah’s impurity, the opposite happens: God’s holiness transfers to Isaiah and erases his sin and impurity.*

*This is unexpected to say the least! The implications of Isaiah’s vision are huge. Perhaps God doesn’t need to be protected by the impurity our sin, maybe it’s the other way around. Maybe it’s our sin that is endangered by God’s holiness.”*

— Bible Project, *Holiness Study Guide*, <https://bibleproject.com/videos/holiness/>

## Isaiah 6:9-13

### The Hard Message (9-10)

<sup>9</sup> And he said, “Go, and say to this people: ‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’

<sup>10</sup> Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.”

### How Long? (11-13)

<sup>11</sup> Then I said, “How long, O Lord?” And he said: “Until cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without people, and the land is a desolate waste,

<sup>12</sup> and the LORD removes people far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.

<sup>13</sup> And though a tenth remain in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak, whose stump remains when it is felled.” The holy seed is its stump.

## Keep on Hearing

Verses 9-10 are picked up by Jesus in a few places in the Gospels:

### Matthew 13:10-17

<sup>10</sup> ”Then the disciples came and said to him, ‘Why do you speak to them in parables?’

<sup>11</sup> And he answered them, ‘To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. <sup>12</sup> For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. <sup>13</sup> This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. <sup>14</sup> Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says:

‘You will indeed hear but never understand,  
and you will indeed see but never perceive.’

<sup>15</sup> For this people’s heart has grown dull,  
and with their ears they can barely hear,  
and their eyes they have closed,  
lest they should see with their eyes  
and hear with their ears  
and understand with their heart  
and turn, and I would heal them.”

And in John, the same thing is present, except this time, John brings extra commentary to the surrounding passage in Isaiah 6:

### **John 12:36-43**

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<sup>36</sup> "While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light." When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them. <sup>37</sup> Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, <sup>38</sup> so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

"Lord, who has believed what he heard from us,  
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"

<sup>39</sup> Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said,

<sup>40</sup> "He has blinded their eyes  
and hardened their heart,  
lest they see with their eyes  
and understand with their heart, and turn,  
and I would heal them."

<sup>41</sup> Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him. <sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; <sup>43</sup> for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

### **The Holy Seed**

In spite of this rejection and hardening, this glorious passage ends with a glorious promise, a holy seed (offspring) will remain from the chopped-down tree. Just like how the vision of Yahweh is 3x Holy, so the remnant after destruction will be.

Out of death and judgement comes the promise of a new life. A life that is holy and dedicated to the Lord!

*"We come nearer to the heart of this chapter by noting that it is pervaded by the thought of death: the dying king (1), the prophet under sentence of death (5), the sacrificial animal dead on the altar (6) and the felled tree (13). Twice over, death seems to spell the end but is found not to be so. The king lies dead (1) but it turns out to be only the felling of a tree, and life remains in the root (13); the prophet lies dead, struck down by sin under divine holiness (5) but when the seraph approaches, apparently bearing the fire of judgment, it is to apply the efficacy of a sacrifice for sin and to speak the word 'atoned' (7). Death does not have the last word."*

— Barry Webb, *The Message of Isaiah*

## THE SAUCE

*Deep dives*

Seraph means "to burn" and this is the same word used in the fiery serpent on the pole that healed Israel from their snake bites in Numbers 21. There's maybe some interesting things here with the purifying nature of both of these stories – or even how Jesus uses this story in John 3:14-15.

How does Isaiah's call narrative relate to Moses's? Both have the firey holiness of God, both have a servant who responds to God's commissioning of them to give a hard message. What other comparisions are there to meditate on?

What does the hardening of the hearers of this message mean for God's Sovereignty vs Human Responsibility? Why couldn't the message be like chapter 1:16 where they could turn and repent and be clean? Is this message to the same people?

## Isaiah 6-9:7

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**Isaiah 6**  
*Isaiah's Call &  
Commission*

**Isaiah 7**  
*Immanuel*

**Isaiah 8**  
*Maher-  
shalal-hash-  
baz*

**Isaiah  
9:1-7**  
*The Prince  
of Peace*

## Isaiah 7:1-25 — Overview

### Verses 1-6: Problem of Potential Future Judgment

- Syria and Israel alliance threatens Judah
- Ahaz and people tremble with fear

### Verses 7-9: God will protect – have strong faith

- Yahweh through Isaiah speaks
- Faith requirement: "If you are not firm in faith, you will not be firm at all"

### Verses 10-17: Faith test – Immanuel / God is with us

- Yahweh through Isaiah speaks
- God gives the Immanuel sign

### Verses 18-25: Problem of Sure Future Judgment

- In that day - repeated phrase marking divine intervention
- Assyrian invasion will devastate Judah

## Isaiah 7:1-6

- <sup>1</sup> In the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, son of Uzziah, king of Judah,  
**A** **Rezin the king of Syria** and **Pekah the son of Remaliah<sup>1</sup> the king of Israel** came up to Jerusalem to wage war against it, but could not yet mount an attack against it.
- B** <sup>2a</sup> When the house of David was told, ”**Syria** is in league with **Ephraim**,”
- C** <sup>2b</sup> the heart of Ahaz and the heart of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake before the wind.
- <sup>3</sup> And the LORD said to Isaiah, ”Go out to meet Ahaz, you and Shear-jashub your son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the Washer’s Field.
- <sup>4</sup> And say to him, ‘Be careful, be quiet, do not fear, and do not let your heart
- C'** be faint because of these two smoldering stumps of firebrands, because of the fierce anger of **Rezin** and **Syria** and **the son of Remaliah**.
- B**, <sup>5</sup> Because **Syria**, with **Ephraim** and **the son of Remaliah**, has devised evil against you, saying,
- A**, <sup>6</sup> ”Let us go up against Judah and terrify it, and let us conquer it for ourselves, and set up the son of Tabeeel<sup>2</sup> as king in the midst of it,”

- 
1. Pekah not mentioned by name here on – likely because he was a usurper, not of royal blood
  2. Good for Nothing

## Isaiah 7:7-9

A<sup>7</sup> thus says the Lord GOD: "It shall not stand, and it shall not come to pass.

