THE CITY IN ISAIAH 24-27:
A THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION IN TERMS OF
JUDGMENT AND SALVATION

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Doctor of Theology at Stellenbosch University

Promoter: Prof. H.L. Bosman

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Declaration

By submitting this dissertation electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the owner of the copyright thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Date: 27 November 2008

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ABSTRACT

As the title indicates, our study is focused on a theological interpretation of the city in Isaiah 24-27 from the point of view of God’s judgment and salvation. The main reason for the study is that in Isaiah 24-27, the city plays a very significant role. The research therefore employs the socio-rhetorical approach which is a method that explores a multi-dimensional way of dealing with the text.

Applying Robbins’ (1966a & b) textural analysis to the text of Isaiah 24-27, the inner and inter textures are examined in order to demonstrate the narrator’s rhetorical strategy. Through the prophetic genre of judgement and salvation, the narrator challenges the audience/reader to change their minds and attitudes, especially about the city. The challenge is that the fortified city alone would never provide safety and peace but rather bring God’s judgment. In contrast, God alone provides salvation and protection through God’s reign on Mount Zion/Jerusalem. It is shown that this rhetorical strategy is deeply embedded in the social and cultural context. The expectation was that the historical and political chaos which was triggered by international pressures and Israel’s unfaithfulness and injustice might cause Israel to reflect on what happened and what would happen to the city in God’s eschatological time. The rhetorical strategy also highlights the eschatological-apocalyptic character of the text and the author of Isaiah 24-27 uses it to focus on the ideological and theological textures by means of which he warned that “Zion theology” could become “Zion ideology” if it became located beyond prophetic voice and criticism.

Furthermore, it is shown that the theological texture highlights God’s theological viewpoint that is symbolized by subjects such as universalism and the restoration of Zion/Jerusalem through judgment and salvation both of which are dialectically reflected in the destiny of the city of Zion/Jerusalem. At a deeper level, this theological engagement is based on God’s steadfast covenant love and justice, through which, God as husband and king, makes a demand on the city Jerusalem/Zion, the wife and the faith community. We have attempted to show from Isaiah 24-27 that God’s kingship is expressed in an apocalyptic manner which is beyond human power and intervention in order to emphasize God’s absolute sovereignty in controlling human destiny, especially the city. In line with the odd literary genre of the text, there still exist traditional prophetic thoughts which demand human responsibility on issues such as repentance, execution of social justice and righteousness in life.
OPSOMMING

Soos hierdie tesis se titel aandui, fokus die studie op ’n teologiese interpretasie van die stad in Jesaja 24-27 vanuit die perspektief van God se oordeel en verlossing. Die belangrikste rede vir die studie is die feit dat die stad ’n baie betekenisvolle rol speel in Jesaja 24-27. Die navorsing maak daarom gebruik van die sosio-retoriese benadering, ‘n metode wat ’n multidimensionele metode van met die teks werk, ondersoek.

Met die toepassing van Robbin’s (1966a & b) se teksturele analise van die teks van Jesaja 24-17, word die binne- en inter-teksture ondersoek om die verteller se retoriese strategie te demonstreer. Deur die profetiese genre van oordeel en verlossing, daag die verteller die gehoor/lesers uit om hul menings en houdings te verander, veral oor die stad. Die uitdaging is dat net die vestingstad nooit veiligheid en vrede sal bied nie, maar eerder God se oordeel bring. Daarsteenoor bied God alleen beskerming en verlossing deur God se heerskappy op Berg Sion/Jerusalem. Daar word uitgewys hoe hierdie retoriese strategie diep gewortel is in sosiale en kulturele konteks. Die verwagting was dat die historiese en politieke wanorde wat veroorsaak is deur internasionale druk en Israel se ontrouheid en onreg sou veroorsaak dat Israel nadink oor wat gebeur het en wat in God se eskatologiese tyd met die stad sou gebeur. Die retoriese strategie beklemtoon ook die eskatologies-apokaliptiese aard van die teks en die skrywer van Jesaja 24-27 gebruik dit om te fokus op die ideologiese en teologiese teksture waardeur hy waarsku dat “Sion-teologie” “Sion-ideologie” kan word wanneer dit bo profetiese stem en kritiek verhef word.

Daarbenewens word aangedui dat die teologiese tekstuur God se teologiese standpunt beklemtoon, wat gesymboliseer word deur onderwerpe soos universalisme en die herstel van Sion/Jerusalem deur oordeel en verlossing, wat albei dialekties gereflekteer word in die lot van die stad Sion/Jerusalem.

Op ’n dieper vlak word hierdie teologiese inskakeling gebaseer op God se troue verbondsliefde en –geregtigheid, waardeur God, as eggenoot en koning, ’n eis stel aan die stad Zion/Jerusalem, die eggenoot en geloofsgemeenskap. Daar is probeer om uit Jesaja 24-27 te toon dat God se koningskap uitgedruk word op apokaliptiese wyse ver bo menslike mag en intervenisie – om God se absolute heerskappy in termie van beheer oor menslike lot, veral die stad, te beklemtoon. Belyn met die eienaardige literêre genre van die teks, is daar steeds tradisionele profetiese gedagtes wat menslike verantwoordelikheid vereis oor kwessies soos berou en die beoefening van sosiale reg en geregtigheid in die lewe.
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## Abbreviations

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<td>AAR</td>
<td>American Academy of Religion, Studies in Religion</td>
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<td>ABD</td>
<td>Anchor Bible Dictionary</td>
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<td>AcOr</td>
<td>Acta Orientalia</td>
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<td>AGNT</td>
<td>Analytical Greek New Testament</td>
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<td>ANE</td>
<td>Ancient Near Eastern</td>
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<td>AOAT</td>
<td>Alter Orient und Altes Testament</td>
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<td>ASTI</td>
<td>Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute</td>
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<td>BASOR</td>
<td>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</td>
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<td>BI</td>
<td>Biblical Interpretation</td>
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<td>Bib</td>
<td>Biblica</td>
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<td>BN</td>
<td>Biblische Notizen</td>
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<td>BSac</td>
<td>Bibliotheca Sacra</td>
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<td>BT</td>
<td>The Bible Translator</td>
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<tr>
<td>BTB</td>
<td>Biblical Theology Bulletin</td>
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<tr>
<td>BWANT</td>
<td>Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament</td>
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<td>BZAW</td>
<td>Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBQ</td>
<td>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</td>
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<tr>
<td>CR:BS</td>
<td>Currents in Research Biblical Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>CTJ</td>
<td>Calvin Theological Journal</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDNT</td>
<td>Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament</td>
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<td>EvTh</td>
<td>Evangelische Theologie</td>
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<td>ESV</td>
<td>English Standard Version</td>
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<td>ETL</td>
<td>Ephemerae Theologicae Lovanienses, Louvain</td>
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<td>ETR</td>
<td>Etudes théologiques et religieuses</td>
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<td>Ex</td>
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<td>ExpTim</td>
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<td>GNB</td>
<td>Good News Bible</td>
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<td>HAR</td>
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<td>HSS</td>
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<td>Inter</td>
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<td>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</td>
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<td>Journal of the American Oriental Society</td>
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<td>JB</td>
<td>Jerusalem Bible</td>
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<td>JBL</td>
<td>Journal of Biblical Literature</td>
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<td>JETS</td>
<td>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</td>
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<td>JS</td>
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<td>JSS</td>
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<td>JTC</td>
<td>Journal for Theology and Church</td>
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<td>JTS</td>
<td>Journal of Theological Studies</td>
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<td>LB</td>
<td>Lutherbibel</td>
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<td>NASB</td>
<td>New American Standard Bible</td>
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<td>NBDB</td>
<td>The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon</td>
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<td>NedThT</td>
<td>Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NET</td>
<td>New English Translation</td>
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<td>NIB</td>
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<td>NIDB</td>
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<td>NLT</td>
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<td>NRSV</td>
<td>The New Revised Standard Version</td>
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<td>OTE</td>
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<td>Old Testament Library</td>
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<td>OTS</td>
<td>Oudtestamentische Studiën</td>
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<td>OTWSA</td>
<td>Ou-Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap in Suid-Afrika</td>
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<td>PRSt</td>
<td>Perspectives in Religious Studies</td>
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<td>RB</td>
<td>Revue Biblique</td>
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<td>RExp</td>
<td>Review &amp; Expositor</td>
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<td>RLB</td>
<td>Revidierte Lutherbibel</td>
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<td>SBL</td>
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<td>SBLDS</td>
<td>Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBLSP</td>
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<tr>
<td>SJOT</td>
<td>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</td>
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<td>SJT</td>
<td>Scottish Journal of Theology</td>
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<td>ST</td>
<td>Studia Theologica</td>
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<td>TDOT</td>
<td>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>TDNT</td>
<td>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>TLOT</td>
<td>Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TynB</td>
<td>Tyndale Bulletin</td>
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<tr>
<td>TWAT</td>
<td>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TZ</td>
<td>Theologische Zeitschrift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VT</td>
<td>Vetus Testamentum</td>
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<tr>
<td>VTSup</td>
<td>Vetus Testamentum Supplement</td>
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<tr>
<td>WMANT</td>
<td>Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZAW</td>
<td>Zeitschrift für die Altestamentliche Wissenschaft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZMR</td>
<td>Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZTK</td>
<td>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</td>
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Introduction

1.1 History of research

When we attempt to study the Book of Isaiah, several important themes can be found such as “the Holy One of Israel” (Roberts 1982:130-43), “a light to the nations” (Clements 1996b:57-69), “King, Messiah and Servant” (Williamson 1998b). However, the Book of Isaiah can also be called the book of the city, Zion/Jerusalem, because it starts with a vision of the city of Jerusalem (Isaiah 1:1) and ends with the city, Jerusalem (Isaiah 66). The question that arises here is: How can we understand the city, especially Zion/Jerusalem? Even though there are many answers to this question, this study will examine the theological nature and implication of ‘the city’ from the perspective of God’s judgment and salvation in the so-called “Isaiah-apocalypse, 24-27.” In order to analyze “the city in Isaiah 24-27” from a theological perspective in terms of judgment and salvation, it may prove necessary at the outset to research the trends in Isaianic study as well as in Isaiah 24-27. The main purpose of this study is to draw out some problems through the history of research, while acknowledging that this study will be a rather selective reading. Furthermore, the study will be an avenue for us to study the book as a whole as opposed to a segmental reading.

The book of Isaiah has a most significant position in both Judaism (Sommer 2004:780-4) and Christianity; it is regarded as the most often quoted in the New Testament as it consists of about 590 connections and allusions: 239 from Isaiah 1-39; 240 from Isaiah 40-55; 111 from Isaiah 56-66 (Sanders 1982:144-5; Evans 1997:651. cf. Blenkinsopp 2006:129-68; Wilken 2007). Therefore, in the history of the church, it is not strange to discover that Isaiah was regarded as “more evangelist than prophet, because he describes all the mysteries of Christ and the church so clearly that one would think he is composing a history of what already

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happened rather than prophesying what is to come” (O. Weber’s 1975:1096\(^3\) edition of Jerome’s work; cf. Sawyer 1996:1; Childs 2004:90-103; Schultz 2005:336-7). Based on this kind of understanding in the early church, the book of Isaiah was even considered as the “Fifth Gospel” (Sawyer 1996:1). Thus, the Church and the Synagogue have continued to accept the unity of the book somewhat without question from the beginning and through history. Furthermore, the Dead Sea scrolls uncovered almost an entire portion of an Isaiah scroll, which seems to indicate that at that time, the faith community accepted it as a whole (cf. Dillard & Longman 1994:272; Koole 1997:33-4).

### 1.1.1 Research trends in the study of the book of Isaiah

Since it seems to play an important role in biblical and early church history, the book of Isaiah, especially since the late 18\(^{th}\) century, has experienced a most unstable time (we may call it the period of “\textit{Sturm und Drang}”\(^4\)). Recently, Childs (2004) describes previous reading history as “the struggle to understand Isaiah as Christian Scripture.” In our judgment, the main reasons behind this struggle and crisis are due to two facts: the nature of the prophetic book and the human nature (Sandy 2002:57). First, as Barton (1996:9) rightly observes that the book of Isaiah is one of the most difficult and most obscure of the prophetic books to understand in terms of its textual nature (Rendtorff 2005:167, 201). However, above all, in our view, it also seems to be rooted in different understandings between scholars’ guilds and church communities. The main difficulty in understanding the book of Isaiah lies in the many significant changes in biblical studies in the last hundred years (Blenkinsopp 2000:73-83). The difficulties or arguments are largely based on the unity and the authorship\(^5\) of the book of Isaiah. Before historical criticism, which is the result of an “\textit{Aufklärung}”\(^6\) influence, the

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\(^3\) “\textit{Deinde etiam hoc adiciendum, quod non tam propheta dicendus sit quam evangelista. Ita enim universa Christi Ecclesiaeque mysteria ad liquidum persecutes est, ut non eum putes de future vaticinari, sed de praeteritis historiam texere.”

\(^4\) We borrow this description from the drama by the German dramatist M. Klinger (1752-1832) \textit{Wirrwarr, oder Sturm und Drang}, i.e. “Confusion, or Storm and Stress” which symbolized an early romantic movement in 18\(^{th}\) century German literature and music (cf. 4\(^{th}\) Webster Dictionary 2001:1423). Here, this terminology is used not necessarily in a negative way but rather to illustrate an inevitable process of human life; like teenagers who grow up in the midst of this \textit{Sturm und Drang}. Furthermore, if we may add that, just as teenagers deeply engross their lives with their parents and the society, it is our humble desire to see that the academic guild respects the faith community and vice-versa. Through this mutual understanding and respect, we can build God’s kingdom in a more desirable way. To consider it from a musical point of view, “it is a concept of a choir which is consisted by different people and voices” (Bosman 1986:1). It appears to us that this understanding can produce a harmonious and beautiful sound. Even at the risk of sounding a little idealistic, we affirm that this is our “hermeneutic of humility and conviction” (Vanhoozer 1998:463) until His kingdom finally comes.

\(^5\) Eaton (1959:138) well summarizes this phenomenon that “the more the authorship of the book of Isaiah has been investigated, the more complicated has the question appeared.”

\(^6\) This is mainly an European philosophical campaign, which had Rene Descartes and Immanuel Kant as two of the major proponents. In English, it is referred to as “the Enlightenment,” or “The Age of Reason” in the 18\(^{th}\) century which emphasized dependence on self, thinking (reason) and experience rather than institution, authority, and tradition (cf. 4\(^{th}\) Webster dictionary 2001:472). Le Roux (1994:198-202) indicates the relationship between \textit{Aufklärung} and historical criticism, especially to explain South African’s situation. McGrath (1993:150-6)
author of the book of Isaiah was generally believed to be Isaiah, the son of Amoz of the eighth century BCE (Isa 1:1), especially because of the statement of Ben Sirach (48:24f). The unity of the book was also largely accepted. Similarly, several scholars strongly believe in the authorship of the book of Isaiah by the eighth century BCE Isaiah, the son of Amoz and in the unity of its parts. According to Dillard and Longman (1994:271), these include conservative scholars such as Allis ([1950]1980); Young (1969); Motyer (1993) and some Jewish scholars such as Kaminka (1935); Margalioth (1964). However, since B. Duhm's influential Isaiah studies in his “epoch-making” commentary, Das Buch Jesaia (1892), main-stream scholars have accepted the divisions of the book, the so-called First, Second and Third Isaiah (1-39, 40-55 and 56-66, respectively) each with its own historical or thematic interest and, moreover, its different author(s) (Tate 1996:28). In this regard, Dillard and Longman III (1994:267) articulate numerous attempts to understand and interpret the book of Isaiah between these two different communities of interpretations, especially in terms of its authorship:

The important place of the book and its length combined also to make it the testing ground. Traditional rabbinic and Christian interpretation had viewed the book as the work of the prophet Isaiah who lived in Jerusalem in the late eighth and early seventh centuries B.C. Critical scholarship, beginning in the late eighteenth century, argued that the book was largely the product of at least two or three different authors widely separated in time and place.

Consequently, after Duhm’s significant effort, most debates on Isaianic study continue to deal with the authorship, the chronicle, of each book under the separation of three books until 1970 and somehow even until today (cf. Fohrer 1968; Wildberger 1978; Auld 1980).

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7 Cf. Ben Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) 48: 22-25: "For Hezekiah did what was pleasing to the Lord, and he kept firmly to the ways of his ancestor David, as he was commanded by the prophet Isaiah, who was great and trustworthy in his visions. In Isaiah's days the sun went backward, and he prolonged the life of the king. By his dauntless spirit he saw the future, and comforted the mourners in Zion. He revealed what was to occur at the end of time, and the hidden things before they happened" (NRSV). To see more on the relation between Ben Sirach and the Book of Isaiah, see Beentjes (1989:155-9) and Schultz (1999:146-159).

8 We generalize its historical tendency but we should acknowledge that it had been noted as early as the Middle Ages that there are differences within the book of Isaiah. For instance, in the 12th century, Ibn Ezra (1089-1164) pointed out the possibility that the book of Isaiah was not a unity. Furthermore, Simon (1985:257-71) notes that in the 18th century, J.C. Döderlein (1775) and J.G. Eichhorn (1780-83) separated the book of Isaiah into two sections (dual authorship), chs. 1-39 and chs. 40-66 (Laato 1998:1; Williamson 1994:1; Blenkinsopp 2000:82), but it was not generally welcomed by Jewish and Christian community.

9 Proto/First Isaiah (chs, 1-39) has been treated as a unit built around the prophetic ministry of Isaiah of Jerusalem; Deutero/Second Isaiah (chs, 40-55) has been assigned to a prophet in the Exile, Trito/Third Isaiah (chs, 56-66) has been treated as originating in a post-exilic Palestinian setting (cf. Duhm 1902; Schramm 1995:11-52; Tate 1996:28; Blenkinsopp 2000:73; Childs 2001:1).

10 Some scholars alternatively refer to First, Second, and Third Isaiah as Proto-, Deutero-, and Trito-Isaiah, respectively (see fn. 9 above).

11 Recently, some scholars have challenged the splitting of the book of Isaiah into three (cf. Seitz 1991; Clements 2002).

In evaluating the above research, certain conclusions can be drawn:

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12 Among earlier important studies on this matter is Eaton (1959) but our attention here will be on major scholarly trends. It is also interesting to note that major discussions on the authorship of Isaiah do not support single authorship but multi-authorship. The reason is that, according to Clements (1996a:6), “In the face of the evidence it seemed unlikely that authorship was a major issue, since ultimately the prophetic word was believed to be of divine origin. More central was the need to discover what the message revealed about the plans and purpose of God.”

13 It seems that there are mainly two methodological approaches to the study the book of Isaiah in its final form: the diachronic and the synchronic approaches (cf. Williamson 1995a:211-26; Rendtorff 1996:32-49).


15 For instance, Sawyer (1977:112) expresses the evaluation of previous Isaianic study in a rather harsh way: “One of the most misleading oversimplifications in Old Testament studies is the division of the Book of Isaiah into three.”

16 In reading the book of Isaiah as a unity and a whole, there are different opinions concerning its understanding. For instance, we have Clements (1980): redaction-critical treatment; Watts 1985: the context of its final composition; Seitz 1993: the coherence and theological themes of larger units; Sweeney 1996: redaction-critical analysis (Tucker 2001:40-41). In other words, according to Blenkinsopp (2000:82), “In this shift, the emphases are different: unifying theological intent (Childs) or by identifying structural, thematic, and lexical clues to an underlying unity at the redactional level (Ackroyd, Clements, Rendtorff)”. The interesting point is that, according to Oeming (2006:66), in Germany, the traditional stronghold of historical criticism, some scholars such as F.L. Hossfeld, K. Koenen, N. Lohfink, O.H. Steck, E. Zenger, and R. Rendtorff are somewhat influenced by the canonical approach.
1. Previous studies, especially influenced by Duhm, consider that the book of Isaiah was composed by accident or haphazardly. Recently, however, some scholars emphasize that the book is not as chaotic but rather, it is well constructed in terms of the theological theme and thought (Barton 1996).

2. At a significant meeting in Kampen (De Moor 1995) the theme, “Synchronic or diachronic? - A debate on method in Old Testament exegesis”, emphasized the importance of both methods. In welcoming a new approach (synchronic), we should also give attention to Dobbs-Allsopp’s (1999:235) opinion: “It is my belief that the current ahistoricist orientation of biblical literary criticism is severely wrongheaded”. Deist (1994:327-42) also urges scholars who are more focused on synchronic approaches to consider the cultural background of the biblical text.

3. Although emphasis was on the apocalyptic character of the book as observed in Isaiah 24-27, there is a new appreciation from prophecy to apocalyptic (cf. Hanson 1979, 1995; Clements 2002:109-26).

How then does the Isaianic study influence the study of Isaiah 24-27? More importantly, how does it affect the theological understanding of the city in Isaiah, especially Isaiah 24-27?

1.1.2 Isaiah 24-27 - research trends

The study of Isaiah 24-27 has not been exempted from scholars’ debates. The arguments are mainly embedded in its textual complications. The so-called “Isaiah Apocalypse” (Isa 24-27) has remained one of the most ambiguous chapters in the book of Isaiah (cf. Anderson 1963:118; Doyle 2000:45; Childs 2001:171). Throughout the history of interpretation, the problems with this text may be categorized thus: First, the main debates on the study of Isaiah 24-27 focus on discerning its literary structure, and then, the connection of these chapters to the rest of the book of Isaiah. Second, the date of composition is also considered crucial (Otzen 1974:196-206; Coggins 1979:328; Childs 2001:171-4). Furthermore, this portion of the book has been evaluated and scrutinized from various perspectives in order to understand its genre, especially, the origins of the apocalyptic (Millar 1976:1; Johnson 1988:11).

For now, we shall briefly consider the above problems. The purpose of examining the problems, which are connected with Isaiah 24-27, is not to deal with the entire problem again, but rather, by so doing, we shall attempt to demonstrate an alternative way to deal with Isaiah 24-27.
1.1.2.1 The unity of Isaiah 24-27

A. Scholars who oppose the unity of Isaiah 24-27

W. Gesenius who is the well-known author of *Hebrew Grammar* contributes a stimulating insight to the study of Isaiah. His critical work concerning the book of Isaiah in *Der Prophet Jesaja* (1821) confronts the genuineness of Isaiah 24-27. His basic argument is based on a four-way division of chapters 1-39: 1) chapters 1-12 are mainly oracles concerning Judah (*Orakel auf Juda*); 2) chapters 13-23 represent a compilation of oracles against foreign nations (*Orakel über auswärtige Völker*); 3) in the unit covering chapters 24-35, chapters 24-27 introduce a considerably different compilation compared to the composition of authentic oracles in 28-33, and date back to the exilic period close to the dating of chapters 34-35 (*hat zum Hauptbestandtheile die Zumsammenhängende echte Orakelreihe aus der Zeit des Hiskia (28-33), woran sich vorn (24-27) und hinten (34-35) zwey Stücke aus der Zeit des Exiles schliefsen*); 4) chapters 36-39 form a biographical description (*lieferde der Sammler dann die histrorischen Stücke*); (Gesenius 1821:19-22).

R. Smend’s historical critical approach somehow reflects Gesenius’ earlier work. For instance, Smend (1884:193-194) isolates major apocalyptic themes and offers 24-27 as portraying a very different picture from the eighth century Isaiah. According to Smend, an interesting point is how to deal with the original source of the composition of Isaiah 24-27. To accomplish this, Smend (1884:163-193) suggests two significant themes which shape the centre of the arrangement of Isaiah 24-27; that is, judgment and hope: 1) Judah’s sin and God’s judgment (24:1-13) “Der Verf. Beginnt c. 24 mit der Schilderung des Unheils, das durch ein alle Welt verwüstendes Kriegsheer auch über Juda kommt, um es wegen seiner Sünden zu züchtigen” (Smend 1884:194); 2) messianic hope (*Hoffnung und Jubellieder*) because God’s imminent punishment is expected in Moab’s downfall (24:14-23) “Nachdem er dann aber die Gewissheit, dass auch sein Volk von diesem Feinde leiden werde, einer gegenteiligen Meinung gegenüber stark betont hat, schildert er weiter das Weltgericht, das durch die bevorstehende Katastrophe eingeleitet wird und allerdings mit der Aufrichtung des messianischen Reiches abschliesst” (Smend 1884:194).