B<sup>8a</sup> For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin.

C<sup>8b</sup> And within sixty-five years Ephraim will be shattered from being a people.

B,<sup>9a</sup> And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is the son of Remaliah.

A'<sup>9b</sup> If you are not firm in faith, you will not be firm at all.<sup>1</sup>"

- 
1. The choice here between "firm in faith" (or "believe") and "firm at all" (or "endure") is a wordplay here in Hebrew. A fun translation that Motyer gives here is "Trust or Bust"

## Isaiah 7:10-17

### The Sign Offered (10-12)

<sup>10</sup> Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz: <sup>11</sup> "Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol<sup>1</sup> or high as heaven." <sup>12</sup> But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test."

### The Sign Given (13-17)

<sup>13</sup> And he said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup> Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. <sup>15</sup> He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. <sup>16</sup> For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted. <sup>17</sup> The LORD will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father's house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria."

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1. The grave/pit. Deep in the earth where the dead are buried.

## Will not Put to the Test?

It seems like Ahaz is doing something noble here by refusing to test the Lord (as commanded in Deut 6:16).

But, in the Hebrew ordering of the Bible, the TaNaK, Isaiah comes right after 2 Kings. In 2 Kings 16:7-9, we see that Ahaz actually *did* put the Lord to the test by asking Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria to come and help him against the alliance of Syria.

John Oswalt has referred to this as 3 mice getting into a fight and one of them going to ask the cat for help! Ahaz, the wicked king, is showing his lack of trust in a passage here in Isaiah when trust in Yahweh is central.

## Virgin vs Young Woman

Virgin

עֲמָלֵה

*al.mah*

**Definition:** young woman of marriable age

In the Hebrew text, the word used for "virgin" in verse 14 is *almah*, which simply means "young woman of marriable age." However, when the Hebrew Bible was translated into Greek (called the Septuagint), the translators chose to use the word *parthenos*, which specifically refers to someone who has never had sexual relations or borne children. This translation choice was significant for how later readers understood this prophecy.

Matthew references this very passage when describing the birth of Jesus:

*"All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 'Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel' (which means, God with us )."*

— Matthew 1:22-23

So why would Matthew quote this text with the word "virgin"? Or better yet, why would the Greek translators of the Hebrew Bible use "parthenos" instead of the other word for "young woman"? What is this all referring to and how does this text actually predict the coming Messiah at all?

## The Virgin Birth Prophecy

There is a lot of comparisons in this and surrounding passages about Ahaz in Isaiah when compared to his son, Hezekiah in chapters 36-39.

Much of this insight comes from Bible Scholar Tim Mackie who also credits Jacob Stromberg. Here's a chart from them, in fact, comparing these two stories from the kings:

### Ahaz in Isaiah 5-11

**Isa. 7:1** The Syrians and northern Israelites ally, so that a foreign king (**מלך** מלך) goes up (**עליה** עלה) against (**על** על) the city of Jerusalem.

**Isa. 7:6** The foreign king seeks to replace the legitimate Davidic king with someone else.

**Isa. 7:3** Isaiah sends a message to King Ahaz “at the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the launderer’s field.”

**Isa. 7:4, 11** Isaiah says “don’t be afraid” (**אל תירא** אל תירא) and offers a “sign” (**אות** אות) to confirm God’s promise.

**Isa. 7:14-15** The sign is a son to be born to a “young woman” (**עלמה** עלמה), who will “eat” (**אכל** אכל) curds and honey until the city’s deliverance.

Despite the absence of a man “going into” the “young woman,” she will birth a son who will be a sign of the city’s deliverance and the survival of the son of David.

### Hezekiah in Isaiah 36-39

**Isa. 36:1** The Assyrian army surrounds Jerusalem so that foreign king (**מלך** מלך) goes up (**עליה** עלה) against (**על** על) the city of Jerusalem.

**Isa. 36:14-17** The foreign king seeks to replace the legitimate Davidic king with someone else.

**Isa. 36:2** “... at the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the launderer’s field.”

**Isa. 37:6, 30** Isaiah says “don’t be afraid” (**אל תירא** אל תירא) and offers a sign (**אות** אות) to confirm God’s promise.

**Isa. 37:30-32** The sign is that the remnant of Jerusalem will “eat” (**אכל** אכל) plants that sprout “upward” (**למעלה** לעלה) and bear fruit when the city is delivered.

The king of Assyria will not be allowed to “go into” (**בוא אל** בוא אל), Isa. 37:33-34) Jerusalem, who is described as the “virgin daughter Zion” (**בתולה בת ציון** / παρθενος θυγατηρ Σιων, Isa. 37:22).

### Isaiah 37:30-35

30 “Then this shall be the sign for you:  
you will eat this year what grows of itself,  
in the second year what springs from the same,  
and in the third year **sow-seed** (**זרע** זרע), reap, plant vineyards and eat their fruit (**פרי** פרי).

31 The **surviving remnant** of the house of Judah,  
it will again take root downward and bear **fruit** (**פרי** פרי) upward.

32 For out of Jerusalem will go out a **remnant**,  
and **survivors** out of Mount Zion,  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”

33 Therefore, thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria,  
**“He will not enter into** (**בוא אל** בוא אל + **אֵל** אל) this city or shoot an arrow there;  
and he will not come before it with a shield,  
or throw up a siege ramp against it.

34 By the way that he came, by the same he will return,

*Ahaz and Hezekiah. Created by Tim Mackie for BibleProject Classroom: Rise of the Messiah (2024).*

In both of these stories, we have a King who's worried about a raging army about to go against it and "break it open" in order to install a puppet king.

God offers them both a sign of His promise of protection, even though Ahaz refuses.

This Immanuel sign is put on analogy to the surviving remnant in Isaiah 37:30-35. Even though the "Virgin daughter Zion" is not able to be entered, there will still be a fruitful "surviving remnant" coming forth from it as a sign of salvation.

This is exactly what the last few chapters of this whole book is about – a glorious surviving remnant worshipping Yahweh in a future glorious Zion! All of this, as we'll read later in Isaiah, is made possible by the coming Suffering Servant. The King of David. The Messiah.

## Isaiah 7:18-25

<sup>18</sup> **In that day** the LORD will whistle for the fly that is at the end of the streams of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria. <sup>19</sup> And they will all come and settle in the steep ravines, and in the clefts of the rocks, and on all the **thornbushes**, and on all the pastures.

<sup>20</sup> **In that day** the Lord will shave with a razor that is hired beyond the River—with the king of Assyria—the head and the hair of the feet, and it will sweep away the beard also.

<sup>21</sup> **In that day** a man will keep alive a young cow and two **sheep**, <sup>22</sup> and because of the abundance of milk that they give, he will eat curds, for everyone who is left in the land will eat curds and honey.

<sup>23</sup> **In that day** every place where there used to be a thousand vines, worth a thousand shekels of silver, will become **briers and thorns**. <sup>24</sup> With bow and arrows a man will come there, for all the land will be **briers and thorns**. <sup>25</sup> And as for all the hills that used to be hoed with a hoe, you will not come there for fear of **briers and thorns**, but they will become a place where cattle are let loose and where **sheep** tread.

## Untamable Land

Having land that used to be able to be worked ("hoed with a hoe"), but now they are full with briers and thorns is reminiscent of the fall as mentioned in Genesis 3:17-19:

*"And to Adam he said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, "You shall not eat of it," cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.'"*

— Genesis 3:17-19

This also fits in with the rest of the imagery in v23-25 too between the initially abundant places that now are filled with violence and where the animals are not subdued (Gen 1:28).

Jerusalem's flourishing can be spoken of like Eden and its destruction can be spoken of like the end of the world throughout the prophets. What God is doing through these people has worldwide implications for humanity's quest to return to Eden.

## Isaiah 6-9:7

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**Isaiah 6**  
*Isaiah's Call & Commission*

**Isaiah 7**  
*Immanuel*

**Isaiah 8**  
*Maher-shalal-hash-baz*

**Isaiah 9:1-7**  
*The Prince of Peace*

### Isaiah 8:1-9:1a — Overview

#### Verses 1-10: The Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz Sign

- Prophet's son named "Swift to the Plunder"
- Assyria is coming to conquer Northern Kingdom
- God is with us ( [Immanuel](#) ) despite judgment

#### Verses 11-9:1a: A More Sure Rock

- Fear the Lord alone, not conspiracies
- God becomes sanctuary *and* stumbling stone
- Hope in Yahweh and trust his teaching or face darkness

## Isaiah 8:1-4

<sup>1</sup> Then the LORD said to me, "Take a large tablet and write on it in common characters<sup>1</sup>, 'Belonging to Maher-shalal-hash-baz<sup>2</sup>'" <sup>2</sup> And I will get reliable witnesses, Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah, to attest for me." <sup>3</sup> And I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. Then the LORD said to me, "Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz; <sup>4</sup> for before the boy knows how to cry 'My father' or 'My mother,' the wealth of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be carried away before the king of Assyria."

- 
1. "Writings of a man"
  2. Quick to the Plunder. Swift to the Spoil

## Uriah's Witness and the Two Child Signs

The mention of Uriah the priest as a witness (v. 2) creates a striking callback to 2 Kings 16:10-16, where Uriah helped King Ahaz construct a pagan altar, compromising his priestly calling. Now Uriah serves as witness to another child prophecy, creating a contrast between Ahaz's faithless witness in chapter 7 and this prophetic declaration.

Both the Immanuel and Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz prophecies share the identical phrase "before the boy knows how to" (v. 4, cf. 7:16), marking the timing of God's intervention. As this child grows to maturity, judgment will fall specifically on the Northern Kingdom, fulfilling God's promise to deliver Judah from her immediate enemies.

## Isaiah 8:5-8

<sup>5</sup> The LORD spoke to me again: <sup>6</sup> "Because this people has refused the waters of Shiloah that flow gently, and rejoice over Rezin and the son of Remaliah,<sup>7</sup> therefore, behold, the Lord is bringing up against them the waters of the River, mighty and many, the king of Assyria and all his glory. And it will rise over all its channels and go over all its banks,<sup>8</sup> and it will sweep on into Judah, it will overflow and pass on, reaching even to the neck, and its outstretched wings will fill the breadth of your land, O **Immanuel**."