Whether we acknowledge it or not, B. Duhm’s work has greatly influenced our study of the book of Isaiah. The historical critical approaches of past and recent scholars to the book of Isaiah, especially Isaiah 24-27, echo Duhm’s hypothesis. Duhm’s ([1892]1902:143-64) division of the book of Isaiah into three-part books, is a stance against the unity of Isaiah 24-
27. For instance, Duhm (1902:143-4) applies the methodology of *Literarkritik* to divide Isaiah 24-27 into a two-part prophetic saying. In his view, there are differences between the two parts; apocalyptic literary works (*Dichtunge*) are at the heart of the original prophetic sayings and other lyrics are added at a later stage:

2) Lyrics (*Lied*)\(^{17}\): 25:1-5; 25:9-11; 26:1-19 with 25:12, and 27:2-5,

Subsequently, Duhm’s idea, especially the lyrical segment, was studied in greater detail by P. Lohmann. Lohmann (1917/8) wrote a thorough article concerning Isaiah 24-27 in *Die Selbständigen lyrischen Abschnitte in Jes 24-27* (1917/8). As the title of the article reflects, Lohmann’s major task is to identify some of the lyrical portions of Isaiah 24-27 as independent songs (*die Selbständigen lyrischen*). His main thesis is that there are two categories of self-governing songs namely victory songs (*Siegeslied*) and other independent songs (Lohmann 1917/8:7-58). For instance, in the first, Lohmann selects five units (*Gattungen*) which reveal element of a victory song. Inside, these songs, Isaiah 26:4-5a; 25:1-5 and 25:9-12 belong to an unmixed form (*Gattung*) of the religious victory song and Isaiah 24:7-12 is a somewhat different victory song because of its profane nature while Isaiah 27:10-11 is perhaps the completion of such a lyric (Lohmann 1917/8:7-38):

I. Song of destroyed city, including song over Moab (*Die Lieder von einer zerstörten Stadt mit Einschluss des Liedes über Moab*)

1) Isaiah 26:4-5a: a religious victory song (*ein religiöses Siegeslied*)
2) Isaiah 25:1-5: a religious victory song (*ein religiöses Siegeslied*)
3) Isaiah 24:7-12: a secular victory song (*ein profanes Siegeslied*)
4) Isaiah 27:10-11: unfinished victory song (*der Torso eines Siegeslied*)
5) Isaiah 25:9-12: a religious victory song (*ein religiöses Siegeslied*)

However, according to Lohmann (1917/8:38-58), besides the victory song, there are other forms (*Gattungen*) in Isaiah 24-27:

II. Other remaining independent song portions (*Die übrigen selbständigen lyrischen Abschnitte in Jes 24-27*)

1) Isaiah 26:1b-3: an entrance song (*ein Einzugslied*)
2) Isaiah 27:2b-5: a vineyard song (*Das Weinbergslied*)
3) Isaiah 26:7-11: a psalm of the pious and wicked (*ein Psalm vom Frommen und vom Gottlosen*)
4) Isaiah 26:12-19: a psalm of penitence and trust (*ein Buss und Vertrauenspsalm*)

\(^{17}\) A song (25:1-5); a satirical song regarding Moab (25:9-11); a poem which shows hope in resurrection (26:1-19 with 25:12); and the song of the vineyard (27:2-5). “Dem Zusammenhang sicher fremd, weil ihn unterbrechend, ist das Lied c. 25:1-5, eine Lobpreisung Gottes wegen der Zerstörung einer starken Feste, deretwegen ihn die Stadt starker Völker ehrt und fürchtet, sodann das Spottlied über Moab c.25:9-11, ferner wahrscheinlich das kunstvolle Gedicht c. 26:1-19 mit c. 25:12, das im AT ganz einzig dasteht durch die Menge der dem Text einverleibten Varianten, endlich das Lied c. 27:2-5” (Duhm 1902:143).
Following Duhm’s influence, O. Kaiser (1974:177-9) chiefly rejects the unity of Isaiah 24-27 and shows the diversity in terms of a different stratum (Schicht) in Isaiah 24-27:

2) Second stratum: 24:14-16a and 25:1-5 are composed of eschatological songs of thanksgiving (eschatologischen Danklieder).
3) Third stratum: 24:21-23 and 25:6-8 integrate with the text by an advanced apocalyptic speculation (apokalyptische Spekulationen).
4) Forth stratum: 25:8aa and 26:19 which show a faith in the resurrection of the dead (Totenaufsterhung)

In the case of the formation of chapter 27, Kaiser follows a different track but he takes 27:1 and 27:12f into 24:21-23 and 25:6-8 as an additional layer. As we can observe, the several strata above demonstrate Kaiser’s main approach to the text. His idea is based on the methodology which, like Vermeylen’s (1974; 1977/78) and Wildberger's (1978), emphasizes Wachstumshypothese (Wachstumsprozess ‘growth process’), a line of redaction criticism that stresses the effort to trace the historical development and formation of the individual materials into the present text as in Isaiah 24-27.

Recently, Tucker (2001:207) also turns down some scholars’ view of Isaiah 24-27, regarding the text “as a single, coherent composition.” The primary reason is that he believes Isaiah 24-27 combines “a great variety of material from different times and places.” In order to support his belief, Tucker (2001:207) shows that it is composed of diverse genres as follow: Announcements of judgment (24:1-13, 17-20; 25:10b-12; 27:1), announcements of salvation (24:21-23; 25:6-10a; 27:2-6, 12-13), hymns of praise (25:1-5; cf. 24:14-16), a victory song (26:1-6), and a complaint song or prayer (26:7-19).

The interesting point is that, while Tucker insists on the literary complexity of Isaiah 24-27, he strongly rejects some ideas that the collection of materials is entirely haphazard. According to him, there are two main reasons for that: The first is that “the consistent eschatological and universal focus holds the individual units together”; the second is due to “some thematic development” (Tucker 2001:207).

In connection with the thematic movement, Tucker (2001:207) points out that it is mainly
from the judgment on the earth (chapter 24) to the announcement of blessing for Israel in the following fashion:

1) Chapter 24 “moves from announcement of judgment on the earth and all its inhabitants to the reign of the Lord on Mt. Zion.”
2) “In Chapter 25 praise and celebration dominate, but it ends with pronouncement of judgment on Moab (25:10b-12).”
3) Moreover, “Chapter 26 begins with the promise that a song of victory will be sung in Judah, moves to prayer, and concludes with a call for the people of God to hide until the Lord finishes punishing the people of the earth. After a single verse announcing that the Lord will kill the dragon of chaos (27:1),”
4) Finally, “Chapter 27 announces salvation for Israel and promises that all nations will be gathered on the holy mountain in Jerusalem.”

B. Scholars who support the unity of Isaiah 24-27

In contrast to the above opinions, H. Wildberger, who steps into the shoes of scholars such as Duhm, Rudolph, Kaiser and Vermeylen, is one of the German scholars who support the “growth process” (Wachstumsprozess) of text history (Wildberger 1978:896). In his substantial commentary, which employs the methodology of redaction criticism, Wildberger holds an interesting idea. Even though he identifies several layers of different materials, which form a unified composition through a process of additions to and expansions of the original sources, Wilderberg strongly believes that there is a literary unity in Isaiah 24-27 (cf. Watts 1985:311; Doyle 2000:20). Wildberger (1978:904) claims that Isaiah 24:1-6, 14-20; 26:7-21, which were added at separate periods, vv.7-9, 10-12, 13 accommodate a “ground work” (Grundschicht) which was developed by successive additions of the eschatological passages (24:21-23; 25:6-8, 9-10a) and later, the city songs (25:1-5; 26:1-6). The final addition is the various eschatological fragments, which make up chapter 27 (27:1, 2-5, 6-11, 12, 13).

Partially influenced by Wildberger, Clements (1980:196-9) applies redaction criticism and emphasizes the unity of the book of Isaiah. He faults previous diachronic interpretations as “inconclusive and unsatisfactory” and challenges us to look for a much broader viewpoint, such as “the thematic approach”, for understanding Isaiah 24-27. Concerning the structure of Isaiah 24-27, Clements’ approach is related to that of scholars such as Childs, Kaiser, Plöger, Vermeylen, and Wildberger. In other words, Clements (1980:199) insists that Isaiah 24-27
contains an allusion of modification with additions and insertions into the “groundwork”, in which a long process of growth has taken place through redactors or editors in the Persian period.

P. Miscall’s approach, in part, reflects Conrad (1991)’s literary approach. In his commentary, *Isaiah*, Miscall (1993:9-10) expresses his dissatisfaction with previous historical approaches, which divided the book of Isaiah into two and three parts (cf. Duhm), as well as his appreciation of new phenomena such as “rhetorical and redaction-critical studies” because these approaches emphasize the book “as a whole.” Such approaches enable him to read the text of Isaiah “as a whole” (Miscall 1993:9, cf. 19, 20). With this reading strategy, Miscall focuses in an interesting way on “vision” and “imagery”. He asserts: “I speak of Isaiah as a vision in the sense of a text that presents something to be seen and imagined rather than just thought and conceptualized. Therefore, I devote attention to the imagery and other poetic features of Isaiah” (Miscall 1993:12). For Miscall, even though the chapters of Isaiah 24-27 are diverse in “style and content from their context,” the “style, vocabulary, imagery and themes”, connect these parts to the rest of the book of Isaiah (Miscall 1993:64). Also for Miscall, these chapters call for “praise more than for wailing” even in midst of “a great deal of devastation” (Miscall 1993:64).

Furthermore, M. Sweeney develops the form critical study of Gunkel and Westermann (1967, 1991). According to Sweeney (1996:311-3), the structure of Isaiah 24-27 is composed of two main parts: the prophetic announcement of Yahweh’s punishment of the earth and the prophetic announcement of Yahweh’s blessing of the earth and its results for Zion/Israel:

**Isaiah 24-27**

I. Prophetic announcement of YHWH’s punishment of the earth 24:1-23
   A. Introductory announcement of YHWH’s punishment of the earth 1-2
   B. Basis: prophetic announcement of YHWH’s word 3-13
   C. Prophetic explanation of YHWH’s word: disputation pattern 14-23

II. Prophetic announcement of YHWH’s blessing of the earth and its results for Zion/Israel 25:1-27:13
   A. YHWH’s blessing of the earth at Zion 25:1-12
   B. Results: return of Israel to Zion 26:1-27:13
      1. Judah’s petition to YHWH for deliverance 26:1-21
      2. YHWH’s defeat of Leviathan 27:1
      3. Exhortation to Israel to accept YHWH’s offer of reconciliation 27:2-13

Sweeney’s analysis challenges previous form-critical studies, which focused on the unity of a small or segmented portion of the text as he clearly advocates for Isaiah 24-27 as a whole or

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18 Miscall (1993:10-11) evaluates two scholars: D.W. Watts and E.W. Conrad. He supports Watts’ views on Isaiah as a unified work, a vision and a mid-fifth century composition but Miscall is dissatisfied with Watts’ “historical bias.” In Conrad’s case, on the other hand, Miscall positively assesses his work as “the first significant work that approaches Isaiah both as a unified work and as a work to be read on its own terms and not as a poetic rendering of Israel’s history.”
unity, based on the structure of the text in terms of God’s judgment and salvation. In line with the above structural division, the text consists of two major sections: 24:1-23, which announces Yahweh’s punishment of the earth; and 25:1-27:13, which announces Yahweh’s blessing of the earth and its results. Consequently, Sweeney (1996:314-315) also suggests two main prophetic announcements: the “prophetic announcement of punishment” in 24:1-13 (with the “disputation speech” of 24:14-23) and the “prophetic announcement of salvation” in 25:1-27:13 (with the “disputation speech” of 27:7-13). For Sweeney (1996:315), it is important to regard these two as an inseparable whole and in harmony:

One must consider the two major sections of chs. 24-27 in relation to each other when considering the generic character of the whole. The PROPHETIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF PUNISHMENT against the earth in 24:1-23 provides the premise for the entire composition; the fall of the city of chaos presages the establishment of YHWH's world rule at Zion. The announcement of YHWH's blessing of the earth and its results for Israel in 25:1-27:13 draws out the implications of YHWH's coming world rule; Israel will be redeemed from exile and restored to the worship of YHWH at Mt. Zion. In sum, the generic character of the whole is a PROPHETIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF SALVATION that focuses on the establishment of YHWH's new world order. Once announced, it remains only for the people to accept the reality of YHWH's action and to work for its realization.

In Sweeney, one can clearly see the tendency of recent form critical study. It is not a typical Gunkel and Westermann’s form critical study, which is more focused on the unity of small parts or the segmentation of the text. Sweeney employs a multidimensional (cf. diachronic and synchronic) approach to emphasize the study of the text in unity and as a whole. For the purpose of this study, therefore, it is evident that this holistic approach can educe greater textual meaning, especially, the theological meaning of Isaiah 24-27.

A recent dissertation by Doyle (2000) is titled, The Apocalypse of Isaiah Metaphorically Speaking: A Study of the Use, Function and Significance of Metaphors in Isaiah 24-27. As the title reflects, the study emphasizes a literary concern, especially, the use of figurative language in biblical Hebrew poetry as in the metaphor of Isaiah 24-27. Doyle’s first chapter focuses on “the question of the unity (or lack thereof) of Isaiah 24-27 within the context of the history of redaction of the text” (Doyle 2000:11-22). According to him, even though strong scholarly disagreements exist, he favours the unity of Isaiah 24-27 in these words: “Nevertheless, a clear progression can be discerned from viewing Isaiah 24-27 as a unique, highly fragmentary, haphazardly placed collection to a well-integrated, internally unified, albeit still unique complex” (Doyle 2000:23). Furthermore, Doyle (2000:371-372) is of the opinion that Isaiah 24-27 is the work of the “same redactor who attuned both segments” of the two major components of the book of Isaiah to one another.
B. Childs, who has long been renowned as an exponent of the canonical approach, recently published an Isaiah commentary that contains his lifelong insights, especially his specific methodology. Childs (2001:172) draws attention to two main objections in scholarly works: 1) scholars who consider Isaiah 24-27 as lacking an actual literary milieu so that it is handled as separate from the whole, 2) other scholars who harmonize the biblical text into specific historical measures so as to bring “the vague biblical references into sharper focus in a reconstructed context”. Dissatisfied with the above oppositions, Childs (2001:172-3) welcomes some new scholars’ movements (such as Johnson, Seitz and Sweeney). The emphases of the new directions are as follow: 1) Isaiah 24-27 in connection with “a larger canonical corpus.” 2) “The eschatological nature” of Isaiah 24-27. This eschatological character ensures that “the voice of faithful Israel is sounded in response from within specific moments of this history, whether as experiencing the full judgmental wrath on the world (chapter 25) or as rejoicing in the signs that deliverance is near (chapter 26).” 3) The theological matter that God cheers up “a community of faith living under great pressure and struggling to discern in its historical experiences the ways of God in human lives”.

1.1.2.2 Isaiah 24-27 and the book of Isaiah

As shown above, some scholars oppose a connection between Isaiah 24-27 and the rest of the book of Isaiah as a unity and a whole. Nevertheless, some scholars accept and emphasize it.

Young (1969) attempts to understand the book of Isaiah as a unity and a whole in contrast to scholars such as Duhm who divide the book into three parts. In opposition to Duhm’s approach, Young considers Isaiah 24-27 not only as a literary unity but also in connection with the rest of the book of Isaiah. To emphasize this close relationship, Young (1969:146) demonstrates some comparisons: 24:13 with 17:5-6; 24:16 with 21:2; 27:9 with 17:8; 25:3 with 1:8; 23:18. A close look at his analysis of the structure of Isaiah 24-27 shows his position more clearly. For instance, he analyzes Isaiah 24:1-27:13 as the conclusion to chapters 13-23 (1969:146). Young’s main argument is that the preceding chapters of 13-23, deal with the enemy of God’s people. The inner logical connection shows that Isaiah 24-27 envisages judgment not in limited but in universal terms. Moreover, he correctly observes that this universal judgment comes with “a world-embracing salvation (25:6-8; 26:9, 21; 27:1, 6)” which includes a remnant who will worship the Lord in Zion (Young 1969:146-147). He also maintains that Isaiah 24-27 is a “true prophecy” and strongly rejects its apocalyptic nature (Young 1969:260).
J. Oswalt is a well-known evangelical scholar who advocates the unity of the book of Isaiah. He is discontented with the outcome of scholars’ works which use form-critical and redaction-critical approaches and highlight the period in the progress of the pieces while ignoring the literary unity of the chapters. According to Oswalt (1986:442), one of the severe flaws of such Isaianic studies is the neglect of “the present form of the materials.” The main reason is that it is in “its present form that this segment and the book as a whole have their power.” In the case of Isaiah 24-27, his position on the literary unity is clear; “these chapters cannot be understood independently but must be understood in context with chs. 13-23, as indeed those chapters must be understood in context with these” (Oswalt 1986:441). To buttress his position on the literary unity of Isaiah 24-27, Oswalt (1986:443) outlines the structure of the unit as two main subdivisions:

1) Isaiah 24-25: focuses on “the city of this world, its overthrow (ch. 24) and the response to its overthrow (ch. 25).”
2) Isaiah 26-27 “centers upon God's efforts on behalf of his people. One of the major elements here is the admission of helplessness on the part of the people (26:7-18).” Thus, 27:12 and 13 become the culmination of chapters 13-27 and remind the audience of the promise of chapter 11, “which the succeeding chapters serve to substantiate.”

Recently, E. Conrad has called attention to a contemporary critical literary approach, the so-called “reader response criticism” in Reading Isaiah (1991). From a methodological point of view, his literary approach is mainly influenced by Stanley Fish’s theory in, 'Is There a Text in This Class?' The Authority of Interpretive Communities (1980) which helps to emphasize the significance of the reader’s clear and vigorous function in the development of the book of Isaiah (Conrad 1991:4-5). With this literary approach, Conrad (1991:29-30) argues that his choice of reading strategies of the book of Isaiah is somewhat different from redaction criticism, which emphasizes literary “historical development;” rather, he focuses on “the text’s aesthetic momentum”:

My reading does not assume the genre of the text, but it assumes the text is something as a whole and seeks to discover what that whole is. I am therefore interested in relating parts of the text not to a world external to it (its historical background or its history of literary development) but to the literary world of the text itself. I will be dealing with the so-called final of the text, but I will be focusing on the form itself, not on the process by which it became final.

Conrad (1991:30) provides the reasons for the necessity of this specific reading strategy focused on literary approach:

The structural unity of a text such as Isaiah is not obvious to contemporary readers of the text. This is because the text has been read customarily by biblical critics as a largely disunified collection of material of disparate origin. It is possible, however, in a close reading of Isaiah
to identify recurring rhetorical techniques and patterns that suggest its unity… I look at repetition in the text of Isaiah as a clue to its structural unity. The Book of Isaiah contains repetition in vocabulary, motif, theme, narrative sequence, and rhetorical devices such as rhetorical questions, pronominal shifts, and forms of address. This repetition creates cohesion in the text. The repetition in the book, however, is not literal; repetition is always repetition with a difference. Variation in the recurrence of repeated elements in the text suggests movement and progression.

Conrad’s analysis of Isaiah 24-27 reflects his literary approach, which focuses on literary unity and wholeness. For instance, Conrad (1991:52-63) examines Isaiah 24-27 within the larger structure of Isaiah 1-39 in order to observe its roles within the larger context. In the actual reading of the book of Isaiah, Conrad (1991:52-79) uses the scheme of warfare in the Lord’s plan and “the royal narratives”19 to characterize crucial basics in the formation of the book:

The Lord’s military strategy concerning all the earth
- The Lord’s plan: a strategy for war
- The Lord’s strategy and the Assyrians
- The Lord’s strategy as it affects Egypt
- The Lord’s plan against Tyre
- The Lord’s plan and Jerusalem’s fate
- The Lord’s plan against Babylon: chapter 40
- The Lord’s plan against Babylon: chapter 41-47

In greater detail, Conrad (1991:52) observes that Isaiah 13-27 includes: 1) 13-23: “universal judgment against the nations”; 2) 24-27: “universal salvation as well as world peace.” According to Conrad, these prophecies received limited fulfilment in the Hezekiah narrative, which functions as support of the certainty of the Lord's scheme20.

Motyer (1993), like Young and Oswalt, holds a strong conviction of the literary unity of the book of Isaiah and his purpose in writing an Isaiah commentary is to express this belief (Motyer 1993:13). In his analysis of the structure of Isaiah 24-27, his view is well-expressed. For instance, Motyer (1993:131-220) considers chapter 13:1-27:13 as one division which he refers to as a “cycle” and in it, there are three subdivisions. He rightly indicates that each of the first (13:1-20:6) and the second (21:1-23:18) is a “cycle of oracles” but the third (24:1-27:13) is simply referred to as “the third cycle,” for it does not belong to the oracle formation. In spite of this difference, the third one is “a continuous whole, incorporating poetry, prose and song. It is, nevertheless, closely integrated with the preceding cycles” (Motyer 1993:194):

19 Conrad (1991:49) suggests that “the royal narrative in chapters 36-39 and its accompanying war oracles in chapters 41, 43 echo the royal narrative in chapter 7 and its accompanying war oracle in 10:24-27. This repetitive device creates cohesiveness and is a key to the structural unity of the book as a whole.”
20 Conrad (1991:80) claims that, “The Hezekiah narrative represents the partial fulfillment of the Lord’s plan as that relates to Assyria and in that way provides a persuasive basis for the implied audience to believe that the Lord will fulfill his military strategy to conduct a global war against all the nations of the earth.”
The universal kingdom (13:1 - 27:13)
1. The first cycle of oracles. The reality of the Lord’s promises (13:1 - 20:6)
   b. Philistia: the Davidic dynasty and the Davidic promises (14:28-32)
   c. Moab: pride before a fall and the conditions of Gentile hope (15:1 - 16:14)
   d. Damascus and Ephraim: destruction and preservation, the work of humankind
      and the work of God (17:1 - 18:7)
   e. Egypt: one God, one world, one people (19:1 - 20:6)
2. The second cycle of oracles. The world in the shadows (21:1 - 23:18)
   a. The Desert by the Sea (Babylon): the fall of the gods (21:1-10)
   b. Silence (Edom): the prolongation of time (21:11-12)
   c. Desert evening (Arabian tribes): needs but no solutions (21:13-17)
   d. The Valley of Vision (Jerusalem): the unforgivable sin (22:1-25)
   e. Tyre: pride and holiness (23:1-18)
3. The third cycle. Two cities in contrast: endurance through to glory (24:1-27:13)
   a. The city of meaninglessness: world history planned around the people of God (24:1-20)
   b. The end of waiting: the King shall reign (24:21-23)
   c. The world rejoicing in salvation: the blessings of Mount Zion (25:1-12)
   d. The strong city: waiting in hope (26:1-21)
   e. The final gathering: the universal Israel (27:1-13)

More precisely, to articulate the literary unity, Motyer (1993:194) adopts the thematic
approach (Clements 1980; 1996b). In doing so, he focuses on the “central theme” of Isaiah
24-27, that is, “a city destroyed and a city established.” In contrast to scholars such as Kaiser
who search for “original settings,” Motyer (1993:194) stresses the significance of context. In
other words, it is necessary to locate Isaiah 24-27 as “a single complex” and place it in the
“grand strategy” of chapters 13-27:

In 2:2-4 a Zion hymn expressed a universal hope centred on the city as a magnet to the whole
world. The companion truth, however, to the call to the nations (‘Come, let us go up’; 2:3) is a
call to the Lord’s people, ‘Come, let us walk’ (2:5). Though they lived in Zion, they had already
lost the Zion ideal and they too must come on pilgrimage back to the Lord. Chapters 24-27
express this double pilgrimage on a grand scale.

1.1.2.3 Dating of Isaiah 24-27

Based on Smend’s strong conviction of the apocalyptic character of Isaiah 24-27, he dates
these chapters as the post-exilic period between 500-300 BCE “Vielleicht ergiebt sich
allerdings aus dem Vorstehenden, dass die Entstehungszeit von Jes. 24-27 innerhalb des
Zeitraums von 500-300 v. Chr. mit Sicherheit nicht genauer fixiert warden kann” (Smend
1884:224).

Duhm, especially because of the apocalyptic oracles, emphasizes the necessity for the reader
of Isaiah 24-27 to compare it to other apocalyptic books such as the Sybilline, Daniel and
Enoch in order to comprehend it: “Das Orakel ist durchaus Apokalypse, zu deren Erklärung
man die sibyllinischen Bücher, Daniel, Henoch u.s.w. nicht missen kann und die den
pentateuchenischen Priesterkodex ganz dogmatischer Weise benutzt” (Duhm 1902:143). This statement correctly reflects Duhm’s view on apocalyptic oracles in Isaiah 24-27 in terms of dating, i.e., the post-exilic period: “In der That könnte Jes. ebenso gut das Buch Daniel geschrieben haben, wie diese schrift” (Duhm 1902:143); “If Isaiah has written these four chapters, he might just as well have written the Book of Daniel” (Otzen 1974:196). A consideration of Duhm’s analysis of the city in Isaiah 24-27 shows his understanding of apocalyptic oracles can be used to determine the historical data of the city in Isaiah 24-27. In other words, Duhm’s kind of presupposition of a lack of literary unity leads to a focus on the historical milieu. His main concern is to identify the anonymous city (24:10-13; 25:2; 26:5-6; and 27:10-11), in order to answer the issue of the date of Isaiah 24-27 in its historical setting.

There are unnamed cities in the apocalyptic oracles mentioned above. Duhm classifies these cities as one specific historical city: Jerusalem (135 BCE) of the Maccabaean period because of his understanding of a late dating of apocalyptic oracles. He states that, “Der Apokalyptiker hat erlebt die Belagerung Jerusalems und die Verheerung Judas durch Antiochus Sidetes, bald nach dem Regierungsantritt des Johannes Hyrkanus (135), ferner den Beginn der Partherkriege, den unglücklichen Zug jenes Antiochus VII. Gegen die Parther, an dem die Juden gezwungen teilnahmen (etwa 129);” (Duhm 1902:144). Regarding the cities mentioned in some parts of the lyrics, Duhm considers that they represent Samaria (between 113-105), which was destroyed by John Hyrcanus and that Isaiah 25:3 is a reference to Rome: “Junger sind die eingesetzten Dichtungen, soweit man ihre Abfassungszeit bestimmen kann: c. 25:1-5 geht aut die Zerstörung Samarias durch Johannes Hyrkanus (zwischen 113 und 105), die mächtige Stadt ist Rom” (Duhm 1902:144). Nevertheless, the above insight also contrasts with his division of the book into First, Second, and Third Isaiah. This brings us to the question, “How did Duhm understand or explain the place of Isaiah 24-27 in this location? Is it just located by accident?” This appears to be where the main problem with Duhm’s position lies (Clements 2002:116). In our opinion, even though the complex nature of the text is evident, we believe that it is a well-organized text.

O. Ludwig has written a dissertation on Die Stadt in der Jesaja-Apokalyose Zur Datierung von Jes. 24-27 (1961). Even though he has used a form critical approach to study the city in Isaiah 24-27, his study heavily depends on Duhm’s central argument that the text is a different literary source with a different date (Ludwig 1961:95-6). Following Duhm’s idea, Ludwig (1961:59-69) provides a methodological consideration for Isaiah 24-27 and identifies two main groups of poems: 1) Isaiah 24:8-12 and 27:10-11; 2) Isaiah 25:1-5, 26:1-6 and possibly 25:9-12 as well as the LXX version 27:2-5. In Ludwig’s (1961:60) view, the main divisions of
these two circles of hymns are very clear. The first circle of song expresses a grievous complaint concerning the devastation of a great city (Der Untergang der Stadt ist einmal Anlass und Thema einer Klage (24:8-12), bzw. Anklage (27:10-11); and the other one, in contrast, emphasizes the cheeriness of the society over the collapse of an enemy - the city (das andere aber Grund zum begeisterten Lobpreis Jahwes (25:1-5 und 26:1-6).

In dealing with these two circles, Ludwig presumes that they reflect two divisions and different historical incidents with the focal point of this historical division being the identification of “the city.” For instance, Ludwig (1961:62-4) claims that it is easier to recognize the first one than the second, which is identified as the city of Jerusalem that fell during the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 168/7 BCE, even though there is a possibility that the compilation time was at the fall of Jerusalem (587 BCE): Bei 24:8-12 und 27:10-11 haben wir es offen lassen müssen, ob diese Texte auf die Eroberung Jerusalems durch Nebukadnezar i.J. 587 v.Chr. oder auf die durch Antiochus IV. Epiphanes i. J. 168/7 v. Chr. Zu beziehen sind (Ludwig 1961:75). For Ludwig, it is more difficult to clarify the city in the second circle, especially because of the terminology. In Hebrew, there are two different expressions for the word, “city” יָרָה and עיר, whereas in English, there is no differentiation in the meaning of the two expressions; they are regarded as synonymous. Ludwig challenges this general understanding and suggests that the two words are not descriptions of equal entities. In order to support his argument, Ludwig (1961:65-71) analyses Isaiah 25:2: where יָרָה and עיר both occur. In this study, Ludwig suggests that יָרָה is similar to the word אֲרָמִי “fortress” or a “citadel,” and these two words somehow allude to a fortified part inside the עיר. In Isaiah 24:10; 25:3 and 26:5, the additional occasions of יָרָה further support this understanding. Moreover, Ludwig’s understanding comes from the interpretation of the word עיר. His understanding of יָרָה is “Stadtteil” i.e. a “district” or a “part of the town”. It implies that only a part of the city was ruined. Based on this understanding, Ludwig drowns the suggestion that the second circle reflects the overthrow of Akra, the acropolis of Jerusalem, in 141 BCE by Simon Maccabeus (Ludwig 1961:75).

1.1.2.4 Isaiah 24-27 and apocalyptic

Various scholars have dealt with the subject of Isaiah 24-27 and the apocalyptic. This subject will be examined in detail under our study of the theological text but at this point, we shall consider some scholarly research on the topic.
To begin with, the emphasis of Smend’s major work is on the apocalyptic genre. For Smend, Isaiah 24-27 is closer to the apocalyptic than the prophetic genre: “Ihrem allgemeinen Charakter nach ist die Schrift ferner vielmehr als apocalyptisch denn als prophetisch zu bezeichnen” (Smend 1884:198). His position stems from the apocalyptic character of the text:

1) 24:18-20: portrayal of the devastation of the earth (die Schilderung der Erderschütterung); 2) 25:8: messianic feast on Zion (das Mahl auf dem Zion); 3) 26:19: resurrection (der die Todten erweckende Thau); 4) 27:13: bluster of the great trumpet (die grosse Posaune); and 5) 27:1: implied historical allusions through three monsters (die absichtlich räthselhafte Bezeichnung der drei Weltreiche durch Ungeheuer) (Smend 1884:199).

According to Sweeney, concerning the genre of Isaiah 24-27, scholars have suggested various designations such as pre-exilic judgment literature, prophetic eschatology, prophetic liturgy, early or proto-apocalyptic, and late post-exilic apocalyptic. For him, “the most important issue has been whether – cha. 24-27 constitute an apocalypse” (Sweeney 1996:313). In dealing with it, Sweeney (1996:313) acknowledges some scholars suggestions of the apocalyptic character:

[W]orld judgment and the end of the judgment of the earth; YHWH establishment of world rule at Zion; the use of mythological motifs such as, YHWH’s defeat of Leviathan or the conquest of death; the reaction of the moon and the sun to YHWH’s rule; the eschatological banquet of the nations on Mt. Zion: the interpretation of earlier prophecy: the pseudonymous nature the composition.

However, Sweeney (1996:314), maintains that these are not convincing evidences for labelling Isaiah 24-27 as “Isaiah apocalypse,” because the text lacks important characteristics of later apocalyptic literature:

The composition gives no indication that the secrets of the cosmos are revealed, nor is there any semi-divine guide who leads the reader through a tour of heaven or hell. There is no indication of a periodization of history in that the defeat of the earthly kings does not represent a fundamental transformation of the cosmos or the end of world history as it is known. No pronounced dualism between the forces of good and those of evil is evident; the references to the wicked ones in 26:1-21 appear to be nothing more than enemies of Judah rather than representatives of cosmic disruption. Perhaps most importantly, chs. 24-27 lack the pessimistic worldview that is characteristic of apocalyptic. Chs. 24-27 portray the coming salvation of Israel and the nations following the downfall of the oppressive city. Rather than waiting for YHWH to intervene in world affairs to punish the wicked, chs. 24-27 understand the fall of the city to be an act of deliverance by YHWH to which Israel and the nations may now respond.

Furthermore, a typical case of prophetic tradition is also described in people’s response:

Unlike apocalyptic literature, which is written from a position of powerlessness and pessimism in which human action is no longer an effective means to overcome suffering in the world, chs. 24-27 call on their audience to respond to YHWH's actions. In this respect, chs. 24-27 stand squarely within the prophetic tradition, which always demanded a response from its audience to change its actions or to adopt a specific program (Sweeney 1996:314).
However, it seems that Sweeney (1996:314) may have concluded that the text is a prophetic eschatology even with the recognition of a growing apocalyptic genre:

Chapters 24-27 do employ many elements that appear in later apocalyptic and eschatological texts. But as the absence of many other elements indicates, these chapters can hardly be characterized as apocalyptic in the fullest sense, although they may represent an early stage in the development of apocalyptic literature.

### 1.1.2.5 Summary of scholars’ understanding of the city, date and genre

Here are some examples concerning the city in terms of the dating and the genre of Isaiah 24-27 which are strongly based on the study and identity of the city. However, to pinpoint a precise dating is a rather difficult process, for some scholars suggest a broader period and place (cf. Otzen 1974:196-206; Millar 1976:1-21; Johnson 1988:11-4; Doyle 2000:30-8; Blenkinsopp 2001:346-8). The following table shows the variety of views based on the identity of the city, the date and the genre. However, we acknowledge that the views may be understood in a different way from ours.

#### Table 1.1 – Scholars’ views on the identity of the city in Isaiah 24-27

Abbreviations: Eschatology (italic), Prophecy (Bold), Apocalyptic (bold and italic), Prophetic eschatology (underline)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Text (Isa 24-27)</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Genre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albertz (1994:571)</td>
<td>24-27</td>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td>300-221 BCE</td>
<td>Eschatology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander (1875:377-416)</td>
<td>24:10</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>8th-6th century</td>
<td>Prophecy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25:3</td>
<td>Babylon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26:5</td>
<td>Babylon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27:10</td>
<td>Jerusalem/Babylon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baumgartner (1933:193)</td>
<td>24-27</td>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td>7th century</td>
<td>Apocalyptic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beek (1849:32-8)</td>
<td>25:6-12</td>
<td>Moab</td>
<td>8th century (750)</td>
<td>Prophecy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biddle (1995:5-12)</td>
<td>24-27</td>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bleek (1869:57,293)</td>
<td>24-27</td>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td>7th century</td>
<td>Prophecy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blenkinsopp (2001:348)</td>
<td>24-27</td>
<td>Babylon</td>
<td>6th century (539 Cyrus)</td>
<td>Prophetic eschatology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brueggemann (1998:188, 192)</td>
<td>24-27</td>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td>Late as 300 BCE</td>
<td>Apocalyptic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calvin [1570] (1948:173</td>
<td>24:10</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>8th century Isaiah</td>
<td>Prophecy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>;192</td>
<td>Many cities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>261-262</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheyne (1895:154-6)</td>
<td>24:10, 27:10</td>
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<td>4th century (Alexander)</td>
<td>Apocalyptic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Symbolic</td>
<td></td>
<td>Prophetic eschatology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clements (1980:196-200)</td>
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<td>Symbolic</td>
<td>5th century</td>
<td>Eschatological prophecy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Assyria &amp; Babylon</td>
<td>6th century (late-exilic)</td>
<td>Prophecy</td>
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<td>456</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drexler (1849:179 )</td>
<td>24-10</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Duhrn (1892) (1902:143-4)</td>
<td>24:10-12</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>135 BCE</td>
<td>Apocalyptic, Lyrics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21 Date is unspecified.
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Author</th>
<th>Books</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Century</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>25:10</td>
<td>Moab</td>
<td>6th-5th century</td>
<td>Eschatological prophecy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fohrer (1963:43)</td>
<td>24:27</td>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td>5th century</td>
<td>Prophetic eschatology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gesenius (1821:756, 820)</td>
<td>27:1</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>6th century (late-exilic)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frost (1952:17, 32-3 )</td>
<td>24-27</td>
<td></td>
<td>3rd century</td>
<td>Apocalyptic eschatology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grätz (1886:1-22)</td>
<td>24-27</td>
<td>Niveveh</td>
<td>7th century</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gray (1912: 397, 401, 459)</td>
<td>24:4-13, 26:5, 27:10</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>5th century (post exilic period. 400 BCE)</td>
<td>Apocalyptic eschatology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grogon (1986:149-174)</td>
<td>24-27</td>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td>8th century Isaiah</td>
<td>Prophetic eschatology and apocalyptic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hansson (1979:314)</td>
<td>24:10, 25:1-5, 26:5-6, 27:10</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>8th century (587 BCE)</td>
<td>Early-apocalyptic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry (1967:20-34)</td>
<td>24-27</td>
<td>Babylon</td>
<td>6th century (538)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hitzig (1963:43)</td>
<td>24-27</td>
<td>Niveveh</td>
<td>6th century</td>
<td>Apocalyptic eschatology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaminka (1925:23-36)</td>
<td>24-27</td>
<td></td>
<td>8th century</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaufmann (1960: 348, 384-5)</td>
<td>24-27</td>
<td></td>
<td>8th century</td>
<td>Prophetic eschatology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kissane (1941:267)</td>
<td>24-27</td>
<td></td>
<td>8th century</td>
<td>Prophecy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuenen (1874:42)</td>
<td>24-27</td>
<td></td>
<td>4th century</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagrange (1894:213-5)</td>
<td>24-27</td>
<td>Samaria</td>
<td>8th century (721)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leupold (1963-1971)</td>
<td>24-27</td>
<td></td>
<td>8th century</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis D (1858:69-70, 175-182)</td>
<td>24:10</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>Exile of inhabitants</td>
<td>Prophetic liturgy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lindblom (1938:72-84)</td>
<td>24:10, 25:2, 26:5-6, 27:10</td>
<td>Babylon</td>
<td>485 BCE (Xerxes I)</td>
<td>Eschatological &amp; lyrical (Cantata)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowth (1834:260, 264)</td>
<td>25:2</td>
<td>No specific city</td>
<td>8th century</td>
<td>Prophetic eschatology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ludwag (1961:70-75)</td>
<td>24, 27</td>
<td>Jerusalem, Jerusalem</td>
<td>168 BCE</td>
<td>Apocalyptic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McConville (2002:19)</td>
<td>24-27</td>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscall (1993:66)</td>
<td>24-27</td>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motyer (1993:194-5, 201, 214, 224)</td>
<td>24:10</td>
<td>Babylon</td>
<td>8th century</td>
<td>Prophecy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulder E (1954:91-3)</td>
<td>24:10, 25:10</td>
<td>Medeba (Dibon)</td>
<td>3rd century (270 BCE)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nägelsbach (1878:9)</td>
<td>24-27</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>8th century</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oswald (1986:440-1)</td>
<td>24-27</td>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td>8th century</td>
<td>Eschatological prophecy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otzen (1974:206)</td>
<td>24-27</td>
<td>Babylon</td>
<td>During and after exile</td>
<td>Prophecy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pagán (1989:115, 121, 132)</td>
<td>24:10</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>End of Babylonian exile and beginning of restoration of temple</td>
<td>Eschatological prophecy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petersen (2002:85, 240)</td>
<td>24-27</td>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td></td>
<td>Prophetic liturgy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pfeiffer (1952:441, 443)</td>
<td>26:20-27:1</td>
<td>Syria, Egypt</td>
<td>3rd century</td>
<td>Apocalyptic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pföger (1968:96-7)</td>
<td>24-27</td>
<td>No specific city</td>
<td>3rd century (225-200)</td>
<td>Apocalyptic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polaski (2001:51, 56, 61)</td>
<td>24-27</td>
<td>Symbolic</td>
<td>5th century</td>
<td>Between Prophecy and apocalyptic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preuss (1996:254, 278-9)</td>
<td>24-27</td>
<td>Samaria</td>
<td>331 BCE (Alexander)</td>
<td>Transition from Prophecy to apocalyptic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd century (146)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table above represents the views of about 84 scholars as an illustration of Isaiah 24-27 studies in terms of identification of the city, the dating and the genre. Here we would attempt to draw some observations based on the following questions: What are the current trends in terms of the identity of the city, the dating, and the genre? What are the main arguments? What do they have in common? Which elements are behind the choice of the specific rhetorical strategies? Which elements have been developed and which are neglected?

First of all, concerning dating, the following scholars’ groups can be identified:

Table 1.2 - Scholars’ dating of Isaiah 24-27

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Num.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8th Century</td>
<td>Calvin (1570); Lowth (1834); Alexander (1875); Nägelsbach (1878); Delitzsch (1889); Von Orelli (1889); Lagrange (1894); Robinson (1910); Kaminka (1925); Kissane (1941); Beek (1949); Kaufmann (1960); Mauchline (1962); Van Zyl (1962); Leupold (1963-1971); Young (1969); Grogon (1986); Hayes &amp; Irvine (1987); Oswalt (1986); Motyer (1993)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th Century</td>
<td>Wellhausen (1878); Bleek (1869); Grütz (1886); Watts (1985)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th Century</td>
<td>Gesenius (1821); Hitzig (1833); de Wette (1845); Alexander (1875); Dillmann (1890); Reuss (1890); König (1926); March (1966); Henry (1967); Cross (1973); Elder (1974); Otzen (1974); Hanson (1979); Millar (1976); Lewis D (1985); Johnson (1988); Pagán (1989); Seitz (1993); Blenkinsopp (2001); Sweeney (1996, 2005)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Century</td>
<td>Driver (1905); Gray (1912); Lindblom (1938); Anderson (1963); Fohrer (1963); Kessler (1967); Redditt (1972); Ringgren (1973); Vermeylen (1977); Wildberger (1978); Clements (1980); Eaton (1997); Doyle (2000); Polaski (2001)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Century</td>
<td>Kuenen (1874); Smend (1884); Cheyne (1895); Wade (1911); Baumgartner (1933); Rudolph (1933); Eissfeldt (1965); Preuss (1996); Brueggemann</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the data above, it is evident that an eighth century dating is considerably supported by scholars, especially by scholars before and in the 19th century. This can be contrasted with more recent studies, that is, with the exception of some conservative scholars such as Young 1969; Grogon 1986; Hayes & Irvine 1987; Oswalt 1986; Motyer 1993, who favour an eighth century dating. Concerning the city, a symbolic interpretation and a Jerusalem identification have considerable support (cf. Sennacherib’s siege of Jerusalem; for it was the time of Isaiah of Jerusalem). Regarding the identification of the city, therefore, two major tendencies are recognizable: 1) a historical city such as Jerusalem; 2) a symbolic city representing a world or an evil power. Concerning the genre, the focus is either on prophecy or on eschatological prophecy. It seems logical to draw attention to the point that this early dating is hard to connect with the apocalypse, which is mainly associated with a later period. Consequently, it is inevitable to choose prophecy or eschatological prophecy for an eighth-seventh century BCE dating.

In contrast to the eighth century dating, more recent studies support a sixth-fifth century BCE dating. As the above study shows and Johnson (1988:14) indicates, there is a strong movement in recent years which argues for the time frame between the period of “the sixth and fifth centuries” (cf. Anderson 1963:126; Ringgren 1973:114; Otzen 1974:206; Doyle 2000:36). This implies that scholars are more focused on an exilic period dating for Isaiah 24-27. Whereas, the eighth century dating focuses on Jerusalem in connection with Isaiah, in the sixth-fifth century, the focus is similar in the sense that it is on the city of Jerusalem but is not connected to Isaiah. This position is supported by many scholars (cf. Elder 1974; Hanson 1979; Millar 1976; Lewis 1985; Johnson 1988; Pagan 1989) unlike some other scholars who consider Babylon as the city (cf. Seitz 1993; Blenkinsopp 2001; Sweeney 1996, 2005). Their main arguments are based on the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BCE. An interesting point to note is that recent scholars are more focused on Babylon rather than Jerusalem. Concerning the understanding of the city, even though some scholars consider the symbolic nature of the city, most studies support a historical city such as Jerusalem or Babylon. With respect to the genre, the focus is on prophetic eschatology, but some scholars (cf. Cross 1973; Hanson 1979; Millar 1976) also emphasize the proto or early – apocalyptic nature of Isaiah 24-27, for they can observe some peculiar apocalyptic textual features. For a fifth century period, it is noteworthy
that some scholars are against an apocalyptic characterization of Isaiah 24-27 but rather suggest that the text is of a “cantata” or “liturgical” nature (cf. Redditt 1972:247; Doyle 2000:33). At the early stage, the prophetic liturgical point of view was developed by Gunkel (1924:182-3) and Hylmö (1929). The phenomena was developed for the Isaiah 24-27 context by Lindblom (1938) and Fohrer (1963). This liturgical character is consistently supported by other scholars even in recent studies (cf. March 1966; Lewis 1985; Watts 1985; Sweeney 1996; Petersen 2002).

Furthermore, for a fourth century dating, as shown in the above data, many cities have been considered (e.g. Moabites’ city - Smend 1884; Eissfeldt 1965; Jerusalem - Cheyne 1895; Babylon - Rudolph 1933). However, concerning the genre, the apocalyptic rather than the prophetic eschatology is highly favoured.

Finally, for the third century and second century dating, it is interesting to note that while recent scholars such as Albertz (1994) and Collins (2004) maintain a third century position, a second century dating is no longer welcome by scholars. It seems this is due to the discovery of the Qumran Isaiah scrolls dated second century (Blenkinsopp 2000:348). Another interesting point is that unlike some other scholars, Albertz (1994) and Collins (2004) do not consider a late dating for Isaiah 24-27 because of the apocalyptic nature. Rather, they support a late dating (third century) based on the conviction that it is the result of a prophetic eschatological redactional process. Concerning genre, with a fourth century dating, the emphasis is on the apocalyptic.

In line with the above observation, Doyle (2000:36) rightly indicates that, “it is clear that dating is based on two distinct if complementary lines of argumentation: historical allusions and the development of religious/political ideas”.

Table 1.3 - The identification of the city in Isaiah 24-27

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Num.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moab (Dibon)</td>
<td>Smend (1884); Lindblom (1938); Beek (1949); Mulder (1954); Eissfeldt (1965)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babylon</td>
<td>Alexander (1875); Von Orelli (1889); Rudolph (1933); Lindblom (1938); Henry (1967); Kessler (1967); Otzen (1974); Vermeylen (1977); Johnson (1988); Motyer (1993); Seitz (1993); Blenkinsopp (2001); Sweeney (1996, 2005)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>Calvin (1570); Gesenius (1821); Drechsler (1849); Alexander (1875); Nägelsbach (1878); Delitzsch (1889); Von Orelli (1889); Duhm (1892); Scott (1956); Ludwig (1961); Mauchline (1962); March (1966); Redditt (1972); Elder (1974); Millar (1976); Hanson (1979); Lewis (1985); Watts (1985);</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The diversity of approaches is well explained by the scholars’ respective methodological points of view (Clements 1980:197-9). As the above study indicates, until the middle of the 1970s, most scholars focused on the city in order to establish the historical background of Isaiah 24-27. Concerning the identity of the city, two main ways of understanding it can be established: a) as a historical city, and b) as a symbolic city. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that there are also two different groups of scholars amongst those who prefer a historical approach, i.e., those who consider the city in Isaiah 24-27 as one city in contrast to those who regard it as at least two different cities such as Jerusalem and Babylon. In addition, research gradually shifted from the historical study of the city as a place (cf. Duhm 1892; Rudolph 1933; Lindblom 1938; Henry 1967) to a historical study as a “national group” or people-group such as Moab\(^{22}\) (cf. Mulder 1954; Eissfeldt 1965) and recently to the “thematic approach”\(^{23}\) (cf. Wildberger 1978; Clements 1980; Seitz 1993; Sweeney 1996; Childs 2000; Doyle 2000; Sheppard 2000; Tucker 2001; McConville 2002; Petersen 2002). In other words, whereas previous studies of Isaiah 24-27 focus on its historical nature, recent scholars prefer a thematic or theological study. The emphasis becomes clearer in view of its connection to Isaiah 13-23 especially in terms of the themes, such as the city. This kind of study tends more on the unity of the text as a whole rather than its segmentation or the disunity of Isaiah 24-27 (cf. Clements 1980; Seitz 1993; Sweeney 1996; Childs 2000; Doyle 2000).

1.2 Problem
From the above study and our personal preference and understanding, we can identify certain

\(^{22}\) In Isaiah 25:10, Moab is referred to as a “national group,” which faced God’s judgment but Moab was a land or region east of the Jordan between the Arnon (Wadi Mujib) and Zared/Zered (Wadi Hasa) rivers (cf. Num 21:13). There were several prominent cities in Moab such as Medeba/Madeba, Dibon/Dhiban, Heshbon, Nebo, Ar, Kir (cf. Isa 15:16; Miller 1992:882-93). In this study, we shall refer to Moab as a national group (i.e. the Moabites), and cities are represented as evil cities but we also bear in mind that some scholars recognize that Moab is used as “the city of Moab” or to refer to a “city in Moab,” such as Dibon (cf. Mulder 1954: 91-3; Doyle 2000:38-9).

\(^{23}\) This is the attempt to study the city in a symbolic or theological way.
problems in connection with Isaiah 24-27 such as the literary structure of Isaiah 24-27 and its connection to the book of Isaiah, the date of composition, and the genre of text. Consequently, regarding the study of the city, even though there has been notable progress, the main problem persists, namely, that previous approaches have focused on the identification of the historical city and its literary meaning (Otzen 1974:198; Millar 1976:15-21; Johnson 1988:29-35) on the implication is that the role and function of the city from a theological perspective has been overlooked. In other words, from the study of the problems associated with Isaiah 24-27, it can be observed that many scholars neglect the theological message or the understanding of the city as “a proper subject of theological inquiry” (Georgi 2005:196). Thus, the question is “How can ‘the city’ in Isaiah 24-27 be interpreted in a theological way?

1.3 Hypotheses

There is a variety of theological interpretations of the city in existing research on Isaiah 24-27. Two of the most important interpretations focus on judgment and salvation. Thus, the central theoretical argument is subdivided into individual hypotheses as follows:

(1) Isaiah 24-27 is a section in the Old Testament in which the city plays a very important role.

(2) A theological interpretation is facilitated when Isaiah 24-27 is interpreted in view of judgment and salvation.

1.4 Aim

The aim of the proposed research is to describe some examples of significant theological interpretations of the city in Isaiah 24-27 with special attention to judgment (curse) and salvation (blessing). In other words, this research is to contribute to the theological understanding of the city in Isaiah 24-27 from the perspective of the socio-rhetorical approach. Thus, the study seeks to determine primarily, the way the present form of Isaiah 24-27 was interpreted at the time of its composition, its message to the Jews living at that time and, its message to 21st century believers, especially the Korean Church.

1.5 Methodology

Any attempt to interpret the book of Isaiah is confronted by a variety of methods from which to choose. The most frequently used method for studying the book of Isaiah has been the historical critical approach but as we indicated above in the historical survey, recent Isaiah studies have shown dissatisfaction with the diachronic method. Thus, many scholars focus on
the whole book of Isaiah and read it as a literary unity (synchronic method) but amidst the above debates, there are, in our opinion, other movements that we consider more agreeable as well. In other words, even though the scholarly discussion of the history of Isaiah studies has been dominated by an historical critical approach (diachronic) and a new (synchronic) approach, several scholars also recognize that the book of Isaiah exhibits both a diachronic and synchronic character (Sweeney 1993:267; Williamson 1995a; cf. Jonker 1996). Hence, Williamson (1995a:211) claims that there is an increasing tendency for the study of the book of Isaiah to focus on a dialogue regarding the relative merits of synchronic and diachronic approaches. Furthermore, in line with Williamson’s argument, Rendtorff (1996:45-6) distinguishes between two current approaches in contemporary Isaiah studies. According to him, the difference between these approaches becomes clear when we express each in a question form: The diachronic approaches ask, “In what stages did the text reach its final form?”; the synchronic approaches ask, “What does the text (in all its complexity) mean in its given final shape?” (1996:46).

From the above observation, it is our opinion that a multidimensional approach is one of the methods that can be used to overcome the limitations of a one-dimensional approach. The main reason is that the Bible is a theological book which also has a cultural, (socio) historical and literary (rhetoric) nature. From this line of argument, we suggest that Robbins’ (cf. 1996a; 1996b) socio-rhetorical approach is an alternative exegetical method because it accommodates a variety of methodical studies such as rhetorical, literary, sociological, cultural, ideological, and theological elements which are mainly adapted into five different dimensions: 1) inner texture; 2) intertexture; 3) social and cultural texture; 4) ideological texture; 5) sacred texture (Robbins 1996b:1-2).

In our review of the study of Isaiah 24-27 above, we claim that even though scholars provide various insight into the text, some of theological points are omitted which can be brought to the fore by combining a “socio-rhetorical approach.” In other words, it is surprising that previous studies on the city in Isaiah 24-27 have not considered the text from a theological point of view by focusing on issues such as God’s judgment and salvation based on a multidimensional exegetical approach such as the socio-rhetorical approach. Thus, our reading of the city is an alternative suggestion after studying previous approaches.

The goal of this study, therefore, is to make use of a socio-rhetorical interpretation to research the role of the city in Isaiah 24-27 in terms of the theological metaphors of “judgment and
salvation”. The choice of this method is informed by its multidimensional function, which can be used to unravel the meaning of the text and to highlight the benefits of both a synchronic and a diachronic reading of texts. As far as we know, no previous research on Isaiah 24-27 of the city has been undertaken mainly by means of socio-rhetorical analysis.

1.6 Outline of research

In Chapter 1, the introduction, history of research, problem, hypothesis, aim, and methodology of Isaiah 24-27 are stated.

Chapter 2 deals with the ‘Inner Texture’ of Isaiah 24-27 while Chapter 3 examines the ‘Intertexture’ of Isaiah 24-27 by focusing on the rhetorical phenomena of the text. In Chapter 4, the ‘Social and Cultural Texture’ of Isaiah 24-27 is investigated in its social context through a rhetorical strategy. while Chapter 5 analyzes the ‘Ideological and Theological Texture’ of Isaiah 24-27.

Finally, in Chapter 6, the general summary and conclusion are discussed and the contribution of the study is also highlighted.
Chapter 2
Inner Texture of Isaiah 24-27

Inner texture concerns the relationship between word-phrase and narrational patterns that produce argumentative and aesthetic patterns in texts. These intermingling patterns are the context for the “networks of signification” in a text (Robbins 1996b:7). The purpose of this analysis is to gain an intimate knowledge of words, word patterns, voices, structures, devices, and modes in the text, which are the context for meanings and meaning-effects that an interpreter analyzes with the other readings of the text (Robbins 1996b:7). The discussion of inner texture would replace the introductory discussions of structure and style. It would provide a fuller analysis of each because socio-rhetorical criticism uses rhetorical theory for its principle of organization and application. It recognizes that the speaker, the speech, and the audience are the constituents of a communication situation. This fuller analysis includes the discussion of the repetitive, progressive, narrational, opening-middle-closing, argumentative, and sensory-aesthetic textures (Robbins 1996a:44-91, 1996b:7-39).24

This rich approach to the inner texture of a text will have implications for the analysis of other textures. For example, the study of the argumentative texture of the book of Isaiah uncovers its social and cultural presuppositions that reveal its ancient Israelite society and culture (Robbins 1996b:64). This is an important starting point for the analysis of the social, cultural and ideological textures.