## The Refused Waters of Shiloah

When verse 6 speaks of "this people" refusing "the waters of Shiloah that flow gently," it references the King's Pool in Jerusalem - the quiet, steady water source that sustained the holy city. This rejection symbolizes the Northern Kingdom's fundamental choice to worship apart from Jerusalem.

This echoes the original kingdom split when Jeroboam set up golden calves at Dan and Bethel (1 Kings 12:28-29), declaring "it is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem." Rather than streaming to Zion as Isaiah envisioned (2:3), the Northern Kingdom established alternative worship centers, rejecting Jerusalem as God's chosen place. The following verses (7-8) reveal the devastating consequences: instead of Shiloah's gentle waters, they will face the overwhelming "waters of the River" - Assyria's destructive flood.

## Immanuel and the Land

The striking phrase "your land, O Immanuel" (v. 8) reveals the deep connection between the promised child and the land of Judah. Whether as future king and landowner or as one who shares in the judgment alongside his people, Immanuel is woven into the very fabric of the remnant's experience.

This develops a central theme throughout Isaiah: the intertwining of the Messiah's identity with the remnant's identity. The Suffering Servant will bear the people's griefs (53:4), the Branch will emerge from Jesse's stump alongside the remnant (11:1, 10), and here Immanuel shares in the land's affliction. From Israel's calling as "my servant" (41:8-10) to the Servant's mission (49:1-6), Isaiah weaves together the destinies of the faithful remnant and their coming Messiah, showing that God's salvation comes through one who fully identifies with his people's plight.

### Isaiah 8:9-10

<sup>9</sup> Be broken, you peoples, and be shattered;  
give ear, all you far countries;  
equip yourselves and be shattered;  
equip yourselves and be shattered.  
<sup>10</sup> Take counsel together, but it will come to nothing;  
speak a word, but it will not stand,  
for **God is with us**.

## "God Is With Us"

The profound theological significance of "God is with us" (**עַמְנוֹאֵל**) cannot be overstated. As

Oswalt explains, this phrase encapsulates the fundamental difference between biblical faith and all human religious attempts:

*"It is hard to overstress the philosophical significance of God is with us. The nonbiblical approach is for an individual to seek to be with God—in fact to be united with God. This inevitably results in varying forms of pantheism or panentheism. If humanity is to attain unity with God it is impossible that God should transcend the psycho-physical world, for that world is finally our only means of access to him. But the biblical view exactly reverses the process. Transcendence is the given; it is nonnegotiable and irreducible. God is distinct from his world. This means that it is impossible for humanity to attain union with God by its devices. Instead God makes fellowship between us and him possible by entering our realm. Far from our trying to escape our finitude and mortality by making God identical to this world, God, who is part of this world, has entered into our finitude and mortality through Christ and thus brings us to fellowship with himself (John 3:13; Rom. 10:6; 2 Cor. 4:6; Col. 1:15-20)."*

— John Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39*

Here in chapter 8, even as judgment waters threaten to overwhelm, the declaration "God is with us" (v. 10) stands as the unshakeable foundation of hope. God does not abandon His people to face the flood alone - He enters their crisis, their land, their very existence.

## Isaiah 8:11-15

<sup>11</sup> For the LORD spoke thus to me with his strong hand upon me, and warned me not to walk in the way of this people, saying:

A <sup>12</sup> "Do not call conspiracy all that this people calls conspiracy, and do not **fear** what they **fear**, nor be in **dread**.

B <sup>13a</sup> But the LORD of hosts, him you shall honor as **holy**.

A' <sup>13b</sup> Let him be your **fear**, and let him be your **dread**. And he will become a sanctuary,

A <sup>14a</sup> but for both houses of Israel he will become a stone of **stumbling** and a rock of offense,

B <sup>14b</sup> a trap and a **snare** to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

A' <sup>15a</sup> And many shall **stumble** on it. They shall fall and be broken;

B' <sup>15b</sup> they shall be **snared** and taken."

## Peter's Use of Isaiah's Call to Holy Fear

The apostle Peter directly quotes this passage in 1 Peter 3:13-16, applying Isaiah's message to Christians facing persecution. Peter transforms Isaiah's warning about misplaced fear into encouragement for believers to maintain proper reverence for God alone:

*"Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame."*

— 1 Peter 3:13-16

<b>Author</b>	<b>Do Not Fear</b>	<b>Honor as Holy</b>
Isaiah	Assyrian threats and conspiracies	Yahweh
Peter	Persecutors of their Faith	Christ the Lord

Peter's quotation demonstrates that honoring Christ as holy is equivalent to honoring Yahweh as holy, affirming Christ's divine identity. The same God who called Isaiah's generation to trust Him alone in the face of Assyrian invasion now calls the church to honor Christ amid persecution, with the same promise: He will be either a sanctuary for those who trust or a stumbling stone for those who reject.