2.1 Repetitive texture and pattern

According to Watson (1998:69), Robbins’ socio-rhetorical effort was “a major cutting edge force in rhetorical criticism” and it was expressed in his two books: The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology (1996a) and Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Social Rhetorical Interpretation (1996b). In these two books, Robbins (1996a:44-50, 1996b:7-14) demonstrates the closeness between repetitive texture and progressive texture. In his initial work, The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse, Robbins (1996a:46) combines these two textures as repetitive – progressive texture but in his other book, Exploring the Texture of Texts, Robbins (1996b:8-9), he distinguishes between these two texts as repetitive texture and pattern and progressive texture and pattern. However, he

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24 Jonker and Lawrie (2005:59) emphasize that when we deal with the “inner text”, we do not deal with “meaning” or “interpretation” as such, but rather engage in “intimate knowledge of words, word patterns, voices, structures, devices, and modes in the text.”
clearly emphasizes the intimate relationship between these two textures: “progression emerges out of repetition” (Robbins 1996b:10). Due to the closeness of these two textures, it is also somehow advisable to merge them as one, that is, the repetitive – progressive texture and pattern.

As claimed by Robbins (1996a:47, 49; 1996b:8-9), a repetitive form is considered when a word and/or a phrase appear(s) at least two times; hence, a progressive texture and pattern based on repetitive words and phrases is grounded on some kind of “restatement and sequence” of words and phrases which can lead to a climax or opinion in the unit. Furthermore, according to Muilenburg (1953:101), these literary phenomena “lie deeply embedded in the language and literature of Israel.” Therefore, our study, which is based on Robbins’ definition and somewhat influenced by Muilenburg’s study, will focus on the repetition of words and phrases and then, pay attention to the progression of those words and phrases. As mentioned above, it is also important to investigate, primarily, the rhetorical strategy in order to see the author/narrator’s theological intention. This we will do later under the theological (sacred) texture. In our view, the disregard for the literary character of the text is one of the weak points of the historical approach. It is our hope that this study can supplement previous studies.

To accomplish our task, we will focus on five categories: deity, judgment/salvation25, world-view,26 city,27 anthropological perspective,28 and others;29 for these are the dominant subjects and they are highlighted in Table 2.1 below. Fixed expressions are not separated here

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25 On the subject of Deity, the concept of judgment/salvation is an important matter for our study, especially, for the theological investigation. The study will examine God’s active involvement in terms of Judgment/Salvation not only of the Jewish people but also of the nations as well as of nature.

26 Webster’s Dictionary (2001:1650, college 4th ed) defines it as “a comprehensive, especially, personal, philosophy or conception of the world and of human life”. Although this represents a popular use of this word, according to scholars, the concept of Weltanschauung is not easy to define. Hiebert (1983:355) insists that a general feature of a world-view is that it is a way of thinking that leads people “to find meaning in existence and to impose order on the world.” On the other hand, Luzbetak (1989:252-4) offers a more practical but somehow complicated application: 1) the cognitive dimension of a world-view; 2) the emotional dimension of a world-view; 3) the motivational dimension of a world-view. Fortunately, for the present purpose, the resolution of these complex issues is not essential. The dictionary definition by Webster can modified here to mean “a comprehensive conception of the world” in terms of the earth, the land, the ground, heaven, and moon, etcetera.

27 The subject of “the city” is significant to this study and we shall focus on its literal occurrence while we also pay attention to words which are metaphorically connected to it such as gate, Mount Zion, and Jerusalem etcetera.

28 Webster’s Dictionary (2001:60) describes it as “the study of humans, especially, of the variety, physical and cultural characteristics, distribution, customs, social relationship, etcetera, of humanity.” Deist (1989:16) asserts that we need an anthropological study when he calls for a paradigm shift in prophetic study (cf. Domeris 1994:160-6). In line with Deist’s claim, we consider that this anthropological perspective is a crucial element in our further study of the social and cultural texture.

29 In this section, we shall focus on some types of expressions used in argumentation and time such as for, therefore, and “at that time.”
but we also acknowledge that some other person may see things from a different perspective. Furthermore, the English translation used here is based on the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), but when it is necessary, some expressions can be emended.

Table 2.1: Repetition of topics in terms of nouns, verbs and phrases in Isaiah 24-27

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Deity</th>
<th>Judgment/ Salvation</th>
<th>World-view</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Anthropological Perspective</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a</td>
<td>the Lord (יָהָהוּ)</td>
<td>lay waste (שֵׁרַב), desolate (שָׁרֵב)</td>
<td>the earth (הָאָרֶץ)</td>
<td>Behold (הִבְרֵיחַ)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b</td>
<td>will twist (שֵׁרַב)</td>
<td>its surface (שָׁרֵב)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1c</td>
<td>scatter (שָׁרֵב)</td>
<td>its inhabitants (שָׁרֵב)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a</td>
<td>It shall be: (כָּל)</td>
<td>like people (כָּל)</td>
<td>like slave (כָּל)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a</td>
<td></td>
<td>like lawyer (כָּל)</td>
<td>like his master (כָּל)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b</td>
<td>like maid (כָּל)</td>
<td>like her mistress (כָּל)</td>
<td>like buyer (כָּל)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b</td>
<td></td>
<td>like seller (כָּל)</td>
<td>like lender (כָּל)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2c</td>
<td></td>
<td>like borrower (כָּל)</td>
<td>like creditor (כָּל)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2c</td>
<td></td>
<td>like debtor (כָּל)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a,b</td>
<td>utterly lay waste (שָׁרֵב), utterly despoiled (שָׁרֵב)</td>
<td>the earth (הָאָרֶץ)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3c</td>
<td>for the Lord has spoken this word (הָיָה הַנִּשָּׁה)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a</td>
<td>dries up (שָׁרֵב)</td>
<td>the earth (הָאָרֶץ)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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30 LXX ἀνακαλύψει “unveil or uncover” (AGNT 1603). Vulgate adfliget “shall afflict.” Lutherbibel renders it as wirf um “knock down/over” (cf. Calvin [1570]1948:163: evertit “to turn upside down”). NBDB 730 and HALOT 6846 suggest that the word תָּמָם indicates “to bend and twist”. Most English translations reflect it as : NET “will mar,” NJB “buckles,” NIV “will ruin,” NRSV and NASB “distorts,” NRSV and NJPST “will twist.”


32 God’s main judgment is to “scatter (שָׁרֵב)” all the inhabitants of the world (Tucker 2001:211) but also God’s main restoration or blessing is to “gather (םָסַר)” all the people including the sons of Israel (cf. Isa 27:12). In this regard, Brueggemann (1998:190) has an interesting suggestion; the word, “scatter (שָׁרֵב)” typically represents the “Jewish exile”.

33 The NRSV, NASB, NKJV, NIV, NJB, and NET translate this as “(the) people” but NJPST renders it as “layman,” NLT “lay people,” Gray (1912:409) “the (common) people,” and Tucker (2001:211) “ordinary people.” All these translations somewhat reflect on and emphasize the non-professional people’s character.

34 NRSV renders it “like his master (םָסַר)” i.e. as singular but its Hebrew literal meaning is “like his masters”, a masculine plural. Therefore, Watts (1985:314) suggests that it is probably a “plural of majesty” (cf. Waltke & O’Connor 1990:122-3).


36 LXX ἀνακαλύψει “mourn, bewail and lament” (AGNT 21321). Vulgate and Calvin [1570]1948:163 luxit “mourn” and Lutherbibel stehet jämmerlich. According to NBDB 5, the meaning of תָּמָם can be “mourns,” and NASV, NJB and NKJV follow this translation (cf. Doyle 2000:147 “wails”). But as Holladay 2 suggests, תָּמָם can also be translated as “dry up.” For, on the basis of parallelism in this context, many translations follow תָּמָם as “dry up” (NRSV, NET, NIV, NLT, and H.J. Bosman 2000:4; see also especially HALOT 64 where “dry up” is suggested because of parallelism).

suggests that we should render מָלַשׁ (the land) as “the land,” for this is an “extended” synonymous parallelism such as מָלַשׁ (the land of Judah), יָם (the world) and מִשְׁקָא (the height i.e. heavens).

38 MT מְלָשׁ is missing in the LXX translation: εἰσὶν ἐρημώσασθαι ἡ γῆ καὶ ἡ οἰκουμένη εἰσὶν ἐρημώσασθαι οἱ υψηλοί τῆς γῆς “The earth mourns, and the world is ruined, the lofty ones of the earth are mourning”, and in contrast, 1QIsa 7a where this word exists and the Targum where it is rendered מָלַשׁ “to be a desert” also express similar meanings.

39 LXX ἡ οἰκουμένη. Vulgate and Calvin [1570]1948:163 render it as orbis “the world.” LB (Lutherbibel) renders it as der Erdboden “ground or the earth” instead of der Erdkreis “the world” (cf. Revidierte Lutherbibel 1984). Some English translations (cf. NJB and NLT) omit it but most translations (cf. NIV, NKJV, NRSV, NET, NASB, and NJPST) translate it as “the world.”

40 MT reads it as a plural verb indicative aorist active 3rd person plural (cf. LXX εἰσὶν ἐρημώσασθαι), in contrast to 1QIsa c, Peshitta, Vulgate infirmata “weakened” where it is referred to as singular (cf. Lutherbibel nehmen ab “take down”, compared to RLB (Revidierte Lutherbibel 1984): verschmachten “fade away” and Calvin [1570]1948:163: elanguerunt “do languish”).

41 There are different interpretations: e.g. “by its people” (NIV), “by the feet of its inhabitants” (NJB), but some others are “under its inhabitants” (NKJV, NASB, NRSV and NJPST).

42 The MT יֵשׁ is plural but 1QIsa uses the singular form יֵשׁ (cf. Blenkinsopp 2000:350).

43 יֵשׁ has numeral מַלְשָׁ נֶכֶר מָלַשׁ הַקּוֹרֶת תִּלְמָדּ. This is an interesting observation regarding the repetition of sounds: ’al-kēn ’āālā ’āālā ’ēres (cf. Oswalt 1986:438), i.e. from a rhetorical point of view.

44 Other translations have similar expressions. For instance, the LXX renders it ἤπιον γῆν (cf. Vulgale and Calvin terram; Lutherbibel das Land).

45 יֵשׁ functions as change from the sin to the punishment (Delitzsch 1889:422).

46 Hebrew Hapax legomenon. MT יֵשׁ literally means “scarred, burned” (NBDB 359; Holladay 118; HALOT 3266). But the meaning of יֵשׁ is somewhat puzzling, for 1QIsa has the word יֵשׁ. BHS suggests an emendation that יֵשׁ can mean יָשׁ (יָשׁ) “grow pale” (NBDB 301; HALOT 2378; cf. Isa 29:22). There is also an interesting suggestion; HALOT 3189 gives another possible meaning of יֵשׁ as יָשׁ “to diminish in number” which probably came from the Arabic meaning “to decrease.” The LXX renders it as πατησόμενος “be poor” and Vulgate translates it as insanient “shall be mad” while Lutherbibel verdorren “wither, scorches” and Calvin [1570]1948:164: combusti “burned” seem to render it close to the original literal meaning. English translations and commentators also show variation on this matter: cf. NRSV, NJPST and Blenkinsopp 2000:349 “dwindled”; NET “disappear”; NKJV “burned”; NIV and NJB “burned up”; H.J. Bosman 2000:4 “decimated”; and Doyle 2000:147 “diminish.”

47 It is a fixed expression. The LXX translates it as: οἱ ἐνοικίωται ἐν τῇ γῇ “the dwellers in the earth.”

48 The literal meaning of מָלַשׁ מָלַשׁ is “a very few” according to NBDB 277. The MT מָלַשׁ is noun masculine singular in contrast to the LXX ἄνθρωποι ἄνθρωποι, ἄλογοι ἄλογοι, that is, noun nominative masculine plural common “few men” (cf. NKJV, NJPST).

49 It is a fixed expression. 4QIsa 8 includes מָלַשׁ subsequent to מָלַשׁ. The reason, according to Blenkinsopp (2000:350), is that it may have been affected by Joel 1:10 (מָלַשׁ מָלַשׁ מָלַשׁ) where identical languages are expressed.
7b sigh(seev)50 all the merry-hearted

8a stilled (pep) the mirth of timbrels

8b ceased (nyn) the noise of the jubilant

8c stilled (pep) the mirth of lyre

9a they do not drink wine with a song (nyn)51

9b strong drink bitter to those who drink it (nyn)

10a broken down (nap) city of chaos

10b shut up (ak) from entering (ak)

11a outcry (nap) in the streets (ge) for wine (ge)

11b all joy (nap) darkened (nap)

11c banished (nap) gladness of the earth (ge)

12a desolation (nap) in the city (ge)

12b gate is battered (ak)

50 The LXX σταναξοιν “sigh, groan” (cf. Targum ינק; Vulgate corde; LB (Lutherbibel) seufzen; Calvin corde). Most English translations reflect the above translations: “sigh (ing)” (ESV, NASB, NKJV, NLT, NRSV, NJB); “groan” (NET, NIV, H.J. Bosman 2000:4 and Doyle 2000:149).

51 It is a fixed expression. The LXX renders it παντει οι ευφραινομενοι την ψυχην “all the merry-hearted” (cf. Targum ינק; Vulgate omnes qui laetabantur; LB (Lutherbibel) alle, die von Herzen fröhlich; Calvin [1570] 1948:164: omnes qui laeto). Many English translations follow the above understandings e.g. ESV, NASB, NJPST, NKJV, and NRSV “all the merry-hearted” (cf. NIV “all the merrymakers”; NLT “the merrymakers”; NJB “the once merry-hearted”; GNB “everyone who was once happy”; H.J. Bosman 2000:4 and Doyle 2000:149 “all the joyful-hearted). Using a similar concept but a different nuance, NET renders it as “all those who like to celebrate” which reflects “the context as parties and drinking bouts” (cf. Blenkinsopp 2000:349 “all the revelers”).

52 In NRSV, “no longer do they drink wine with singing.” Our translation is based on NASV, NKJV and H.J. Bosman (2000:4).

53 Most English translations render it as “no one (non e) may enter” (NASB, NRSV, NJB, NKJV, and NJPST) but some others follow the literary meaning of the Hebrew text as “the entrance” (NIV) and “from entering” (H.J. Bosman 2000:5 and Doyle 2000:149). We will follow H.J. Bosman Grol and Doyle’s rendering.

54 The LXX πανταζητητα translates this as “everywhere.” The Targum’s התיייל can imply a variety of meanings: 1) street; 2) quarter of town; 3) market; 4) public square.

55 It is a fixed expression. The LXX περι του οινου and 1QIsaa אבות, and the Targum התיייל. Some English Bibles translate this as “for lack of wine” (NRSV, ESV) or “to get wine” (NJB). But other translations are based on the literary meaning of the Hebrew text such as “concerning wine” (NASB), “for wine” (NIV, NKJV, NJLT). We choose the NIV translation.

56 NBDB 788 suggests two similar meanings: “become evening and grown dark.” The LXX seems to paraphrase it as πανταζητητα “to cease”. The Targum’s התיייל “to finish or to come to an end” also seems to support the LXX. The NRSV rendering of “has reached its eventide,” “turn to gloom” (NAB), “has vanished” (NJB), “is darkened” (NKJV), “turn to gloom” (NIV), and “turn to sorrow” (NET) all represent the darkness of evening. We follow the NKJV.

57 The LXX renders πανται as “ceased” (AGNT 21188). The Vulgate renders it as translatum “gone away” (cf. Calvin ([1570]1948:164) and LB (Lutherbibel) also has a similar translation: Calvin migravit “gone”; Luther dahin “pass or go by”). Most English translations render πανται as “banished” (NRSV, NJB, NIV, NJPST and NASB; cf. NET “disappear”, NJKV “gone”). But H.J. Bosman (2000:5) change it to “goes into exile,” which is expressed, in some ways, in other texts: Ju 18:30; 2 Kg 17:23, 25:21; Is 5:13; Je 1:3, 52:27; Ez 12:3, 39:23; Am 1:5, 5:5, 6:7, 7:11, 7:17; Mi 1:16; La 1:3 (cf. NBDB 163).

58 ה’app הapax legomenon.

59 It is a fixed expression. The MT is singular.
thus it shall be (יהה)  

in the midst of the earth\(^{60}\)  

among the peoples

as the shaking of an olive tree  

as at the gleanings when the vintage is ended\(^{61}\)

they lift up their voices  

they shall exult

in the Lord’s majesty  

they shall cry out from the sea

in the dawning light glorify the Lord  

therefore

the name of the Lord (יהיה) the God of Israel  

in the coastlands of the sea

we hear songs  

but I said

I pine away, I pine away woe to me  

the treacherous deal treacherously,  

the treacherous deal very treacherously

terror and pit and snare are upon you  

O Inhabitants of the earth

whoever flees at the sound of the terror  

shall fall into the pit

whoever climbs out of the pit  

shall be caught in the snare

opened  

the windows of height

tremble  

the foundations of the earth

\(^{60}\) “In the midst of” (NKJV, NASB) but “throughout” in NET  

\(^{61}\) According to NET, it may imply that the earth’s population (cf. Isa 24:6) will be severely reduced due to God’s judgment.  

\(^{62}\) The identification of “they” is rather difficult (cf. Oswalt 1986:450; Childs 2001:180). They can be Jewish who were in eastern and western Diaspora (Blenkinshopp 2000:354) or “those who have survived the judgment begin to praise God” (NET).  

\(^{63}\) H.J. Bosman (2000:5): “beauty to the righteous one!” NET: “Just one is majestic”; “Beauty belongs to the just one.” These words may summarize the main theme of the songs mentioned in the preceding line.
| 19a | utterly broken | the earth |
| 19b | torn asunder | earth |
| 19c | violently shaken | earth |
| 20a | stuggers | earth | like a drunkard |
| 20b | sways like a hut | |
| 20c | its transgression lies heavy upon it | |
| 20d | it falls, and will not rise again | |
| 21a | the Lord will punish | the host of the height in the height |
| 21b | on the earth | the kings of the earth |
| 22a | they will be gathered together | prisoners in a pit |
| 22b | they will be shut up in a prison | |
| 22c | they will be punished | after many days |
| 23a | will be abashed | the moon |
| 23b | ashamed | the sun |
| 23c | the Lord of hosts will reign | on Mount Zion, in Jerusalem for |
| 23d | | before his elders, gloriously |
| 25:1a | O Lord, your are my God | |

| 1b | I will exalt you, | you made city |
| 1c | you have done wonders, | |
| 1d | plans formed of old, faithful and truth | for |
| 2a | a heap | for |

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66 NKJV: “in that day”
67 הַפָּאָשָׁה Hapax legomenon.
68 As Oswalt (1986:440) points out, other ancient versions (cf. the LXX, Targum, 1QIs) do not have “prisoners.”
69 NRSV: “and before his elders he will manifest his glory.” MT יִפְסַס is a noun common masculine singular absolute (cf. Targum יֵפָס, noun, “honour, splendor”; Lutherbibel der Herrlichkeit “splendor”). In contrast to the MT, the LXX δοξασκεται, verb indicative future passive 3rd person singular, renders this as “he shall be glorified” (cf. Vulgate glorificatus “shall be glorified”). As we note, there are different understandings of יִפְסַס in English translations as well: cf. CEV, ESV, GNB, NRSV, NJB, NASB “glory” but NKJV, NIV, NLT “gloriously” and NJPS “the Presence.”
70 יָפָס NRSV “your name” but NET “your fame”
71 יִפְסַס Hapax legomenon.
72 Literal meaning in Hebrew: “you have made from the city.” This reading is not impossible but is rather strange and is not supported by the versions. Suggestions for emendation have multiplied but none has carried the day. The two most widely adhered to are: (1) that יִפְסַס is a mistake for יָפָס “the city,” in the light of יָפָס at

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34
| 2b | a ruin | fortified city  |
| 2c | palace of aliens is a city no more  |
| 2d | it will never be rebuilt  |
| 3a | will glorify you  |
| 3b | will fear you  |
| 3c | palace of aliens is a city no more  |
| 4a | you have been a refuge  |
| 4b | a refuge in his distress  |
| 4c | a shelter from the rainstorm  |
| 4d | a shade from the heat  |
| 5a | like heat in a dry place  |
| 5b | you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds  |
| 5c | was stilled  |
| 6a | the Lord of hosts will make on this Mountain for all peoples  |
| 6b | a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines  |
| 6c | rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear  |
| 7a | he will swallow up the face of the shroud on this Mountain shrouding all the peoples  |
| 7b | the sheet spread over all nations  |
| 8a | Adonay the Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces  |
| 8b | he will take away from all the disgrace of his people  |

the end of the verse; (2) that originally the מ was at the end of the word as a plural: שהים (cf. the LXX, BHS, NEB). However, both are difficult. The prefixed מ on语气 was probably originally an enclitic מ suffixed to the preceding verb (NET). 73 Most other English translations refer to it as “for” (NKJV, NASB, NRSV) while NET has it as “indeed.” 74 According to NET, it can be rendered as “the towns of powerful nations.” Furthermore, the מ may have been accidentally copied from the preceding verse or it may connected to v. 2 and ch. 24 (Oswalt 1986:457). 75 “breath of violent” (NIV); “blast of the ruthless” NRSV; NET “the breath of tyrants”; “breath of violent” (NIV); “blast of the ruthless” NRSV. 76 ידב אדונא הילא ע”ג 77 Hapax legomenon. 78 That is, Mount Zion (cf. 24:23). Some English translations: NLT “in Jerusalem” According to Smend (1884:196-7) both the ה and the כ are Hapax legomena. 79 שמעון, Hapax legomenon. 80 לו הילא ע”ג 81 Hapax legomenon.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8d</th>
<th>for the Lord has spoken (םלֵטָנָה יִקְרָה)</th>
<th>(רשפת עליא)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9a</td>
<td>it will be said (דבר),</td>
<td>on that day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9b</td>
<td>this is our God (יהוה אב政府部门),</td>
<td>we have waited for him (לִבְּעָד הָעָם)</td>
<td>so that he might save us (בְּחַד הָעָם)</td>
<td>Behold (ראה)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9c</td>
<td>this is the Lord (יהוה נְבָלְתָא),</td>
<td>we have waited for him (לִבְּעָד הָעָם)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9d</td>
<td>let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation (בְּשָׁאַלון וּבְרָגַלִּים בִּרְצֹון),</td>
<td>on this Mountain (הָרֹא הָאָדָם)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10a</td>
<td>the hand of the Lord (יְדֵי יהוה),</td>
<td>will rest (שתיה יְתוֹמָא)</td>
<td>on this Mountain (הָרֹא הָאָדָם)</td>
<td>for (כן)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10b</td>
<td>shall be trodden down in its place (תֹּהָךְ יִתְּפָרֵשׁ),</td>
<td>Moabite (בָּאָמִית)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10c</td>
<td>as a heap of straw is trodden down in the water of a dung-pit (דָּם הָעֵז),</td>
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<tr>
<td>11a</td>
<td>he will spread out his hands in the midst of it (הָרֹא בָּאָמִית),</td>
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<tr>
<td>11b</td>
<td>as swimmers spread out to swim (שִׁילְאָה מַעַלְם),</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11c</td>
<td>he will bring down his pride (יראת הָרֹא אִשָּׁה),</td>
<td>the high fortification of your walls (נִינְנֵי חֲלֵדַע),</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12a</td>
<td>he will bring down, he will lay low (יְתָמָא לִשָּׁמֶר),</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12b</td>
<td>he will cast (תּוֹקֵד),</td>
<td>to the ground, even to the dust (פָּלְחַר לְיִשְׁבִּין),</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>26:1a</td>
<td>this song will be sung (יִשָּׁמֶר לְרַשָּׁת),</td>
<td>in the land of Judah (יִשְׂרָאֵל יָדוֹ),</td>
<td>on that day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b</td>
<td>we have a strong city (יִשָּׂרָאֵל יָדוֹ),</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1c</td>
<td>he sets up salvation (יִשָּׂרָאֵל יָדוֹ),</td>
<td>walls and bulwarks (יִשָּׂרָאֵל יָדוֹ),</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a</td>
<td>open the gates (פָּלְחַר לְיִשְׁבִּין),</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b</td>
<td>may enter in (יִשָּׂרָאֵל יָדוֹ),</td>
<td>righteous nation that keeps the truth (יִשָּׂרָאֵל יָדוֹ),</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>those of steadfast mind</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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82 NET renders it “indeed, the Lord has announced it” but most English translations have “has spoken” (NASB, NIV, NRSV and NLT).
83 NET: “will make secure”; NLT: “will rest on Jerusalem”
84 Hapax legomenon; Rabbinic אַפֶּרְאוּס הָעָם Hapax legomenon.
85 Hapax legomenon. The meaning of מִמְשֶׁרֶף, which occurs only here in the Old Testament, is unknown. NBDB 70 renders it as “artifice, cleverness,” relating the form to the verbal root מָשָׁר “to lie in wait, ambush,” but this requires some convoluted semantic reasoning (HALOT 827 suggests the meaning “nimble movements.”) NET changes “he” to “the Lord” and “his” to “Moab” for clarity.
86 LXX ἀλήθιος “truth”; Vulgate veritatem “truth”; Calvin veritates “truth”; LB (Lutherbibel) den Glauben “faith or belief”; ESV, NJPST, NJB, NIV, NRSV, “faith”; NASB “faithful”; NLT “the faithful”; NKJV “the truth”; NET “trustworthy”.