### The Real Issue: Power Politics or Divine Power?

Brevard Childs helps us understand the broader theological issue at stake in these verses. He says (in reference to the debate about what the specific conspiracy is):

*"In my opinion, much of this debate has served as an unfortunate distraction from the main subject matter of the oracle. The divine warning does not turn on one form of political intrigue, which is never specified in the text itself. Rather, the warning is directed against all and everything that is surmised to be treason by the city's populace. As a result of such rumors the city is filled with great fear and foreboding of impending violence. In contrast, the prophet is called upon to direct his attention to the real source of power and dread: 'None but the LORD of hosts will you regard as holy.' He is the one to fear; he is the object of terror. In a word, the true issue at stake is again between two visions of reality. Does the future lie in the throes of power politics and clever human machinations, which evoke fear and uncertainty? Or does the future lie with God, the Holy One of Israel, who is the real power to be reckoned with?"*

— Brevard Childs, *Isaiah: A Commentary*

### Jesus and the Rock Foundation

Jesus directly applies this imagery of the sanctuary rock in His Sermon on the Mount, concluding His teaching with a parable about two builders. The connection to Isaiah 8:14 becomes clear when we recognize that building on the rock means building on Christ's words—making Him both foundation and sanctuary:

*"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."*

— Matthew 7:24-27

The parallel is striking: Isaiah declares that the LORD will become either a sanctuary or a stone of stumbling (v. 14), while Jesus presents Himself as either a secure foundation or the cause of catastrophic collapse. Those who hear His words and obey find Him to be their sanctuary—their rock of refuge when the storms of judgment come. Those who hear and reject stumble over the very stone that could have saved them. Like the imagery of overwhelming flood waters in verse 8, Jesus speaks of rains, floods, and winds that test every foundation. Only those built upon Him as their rock will stand.

## Isaiah 8:16-9:1a

### Hope in Yahweh (16-18)

<sup>16</sup> Bind up the **testimony**; seal the **teaching** among my disciples<sup>1</sup>.<sup>17</sup> I will wait for the LORD, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob, and I will hope in him. <sup>18</sup> Behold, I and the children whom the LORD has given me are signs and portents in Israel from the LORD of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion. <sup>19</sup> And when they say to you, "Inquire of the mediums<sup>2</sup> and the necromancers who chirp and mutter," should not a people inquire of their God? Should they inquire of the dead on behalf of the living?

### Total Darkness (20-22; 9:1a)

<sup>20</sup> To the **teaching** and to the **testimony**! If they will not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn. <sup>21</sup> They will pass through the land, greatly distressed and hungry. And when they are hungry, they will be enraged and will speak contumely against their king and their God, and turn their faces upward. <sup>22</sup> And they will look to the earth, but behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish. And they will be thrust into thick darkness.

<sup>9:1a</sup> But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish.

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1. Either an official confirmation of authenticity – or – a result of failing to convince Ahaz
  2. Translated "ventriloquists" in the Septuagint

## The Names: Isaiah's Family as Living Prophecy

When Isaiah declares "I and the children whom the LORD has given me are signs and portents in Israel" (v. 18), he reveals that his very family embodies the entire theological message of his book. Consider the names:

Isaiah

ישָׁעַיָּהוּ

*ye.sha.ya.hu*

**Definition:** Yahweh is salvation

Shear-Jashub

שָׁאֵר יִשְׁׁוֹב

*she.ar ya.shuv*

**Definition:** A remnant will return

Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz

מַהְרָ שָׁלָל חַשְׁבָּז

*ma.her sha.lal hash baz*

**Definition:** Swift is the booty, speedy is the prey

These three names together proclaim the book's central message: God saves (*Isaiah*) through judgment (*Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz*), but a remnant will return (*Shear-Jashub*). Every time Isaiah walked through Jerusalem with his sons, their very names preached the gospel—judgment is coming, yet hope remains for those who trust in Yahweh alone. The prophet's household becomes a living testimony that God's salvation comes not through political alliances or human schemes, but through divine judgment that purifies and preserves a faithful remnant.

## No Teaching, No Dawn

The declaration "if they will not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn" (v. 20) brings us back to the teaching and light wordplay that Isaiah established in chapter 2. There, the prophet envisioned the nations streaming to Jerusalem because "out of Zion shall go forth the law (*torah*), and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem" (2:3), followed immediately by God's light breaking forth to establish justice. Now in chapter 8, we see the tragic inverse: rejecting the teaching (*torah*) and testimony results in having "no dawn"—no light, only "distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish" and "thick darkness" (vv. 21-22).

There is a direct line between rejecting the words of God and the destruction awaiting Israel. Without God's word, there is no light—only the thick darkness of judgment.

## Isaiah 6-9:7

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**Isaiah 6**  
*Isaiah's Call &  
Commission*

**Isaiah 7**  
*Immanuel*

**Isaiah 8**  
*Maher-  
shalal-hash-  
baz*

**Isaiah  
9:1-7**  
*The Prince  
of Peace*

## Isaiah 9:1b-7

### Joy Instead of Darkness (v1b-3)

<sup>1b</sup> In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

<sup>2</sup> The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,  
on them has light shone.

<sup>3</sup> You have multiplied the nation;  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as they are glad when they divide the spoil.

### Enemies Destroyed (v4-5)

<sup>4</sup> For the yoke of his burden,  
and the staff for his shoulder,  
the rod of his oppressor,  
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

<sup>5</sup> For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult<sup>1</sup>,  
and every garment rolled in blood  
will be burned as fuel for the fire.

### Child is Born (v6-7)

<sup>6</sup> For unto us a child is born,  
to us a son is given;  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,  
and his name shall be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

<sup>7</sup> Of the increase of his government and of peace  
there will be no end,  
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,  
to establish it and to uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time forth and forevermore.  
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

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1. Lit. "boot, booting with shaking"

## Matthew's Quotation of Isaiah 9:1b-2

Matthew 4:12-17 directly quotes this passage when describing Jesus's ministry in Galilee:

*"Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:"*

*"The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned."*

*"From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'"*

— Matthew 4:12-17

So what is significant about this section of Israel in Isaiah's day, what is the significance of it in Christ's day, and why even bring up the tribal allotments from centuries earlier?

The areas up in the north here were the first to be conquered by the Assyrians in Isaiah's day (2 Kings 15:29). They were the first wiped out, but they are also the first who are offered hope of restoration.

And is Matthew just picking up on this because it just so happens Jesus was born in that same region? It seems Matthew is connecting not only Isaiah 9:1-2, but also a few other passages in Isaiah given his intentional change of "sitting in darkness" and "light is dawned".

Matthew is likely pulling in Isaiah 42:1-9 which describes the Servant of the Lord who brings justice and is a light to those sitting in darkness as well as Isaiah 60:1-3 which describes the glory of the Lord rising upon Jerusalem and all nations coming to that light.

Jesus is the servant to the nations – the glory of the Lord Himself! (who also happens to be born in that same region)



## The People Walking in Darkness

We just saw how the Northern Kingdom is explicitly called out as a people walking in darkness, but we just read in 8:14 to the end of that section that Jerusalem is also in view.

It's a small thing, but worth noting how in Isaiah's future view of deliverance and seeing a great light, it's one unified nation (v3) of Israel, not the divided kingdoms of the past 150 years.

God's bringing deliverance and unity to not only the nations (ch2), but also to Israel itself under the coming Child King (v6-7).

## Comparison with Judges 6-8: Gideon and the Child

	Judges 6-8	Isaiah 6-9:7
Enemy Oppression	Midianites oppressed Israel for seven years, impoverishing the land (Judg 6:1-6)	Darkness and oppression over the land (Isa 8:21-22); "the yoke that burdens them" (Isa 9:4)
Divine Deliverance	"The LORD is with you, mighty warrior" (gibbor) (Judg 6:12); God raises up Gideon as deliverer	"His name shall be called...Mighty God" (Isa 9:6); deliverance through the Mighty (gibbor) God
Sign Requested	Gideon asks for signs twice with the fleece (Judg 6:36-40)	Ahaz refuses to ask for a sign; God gives the sign of Immanuel anyway (Isa 7:10-14)
"Insignificant" Leader	Gideon from the weakest clan in Manasseh, least in his family (Judg 6:15)	A child/infant as the deliverer (Isa 9:6); born in despised "Galilee of the Gentiles" (Isa 9:1)
Unexpected Means	God reduces army from 32,000 to 300 to show His power (Judg 7:2-7)	A child brings deliverance (Isa 9:6); the battle won by divine action, not human armies
Throne/Kingdom	Gideon refuses kingship: "The LORD will rule over you" (Judg 8:22-23); no dynasty established	"He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom...forever" (Isa 9:7)
Weapons of War	Victory achieved through unconventional weapons: trumpets, empty jars, torches (Judg 7:16-20)	"Every warrior's boot...and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning" (Isa 9:5); end of warfare
Family Legacy	Gideon's son Abimelech murders 70 brothers and becomes a tyrant (Judg 8:30-9:5); family legacy ends in violence	Eternal dynasty on David's throne (Isa 9:7); names include "Everlasting Father" (Isa 9:6)

## ”Prince of Peace” vs. ”King”

Why does Isaiah use ”Prince” of Peace rather than ”King” of Peace?

Prince	שָׁרֵךְ	sar
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There are a few possible reasons for this choice:

**1. Assyrian Context:** Scholar R.A. Carlson suggests that *sar* was deliberately chosen because it closely resembles the Assyrian word for king (*sarrum*). In Isaiah's time, when Assyria dominated the ancient Near East, this linguistic connection would have communicated royal authority in terms familiar to the broader imperial context. The title may be asserting that the coming ruler would possess authority surpassing that of the Assyrian kings.

**2. Davidic Succession:** The term *sar* (prince, ruler, leader) may emphasize the child as heir to the throne rather than an already-reigning monarch. Since the passage speaks of a child who is ”born” and ”given,” the title ”Prince” appropriately describes one who will ascend to royal authority. This aligns with the promise that ”the government will be on his shoulders” (v6) and that he ”will reign on David’s throne” (v7)—future-oriented language pointing to an heir who will establish his kingdom.

**3. Military Commander:** The word *sar* often carries military connotations, referring to commanders, officers, or leaders of armies (e.g., ”the prince of the army” in Joshua 5:14-15). Given the context of Isaiah 9:4-5, which describes the breaking of the yoke, the rod of oppression, and the burning of military boots and bloodied garments, ”Prince of Peace” may emphasize that this leader achieves peace not through endless warfare but through decisive divine victory. He is the commander who ends all wars.

**4. Poetic Sound and Rhythm:** In Hebrew, *sar shalom* (שָׁרֵךְ שָׁלוֹם) creates an alliterative pairing with the ”s/sh” sounds.