36
<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3b</td>
<td>he trusts in you</td>
<td>in the Lord forever</td>
<td>for (ב)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a</td>
<td>in Yah the Lord is an everlasting rock</td>
<td>in peace, peace</td>
<td>for (ב)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4b</td>
<td>in Yah the Lord</td>
<td>he trusts in you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a</td>
<td>he brought low</td>
<td>he lays low</td>
<td>for (ב)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5b</td>
<td>the lofty city</td>
<td>to the ground</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5c</td>
<td>he lays it low</td>
<td>the feet of the poor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5d</td>
<td>he casts it</td>
<td>to the dust</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a</td>
<td>the foot tramples it</td>
<td>the steps of the needy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6b</td>
<td>the steps of the needy</td>
<td>to the ground</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7a</td>
<td>O Just One</td>
<td>O Lord</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7b</td>
<td>you make smooth</td>
<td>we wait for you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8a</td>
<td>in the path of</td>
<td>your name and your memory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8b</td>
<td>the path of the righteous</td>
<td>are the soul's desire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8c</td>
<td>your name and your memory</td>
<td>are the soul's desire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9a</td>
<td>my soul yearns for you</td>
<td>in the night</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9b</td>
<td>my spirit within me earnestly seeks you</td>
<td>in the earth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9c</td>
<td>when your judgments are</td>
<td>for (ב)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9d</td>
<td>learn righteousness</td>
<td>the inhabitants of the world</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10a</td>
<td>if favor is shown</td>
<td>to the wicked</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10b</td>
<td>he will not learn righteousness</td>
<td>in the land of uprightness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10c</td>
<td>he will deal perversely</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

87 Some have suggested that the phrase הָתֵֹּכְכָּנָו “in Yah” is the result of dittography. A scribe seeing הָתֵֹּכְכָּנָו in his original text probably confused the letters and accidentally inserted הָתֵֹּכְכָּנָו between the words (cf. ה and כ can be easily confused in later script phases). Most English versions keep both divine names (cf. ESV, NIV, NKJV, NRSV, NLT). 1Q1sa confirms the MT reading as well.

88 The translation assumes that הָתֵֹּכְכָּנָו goes with the preceding words, “an elevated town,” and that הָתֵֹּכְכָּנָו belongs with the following words, “to the ground” (cf. Oswalt 1986:469).

89 There are three possible ways to translate this line. Some take הָכְכָּנָו as a divine title: “O Upright One” (cf. NASB, NIV, NKJV, NRSV, NLT). Others regard הָכְכָּנָו as the result of dittography (כָּנָו כָּנָו.correction. Another possibility is to keep הָכְכָּנָו and render the line as “the path of the righteous that you prepare is straight.”

90 NET translation understands כְּכָּנָו in the sense of “justice,” but it is possible that it carries the nuance of “righteousness.”

91 “He” instead of “they.”

92 Constrictive state
| 10d | the majesty of the Lord (יהוה מלך) and he will not see |  |
| 11a | O Lord (יהוה) your hand is lifted up, but they do not see it (יהוה יד his צים) | your zeal for your people (יהוה צעדים לארשי) |
| 11b | let them see (יהוה) and be ashamed (יהוה) | for your adversaries (יהוה) |
| 11c | let the fire consume them (יהוה) | for your adversaries (יהוה) |
| 12a | O Lord (יהוה) you will ordain peace for us (יהוה י враים לשלום לארשי) | all that we have done, you have done for us (יהוה) |
| 13a | O Lord our God (יהוה אלהי) | other lords besides you (יהוה אלהי) have ruled over us (יהוה אלהי) |
| 13b | other lords besides you (יהוה אלהי) | but only in you we kept remembrance of your name (יהוה אלהי) |
| 14a | the dead do not live (יהוה) | shades do not rise (יהוה) |
| 14b | you have punished (יהוה) and destroyed them, (יהוה) and wiped out all memory of them (יהוה) | you have punished (יהוה) and destroyed them, (יהוה) and wiped out all memory of them (יהוה) |
| 15a | O Lord (יהוה) you have increased (יהוה) the nation (יהוה) you have increased (יהוה) the nation (יהוה) |
| 15b | you are glorified (יהוה) | all the borders of the land (יהוה) |
| 16a | O Lord (יהוה) in distress they sought you (יהוה) | in distress they sought you (יהוה) |
| 16b | they poured out a prayer when your chastening was on them (יהוה) | they poured out a prayer when your chastening was on them (יהוה) |
| 17a | who writhes and cries out in her pangs when she is near her time (יהוה) | like pregnant woman (יהוה) |

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93 Many understand the prefixed verb form to be jussive and translate it as “let [fire] consume” (cf. NAB, NIV, NRSV). The mem suffixed to the verb may be enclitic; if a pronominal suffix, it refers back to “your enemies.”

94 NRSV “but we acknowledge your name alone”.

95 NKJV “they are dead, they will not live”; dead and shades are parallelisms.

96 “visited (for harm)” (cf. NKJV, ASV); NAB, NRSV “you have punished.”

97 נפש may here carry the sense of “seek with interest” (cf. Ezek 23:21 and NBDB 823) or “seek in vain” (cf. Isa 34:16), but it is peculiar for the Lord to be the object of this verb. LXX: κύριε ἐν θλίψει εἰμι δικαιός σοι ἐν θλίψει μικρῇ ἢ πεῖσθαι σοι ἡμῖν, “Lord, in affliction I remembered thee; thy chastening was to us with small affliction.” Vulgate: Domine in angustia requisierunt te in tribulatione murmurus doctrina tua eis, “Lord, they have sought after thee in distress, in the tribulation of murmuring thy instruction was with them.” But Calvin: Jehova, in tribulatione visitaverunt te, effuderunt precautionem, dun castigation tua super eos, “Lord, in trouble have they visited thee; they poured out a prayer when they chastening was upon them.” LB (Lutherbibel): Herr, wenn Trübsal da ist, so suchet man dich; wenn du sie züchtigstest, so rufen sie ängstlich.

98 NRSV: “like a woman with child”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verse</th>
<th>English translation</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 17b   | O Lord (יהוה) so were we before you | 99 NRSV: “so were we because of you”  
 99 “victories, deliverances”  
 100 NKJV, NASB, NIV, NRSV: “You who dwell in dust” but NET has “you who live in the ground”  
 100 “victories, deliverances” |
| 18a   | we were pregnant, we whirled, but like we gave birth to wind  
 18b   | we have won no salvations on the earth | 100 “victories, deliverances”  
 18c   | and no one is born to inhabitants of the world  
 18d   | your dew is a radiant dew for your dead | 100 “victories, deliverances”  
 18e   | will cast out the dead and the earth  
 19a   | shall rise my corpses  
 19b   | will cast out the dead and the earth  
 19c   | awake and sing for joy! O dwellers in the dust | 101 NET: “until his angry judgment is over”  
 19d   | your dew is a radiant dew for your dead | 100 “victories, deliverances”  
 19e   | will cast out the dead and the earth  
 20a   | enter your chambers | 102 “in the place of divine presence”  
 20b   | and shut your doors behind you  
 20c   | hide yourselves for a little while until the wrath is past  
 20d   | and will no longer cover her slain | 103 “in the place of divine presence”  
| 21a   | the Lord (יהוה) comes out from his place  
 21b   | to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity | 104 NET: “the place where he lives”, “out of his place” (NKJV, NASV).  
| 21c   | will disclose her blood shed the earth  
 21d   | and will no longer cover her slain | 105 “in the place of divine presence”  
| 27:1a | the Lord (יהוה) will punish with his cruel sword  
 27:1b | and he will kill the dragon that is in the sea | 106 “in the place of divine presence”  
|       | with the great (הָיָה), and the strong (יָדֶה) | 107 “fleeing” (cf. NAB, NASB, NRSV). Some translate “slippery” or “slithering.”  
 27:1b | and he will kill (תָּדֵה) the dragon  
 27:1b | and he will kill (תָּדֵה) the dragon that is in the sea | 108 Hapax legomenon.  
| 1b    | the Lord (יהוה) will punish (תָּדֵה) | 109 Dragon, monster, sea-monster. Isaiah here applies imagery from Canaanite mythology to Yahweh’s eschatological victory over his enemies (cf. Oswalt 1986:490-1; Blenkinsopp 2000:372-3; Childs 2001:196-7).  
 110 In other parts of the OT, this kind of conflict is applied to God’s victories (cf. Ps 74:13-14; 77:16-20; 89:9-10; 90:11-21; 91:9-16; 102:25-28; 105:34-35; 110:1-3; 111:4-14; 112:1-10; 113:6-7; 114:2-4; 115:6-8; 121:3-4; 122:5-9; 123:7-9; 124:5-10; 125:1-10; 126:1-6; 127:1-2; 128:1-8; 129:7-10; 130:8-10; 131:8-10; 132:6-7; 133:1-3; 134:1-2; 135:12-14; 136:6-9; 137:3-9; 138:1-8; 139:6-9; 140:1-11; 141:10-14; 142:7-10; 143:10-12; 144:6-12; 145:8-12).  
 111 “fleeing” (cf. NAB, NASB, NRSV). Some translate “slippery” or “slithering.”  
 112 Hapax legomenon.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
<th>Hebrew Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2a</td>
<td>sing about her</td>
<td>יְנַשֵׁל אֶתָּה (yanshel etah)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b</td>
<td>a pleasant vineyard</td>
<td>נָתַתָּה (natatah)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2c</td>
<td>on that day</td>
<td>בּוֹשֵׁהָ (boshehah)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>The Lord (יהוה)</td>
<td>יְהוָה (yehovah)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b</td>
<td>I am (אני)</td>
<td>אני (ani)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3c</td>
<td>its keeper (מנ hoàn)</td>
<td>מנ hoàn (man haolah)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a</td>
<td>I have no wrath</td>
<td>לא בִּרְרָה (lavi ravra)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4b</td>
<td>if it gives me thorns and briers</td>
<td>לְמֵצַּת בּוֹרָה (lematz boarah)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a</td>
<td>in battle, I will march against it</td>
<td>בְּעָרַיָּם אֲנִי אוֹלַי (be'arayam ani olai)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5b</td>
<td>I will burn it together</td>
<td>אִנִּי אֲנִי אֲנִי אוֹלַי (ani ani ani olai)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a</td>
<td>or else let it cling to me for protection</td>
<td>אוּלָּי יִקְפָן עַל עָנָּנִי (olai yikpan al anakni)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6b</td>
<td>let it make peace with me</td>
<td>יִכְלָּל עָנָּנִי (yikel anakni)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6c</td>
<td>and fill the face of the world</td>
<td>לְשָׁמַע לְלָבֶנֶת (lesham lelabenet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7a</td>
<td>Has he struck them down as he struck down those who struck them?</td>
<td>אוֹלָּי נַשֵּׁל עָנָּנִי בָּעָרַיָּם (olai yanshel anakni be'arayam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7b</td>
<td>or have they been killed as their killers were killed?</td>
<td>אוֹלָּי נַשֵּׁל עָנָּנִי בָּעָרַיָּם (olai yanshel anakni be'arayam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8a</td>
<td>by her expulsion,</td>
<td>בְּאֶפֶס תַּאָרָה (be'epes taarah)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8b</td>
<td>by sending her</td>
<td>בְּאֶפֶס תַּאָרָה (be'epes taarah)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8c</td>
<td>you struggled against her</td>
<td>בְּאֶפֶס תַּאָרָה (be'epes taarah)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9a</td>
<td>with his fierce blast he removed her</td>
<td>בְּאֶפֶס תַּאָרָה (be'epes taarah)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9b</td>
<td>in the day of the east wind</td>
<td>בְּאֶפֶס תַּאָרָה (be'epes taarah)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Isa 51:9-10) and to God’s kingship (cf. Ps 29:3, 10; 93:3-4). The apocalyptic literature employs the imagery as well.

110 הָמוֹצֶה (hamoshe) Hapax legomenon. NRSV: “I will march to battle against it”; נָשַׁל The feminine singular suffix apparently refers to the expression “thorns and briers,” understood in a collective sense.

111 הָמוֹצֶה (hamoshe) Hapax legomenon. NRSV “I will burn it up”

112 NET: “produce” but rendered “fruit” elsewhere (NKJV, NASB, NIV, NRSV, NLT)

113 NRSV: “the whole world”

114 הָמוֹצֶה (hamoshe) Hapax legomenon.

115 NET: “will be forgiven”; “be atoned for” (NIV).
| 9c | when he makes all the stones of the altars like chalkstones crushed to pieces. | 10a | is solitary | 11a | When its boughs are dry they are broken
(יב) (ה) 11b | women (ג) | 11c | this is a people without understanding (כ)
for (כ) 11d | he that made them will not have compassion on them (כ) he that formed them will show them no favor (כ)
therefore (כ) 12a | the Lord (כ) will thresh (כ) from the channel of the Euphrates (כ)
to the Wadi of Egypt (כ)
on that day (כ) 12b | and you will be gathered (כ) O sons of Israel (כ)
and on that day (כ) 13a | a great shophar will be blown (כ)
and they will come (כ)
and those who were lost in the land of Assyria (כ)
and those who were driven out to the land of Egypt (כ)
on the holy mountain (כ)
at Jerusalem (כ) 13b | and they will worship (כ) | 13c | NRSV: “they” NRSV: “the river,” refers to the Euphrates that is often implied in the Old Testament. Thus, many English versions alternate the name “Euphrates” for “the river”.
NRSV: “O people of Israel” NRSV: “trumpet”

116 Hapax legomenon.
117 The identity of this city is uncertain (see Chapter 1).
118 NRSV: “they”
From Table 2.1 above, interesting aspects of Isaiah 24-27, which can be developed have been identified: personal characteristics of the deity, the city and themes (cf. judgment/salvation, world-view and anthropological perspective). The repetitions that display major themes in Isaiah 24-27 generate the model that is shown in Table 2.1. The table reveals that there is a focus on the deity, or more specifically, on the Lord, throughout Isaiah 24-27. In addition, the concept of judgment/salvation is vividly connected to the deity’s activity. Furthermore, concerning world-view, there are 35 references to the earth and the world. There are also nine literal references to the city while some other metaphoric instances (e.g. mountain) appear several times. Concerning the anthropological perspective, the words, human and nations in their varieties, appear about 74 times. Moreover, other noteworthy phrases occur such as seven references to “on that day (אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל);” three references to “on this mountain (מֵישׁוֹן)”; and two references to “for the Lord has spoken (וַיֹּאמֶר ה' כֹּל אֲשֶׁר יָמַן).”

This grouping of repetitive data produces four main positions of rhetorical concerns. First, the Lord God of Israel features as the main subject. Second, the earth and world constitute other significant themes. Third, the focus on the city is an important facet. Finally, the references to time as in “on that day” (וְלָעַל עַל הַיָּמִים) reflect the eschatological (apocalyptic) perspective in a significant way.

According to Robbins (1996b:8), this kind of initial study is an important milestone in engaging the text, even though it does not generate the meaning itself in the text:

The repetitive texture of a span of text regularly exhibits initial glimpses into the overall rhetorical movements in the discourse. Repetition does not reveal the precise nature of the boundaries between one unit and another. Also, repetition does not exhibit inner meanings in the sequences. But repetitive texture introduces interpreters to the overall forest, if you will, so they know where they are as they look at individual trees. Clusters of repetitive data give initial insight into the overall picture of the discourse. They provide an overarching view of the texture of the language that invites the interpreter to move yet closer to the details of the text.

Before examining the main terms and characters in Table 2.1, it is important to mention the occurrence of the *hapax legomena*. This is a Greek term, which literally means ‘read once’. In practice, to understand the *hapax legomena* is not a simple task. The reason is that “the criteria used to identify such words have differed according to the varied concerns of those who study them” (Greenspahn 1992:54). This kind of difficulty is also echoed in the works of Smend, Mulder, and March. At this stage, a modified version of the definition of van der Merwe et al (1999:359) is in order: “The term *hapax legomenon* refers to a word or combination of words (an expression) that is known only from a single citation in a given
piece of literature.” In other words, we consider *hapax legomena* as words, which appear only once including words whose roots occur several times in other forms but in only one context (cf. Greenspahn 1992:54-5). This investigation is based on the considerable number of occurrences of the *hapax legomena* in the context of Isaiah 24-27. More than a hundred years ago, a German scholar, Smend (1884:196-7) listed the *hapax legomena* as follow:

In our view, Smend’s work is a remarkable effort considering the limited resources at that time as it continues to influence subsequent generations of scholars. Therefore, influenced by Smend, Mulder’s (1954:72-3) findings concerning the *hapax legomena* are:

Moreover, compared to Smend’s March (1966:201) holds a somewhat different point of view (cf. Mulder and March add some more *hapax legomena*: הַיָּרָה [24:6], מִשְׁפָּט [25:7], בֶּשָּׁם [27:4], מַסָּאָה [27:8]):

Consequently, March puts the following words into some other category:

Based on previous studies and our research, there are some words which seem to occur as *hapax legomena*. They are shown in Table 2.2 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Hebrew</th>
<th>Stem</th>
<th>Grammar</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24:6</td>
<td>נַרָה</td>
<td>מ.ק</td>
<td>p. q. p. 3rd. per. pl.</td>
<td>glow, burn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24:12</td>
<td>מִשְׁפָּט</td>
<td>מ.ק</td>
<td>n. f. s. a.</td>
<td>ruin, desolation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24:15</td>
<td>בֶּשָּׁם</td>
<td>מ.ק</td>
<td>n.m.pl.</td>
<td>region of light</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

123 It seems to us that Smend mis-spelt it as הַיָּרָה.
As we can see, these *hapax legomena* are widespread in Isaiah 24-27. The question is, in a certain case, why did the author/narrator make such copious use of the *hapax legomena* (cf. מַפְּחֵי יָדִים)? At first glance, some of the *hapax legomena* seem to intensify some subjects. We shall examine this more closely in the discussion of other textures.

In the table below, the main terms and characters in Table 2.1 above, are summarized to show the main rhetorical features:

**Table 2.3: Main themes according to Table 2.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Hebrew</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Appearance</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deity (37x)</td>
<td>יְהוָה</td>
<td>Lord</td>
<td>24: 1, 3, 14, 15 (2x), 21, 23; 25: 1, 6, 8 (2x), 9, 10; 26: 4 (2x), 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 21; 27: 1, 3, 12, 13</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>אֱלֹהִים</td>
<td>God</td>
<td>24: 15; 25: 1, 9; 26: 13</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>אדוֹנָי</td>
<td>Adonay</td>
<td>25: 8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>יָה</td>
<td>Yah</td>
<td>26: 4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>לֶדְוִים</td>
<td>Lords</td>
<td>26: 13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>רוֹתֵךְ</td>
<td>Righteous One</td>
<td>24: 16</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>יַשְׁנֵי</td>
<td>Just One</td>
<td>26: 7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World-view (35x)</td>
<td>מַעֲמֹ קִים</td>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>24: 1, 3, 4 (2x), 5, 6(2x), 11, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19 (3x), 20, 25: 8, 12, 26: 1, 5, 9, 10, 15, 18, 19, 21 (2x); 27: 13 (2x)</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>מַעֲמֹ קִים</td>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>24: 21 (2x)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>מַעֲמֹ קִים</td>
<td>World</td>
<td>24: 4, 26: 9, 18, 27: 6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City (9x)</td>
<td>צִיבְי</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>24: 12; 25: 2 (2x); 26: 1; 27: 10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Through a careful examination of the content of Isaiah 24-27, we are able to identify the themes that will be addressed in this study. As noted above, the texts of Isaiah 24-27 support our topic, “The city in Isaiah 24-27: A theological interpretation in terms of judgment and salvation”, as a worthwhile subject. In reflecting on the text for the purpose of this study, we shall consider in detail some important themes such as deity, city, apocalyptic, judgment and salvation because these themes are dominant features in the text of Isaiah 24-27.

From Table 2.1, we have observed the repetition of certain expressions and themes in Isaiah 24-27 and it has been mentioned that repetition entails a progression, which starts from one incident to another. According to Table 2.1, there are important expressions such as the deity, judgment/salvation, world-view (e.g. the earth), city, time and so on. Thus, regarding the initial textual observation, it is worthwhile to examine these significant themes.

### 2.2 Progressive texture and pattern

As briefly mentioned above, the definition of progressive texture as a sequence or pattern which leads to purpose and to a dramatic conclusion (Robbins 1996b:10), also suggests that this kind of study on progression within repetition can widen our understanding in the following ways: “First, it may lead to observations about progressive texture in the entire work. Second, it may exhibit phenomena that function as stepping-stones to other phenomena in the text. Third, it may exhibit a sequence of subunits throughout a span of text.”

---

124 Table 2.1 shows that there are 74 appearances of both peoples and nations or their variants. We shall illustrate with some of the dominant instances. For more details, see Table 2.1.
According to Tables 2.1 and 2.3, the dominant character in our text is the Lord God of Israel. As Oswalt (1986:443) rightly indicates, God is at the centre in Isaiah 24-27, that is, in contrast to previous chapters (13-23), in which the nations seem to receive prominence. Consequently, it is a legitimate task to consider divine action by focusing especially on the verbs (and some nouns) because the verbs express God’s vivid activity (Westermann 1982:10) and because this verbal phenomena dominates the content of Isaiah 24-27. This is a primary task of theological interpretation, which is also crucial to the theological understanding of the city in Chapter 5 of this study.

Table 2.4: Repetitive-progressive texture and pattern of nouns and verbs relating to God’s judgment and salvation and its objects in Isaiah 24-27

Abbreviations: J (judgment); S (salvation); the way of God’s judgment and salvation is in bold character

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pericope</th>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>J</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Way of God’s J and S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24:1-3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Waste, twist, scatter</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>The earth</td>
<td>Natural (e.g. earthquake or drought) and military Judgment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Like people, priest</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Religious Household</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maid, mistress</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Economic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lender, Borrower</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Chaos in society because of military Judgment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24:4-13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dries up</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>The earth</td>
<td>Drought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Languishes</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Agricultural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The earth</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Natural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Height of people</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Agricultural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The laws, covenant</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Court</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The earth</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Natural and military</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The earth</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Natural and military</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Inhabitants</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Military</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>New wine</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Agricultural, Society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Noise of jubilant</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wine</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Agricultural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>City</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Military</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gladness of earth</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Agricultural, Society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>City</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Military</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Olive tree</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Agricultural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24:14-16b</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lift up exult</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Their voices</td>
<td>Song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Their voices</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>The Lord</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25:1-5</td>
<td>Glorify</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>The Lord</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Glory</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Righteous One</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>The Lord</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24:16c-20</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pine away</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>The treacherous</td>
<td>Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The earth</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Military</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Whoever</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Military</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The earth</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Natural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The earth</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Natural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Earthquake</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24:21-23</td>
<td>Punish</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Host of height</td>
<td>Military</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kings of earth</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Mythological</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>They, prisoners</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Military</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25:1-5</td>
<td>Exalt, praise</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>The Lord</td>
<td>Song, (involve social conflict)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Made heap, ruin</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Fortified city</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>You (the Lord)</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Kingship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>You (the Lord)</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Kingship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A careful examination of the content of Isaiah 24-27 in Tables 2.1 and 2.4 shows two interesting themes in progression which are the concepts of God’s judgment and salvation. The objects of judgment are mainly the earth and its inhabitants who are living in the fortified
city (especially in Isa 24:1-22) and the objects of salvation are primarily the city of Zion, Jerusalem, and its people, who are somehow blessed through discipline and punishment (Isa 24:23; 27:13).

There is also a progression in terms of tense in that chapter 24 relates God’s judgment in the past and by contrast, chapters 25, 26 and 27 reveal God’s salvation for the future - in a progression. The structure of Isaiah 24-27 shows these important themes in detail, that is, judgment and salvation based on repetitive verbal texture in Isaiah 24-27 (Pagán 1992:323), as follows:

24: 1-3 Judgment
24: 4-13 Judgment
24: 14-16a Salvation
24: 16c-20 Judgment
24: 21-23 Judgment/ Salvation (on that day)
25: 1-5 Salvation /Judgment
25: 6-10a Salvation /Judgment (on that day)
25: 10b-12 Judgment/ Salvation
26: 1-6 Salvation /Judgment (on that day)
26: 7-19 Salvation /Judgment
26: 20-21 Salvation/ Judgment
27: 1 Judgment/ Salvation (on that day)
27: 2-6 Salvation (on that day)
27: 7-11 Salvation /Judgment
27: 12-13 Salvation (on that day)

This seemingly dialectical relationship of the structure of judgment and salvation shows progressive movements: “from crisis to hope, from destruction to restoration, from chaos to order” (Pagán 1989:139; cf. Johnson 1988:100).

When God demonstrates his activity, especially in terms of judgment and salvation, the objects are mostly the cities, which are a climax of the earthly life. As the analyses in Tables 2.1 and 2.4 show, the Lord who is the main subject of judgment and who scattered (הָגַם) the earth and its inhabitants (Isa 24:1) would eventually bless the sons of Israel (יִשׂרְאֵל) who would be gathered one by one (וַיֹּסֶף) in order to worship (רֵדֵשׁ) the Lord on the holy mountain at Jerusalem (הַר הָיְלֹם); (Isa 27:12-13). This holy mountain is deeply connected to Zion, especially the city of Jerusalem (24:23; 27:13). In contrast, God also judges the arrogant city called the “fortified city (הָרָע)” and the “lofty city (רֶוֶם); (Isa 26:5; 27:10). In other words, God’s judgment and salvation are focused on these cities.
A good example of the progression of the city within a small unit is Isaiah 24:4-12. According to Table 2.4, even though God’s judgment is against the whole earth, there is a progression of God’s judgment from the earth (world) in terms of the universal (Isa 24:4-6) to the city in terms of specifics (Isa 24:7-12; cf. Johnson 1988:20; Blenkinsopp 2000:351). On this matter of progression, Polaski (1999:23) adds that, “the city stands, in some sense, as the epitome of the once and future disorder faced by human society and, indeed, the whole world”.

From this brief analysis, certain descriptions of the city’s characters can be observed but no specific name of the city is mentioned. It seems that the author/narrator intended that the identity of this city should remain vague, to foreshadow Israel’s opponent. However, a close look at Tables 2.1 and 2.4, shows that there a progression in terms of the city’s title - from an unnamed city to a named city. For instance, the unnamed city which is initially described as “the city of chaos (חף חמאש)" in Isaiah 24:10a and the “fortified city (חז')" in Isaiah 25:2b becomes a named city: “on Mount Zion at Jerusalem (ירושלים)" in Isaiah 24:23b (cf. also “on this mountain (חף חמאש)" in Isaiah 25:6, 7, 10 and “on holy mountain (חף חמאש) at Jerusalem (ירושלים)" “at Jerusalem (ירושלים)" in Isaiah 27:13.

Furthermore, when we consider the Lord’s judgment and salvation, the theological themes in terms of salvation and worship in the city become significant. As Table 2.4 indicates, God is deeply involved in the judgment that devastates the earth and the city (in Isa 24:1-23). Nevertheless, God’s sovereignty and his kingdom (Isa 24:23) will save the earth and the city which were devastated (Isa 25:9; 26:1). In addition, the place of God’s salvation is a specific place - “the Mount Zion at Jerusalem (ירושלים)" (Isa 24:23) and “on this mountain (חף חמאש)" (Isa 25:6, 7, 10) and eventually this place of God’s salvation became the place of worship “in the holy mountain at Jerusalem (פוליטי חף חמאש)" (Isa 27:13). In other words, there is a sequence of movements that climaxes the point that the place of God’s reign, judgment, rest, and salvation would be the spot where “the temple” for worshipping him actually stood. As Von Rad (1965:164) observes, it is also noteworthy that God’s work concerning Zion/Jerusalem manifests a striking “theological ambivalence” in terms of judgment and salvation.