## The Pattern: Isaiah 6-9:7 and Genesis 1-12

The structure of Isaiah 6-9:7 follows the same redemptive pattern established in Genesis 1-12, showing that God's plan of salvation through judgment and restoration has been consistent from the beginning:

- **Creation** — Isaiah 6 opens with Isaiah's vision of God's throne room, the heavenly temple filled with glory and holiness. This establishes the divine order and God's sovereign rule over creation (like 7th day).
- **A Testing (often involving food)** — Isaiah 7 presents King Ahaz with a test: will he trust God or seek alliance with Assyria? God offers him a sign, any sign he wants, to confirm His promise.
- **Moral Failings** — Ahaz refuses to ask for a sign (Isaiah 7:12), rejecting God's offer. This represents the failure of God's people to trust Him, paralleling Adam and Eve's failure in the garden. The sin continues spiraling.
- **Flood of Judgment** — Isaiah 8:5-8 depicts the Assyrian invasion as a flood that will "sweep on into Judah, it will overflow and pass on, reaching even to the neck." The waters of judgment come upon the land.
- **Decreation** — Isaiah 8:19-22 describes the land returning to chaos: "distressed and hungry...darkness and gloom, the distress of anguish...thrust into thick darkness."
- **Righteous, Faithful Intercessor** — The promised child of Isaiah 7:14 (Immanuel) and 9:6-7 serves as the faithful one where Ahaz failed. Unlike Adam who brought death, this child brings life and establishes an eternal kingdom.
- **New Creation** — Isaiah 9:1-7 bursts forth with new creation language: light shining in darkness, joy and abundance replacing mourning, weapons of war burned, and the government resting on the shoulders of the Prince of Peace who reigns forever.

## The Cyclical Pattern of Genesis 1-11

The Adam and Eve story in Genesis chapters 2-5 fits within a larger pattern at work in Genesis 1-11. Chapters 1-5 play out a cycle of themes, and chapters 6-11 replay and develop the cycle. These symmetrical patterns are created by the dense repetition of key words that indicate the thematic arguments at work in the narrative and show important comparisons.

Unit		Theme
<b>A1</b>	1:1-2:3 Creation of sacred cosmos from chaos waters / human image of God / blessing / fruitful and multiply	<b>Creation and Blessing</b>
<b>B1</b>	2:4-3:24 Mountain-garden temple / sin, nakedness, curse, exile	<b>Failure</b>
<b>B2</b>	4:1-16 Next generation sins / brothers divide / firstborn not chosen / curse, exile	<b>Failure of Next Generation</b>
<b>C1</b>	4:17-26 Adam to Lemek: 7 generations + 3 sons / city of	<b>Non-Chosen</b>

Macro-Design of Genesis 1-11. Created by Tim Mackie for BibleProject Classroom: Adam to Noah (2020).

Class Notes: Adam to Noah

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Unit		Theme
	Cain / murder / 70 x 7	
	<b>C2</b> 5:1-32 Adam to Noah: 10 generations + 3 sons / promise of comfort	<b>Chosen</b>
<b>B3</b>	6:1-8 Cosmic rebellion in Heaven and Earth: sons of God invade the land, leading to the flood	<b>Cosmic Rebellion</b>
<b>A2</b>	6:9-9:19 De-creation by chaos waters and recreation / Noah as new humanity / blessing / fruitful and multiply	<b>Re-Creation and Blessing</b>
<b>B1</b>	9:20-21 Garden vineyard / sin, nakedness	<b>Failure</b>
<b>B2</b>	9:22-27 Next generation sins / brothers divide / firstborn not chosen / curse, scattering	<b>Failure of Next Generation</b>
<b>C1</b>	10:1-32 Noah + 3 sons / 7 generations to Peleg / City of Babylon and Assyria / 70 nations	<b>Non-Chosen</b>
<b>B3</b>	11:1-9 Cosmic rebellion in Babylon: sons of Adam invade the heavens, leading to the scattering	<b>Cosmic Rebellion</b>
<b>C2</b>	11:10-26 Shem to Abram: 10 generations / 3 sons	<b>Chosen</b>
<b>A3</b>	12:1-9 Abram as new humanity / blessing / fruitful and multiply	<b>Re-Creation and Blessing</b>

Macro-Design of Genesis 1-11. Created by Tim Mackie for BibleProject Classroom: Adam to Noah (2020).

**A      Chapter 1**  
The Vision and Call to Repentance

**B      Chapters 2-4**  
Glorious Mt. Zion — Judgment — Righteous Branch

**C      Chapter 5**  
Vineyard Parable and Assyrian Threat

**Chapters 6-9:7**  
Glory of Yahweh/3 Sons

**C'     Chapters 9:8-10:34**  
Extended Woes and Divine Judgment

**B'     Chapter 11**  
The Righteous Branch and Peaceful Kingdom

**A'     Chapter 12**  
Songs of Salvation and Praise

## Isaiah 9:8-10:34

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### Isaiah 9:8-21

*Anger not Turned  
Away from Israel*

### Isaiah 10:1-4

*Woe to Israel &  
Anger  
not Turned Away*

### Isaiah 10:5-34

*Woes and Therefores  
to Assyria*

## Isaiah 9:8-9:21 — Overview

Verses 8-12: Nations against Israel

Verses 13-17: Israel's Leaders against Poor

Verses 18-21: Israel against Itself

## Isaiah 9:8-12

<sup>8</sup> The Lord has sent a word<sup>1</sup> against Jacob,  
and it will fall on Israel;  
<sup>9</sup> and all the people will know,  
**Ephraim** and the inhabitants of Samaria,  
who say in pride and in arrogance of heart:  
<sup>10</sup> "The bricks have fallen,  
but we will build with dressed stones;  
the sycamores have been cut down,  
but we will put cedars in their place."  
<sup>11</sup> But the LORD raises the adversaries of Rezin against him,  
and stirs up his enemies.  
<sup>12</sup> The Syrians on the east and the Philistines on the west<sup>2</sup>  
**devour** Israel with **open mouth**.  
**For all this his anger has not turned away,**  
**and his hand is stretched out still.**