As Robbins indicates, when we study the repetitive-progressive texture and pattern which inevitably show some important subjects and themes, it is logical that we should have some predetermined idea of these subjects and the themes we wish to investigate. Following this
argument, we shall later tackle some subjects and themes uncovered by the repetitive-progressive texture and pattern in more detail.

2.3 Narrational texture and pattern

In addition to the study of the repetitive-progressive texture and pattern, it is also important to investigate Isaiah 24-27 from the perspective of narrational texture and pattern. According to Robbins (1996a:72, 1996b:15; cf. Chatman 1978), narrational texture is embedded in different voices: narrative voice, narrating voice, narrator’s voice, and the voice of the written text (cf. Old Testament). As mentioned in Chapter 1, studying the narrational texture and pattern of Isaiah 24-27 seems a difficult but interesting task because of the complexity of its textural nature which is composed of poem, prayer, song, prophetic announcement. In other words, Isaiah 24-27 is unlike the Gospels of the New Testament, for example, which are mainly narrative in character. For this reason, this study will be based on the voice of the written text (Robbins 1996b:15) of Isaiah 24-27. We shall accomplish our task by examining some scholarly views and personal pronouns based on the Hebrew text. Furthermore, attention will be paid to development of the text of Isaiah 24-27 in terms of the rhetorical function of the speeches; for the speeches play a vital role in the narrative as a whole, that is, in achieving the author/narrator’s goals of persuading the audience/reader (Combrink 2003:7).

A survey of scholarly works reveals the challenge involved in the study of narrational texture and pattern from the perspective of Old Testament scholars because as far as we know, Old Testament studies of Isaiah 24-27 in terms of narrational texture and pattern, appear to be non-existent. Nonetheless, it seems that some approaches share the basic concept of narrational texture and pattern. Some decades ago, Lindblom suggested an attractive idea that Isaiah 24-27 was performed as a “cantata” - as a victory song, and that its textual evidence is like Isaiah 26:2, “Open the gates, so that the righteous nation that keeps the truth may enter in.” Sharing Lindblom’s (1938) basic proposal but in different way, Fohrer (1963:43) develops the concept of “the liturgy.” He proposes three “prophetische Liturgie” in following way:

The first prophetic liturgy embraces 24:1-20 and announces the horrifying last Judgement (Die erste prophetische Liturgie umfasst 24,1-20 und kündigt das grauenhafte Weltgericht an):

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125 Chatman (1978:151) shows the “narrative-communication situation” in terms of different points of view of the real author, implied author, narrator, narratee, implied reader and real reader.

126 Previously, some scholars studied Isaiah 24-27 in terms of rhetoric (Lewis 1985) and literary and linguistic methods (Itoh 1995). Even though we acknowledge their contributions towards a close reading of the text, in our judgment, their approaches differ markedly from Robbins’.
24,1-3 prophetic announcement: devastation and dissipation (*prophetische Ankündigung: Verwüstung und Zerstreuung*),
24, 4-16a (a) song: lamentation and rejoicing (*Lied: Klagende und Jubelnde*),
24,16a (ß)-20 prophetic announcement: conclusive disaster (*prophetische Ankündigung: endgültiges Unheil*).

The second prophetic liturgy embraces 24:21-25:10a and forms part of the Lord’s royal coronation dominion and his coronation meal (Die zweite prophetische Liturgie umfasst 24,21-25,10a und steht unter den Gedanken der Königsherrschaft Jahwes und seines Krönungsmahls):

24, 21-23 prophetic announcement: deprivation of power of the Lord’s enemy (*prophetische Ankündigung: Entmachtung der Feinde Jahwes*),
25, 1-5 hymn of thanksgiving: thanks for the deprivation of power of enemy (*Danklied: Dank für die Entmachtung der Feinde*),
25, 6-8 prophetic announcement: culmination-(covenant-) meal (*prophetische Ankündigung: Krönungs- (Bundes-) Mahl*),
25, 9-10a hymn of thanksgiving: thanks for the Lord’s royal dominion (*Danklied : Dank für Jahwes Königsherrschaft*).

The third prophetic liturgy embraces 27:1-6; 12-13 and describes the fall of world power following the salvation of Israel (Die dritte prophetische Liturgie umfasst 27,1-6.12-13 und beschreibt das auf den Sturz der Weltmacht folgende Heil Israels):

27, 1 prophetic announcement: fall of world power (*prophetische Ankündigung: Sturz der Welmtacht*),
27, 2-6 song: the salvation for Israel (*Lied: Heil für Israel*),
27, 12-13 prophetic announcement: collection and assembly of Israel (*prophetische Ankündigung: Sammlung und Vereinigung Israels*).

Here, the main input from Lindblom and Fohrer is the glimpse their studies offer into the background of public, cultic and liturgical activity during the period of writing. However, in our judgment, their interpretations, which portray Isaiah 24-27 in segments, may cause us to lose the voice of Isaiah 24-27 as a whole.

On the other hand, Watts’ innovative perspective appears to stimulate our study of Isaiah 24-27 in a different way, especially in terms of narrational texture and pattern when compared to previous studies which mainly focus on historical facts. Even though Watts does not clearly use the term, narrational texture, it is rather implied in his study, In our view, Watts’ (1985:313-46) main contribution is the interesting view that Isaiah 24-27 is composed like a drama or vision (cf. Miscall 1993:15 calls it “a quasi-drama”), which in our texts is constructed in terms of six scenes to be performed by the narrator, Yahweh, the choir. Scene 1 belongs to Isaiah 23 while Isaiah 24-27 begins with Scene 2:

**Table 2.5 (from Watts 1985)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Narrational Texture and Pattern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scene 2 - 24:1-13</td>
<td>Heavens (24:1) and Earth (24:2), Mourner (24:3-13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 3 - 24:14-22</td>
<td>Heavens (24:14, 17, 18a, 21), Earth (2:15, 18b, 19), Chorus (24:16a), Voice (24:16b)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This concept of “dramatic text” (dramatischer Text) was developed recently by Nitsche (2006) in Jesaja 24-27: ein dramatischer Text. Die Frage nach den Genres prophetischer Literatur des Alten Testaments und die Textgraphik der großen Jesajarolle aus Qumran. Nitsche’s study focuses on the comparison between the Isaiah pericope and the Qumran Isaiah scroll. Nitsche’s findings reveal a fascinating point, that is, Isaiah 24-27 is recited publicly by three individual speakers127: Isaiah, personified Zion and God, with two more individual voices that mention the destiny of Jerusalem, and a choral group in place of the collective people of Jerusalem (Williamson 2007:144-5). Nitsche’s study which urges us to appreciate Isaiah 24-27 through the Qumran Isaiah scroll in terms of public narration is rather new within the scholars’ guild and, for this reason, his study requires further consideration.

Another stimulating study comes from a Dutch scholar, H. J. Bosman (2000:30-7), and it focuses on “syntactic and text-syntactic considerations”. Like Watts, the author considers the overall structure of Isaiah 24-27 in a simplified way. The structure consists of: “the main line” and “interruptions of the main line.” Through this approach, H.J. Bosman, in our opinion, significantly demonstrates that Isaiah 24-27 is constructed in terms of narratorial conversation:

**The Main Line**
YHWH is about to shake the earth (Isa. 24:1-3, 18, 20):

- and he will punish the powers of heaven and earth, because he rules on Mount Zion (Isa. 24:21-23);
- and he will make a feast on that mountain; he will defeat Death and wipe the tears from all eyes, because he has spoken it (Isa. 25:6-8).
- On that day, the people will recognize him as their God, but Moab will be trampled (Isa. 25:9-12).
- On that day, a song of trust in YHWH will be sung in Juda (Isa. 26:1-6).
- YHWH is about to come out of his place to punish the earth (Isa. 26:21).
- On that day, YHWH will punish the sea monsters (Isa. 27:1).
- On that day, you will be gathered up, Israelites, and the exiles will return to worship YHWH in Jerusalem (Isa. 27:12-13).

**Interruptions of the main line**
- Isa. 24:4-6, 7-12, 19: descriptive, “backgrounded” elaborations of the actions announced in Isa. 24:1-3
- Isa. 24:13: discursive comment to what is said in Isa. 24:1-3

127 A similar idea is also suggested by Pfeiffer (1952:443), that is, that the hymns are similar to “the voice of the chorus in a Greek drama.”
Even though previous scholarly approaches may have their strengths and weaknesses, there is no doubt that they offer great insight, implicitly or explicitly, into an understanding of Isaiah 24-27. When we apply the theories of Lindblom’s “cantata”, Fohrer’s “liturgy”, Watts’ grand “drama”, Nitsche’s “public recitation”, and Bosman’s “syntactic and text-syntactic considerations” into the specific situation of “oral tradition” (Niditch 1996) and “aural text” (Tsumura 1999:390) of Isaiah 24-27, these may bolster the rhetorical perspective and its persuasion.

We have demonstrated the central themes or subjects of Isaiah 24-27 through the repetitive texture and pattern in Table 2.1. When we investigate the Hebrew text of Isaiah 24-27, we are also confronted with a most remarkable repetitive phenomenon in terms of the use of personal pronouns. It seems important to examine this feature, for it is inevitably connected to the narrational texture and pattern. An attempt to study the narrational texture and pattern uncovers “some kind of pattern that moves the discourse programmatically forward” (Robbins 1996b:15). Subsequently, one of the tasks of this study is to investigate this kind of pattern and, consequently, the narrator’s point of view in Isaiah 24-27 based on our observation of the personal pronouns. Moreover, some other comparable texts will be examined to determine other narrators’ viewpoint.

In practical terms, there are some inherent difficulties in the study of the occurrence of personal pronouns. For instance, in English translations, it is difficult to find the occurrence of personal pronouns compared to the original Hebrew language. This is due to the nature of Hebrew; the language also sometimes makes it difficult to identify the speaker or the actor in certain contexts. Therefore, with these problems in view, we shall attempt to identify personal pronouns based on clear (or even implied) occurrences (for more critical details, see Bosman 2000:38-50). However, we admit that it is also possible to examine these issues in some other ways but it is hoped that the results would not be at much variance with ours.

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<th>Table 2.6: Personal pronouns in Isaiah 24-27</th>
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An examination of the occurrence of personal pronouns, makes the dominant topic of the divine immediately clearer. Divine appearances as first person, “I, my, and me,” occur 10 times; as second person “you and your” 36 times; and third person, “he, his, and him” occur 24 times. Table 2.6 represents the summary in a more detailed order and the data implies that the centre of the narrational texture and pattern is God who deals with other people and even heaven and earth (Watts 1985:313-46).

First of all, throughout Isaiah 24:1-23, the narrator mainly refers to God in the third person singular, “He”. He also expresses the proclamation of God’s judgment as being focused primarily on the earth or the land and eventually on the powers of the heaven and the kings of the earth. An interesting observation is that in God’s punishment, the narrator indicates that the object of God’s judgment is also unknown and is in the third person singular and plural, “He, His, They.” Consequently, it seems to us that there is a conflict between an unknown first person singular “I” and the third person plural, “they” (Isa 24:14, 16, 18). Furthermore, there is a rhetorical progression pattern in Isaiah 24:14-16b and 16c-18d: “they”—“we”—“I”—“you,” that is emphasized by the author/prophet (Doyle 2000:186). Thus, the main pattern and focus of Isaiah 24:1-23 is God’s judgment on the earth, the heavens and the earthly powers.

In Isaiah 25, the narrator in some ways, changes focus. Unlike Isaiah 24 in which the third person is primarily employed, Isaiah 25:1-5 uses a first person singular, “I” viewpoint to express the song of praise and a second person masculine singular, “You” to refer to God. It seems to us that the alteration of focus is to convey the narrator/author’s deepest personal relationship with God. The core of the narrator’s declaration is based on God’s wonderful works, that is, his judgment by afflicting city. Furthermore, even though Isaiah 25:1-5 in some way is rendered in the first person singular and connects with the narrator’s perception in Isaiah 24:16b, there is equally a divergence in that Isaiah 25:1-5 renders God the second person masculine while Isaiah 24:1-23 employs the third person masculine singular. In Isaiah 25:6-12, God is depicted in the third person masculine singular “He” or “Him,” connecting the previous verse Isaiah 25:1-5 by a conjunctive waw at the beginning of v.6 (Sweeney 1996:333-4).

Isaiah 26:1-21 incorporates Isaiah 26:1-6, which, like Isaiah 25:1-5, is a song of praise to God.
whereas Isaiah 26:7-21 is a prayer of appeal. As far as the personal pronoun is concerned, the focus on God is once again changed. The major modification concerning God is the dominant way of addressing him in the second person singular “You” or “Your.” This second person singular characterization of God is meant to express the narrator’s intimate personal connection to God as in Isaiah 25:1-5. With this main description of God in the second person singular, there are unnamed speakers in the first person plural, “We” and in the form of a singular speaker, “My.” Additionally, in Isaiah 26:3-5, there are descriptions of God in the third person singular, “He.”

In Isaiah 27:1-13, we encounter a remarkable phenomenon. In the previous chapters of Isaiah 24-26, no single appearance of the first person singular pronoun is used to describe “God” but here we see the depiction of God as first person common singular, “I, and even as the emphatic (יִּנֵּה) “Me” and “My” in the vineyard metaphor (about 10 times in Isa 27:3-5). What does this mean? What is the narrator’s rhetorical argument here? It seems to us that the narrator here endeavours to show God’s overwhelming concern or love for his people. God’s initiated love and care are beyond their imagination, for in time of tribulation, people, even the so-called people of God, often question God’s protection and love (cf. on their sense of loss, and being forgotten and forsaken, see Brueggemann 1997a:4-5). In Isaiah 27:6, the focus changes from first person singular pronoun to third person singular, “He.” Here in Isaiah 27:1-13, the narrator persuades the audience/reader to see that through history the people have experienced God’s protection and love in the same way that a farmer takes care of his vineyard. Therefore, even in the midst of difficult times, they can continue to trust God who will eventually call them into the “holy Mountain Zion” to worship Him.

Through the personal pronouns, the viewpoints behind the narration of the thoughts, feelings, and argumentation become clearer. Here we shall compare and contrast some verses, which can enable us to see the narrator’s points of view more clearly.

**Isaiah 24:3 versus Isaiah 25:8**

24:3
The earth shall be utterly laid waste and utterly despoiled; for the Lord has spoken this word.

25:8
He will swallow up death forever. Then Adonay the Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken.
In Isaiah 24:3 and 25:8, the narrator employs a typical prophetic formula to create different impressions. In Isaiah 24:3, the typical prophetic formula is used to indicate God’s judgment while it is used to announce God’s salvation in Isaiah 25:8. Here, the narrator attempts to show one of God’s peculiar traits, that is, God’s abundant love is expressed as salvation but his justice and righteousness are also communicated through judgment.

Isaiah 24:7-9 versus Isaiah 27:2-6

24:7-9
7 The new wine dries up, the vine languishes, all the merry-hearted sigh. 8 The mirth of the timbrels is stilled, the noise of the jubilant has ceased, the mirth of the lyre is stilled. 9 They do not drink wine with singing; strong drink is bitter to those who drink it.

27:2-6
2 On that day: A pleasant vineyard, sing about her! 3 I, the Lord, am its keeper; every moment I water it. I guard it night and day so that no one can harm it; 4 I have no wrath. If it gives me thorns and briers, In battle, I will march against it. I will burn it together. 5 Or else let it cling to me for protection, let it make peace with me, let it make peace with me. 6 In days to come Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots, and fill the face of the world with fruit.

The narrator makes a comparison between Isaiah 24:7-9 and Isaiah 27:2-6. Whereas Isaiah 24:7-9 describes the object of God’s judgment, Isaiah 27:2-6 is a portrayal of the object of God’s salvation using the vineyard imagery (Sweeney 1996:332). The narrator vividly demonstrates the contrast in the two passages. In Isaiah 24:7-9, there is no song, not even a little noise in the streets, due to God’s judgment but in Isaiah 27:2-6, there is a song, a song of the vineyard because of God’s protection. Even Jacob, who was also under God’s judgment, has a new life like “a pleasant vineyard.” Here, the narrator reminds the audience/reader that God’s people Israel, are depicted as a vineyard that completely depends on God’s care and protection; they have a relationship with God who is symbolized as a farmer who takes care of and loves his vineyard (cf. Isa 5:1-7). Consider God’s sincere invitation! (v.5). The implied message, therefore, is to restore the people’s relationship with God through their moral and religious decision.

Isaiah 24:10-11 versus Isaiah 25:6

24:10-11
10 The city of chaos is broken down, every house is shut up for entering. 11 There is an outcry in the streets for wine; all joy is darkened; the gladness of the earth is banished.

25:6
6 The Lord of hosts will make for all peoples on this mountain a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.

In these passages, there is a different depiction of the vineyard metaphor. In Isaiah 24:10-11,
the images express a situation in which people cry for wine under God’s judgment. In contrast, Isaiah 25:6 describes God’s salvation to all peoples whom he will cause to enjoy the best of wine. Furthermore, the setting also changes. Isaiah 24:10-11 is situated in the city which symbolizes power, protection, and even abundance of food especially of wine, but now it becomes “the city of chaos” and suffers for lack of wine and food. On the contrary, Isaiah 25:6 shows that there is abundant food and wine which is not like the ordinary but the best of the best. These things are available “on this mountain (הַר הָרּוֹם)” that symbolizes God’s protection and reign. It seems to us that the narrator urges the audience/reader to participate in God’s banquet “on this mountain” instead of remaining in “the city of chaos.”

**Isaiah 24:16b versus Isaiah 25:1**

24:16b
16b But I said, I pine away, I pine away. Woe is me! The treacherous deal treacherously, the treacherous deal very treacherously

25:1
1 O LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you, I will praise your name; for you have done wonders, plans formed of old, faithful and truth.

In Isaiah 24:16b and 25:1, the narrator describes two different scenarios with the use of the personal pronoun, “I.” In Isaiah 24:16b, “I” is connected to mourning as opposed to Isaiah 25:1, in which “I” expresses joy and praise. What message does the narrator try to convey here? It seems that the narrator implies that the person represented by “I,” is deeply concerned about God’s providence in terms of God’s judgment and salvation.

In sum, the narrational texture of Isaiah 24-27 reveals that one of God’s important activities and characteristics is demonstrated in the use of personal pronouns. God’s judgment is heavy and severe but that is not the end of story. God’s overwhelming love is also there, inviting his people, and indeed, all peoples to participate in God’s banquet which is accentuated by worshipping God on Mountain Zion in Jerusalem. The narrator’s viewpoint also focuses on this matter by comparing certain images. An interesting viewpoint is that the narrator has already predetermined that there is a city which is under God’s judgment and another, which is under God’s salvation.

At this point, it is logical to expect that the opening-middle-closing texture of Isaiah 24-27 will reveal some important issues in an even more dramatic way; this is part of its nature (Robbins 1996b:19).
2.4 Opening-Middle-Closing texture and pattern

According to Robbins (1996a:50-3; 1996b:19), the repetitive-progressive pattern and the narrative texture and pattern create an opening-middle-closing texture in a unit. Robbins (1996b:19) explains that it is located in the nature of the beginning, body, and conclusion of a section of discourse.

When we focus on determining the opening-middle-closing texture of Isaiah 24-27, we are immediately faced with a difficult situation, and that is because of its complex structural nature. In this regard, Jenner (2000:100-11) adequately summarizes scholars’ account of the structure of Isaiah 24-27:

1) Isa. 24:1-6: (Henry, Lindblom, Mulder)
2) Isa. 24:7-12 (Henry, Lohmann, Mulder)
3) Isa. 24:21-23 (Böhmer, Fohrer, Henry, Johnson, Wildberger)
5) Isa. 25:6-8 (Böhmer, Fohrer, Henry, Wildberger)
6) Isa. 25:6-10a (Elder, Johnson, Lindblom)
7) Isa. 25:9-12 (Lohmann, Wildberger)
8) Isa. 25:9-10a (Fohrer, Henry)
9) Isa. 25:10b-12 (Henry, Lindblom)
10) Isa. 26:1-6 (Elder, Johnson, Wildberger)
11) Isa. 26:1-3 (Henry, Lohmann)
12) Isa. 26:1-14 (Lindblom, Mulder)
13) Isa. 26:7-19 (Elder, Johnson)
14) Isa. 26:20-27:1 (Böhmer, Elder, Henry, Johnson)
15) Isa. 27:1 (Fohrer, Lindblom, Wildberger)
16) Isa. 27:2-6 (Elder, Fohrer, Johnson, Mulder)
17) Isa. 27:7-11 (Elder, Johnson)
18) Isa. 27:12-13 (Elder, Fohrer, Henry, Johnson, Lindblom)
19) Isa. 27:12 (Böhmer, Wildberger)
20) Isa. 27:13 (Böhmer, Wildberger)

Even though difficulties arise in determining the structure of Isaiah 24-27 due to its textural nature and scholars’ multiple understanding of the text, some common ground exists as Jenner has shown above.

Here, the fascinating question is, “How can these scholarly positions be applied to this study?” In dealing with the opening-middle-closing texture of Isaiah 24-27 based on the common ground in the structures provided by scholars, we shall also approach the issue in a different way from the positions enumerated above. We shall attempt to show Isaiah 24-27 as a unit rather than a random fraction. In our opinion, previous studies, to some extent, have failed to show “the cosmic drama” (Gentrup 1993:313) embedded in the structure of Isaiah.
24-27. In other words, it seems to us that their understandings focus more on the fragmentation or segmentation of Isaiah 24-27 than on the unity or the whole. As modern readers, when we read the text of Isaiah 24-27, ostensibly, it appears to be a complicated and even illogical text. However, when we visualize and consider the “oral and aural” circumstances of that ancient time, issues become clearer and even make better sense.

Our analysis will focus on some specific subjects which are already acknowledged as dominant themes in earlier studies when Isaiah 24-27 is divided thus: opening - Isaiah 24:1-21; middle - Isaiah 25:1-27:10, and closing - Isaiah 27:12-13.

2.4.1 Opening - Isaiah 24:1-21

The text of Isaiah 24-27 opens (v.1) with the word “behold (נַפְרָא)” which is the beginning of a typical Isaianic speech. In the context of Isaiah 24-27, the term “נַפְרָא” indicates a new chapter or speech. Van der Merwe et al (1999:330) note that “it often introduces an important change of perspective in a story”. When examined in the light of previous and succeeding chapters, the opening of Isaiah 24-27 differs from that of chapters 13-23 which is an “oracle (נֶפֶשׁ)” concerning specific nations (Babylon and Egypt, etc) and from chapter 28, which opens with a new sequence of “woe (נַפְרָא)” regarding Ephraim and Jerusalem (Sweeney 1988a:51). As observed by some scholars, נַפְרָא is especially associated with time (cf. Waltke & O’Connor 1990:675-7). It is followed by a participle which indicates “something in the future” (Delitzsch 1889:420) or an “eschatological immediate future” (Redditt 1972:321). Moreover, נַפְרָא is associated with the special function of emphasizing the coming of a prophetic speech (Young 1969:147), which mainly focuses on the announcement of God’s judgment (Ankundigung eines umfassenden, von Gott vollzogenen Gerichtes ein; Habets 1974:39).

After נַפְרָא in Isaiah 24:1-23, no particular nations are mentioned but it is used to primarily spotlight God’s devastating judgment on the earth נַפְרָא - 24: 1, 3, 4 (2x), 5, 6 (2x), 11, 13,

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128 It is translated in LXX as ιδού, that is, “see, look, behold.” Throughout the history of the church, it is translated as “behold” (cf. Vulgate and Calvin [1570]1948:163; ecce “behold” and Lutherbibel “Siehe”). Modern English versions mainly follow that tradition (cf. NKJV, NASB, and NJPST “behold”, NET “look,” NIV and NJB “see,” but NRSV is somehow different “now.”


130 1QIsa reads נַפְרָא as נַפְרָא. The LXX translates it as πᾶσα oικουμένη, “the (inhabited) world” (AGNT 19477) instead of the more general term γῆ which can mean: the earth; land, country, region; soil, ground. Young (1969:149) suggests that the substitution of נַפְרָא for נַפְרָא in Deuteronomy 31:21 is probably the result of a
16, 17, 18, 19 (3x), 20; on the land (or the earth) הֵמָא 24: 21(2x) and on the world 24: 4. Moreover, in the centre of God’s punishment, there is the fall of an unnamed city called “the city of chaos (חַגָּצִים)” in v.10. God’s judgment is even extended to the heavenly powers and the earthly political sphere (24:18, 21-23), for the God of hosts reigns on Mount Zion in Jerusalem (כַּהַנָּים הַיְבוֹשָׁתִים זְכַרְיָה הָיִם 24:23). In other words, it seems that the narrator presents Isaiah 24:21-23 as a conclusion or “a climax” to Isaiah 24:1-20 (Itoh 1995:73).

2.4.2 Middle - Isaiah 25:1-27:10

Suddenly, at this point, the tempo changes. In contrast to the opening (Isa 24:1-23) where the dominant feature is God’s judgment, the middle (Isa 25:1-27:10) texture focuses on God’s salvation and blessing. In the midst of God’s restoration and salvation, once again, the city (cities) becomes the centre of God’s drama. The person described as “I” (author or prophet?) expresses his deepest feeling through a song; he exalts and gives thanks to God who works wonders (אָדַם), punishing the city (cities). The city described as “the city of chaos (חַגָּצִים)” (24:10), is now portrayed as “a fortified city (חֲלוֹצִים חַגָּצִים),” “a palace of strangers (אָדַם הָעַר חַגָּצִים)” (25:2), as “cities of ruthless nations (לְחָרַץ נִסְתְּרִים חַגָּצִים)” and again as “a fortified city (חֲלוֹצִים חַגָּצִים);” (27:10) which becomes a heap and will never be rebuilt but will be isolated eventually (25:23; 27:10). Furthermore, it is a surprise to discover that Moab (מֹאָב) is symbolized as the

Samaritan influence (Hempel [1938]1964:287). Most English translations render it as “the earth” (cf. NASB, NLT, NET, NRSV, NKJV, NIV, NJB, and NJPST) but there are debates about the understanding of the word יָרֵד. Is it the land or the earth? TDOT 394-401 recognizes the following uses: earth, ground, underworld and land (cf. NBDB 75-6, Holladay 28, HALOT 906). In the history of the Church, Lutherbibel (1545) translates it as “das Land” instead of “die Erde.” Calvin ([1570]1948:165-6) suggests that terram “the earth” is restricted to the “world to the Egyptians, Assyrians, Moabites, Tyrians.” Scott (1956:298-9) prefers to render it as “the land” (i.e., of Judah). Watts (1985:316-7), sharing a slightly similar view with Calvin, insists that יָרֵד is the land. Watts’ main arguments are as follows: 1) there are different understandings for Israel: יָרֵד “the civilized land,” יָרֵד “the cultivatable land,” and יָרֵד “the world,” 2) this land is limited by Palestine/Syria and the wings in Mesopotamia in the Northeast and Egypt/Ethiopia in the South. However, Delitzsch (1889:421) argues that it is not simply limited to the land of Israel and its frontier but rather it extends to the earth in a universal sense. Like Delitzsch, Gray (1912:408) and Clements (1980:200-201) also support this claim.