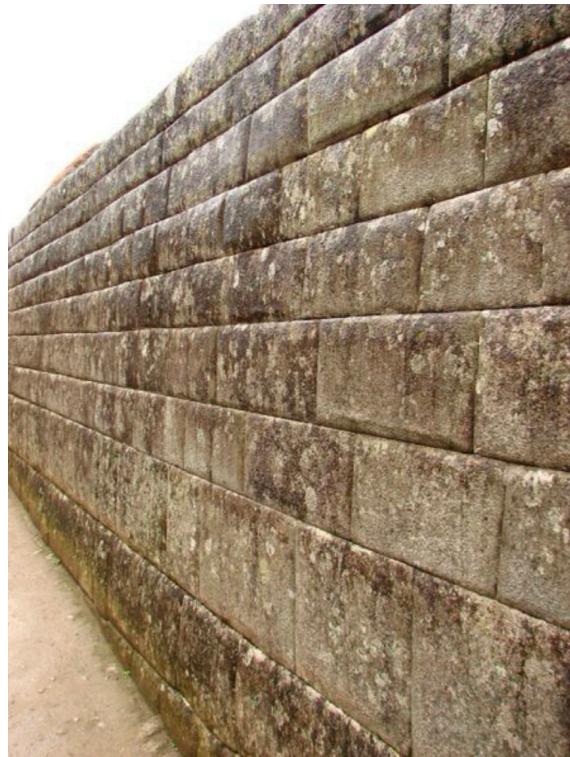
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1. Septuigent – "plague/death"
  2. C.f. Amos 1:6 – Could be figurative or they could've been involved in capturing the fleeing Israelites during Assyrian invasion

### Bricks, Stones, Sycamores, and Cedars

The Bricks vs Dressed Stones and the Sycamores vs Cedars show how Israel is trying to rebuild itself after the Syro-Ephraimite War (where the Northern Kingdom fought against Judah). The bricks and sycamores are the cheap, quick, and easy way to rebuild while the dressed stones and cedars are the expensive, high quality, and long lasting way to rebuild.



Mud Bricks



Ashlar Stones



Sycamore



Lebanon Cedar

## "Hand Still Stretched Out"

The phrase "hand is stretched out still" appears throughout this passage as a refrain of divine judgment (9:12, 17, 21; 10:4). Yet elsewhere in Scripture, God's "stretched out hand" demonstrates His power to save (along with judgement on Egypt):

*"Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment.'"*

— Exodus 6:6

*"Or has any god ever attempted to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, by wonders, and by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by great deeds of terror, all of which the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?"*

— Deuteronomy 4:34

The same divine hand that delivered Israel from Egypt now remains stretched out—not to judge Egypt though, but to judge Israel itself!

## Isaiah 9:13-17

<sup>13</sup> The people did not turn to him who struck them,  
nor inquire of the LORD of hosts.

<sup>14</sup> So the LORD cut off from Israel head and tail,  
palm branch and reed in one day—

<sup>15</sup> the elder and honored man is the head,  
and the prophet who teaches lies is the tail;  
<sup>16</sup> for those who guide this people have been leading them astray,  
and those who are guided by them are swallowed up.

<sup>17</sup> Therefore the Lord does not rejoice over their young men,  
and has no compassion on their fatherless and widows;  
for everyone is godless and an evildoer,  
and every mouth speaks folly.

For all this his anger has not turned away,  
and his hand is stretched out still.

## ”Devoured”

Seeing the repeated phrases around **eating / swallowing up**, we can see what Israel's leaders are doing to their vulnerable is put on analogy to what the Syrians and Philistines are doing to Israel and what they will ultimately do to each other. Thinking through how they must have viewed their enemies around them that are ravaging their homes and killing their people, the Lord turns that right around back on them! That's how they're treating the most vulnerable in their communities!

## God has no compassion on Poor?

The opposite of taking care of them is teaching lies and leading astray. Even those who are supposed to be cared for are led to moral corruption by the leaders. This is kind of like how the prosperity gospel of today feeds on the vulnerable and leads them away from the truth.

### Isaiah 9:18-21

<sup>18</sup> For wickedness burns like a **fire** ;  
it **devours** briars and thorns;  
it kindles the thickets of the forest,  
and they roll upward in a column of smoke.  
<sup>19</sup> Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts  
the land is scorched,  
and the people are like fuel for the **fire** ;  
no one spares another.  
<sup>20</sup> They slice meat on the right, but are still hungry,  
and they **devour** on the left, but are not satisfied;  
each **devours** the flesh of his own arm<sup>1</sup>:  
<sup>21</sup> Manasseh **devours** **Ephraim**, and **Ephraim** Manasseh;  
and together they are against Judah.  
**For all this his anger has not turned away,**  
**and his hand is stretched out still.**

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1. Septuigent – ”Brother”; Could also be interpreted ”seed”

## Who's Doing This?

In verses 18-21 we see a pattern that started all the way back in the early chapters of Genesis: God's wrath being evidenced as handing people over to their own destructive desires. Consider the

flood narrative:

*"The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually... Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence."*

— Genesis 6:5, 11

God's judgment in Genesis wasn't arbitrary—He allowed humanity's violence to run its full course until it consumed them. Similarly, in Isaiah 9:18-21, wickedness "burns like a fire" and the people become "fuel for the fire" (v. 19). They devour one another—Manasseh against Ephraim, Ephraim against Manasseh—in an insatiable cycle of self-destruction. God's wrath is demonstrated not by direct intervention but by removing His restraining hand and allowing their wickedness to consume them from within. This is the terrifying reality of divine judgment: sometimes God simply gives people over to what they already desire, and they destroy themselves.