113 It is a fixed expression. In the church tradition, Vulgate and Calvin ([1570]1948:164) render חֲלוֹצִים as civitas vanitatis “the city of vanity or emptiness” (cf. Lutherbibel die leere Stadt “the empty city”). The others are translated as “the city of chaos” (NAB, NASB, NRSV), “the ruined town” (NET), “the ruined city” (NIV), “the city of confusion” (NKJV), “the city of nothingness” (NJB), which reflects the construct state emphasizing the genitive way of modifying other nouns (Waltke & O’Connor 1990:136-7). In contrast to these understandings, Redditt (1972:8-18, 327) revises the expression from a construct state חֲלוֹצִים to the absolute חֲלוֹצִים: “the city is shattered into chaos” which is influenced by the Targum’s חֲלוֹצִים חַגָּצִים אֶזְכַּר “their city is broken down, it is deserted.” Following this argument, Irwin (1994:401-3) also suggests a similar idea; that “the city of chaos” can be translated into “the city has been shattered into a desolation,” [Irwin’s italics] which forces the genitive to change the verb and to function like an accusative of a product or result (cf. NJPST: “towns are broken, empty”). Recently, Scholl (2000:40-1) also supported Irwin’s view in his translation “Zerbrochen zu Chaos ist die Stadt.” In the LXX, it is interpreted as πᾶσα πόλις “every city”, which probably “reflects a tendency to generalize the judgment” (Watts 1985:314). Wildberger (1978:915) expresses a similar view: “πᾶσα πόλις wieder, bezeichnet als Verallgemeinerung der Gerichtsansage.”
city under God’s punishment (25:10-12). In Isaiah 26, the people are depicted as “we” [are singing] for a different reason. They have “a strong city (יְרוֹם),” (v.1) which has experienced God’s salvation in the midst of God’s judgment. The narrator ostensibly illustrates a contrast between two cities - the city that experiences God’s severe punishment (cf. 24:10; 25:2-3; 27:10) and the city described as “a strong city (יְרוֹם)” that obtains salvation (יְשָׁנָה) from God and is located in the land of Judah (יִשְׂרָאֵל), (26:1). Consequently, the narrator demonstrates that God’s kingship (24:23) is exercised for salvation from the desolation of the earth and the world ( Isa 25:9, 26:1). In addition, the narrator indicates that the place of salvation is “on this Mountain (יהָרָה),” (25: 6, 7, 10; repeated three times) and ultimately, that mountain is identified as “the Mountain Zion in Jerusalem (יהָרָה יִשְׂרָאֵל),”(24:23) and the “holy mountain in Jerusalem (יהָרָה יִשְׂרָאֵל)” (27:13). Therefore, in the rhetorically constructed world, the narrator’s implied question to the audience/reader is, “which city do they want to choose?” Obviously, it is not necessary to answer; for it is a rhetorical question that permits “no real choice whatsoever” (Polaski 1999:38-9; cf. Gitay 1996:222-5).

2.4.3 Closing -Isaiah 27:12-13

12 On that day the Lord will thresh from the channel of the Euphrates to the Wadi of Egypt, and you will be gathered one by one, O people of Israel. 13 And on that day a great shophar will be blown, and those who were lost in the land of Assyria and those who were driven out to the land of Egypt will come and worship the LORD on the holy mountain at Jerusalem.

It seems to us that Isaiah 24-27 is well structured in terms of its beginning and the ending (cf. Clements 2002:119). As we indicate in the opening texture, Isaiah 24-27 begins with “behold (ויהי)” which distinguishes it from other chapters and is signified the coming of God’s judgment. At this point, the narrator leads the audience/reader into “Good News” in the midst of despair; they will be gathered (saved) and pilgrimized to God’s holy sanctuary to worship God after the judgment of the world in God’s time (on that day). Here, it is also important to note that in the previous chapter, the narrator describes the people in a general or somewhat obscure way but now the narrator clearly identifies them as the “people of Israel להָא בָּנָי (lit. sons of Israel),” the object of God’s salvation (27:12). Thus, God’s ultimate redemptive work focuses on his people, the “people of Israel (הָא בָּנָי)”

When we draw a picture from an opening-middle-closing texture, there are some important concepts which may indicate the author’s intentional scheme (cf. Sweeney 1996:311-52; Zenger 1998:303-18). First of all, the author uses the word “will scatter (לָשׁוּט), hiphil” its inhabitants (24:1) as a sign of God’s judgment but it is noteworthy that in Isaiah 27:12, the
expression, “will be gathered (ירוק), pual” is a symbol of God’s blessing and restoration of his people. It seems that the author of Isaiah 24-27 attempts to show that God’s judgment is not the end of story; God’s willingness to save is also a part of his grand drama in his city.

Another important point here concerns Mount Zion in Jerusalem (הַר צוֹלֶה), (v.23). After God’s terrifying judgment (24:1-22), the author leads us to see Mount Zion as the place where God’s kingship is instituted (Isa 24:23). Consequently, this place, referred to as “on this mountain (הַר צוֹלֶה)” becomes the place of God’s salvation for all peoples (Isa 25:6, 7, 10). As a climax to the drama, Zion/this mountain is named “his place (הַר צוֹלֶה)” or the holy place (Isaiah 26:21), and is eventually called the “holy mountain at Jerusalem (הַר צוֹלֶה יְרוּשָׁלַיִם)” where “the sons of Israel” come to worship the Lord (Isaiah 27:12-13). Mount Zion is the place where God’s judgment and salvation are executed. In other words, Mount Zion is the centre of all human drama under God’s control. Clements (2002:119) rightly summarizes this matter: “It gives a remarkably far-reaching promise about Jerusalem” (cf. Von Rad 1965:155-69 on the concept of “Zion as God’s place and protection”).

We shall further examine this important subject in connection with other parts of the book of Isaiah under our study of the intertexture of Isaiah 24-27 in Chapter 3.

2.5 Argumentative texture and pattern

The purpose of the argumentative texture and pattern is to persuade the reader or audience through a logical progression to “think and act in one way rather than another” (Robbins 1996b:21. cf. Gitay 1996:218-29). Robbins (1996a:92) defines this texture in the following way:

Argumentative Texture moves beyond sign and voice into the inner reasoning in the repetition and progression in the text. At this point, logical and qualitative progressions effect myriads of techniques with language that evokes images of authority, persuasion, emotion and myriads of other meanings and meaning effects that rhetoricians throughout the ages have investigated.

We shall consider argumentative texture and pattern in Isaiah 24-27 through the use of the

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132 According to the LXX, this place is also called the “holy place τοῦ ἅγιου”. It seems to imply “the holy mountain” in Jerusalem (cf. Isaiah 27:13).

133 Recently, Van Eemeren (2002:9) also suggests an insightful definition of argumentation which broadens our understanding in terms of the involvement of the social activities and the textual world. In other words, argumentation indicates not only “the activity of advancing reasons but also to the shorter or longer oral or written text that results from it.” He continues: “Argumentation is a verbal, social and rational activity aimed at convincing a reasonable critic of the (in)acceptability of a standpoint by advancing a certain constellation of propositions which is designed to justify (or refute) the standpoint.”
conjunctions: “for (ץ)”134 (cf. Schoors 1981:240-76; Meyer 2001:39-62) and “therefore (ץ-hei, שֶׁיָּ-הָיָה)” (cf. Van der Merwe et al 1999:300-5), for these conjunctions are used to construct arguments in the text and may provide insight into the rhetorical perspective and its persuasion.

**Table 2.8 - Repetition of conjunctions in Isaiah 24-27**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>For (ץ)</th>
<th>Therefore (ץ-hei)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24: 3c</td>
<td>for (ץ)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5b:</td>
<td>for (ץ)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a</td>
<td></td>
<td>therefore (ץ-hei)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6d</td>
<td></td>
<td>therefore (ץ-hei)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13a</td>
<td>for (ץ)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15a</td>
<td></td>
<td>therefore (ץ-hei)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18g</td>
<td>for (ץ)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23c</td>
<td>for (ץ)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25:1e</td>
<td>for (ץ)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td></td>
<td>therefore (ץ-hei)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4f</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8d</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26:3c</td>
<td>for (ץ)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4b</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9c</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12c</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14e</td>
<td></td>
<td>therefore (ץ-וֹיָ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19f</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27:9a</td>
<td></td>
<td>therefore (ץ-וֹיָ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11b</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11c</td>
<td></td>
<td>therefore (ץ-וֹיָ)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table shows that there are reasons and there are results. In other words, the structure of Isaiah 24-27 is constructed in an argumentative way. There are many ways of dealing with the argumentative texture and pattern (cf. Eriksson et al 2002), but here we opt for the argumentative method of the enthymeme135 - result and case (reason), in order to uncover the

134 To translate ץ is sometimes not an easy task. It is genally rendered as “for” but in some cases, as an emphatic term, “indeed” or “truly”. For instance, Doyle (2000:149-51; 219-21; 277-9) translates ץ as “indeed” (24:13a, 18g; 25:1e,2a, 4a, 4f, 8d; 26:5a, 9c, 12c) and “truly” (25:10a) but renders שֶׁיָּ-הָיָה as “indeed” (26:14e). In line with Doyle’s suggestion, we shall render it as “for” and “therefore”, in order to emphasize the argument of the text.

135 As Debanné (2002:481-503) indicates, its definition is somewhat tricky but recently, it has become a popular argumentative method among scholars. Taking into account its puzzling nature, Debanné (2002:481) provides a general definition of enthymeme as “a micro-argument, a building block for larger argumentative schemes.” A typical example is “Socrates is mortal, for he is human.” Furthermore, Debanné offers Kraus’ view as an introductory definition: “The enthymeme is one of the most important elementary means of persuasion; of rhetoric. One understands by this a densely formulated argument which seeks to confirm the truth of a

Isaiah 24:3
Result: The earth shall be utterly laid waste and utterly despoiled
Case: For the Lord has spoken this word.

Isaiah 24:1-2 shows the announcement of God’s judgmental activity on the earth and in Isaiah 24:3, the audience/reader hears the result: there will be a destruction of the earth. Furthermore, the narrator’s surprising reason is that it will happen because of God’s word. The author uses the typical prophetic formula “the Lord has spoken this word (ויהיה דבר א sprzęה עָמַד)" for emphasis:

Isaiah 24:5
Result: The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants
Case: For they have transgressed laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant.

Isaiah 24:6
Consequence: Therefore a curse devours the earth, and its inhabitants are guilty;
Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few people are left.

After the announcement of God’s judgment, the speaker/author in Isaiah 24:4-5 argues that God’s punishment is caused by human behaviour - moral and religious sin: the people have “transgressed laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant (חֶיָּרָה בַּכֶּה הָעָלָה הַרְבּוּ בּוֹדֵד)
(עָמָלַד נַחֲלָתֵה הָהַר הָיָה הָיָה הָיָה הָיָה הָיָה Hensham 1963:166). Subsequently, verse 6 details the consequence of the actions using the double word “therefore (ויהיה דבר),” which acts “as an effective device of proposition about a particular state of affairs through its deduction or another proposition which is universally recognized or hardly refutable” (Kraus 1994, quoted in Debanné 2002:481). It seems to us that these definitions support and justify our consideration of the conjunctions “for and therefore” as features of a rhetorical argument.

It is a fixed expression. As Gray (1912:409), and Blenkinsopp (2000:350) note, this expression is rather different from and stranger than the Isaiah 25:8 expression “for the Lord has spoken” (cf. Isa 1:2; 22:25. Other similar expressions of this kind also abound: Isa 1:20; 40:5; 50:14. "for the mouth of the Lord has spoken" and Isa 37:22: "for the Lord has spoken this word"). However, the 1QIsaa, LXX γάρ στόμα κυρίου ἐλάλησεν ταύται and Targum ידית האלפימ תי"ל מ"ע ר"ע ה"י (Fensham 1963:166). Subsequently, verse 6 details the consequence of the actions using the double word “therefore (ויהיה דבר),” which acts “as an effective device of proposition about a particular state of affairs through its deduction or another proposition which is universally recognized or hardly refutable” (Kraus 1994, quoted in Debanné 2002:481). It seems to us that these definitions support and justify our consideration of the conjunctions “for and therefore” as features of a rhetorical argument.

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conclusion” (Doyle 2000:162; cf. Lewis 1985:50). In other words, the narrator argues that there is no reason to complain about God’s judgment for they deserve it because of their sins against God.

Isaiah 24:13

Case: For thus it shall be in the midst of the earth and among the nations, as the shaking of an olive tree, as at the gleanings when the vintage is ended.

In Isaiah 24:13, the narrator seems to provide a summary of what Isaiah 24:3-12 introduces, that is, the announcement of God’s judgment on the earth. The harvest is disastrous in this dry and wasted land, for the earth is under God’s punishment (Sweeney 1996:328).

Isaiah 24:14-16

Result: 14 They lift up their voices, they shall exult in the Lord’s majesty; they cry out from the sea. 15 Therefore in the dawning light glorify the Lord; in the coastlands of the sea the name of the Lord, the God of Israel. 16a From the ends of the earth we hear songs; glory to the Righteous.

16b But I said, I pine away, I pine away. Woe is me! The treacherous deal treacherously, the treacherous deal very treacherously.

In the midst of God’s judgment, the narrator suddenly introduces the pronoun, “they” to describe an unknown group which expresses the joyful song of praise to God and in v.16b, the pronoun, “I” to refer to one who expresses contrasting emotion. According to Sweeney (1996:328), this instance is a discourse of “the prophetic disputation” and is one of the portions of Isaiah 24-27 which is difficult to understand. Childs (2001:180) who is dissatisfied with the views of previous scholars regards it as “Israel’s true voice of praise,” that is, from a theological point of view. The problem lies not only in its shallowness but its incorrect timing; for they misunderstand the symbols of the times. It seems that Childs’ insight is closer to the text’s intended meaning than some other opinions that insist that these verses are accidentally located or point to evidence of disunity in Isaiah 24-27. What then is the narrator’s argument to the audience? Polaski (1999:25-6) provides an insightful thought which is influenced by Jon Berquist; he claims that the author describes dual opponents

138 ἀπώρησιν. There are debates about the understanding of ἀπώρησιν. The LXX omits it while the Targum renders ἀπώρησις as ἀπώρησις “mystery” (cf. Vulgate secretum “secret”) but Lutherbibel and Calvin translate it with other similar concepts (cf. Lutherbibel mager “thin, lean” and Calvin [1570]1948:164, 179-180: maces “leanness”). According to Gray 1912:418-9, the MT claims that it probably means “secret”, for “leaness” could be יָרֵד or יָרֵד (cf. Isa. 10:16) instead of יָרֵד. In line with the Targum, Vulgate and Gray’s suggestions, Blenkinsopp (2000:353-4) also understands it as “secret” (Barker 2003:516). However, most English and other translations support Luther’s and Calvin’s understanding of the term in the context of personal lamentation (cf. ESV, GNB, NET, NJV, NJPST “wasting/waste away”) The NJPS suggests an emendation “Villain [Arabic razil], foolish villain!”; NKJV “ruined”; NLT “heavy with grief”; NASB “woe”; CEV “feel awful, terribly miserable”; NJB “what an ordeal”; NRSV “pine away”; Doyle (2000:151) “emaciation.” H.J. Bosman (2000:5) render it as “gauntness,” for they see a parallelism that יָרֵד is in contrast to יָשָׁר “beauty or glory” (Isa. 24:16b). The prophet seems to contradict what he hears the group say. Their words are premature because more destruction is coming (NET).
(insiders and outsiders) imposing two choices - “rejoicing and woe” in an apocalyptic situation:

Apocalyptic divides communities into insiders and outsiders—those who survive (by God’s grace or by other fortuitous occurrence) and those who face destruction—and thus strengthens ties among its audience, which consists entirely of insiders who survive the terrors destruction depicted in the apocalyptic rhetoric. The sense of survival exhilarates; when shared, this sense of survival bonds community together.

(Berquist 1995:191-2, quoted in Polaski 1999:25-6)

In this rhetorical argument, it seems the narrator leaves his audience with not much choice but “mourning” in the times of crisis.

**Isaiah 24:18**  
Result: Whoever flees at the sound of the terror shall fall into the pit; and whoever climbs out of the pit shall be caught in the snare.  
Case: For the windows of the height are opened, and the foundations of the earth tremble.

The narrator in Isaiah 24:18 gives reasons concerning verses 15-16 why the reader/audience has to lament. The situation is hopeless in an entrapment. There is no way to escape from this cosmic upheaval which seems linked to the “Noahic covenant” like the “eternal covenant” in v.5. The question is why does the narrator make this connection? Is there no hope at all? It seems that the narrator implies in a sense, that even if there is no hope superficially, the audience/reader must not lose faith, for God will prevail and give salvation to them like he did to Noah. Nevertheless, before experiencing God’s redemption, they must go through this turmoil to purify them of their transgression (v.20).

**Isaiah 24:23**  
Result: Then the moon will be abashed, and the sun ashamed;  
Case: For the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before his elders, gloriously.

This verse follows vv.21-22:

**21** On that day the Lord will punish the host of the height in the height, and on earth the kings of the earth. **22** They will be gathered together prisoners in a pit; they will be shut up in a prison, and after many days they will be punished.

The narrator uses the time phrase “on that day (אֶחְיָכָנָה יְהוָה)” to argue that in the eschatological future, God will judge not only the heavenly powers but also the earthly power of kings as symbolized by the thoroughness of his judgment. The narrator then shows the audience/reader the goal of God’s judgment: His enthronement on Zion/Jerusalem (v.23). In other words, on that day, there will be a new society where only God reigns.
by earthly kings or heavenly powers. What then is the narrator’s basic argument? It seems the narrator seeks to persuade the audience/reader that because God will rule on Jerusalem/Zion, the people should not trust in or depend on an unnamed city (cf. city of chaos in 24:10), or on heavenly and earthly powers, which are the objects of God’s judgment. To put it in another way, the narrator argues that there is no security and hope outside of God’s temple; they must live in it (Polaski 1999:26-8).

Isaiah 25:1-5:

25:1
Result: 1 O Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you, I will praise your name;
Case: For you have done wonders, plans formed of old, faithful and truth.

25:2
Result: The fortified city a ruin; the palace of aliens is a city no more, it will never be rebuilt
Case: For you have made the city a heap,

25:3-4c
Result: 3 Therefore strong peoples will glorify you; cities of ruthless nations will fear you.
Case: 4c For you have been a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in his distress, a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat.

25:4d-5d
Result: 5d You subdued the heat with the shade of clouds; the song of the ruthless was stilled.
Case: 4d For the blast of the ruthless was like a rainstorm against a wall, 5 the noise of aliens like heat in a dry place,

Isaiah 25:1-5 can be regarded as a thanksgiving or eschatological song and is considered as a rhetorical unity (cf. Duhm 1902:143-4; Kaiser 1974:177-9; Wildberger 1978:904; Sweeney 1996:334). The narrator relates an argument to explain the reason why a person (the prophet himself?) described as “I” who laments in 24:16b now expresses joy in 25:1-5. The reason for praising God is demonstrated in a progression from a general to a more specific sequence through the use of “for (יָעַבְרָנָה)” in each instance (Sweeney 1996:335). The argument begins with God’s amazing deeds in v.1 and in vv.2-3, explains what is meant by God’s wonderful things: the demolition of the city of oppression referred to as the “fortified city” and a “palace of aliens” and then in vv.4-5, it depicts God as the protector of the poor and the needy. The question arises concerning the identity of the poor and the needy. Who are they? Why does God protect them? We believe this is an important question that requires an answer and we shall deal with it under ideological and theological texture of Isaiah 24-27.

Isaiah 25:8
Result: 8 He will swallow up death forever. Then Adonay the Lord will wipe away the tears
from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,

Case:  For the Lord has spoken.

Isaiah 25:8 is closely connected to Isaiah 25:6-7. God will prepare a banquet for all peoples in verse 6 and will prevail on death for all peoples in verse 7. Here, the narrator explains a fascinating phenomenon - that God’s dinner is not yet over. As a climax to the banquet, God swallows death, the source of grief - that is God’s last dish (Miller 1995:175-8). Moreover, the narrator notes that consequently, the nations and God’s people will experience the elimination of the suffering in v.8, because God says so (יְהֹוָה יְשַׁלַם). It is interesting that the narrator also declares God’s salvation and blessing not only to his people but also to the nations and this is elsewhere developed as an important theme, especially, in Isaiah 40-66.

**Isaiah 25:9-10a**

Result: 9 It will be said on that day, behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the Lord! We have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Case: 10a For the hand of the Lord will rest on this mountain.

Even though the narrator pronounces God’s salvation on all nations and on God’s people in Isaiah 25:6-8, the narrator also attaches an important condition for partaking in God’s salvation – it must be obtained “on this mountain (יהוּד)” Jerusalem/Zion. In line with Isaiah 24:23; 25:6, 7; 27:13, Isaiah 25:10a shows that not only God’s people but the nations must come to the temple, to Mount Zion; for it is their fate.

**Isaiah 26:3-5**

**Isaiah 26:3**

Result: Those of steadfast mind you keep in peace, peace.

Case: For he trusts in you

**Isaiah 26:4-5**

Result: 4 Trust in the Lord forever,

Case: For in Yah the Lord is an everlasting rock.

5 For he has brought low the inhabitants of the height; the lofty city he lays low. He lays it low to the ground, He casts it to the dust.

Further, the narrator raises another important issue - “trust ( уверен)” in God. The narrator’s argument is that the main reason for trust is based on God’s security and deeds. God will bring perfect peace (שלום־שלום) in v.3 and he will judge the arrogant city. The narrator implies a rhetorical question: “If we cannot trust him, whom can we trust?” (Oswalt 2005:80). Once again, there is no need to answer the question, for the answer is obvious.

**Isaiah 26:9**

Result: My soul yearns for you in the night, Surely, my spirit within me earnestly seeks you.

Case: For when your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn
Here, the narrator is identified as “My” to express hope and confidence in God’s righteousness. Furthermore, the narrator makes an interesting connection between the subjects of God’s judgment (יְדִי חֲרוֹב) and God’s righteousness (רַצִּיוּת). It implies that the aim of God’s punishment is not just to express his anger but rather to lead the inhabitants of the world (יָשָׁר נַפְשׁוֹ) to his righteousness (רַצִּיוּת).

Isaiah 26:12
Result: O Lord, you will ordain peace for us,
Case: For also, all that we have done, you have done for us.

The narrator makes a supplication for peace. The motivation for this plea comes from the narrator’s personal experience of God’s constant benefits to his people (Sweeney 1996:340).

Isaiah 26:14
Result: The dead do not live; shades do not rise –
Case: Therefore, you have punished and destroyed them, and wiped out all memory of them.

In this verse, the narrator evokes an important ancient Near Eastern mythic subject, more specifically, the Canaanite “Mot (טָוִּים)” which is considered as a terrifying ruler (cf. ANET 1969:135; Lewis 1992:92-4; Smit 2002:45). Here, however, the narrator shows that Mot has no more power but like his name, is dead because of God’s involvement and judgment.

Isaiah 26:19
Result: Your dead shall live, my corpses shall rise. O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy!
Case: For your dew is a radiant dew, and the earth will cast out the dead.

In following the argument in Isaiah 26:14, the narrator claims in metaphoric language, that those who died, are coming to back life, because God conquers “Mot (טָוִּים)” (Healey 1995:1122-32). Here, the argument is that God is so powerful; powerful enough to overcome death. In other words, the narrator encourages the audience/reader that in any circumstance, even in death, God can bring life. They should, therefore, not despair but rather trust him.

Isaiah 26:20-21
Result: 20 Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide

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139 יָבֵל. English translations have some different understandings. For instance, the NRSV and NET render it as “because” while NJB follows a similar idea and translates it as “for.” It seems that they see it as the reason why the dead shall live and they sing for joy. On the other hand, the NASB and NKJV understand it as “therefore” which, in our view, follows a common Hebrew grammar cause-effect relationship between what precedes and what follows (NBDB 487). We basically follow the NASB rendering. There is also an interesting interpretation by H.J. Bosman (2000:9) and Doyle (2000:279); they translate it in an emphatic way as “indeed” (NJPST “of a truth”).
yourselves for a little while until the wrath is past.

Case: 21 For, behold, the Lord comes out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will disclose her blood shed, and will no longer cover her slain.

In Isaiah 26:20, the narrator refers to the people as “my people (יִשְׂרָאֵל)” and asks them to remain until God’s intercession takes place in “a little while (חַג לֵב יִשְׂרָאֵל)” The narrator then explains the reason for his request using the emphatic expression “for, behold (הֲנִיא אֵל) - that God will soon punish or visit (יָדָה) the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity. The judgment time is short (בַּשָּׁם), therefore, they need a little patience. Furthermore, God’s salvation is coming after the judgment for the iniquity of the inhabitants of the earth.

Isaiah 27:7-9

Result: 9 Therefore by this the guilt of Jacob will be expiated, and this will be the full fruit of the removal of his sin: when he makes all the stones of the altars like chalkstones crushed to pieces, no sacred poles or incense altars will remain standing.

Case: 7 Has he struck them down as he struck those who struck them? Or have they been killed as their killers were killed? 8 By her expulsion, by sending her you struggled against her; with his fierce blast he removed her in the day of the east wind.

Isaiah 27:7 is a typical rhetorical question and argument; there is no need for an answer. Using questions, the narrator argues that God never punishes his people like he does other nations. Even though God punishes his people, it is to discipline them in his love not to judge or destroy them in anger. Therefore (הֲנִיא אֵל), the iniquity of the house of Jacob/Israel will be pardoned because of God’s caring love. However, this is on the condition that they purify themselves in terms of their religious activities (i.e. by destroying the strange altars and removing the Asherim). The narrator shows that one of Israel’s dominant sins is centred on their religious activities.

Isaiah 27:10-11a

Result: 10b The calf will graze there, there he will lie down, and strip its branches. 11a When its boughs are dry, they are broken; women come and make a fire of them.

Case: 10a For the fortified city is solitary, a habitation deserted and forsaken, like the wilderness;

Isaiah 27:11b-11c

Result: 11c Therefore he that made them will not have compassion on them, he that formed them will show them no favor.

Case: 11b For this is a people without understanding;

Once again, the narrator depicts the city’s miserable condition in a critical report of its solitary and abandoned state; only some animals nibble there (v.10a). Why is this thing happening? The main reason is that the people lack understanding (יִרְאוֹן). The result is that God does not have compassion on them. What is the narrator’s argument? It seems to imply that
knowing God in a practical way is a life and death issue. They must know what God requires from his people. They must show it practically in their social life in terms of a moral and religious attitude.

In sum, regarding the argumentative texture of Isaiah 24-27, there are 20 instances of the word that expresses reason, “for (אַל)” and seven occurrences of the expression, “therefore (וֹסֵר, וֹסֵר)”. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that these are well-distributed within Isaiah 24-27: in Isaiah 24, “for” occurs five times and “therefore” is found three times; in chapter 25, “for” occurs six times and “therefore” occurs once; in chapter 26, “for” occurs seven times and “therefore” occurs once; and finally in chapter 27, “for” and “therefore” both occur twice. The author/narrator seems to construct the argument by deliberately using cause and effect words to persuade the audience/reader. In other words, the narrator’s argument is so clear and explicit that it leaves the audience/reader with no ambiguity. Once again, this overwhelming argumentative texture persuades them to make a decision in the city whose description is rhetorically constructed.

2.6 Sensory-aesthetic texture and pattern

According to Robbins (1996a:64-5; 1996b:29-36), sensory-aesthetic texture moves beyond inner reasoning into the evocative power of all the senses available to human life and imagination. The very images that the discourse selects to communicate its meanings stimulate dimensions of the body that transcend explanation and understanding. In the realm of the aesthetic, communication occurs in ways that quite fully escape our ability to describe. This point is stated more clearly in Robbins (1996b:30-1) than in his previous book (1996a). He suggests three zones:

*Zone of emotion-fused thought:* eyes, heart, eyelids, pupils, and the activities of these organs: to see, know, understand, think, remember, choose, feel, consider, and look at. Nouns and adjectives: thought, intelligence, mind, wisdom, folly, intention, plan, will, affection, love, hate, judgment, conscience, personality thrust, affection, etcetera.

*Zone of self-expressive speech:* mouth, ears, tongue, lips, throat, teeth, jaws, and the activities — to speak, hear, say, call, cry, question, sing, recount, tell, instruct, praise, listen to, blame, curse, swear, disobey, turn a deaf ear to. The following nouns and adjectives pertain to this zone as well: speech, voice, call, cry, clamor, song, sound, hearing; eloquent, dumb, talkative, silent, attentive, distracted, and the like.

*Zone of purposeful action:* hands, feet, arms, fingers, legs, and the activities of these organs — to do, act, accomplish, execute, intervene, touch, come, go, march, walk, stand, sit, along with specific activities such as to steal, kidnap, commit adultery, build, and the like. The following representative nouns and adjectives pertain to this zone: action, gesture, work, activity, behavior, step, walking, way, course, and any specific activity; active, capable, quick,
slow, and so forth.

Through the repetitive, progressive, narrational, opening-middle-closing, and argumentative texture and pattern, we have probed some important aspects of Isaiah 24-27. However, under the sensory-aesthetic texture and pattern, we shall briefly or selectively examine some important matters using Robbins’ suggestion of three zones (zone of emotion-fused thought, zone of self-expression speech, and zone of purposeful action) in order to highlight the sensory-aesthetic texture and pattern.

Isaiah 24 begins with the zone of emotion-fused thought; i.e. God’s judgment. In Isaiah 24:1, 3, 4, the narrator expresses God’s impending judgment by using a great sound effect on the consonantal and assonance level and even using the same word root in 24:1: מָשַׁלְתָּה הָאָרֶץ; in 24:3 מָשַׁלְתָּה וְלֹא יְהוָה תְּלֵשׁ in 24:4: מָשַׁלְתָּה אַלָּא יְהוָה תְּלֵשׁ (cf. Lewis 1985:41-3; Itoh 1995:79-81; Williamson 1995b:1-9).

Delitzsch (1889:420-1), March (1966:6), Young (1969:148) and, recently, Williamson (1995b:1-2) note the sound effect of מָשַׁלְתָּה and מָשַׁלְתָּה which could greatly influence the ears of the audience while Wildberger (1978:913) and Blenkinsopp (2000:350) seem reluctant to refer to it as an alliteration. Following the appearance of מָשַׁלְתָּה and מָשַׁלְתָּה in v.1, these expressions מָשַׁלְתָּה מָשַׁלְתָּה emphasize the sound effect. According to Delitzsch (1889:421), the Niphal imperfect are used to emphasize assonance: “ו” in place of “א” (cf.

140 According to the NBDB 132, מָשַׁלְתָּה is the concept of “emptying or devastating” a land but Holladay 46 and HALOT 1394 state that the idea is to “lay waste” a land or country. The LXX renders מָשַׁלְתָּה as κατακαλλήρετο “to destroy” or “lay waste” (AGNT 15397). The Vulgate, like the LXX, also renders it dissipabit “shall lay waste”. Gesenius (1821:761), like Lutherbibel, translates מָשַׁלְתָּה as leer “empty” (cf. Scholl 2000:37: entleeren “empty” but Duhm 1902:143 and Wildberger 1978:886 prefer verheerent “shall lay waste”. Gesenius (1821:761); Driver (1937:41-2) has a different view; he assumes that both מָשַׁלְתָּה and מָשַׁלְתָּה are derived from an initial biconsonantal stem מָשַׁלְתָּה “to crack”. March (1966:7-8), Oswalt (1986:437) and Lewis (1987:42) follow Driver’s understanding with some caution while Watts (1985:314) supports Driver’s argument. Like Watts, Redditt (1972:8, 12, 321) reflects Driver’s suggestion in his translation: “Yahweh is about to crack and cleave the earth” (italics ours). Recently, H.J. Bosman (2000:4) and Doyle (2000:147,154) came up with the suggestion that מָשַׁלְתָּה can be understood as “to depopulate” and that it seems to consider the parallel relationship with the following phrase in 24:1b (cf. “scatter its inhabitants”).

Clement 1980:201; Oswalt 1986:438). In our view, there is no doubt that the narrator has carefully chosen these words to appeal to the audience/reader.

It can be observed that this sound effect, especially assonance, is continually well-demonstrated. There are examples of assonance such as א, which add emphasis and sober effect to this word of lamentation and judgment as shown below:

v.4  אֶמְלָלָה , אֵכְלָה , אֵכְלָה
v.6  אֵכְלָה , אֵכְלָה , אֵכְלָה
v.7  אֶמְלָלָה , אֵכְלָה , אֵכְלָה  ( א appears in the Niphal stem)

In addition, in v.8 there is an almost identical repetition of similar sounds:

Similar consonant sounds can also be found in v.9 and v.12 (Itoh 1995:90): in v.9: ג (x2), ר (x3), ו (x4) and in v.12: ו (x2), ג (x3), ר (x4), ו (x2)

On the whole, the author’s intention that shows signs of careful craftsmanship and conscious composition can be discerned. Furthermore, elaborate play on words can be attested. The terms for terror (pahad), pit or trench (pahat), and snare or trap (pah) were used because of their similar sounds and because the prophet could use the three to illustrate the inescapability of the Lord’s actions (Hayes & Irvine 1987:303; cf. Alonso-Schökel 1987:182). Consider:

Isaiah 24:17

The earth is breaking, breaking;
The earth is crumbling, crumbling;
The earth is tottering, tottering;
The earth is swaying like a drunkard
It is rocking to and fro like a hut (NJPSV)

Furthermore, In Isaiah 24:2, God’s judgment is described in terms of personal relationships within the society.
Young (1969:151) rightly argues that “the contrasts are not between an individual and a group, but between different classes of people.” Thus, the discourse points to a society where normal life is upside down in terms of relationship among different groups of people and of societal roles: people & priest (cultic, religious life); master and servant (domestic, household); buyer/seller and lender/borrower, creditor/debtor (economic world); (cf. Calvin [1570]1948:167; Kaiser 1974:182; Oswalt 1986:444; Hayes & Irvine 1987:300; Brueggemann 1998:190; Childs 2001:178; Tucker 2001:211). In other words, no one is immune and “the author wishes to drive his metaphor home with some force” (Doyle 2000:155). Redditt (1972:322) also provides an intriguing insight by claiming that the use of polar pairs is a conventional Hebrew strategy to emphasize an “all-inclusive” experience. Furthermore, when we imagine the heart of the audience/reader, it appears filled with only desperation; for the narrator/author tries to make a message which is “unspeakable speakable by the way of metaphor: YHWH has abandoned his people” (Doyle 2000:178). As a result, it is noteworthy that the narrator implies that the turmoil in the city mainly affects the exalted of the people of the earth (חぴים~ם) who are fading away (ใครה~ם); (Isa 24:4).

With reference to God’s judgment and salvation, the narrator uses agricultural imagery which is one of the prominent imageries in Isaiah 24-27 to communicate the zone of purposeful action. In Isaiah 24:7-13, the people are desperate because of God’s judgment on his vineyard. However, this dark and miserable imagery changes suddenly in Isaiah 27:3-4.

Isaiah 27:3-4

Here, God’s care is described in an impressive way. He does not just wait for the fruit of the

142 It is a fixed expression. The MT renders מים ~ים as “the height of the people of the earth”, but the BHS notes that we probably read ס (the people) as ס (with). In 1QIsa, ס is removed as ס פסיק (but in the Targum version, the expressionי גאמה גאמה supports the reading of ס as ס. According to Van der Kooij (2000:13), the LXX οί ψυχαί τῆς γῆς “the lofty ones of the earth” gives the impression that it shows “the idea of people that are in a high position” (cf. Vulgate infringata est altitude populi terrae “the height of the people of the earth is weakened”, Lutherbibel die Höchsten des Volks im Lande nehmen ab, and Calvin [1570]1948:163: elanguerunt qui erant sublimis populus terrae “the haughty people of the earth do languish”). There are also different renderings of the word ~ים which literally means “height.” It is interesting to note that the NRSV translates it as “the heaven languish together with the earth” which seems to reflect parallelism with the previous words: earth and world (cf. Clements 1980:201; NJPST renders it “the most exalted people of the earth,” while it is suggested that the alteration of vocalization produce “both sky and earth”). Moreover, March (1966:29) seems to have a similar idea but for different reason: ~ים is the place of Yahweh’s abode like Baal’s home lived in ~ים in the mythology of Canaan (cf. Baal II iv 19). However, most other translations follow the MT and LXX; for instance, “the haughty people of earth” (NKJV), “the prominent people of the earth” (NET), “the pick of earth’s people” (NJB), “the exalted of the people of the earth” (NASB), “the exalted of the earth” (NIV).
vineyard but he is there to protect and cultivate the vineyard which symbolizes Israel (Rendtorff 2005:181). In connection with the representation of vineyard, the feast or fertility imagery is also well-depicted in Isaiah 25:6 (Itoh 1995:125-6):

(a feast of rich food) (a feast of well-aged wines) (rich food filled with marrow) (well-aged wines strained clear)

In the verse above, similar resonance and orthography can be observed. The narrator vividly illustrates God’s sumptuous banquet by using three occurrences of the *hapax legomena* (cf. Table 2.2) to intensify his message. This situation is in complete contrast to Isaiah 24:7-9: 7 *The new wine* (אֲדֹנָי) dries up, the vine languishes, all the merry-hearted sigh. 8 The mirth of the timbrels is stilled, the noise of the jubilant has ceased, the mirth of the lyre is stilled. 9 they do not drink wine (ךָּיָּדוּ) with singing; strong drink is bitter to those who drink it. Here, the inhabitants of the earth are devastated because of the lack of wine, even the simple ordinary wine. It can only be imagined that at that time of the audience/reader, hearing the announcement of God’s great feast, would immediately make a connection in their heart, i.e., a heart of thinking (Robbins 1996b:30).

Another important and stimulating subject can be found in the occurrences of time phrases. The narrator uses time images to show God’s purposeful activity. The most important part of Isaiah 24-27 develops from this time description, assigning all other parts of the texts to “on that day (אֲדֹנָי);” (24:21; 25:9; 26:1; 27:1, 2, 12, 13; Polaski 1999:26). The time phrase leads us to see God’s ultimate work of judgment and salvation “on that day (אֲדֹנָי).” From Tables 2.1 and 2.4 above, it can be observed that God’s judgment and salvation on the city (cities) are in the future tense. In other words, God’s activity is an eschatological incident. It is therefore important to investigate this point in this study. Tables 2.1 and 2.4 demonstrate a trend in the occurrence of the term “on that day (אֲדֹנָי)” and God’s works, especially his judgment and salvation, are rooted in that eschatological time expressed by the phrase, “on that day (אֲדֹנָי).” It is notable that that future time is significantly connected to the fate of

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143 The words and are both recognized as cases of *hapax legomenon* (cf. Smend 1884:196-7); similarly, (טָמִים) is shown to be a *hapax legomenon* (Blenkinsopp 2000:358).

144 LXX: οἶνος “wine” (AGNT 19509). Targum: יין “wine”. The Vulgate renders it as vindemia “vintage” (cf. Calvin [1570]1948:164; *vinum “wine,” Lutherbibel der Most “new wine”). According to the NRSV, it is translated as “wine” but the NASV, KJV, NIV, NET and NJPST translate it as “new wine” (cf. NBDB 440 and HALOT 10146, suggests wine that must be fresh or new wine).
Table 2.9: “On that day” and its descriptions connected to the cities in Isaiah 24-27 based on repetition and progression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>On that day</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>Description of City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24:10a</td>
<td></td>
<td>J</td>
<td>The city of chaos is broken down (דowntown הדוכי)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12a</td>
<td></td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Desolation is left in the city (דowntown הדוכי)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21a</td>
<td>On that day</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>For the Lord of Host will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem (דowntown הדוכי)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23b</td>
<td>S+J</td>
<td></td>
<td>For the city of aliens is a city no more (דowntown הדוכי)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25:2a</td>
<td></td>
<td>J</td>
<td>The palace of aliens is a city no more (דowntown הדוכי)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26:1a</td>
<td>On that day</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>This song will be sung in the land of Judah (דowntown הדוכי)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4d</td>
<td></td>
<td>J</td>
<td>The lofty city he lays down (דowntown הדוכי)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27:1a</td>
<td>On that day</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>The Lord will thresh from the channel of the Euphrates to the Wadi of Egypt (דowntown הדוכי)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a</td>
<td>On that day</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>A pleasant vineyard, sing about it! (דowntown הדוכי)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a</td>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Jacob shall take root (דowntown הדוכי)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10a</td>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots (דowntown הדוכי)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11a</td>
<td></td>
<td>J</td>
<td>For the fortified city is solitary (דowntown הדוכי)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12a</td>
<td>On that day</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>The Lord will thresh from the channel of the Euphrates to the Wadi of Egypt (דowntown הדוכי)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12e</td>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>You will be gathered one by one, o people of Israel (דowntown הדוכי)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13a</td>
<td>On that day</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Those who were lost in the land of Assyria (דowntown הדוכי)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13c,d,e</td>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Those who were driven out to the land of Egypt (דowntown הדוכי)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table shows that the repetition of “on that day (דowntown הדוכי)” is profoundly connected to the progression of the city’s destiny in terms of judgment and salvation. As demonstrated above, there is also a dialectical relationship between God’s judgment and salvation which indicates a progressive movement of purpose. Threats from the hostile city and its arrogant declaration of control in human affairs are interpreted from God’s point of view, as contained in the phrase, “on that day (דowntown הדוכי)”. When the phrase “on that day (דowntown הדוכי)” comes to fulfilment, the city will be judged through the fire of divine wrath (cf. Isa 24:6, 26:11, 27:4) so that, at last, all people may live in peace and justice, and eventually worship the Lord (Isa...
27:13). In other words, God’s timing of “on that day (vm 24:27; 25:2)” is gradually moved from judgment to salvation in a dialectical sequence. Thus, it seems to us that the narrator tries to convey the message that the course of human life is completely determined by God’s sovereignty.

In the sensory-aesthetic texture and pattern, it has been observed that the narrator uses his/her skill and superior stylistic compositions to describe God’s judgment and salvation on that day. Through hearing and facing stunning sounds and colourful images, the audience/reader finds out that God’s judgment is inevitable but there is also hope of escape; escape to only one place: “this mountain Zion/Jerusalem” where God reigns on that day.

2.7 Summary and some remarks for the next chapter

Thus far in this chapter, the discussion has centred on “inner texture,” which is composed of: repetitive, progressive, narrational, opening-middle-closing, and argumentative textures as well as the sensory-aesthetic texture and pattern. The journey can be considered rewarding because through this process, the multi-dimensional way of analysing a text is brought to the fore. Our investigation up to this point can be summed up in the following words:

1) Under the repetitive texture and pattern, Isaiah 24-27 is examined in terms of six categories: deity, judgment/salvation, world-view, city, anthropological perspective, and others. It seems that these categories are the dominant subjects or themes the text of Isaiah 24-27, even though we acknowledge that some other scholars may choose to view the issues in a different way. The study demonstrates that these five categories can be regarded as crucial, especially in view of the number of occurrences of the themes in the text. For instance, the appearances of deity is about 37 times, while notions relating to worldview such as the earth/world are repeated about 35 times. The city is mentioned about nine times and anthropological perspective is portrayed about 74 times. Furthermore, some important phrases such as “on that day” occur seven times and “on this mountain” three times. All in all, God’s dominant activity is shown to be the executing of judgment on and salvation for the city.

2) Concerning the progressive texture and pattern, we considered it logical to investigate some of the dominant subject matters mentioned above, especially God’s judgment and salvation. To achieve this, we intentionally examined the references to God’s activity in terms of utilizing the verbs with some nouns. The reason is based on the overwhelming presence of verbal descriptions in Isaiah 24-27 (cf. Tables 2.1; 2.4). Consequently, this study reveals that
God’s judgment and salvation primarily focus on the earth/land/world and that the centre of God’s act is the unknown city (cities) which is revealed in progression as the “city of chaos,” the “fortified city”. It is significant that the author/narrator in this progression, finally, identifies the name of the city as Zion/Jerusalem in the holy mountain.

3) Through the narrational texture and pattern, we understand repetitive phenomena in terms of the use of personal pronouns. As earlier indicated, God is the central figure in the repetitive texture and pattern, and in this segment, details concerning God’s outstanding involvement are also provided. Divine appearances are attested about 70 times; first person pronouns, “I, my, and me” occur 10 times; second person pronouns, “you and your” occur 36 times; while third person pronouns, “he, his, and him” are found 24 times in the text. The study of the use of personal pronouns also demonstrates the exciting point that even if God is occupied with executing his judgment, God is also profoundly associated with the “I” and “we” in intimate relationships. Additionally, God himself expresses his plentiful covenantal love and care for his people through the use of the words “I” and “Me” (cf. 27:2-5).

4) Even though there are various debates on the structure of Isaiah 24-27 due to its textual nature, in this chapter, we have attempted to explicate the grand drama of the text. This is by trying to hear the voice of Isaiah 24-27 as a whole through the opening-middle-closing texture and pattern by dividing the textures into: opening - Isaiah 24:1-23; middle - Isaiah 25:1-27:11; and closing - Isaiah 27:12-13. In the opening segment, it is shown that God’s imminent future judgment will be executed on the world and the cosmic realm, but particularly on “the city of chaos.” The primary reason is found in God’s kingship on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. In sequence, the middle texture points out that God’s salvation will begin from the place referred to as “on this Mountain.” Finally, the closing texture discloses God’s good news that people will be gathered on the holy Mountain Zion/Jerusalem to worship the living God on that day.

5) For the argumentative texture and pattern, the argumentative method of the enthymeme is used, that is, the concepts of result and case (reason) based on the terms “for (מִי)” and “therefore (לֵבָנָן)”. In the argumentative texture of Isaiah 24-27, about 20 occurrences of the word for reason, “for (מִי),” and seven times of the word for result, “therefore (לֵבָנָן, לָבַן),” are identified. Using well-constructed arguments, the narrator/author logically reasons with the audience/reader that God’s judgment is as a result of their iniquity in terms of their religious and moral practices. Therefore, there is no way to run away from God’s judgment. Even their last hope, the “fortified city” can not protect them. The narrator then urges them to face God’s
judgment by making the right decisions to purify themselves and trust in God alone. Through that process, they can experience God’s blessing and salvation in the holy Mountain Zion/Jerusalem.

6) Finally, in the sensory-aesthetic texture and pattern, Isaiah 24-27 is viewed through the lens of Robbins’ concept of three zones (zone of emotion-fused thought, zone of self-expression speech, and zone of purposeful action). In this segment, one encounters great stylistic compositions which make use of stunning sounds (cf. repetition of assonance and consonance, especially in 24:1-12) and colourful images (cf. vineyard and banquet, especially in 24:7-11; 25:6; 27:2-5) to describe God’s judgment and salvation. Moreover, the time-phrase, “on that day” is shown to be a central expression in Isaiah 24-27 and can be regarded as deeply connected to the city’s (cities’) destiny.

From the summary of inner texture above, some important overlapping subjects can be observed. For instance, God’s activity in terms of judgment and salvation shows that the object of God’s judgment and salvation is the earth/world and its inhabitants. Consequently, its focal point is the city (cities). Moreover, regarding the city, it appears that two cities are placed in contrast. One is under God’s judgment and the other is under God’s salvation. In particular, the city which experiences God’s salvation is located on “the mountain” in Zion/Jerusalem. Furthermore, all these things will happen “on that day.” In other words, they will be carried out in God’s eschatological (or apocalyptic) time.

Table 2.10 - Summary of Inner texture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inner texture</th>
<th>Overlapping subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repetitive texture</td>
<td>The expression ‘the city’ is one of the most repeated in God’s judgment/salvation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thus, in this texture, the city is highlighted as the central subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive texture</td>
<td>There is a progressive focus on ‘the city’, from God’s judgment to God’s salvation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and this will take place in Mount Zion/Jerusalem, the holy mountain on that day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrational texture</td>
<td>God’s judgment is heavy, but God’s overwhelming love is also available, inviting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>his people/all people to participate in God’s banquet which is highlighted in terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of eventually worshipping God in the Mountain Zion/Jerusalem, on that day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening-middle-closing</td>
<td>In opening, God’s judgment is administered in the world and in the cosmic realm;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>texture</td>
<td>particularly in “the city of chaos.” The middle texture points out that God’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>blessing and salvation emanate from the place - “on this Mountain.” Finally, the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>closing texture discloses God’s good news that people will be gathered in the holy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mountain Zion/Jerusalem to worship the living God on that day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argumentative texture</td>
<td>The narrator/author logically reasons with the audience/reader that God’s judgment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>is due to their iniquity in terms of their religious and moral practices. However,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>they can experience God’s blessing and salvation in the holy Mountain Zion/Jerusalem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>on that day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensory-aesthetic</td>
<td>Stunning sounds and colourful images describe God’s judgment and salvation. The</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>texture</td>
<td>occurrence of the expression “on that day” is shown to be central in Isaiah 24-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and is connected to the city’s (cities’) eschatological destiny.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Based on this summary, certain questions can be raised. Why do certain subjects overlap in the inner texture? Why are these data composed this way? What kind of argument can be identified in the text? Why are there special literary genres? From the rhetorical point of view, it is obvious that the author/narrator repeats the above-mentioned themes for the sake of argumentation; to convey some important message which can persuade the audience/reader. It is, therefore, our responsibility to examine these overriding issues in following chapter. This will no doubt, generate further questions:

1) How is the city that is under God’s judgment and salvation depicted under intertexture?

2) From the above study, the city is shown to be deeply connected to Zion/Jerusalem and the mountain. Thus, the question is, “How is this relationship depicted in other texts?

3) The fate of the city is also intricately connected to the expression “on that day.” How is this represented in other texts?
Chapter 3

Intertexture of Isaiah 24-27

Scholars have noted that the Bible contain various voices and is not just a monologue (e.g. intertextuality and inner-biblical exegesis; cf. Tull 2005:691). In this regard, Schniedewind (2005:502-3) introduces a recent trend especially, in the Old Testament of what is called inner-biblical exegesis (cf. Fishbane 1985145, 1992; Kugel 1990; Zakovitch 1991; Sommer 1998), which refers to the explicit citation and interpretation of the biblical texts within the biblical literature. In line with inner-biblical exegesis but in a broader fashion, intertexture146 does not only focus on the biblical text but it does not exclude other texts such as ancient Near Eastern texts, Greek poetry and even Jewish Midrash (Robbins 1996b:40; Rudman 2000:404-408; Schniedewind 2005:503). In this line of reasoning, intertexture is a thick reading of the Bible through diverse kinds of intertextuality: “quotations, allusions, catchwords, motifs, and framing devises” with other texts (Nogalski 1996:103).


Regarding intertextuality and inner-biblical exegesis, like Hays (1989), Robbins is a strong advocate. According to Robbins (1996b:40-68), there are four kinds of intertexture: 1) oral-scribal intertexture which consists of recitation, recontextualizaton, reconfiguration, narrative amplification, and thematic elaboration; 2) cultural intertexture, that is, reference or allusion, and echo 3) social intertexture, made up of social role or social identity, social institution,

145 Fishbane uses “inner-biblical exegesis” in a slightly different way, i.e., “inner-prophetic interpretation” (1985:289).

146 In this chapter, we shall not consider the problem of intertextuality in detail; but rather, follow Robbins’ definition of intertextuality essentially. For more detail on the complexities and problems concerning intertextuality, see Sanders (1982:144-55; 1999:35-44); Snyman (1995:205-22); Nogalski (1996:102-24); O’Day (1999:546-8); Polaski (2001:32-49); Koptak (2005:332-4); Schniedewind (2005:502-8); and Tate (2006:181-3).

147 Hays (1989:29-32) suggests seven categories that tests for echo in Pauline texts namely 1) Availability: the claimed source which the author or reader accesses; 2) Volume: explicit repetition of extension; 3) Recurrence: parallels or citations between scriptural texts; 4) Thematic Coherence: similar alleged echo in the two texts; 5) Historical Plausibility: effective meaning which is intended from an earlier text to a latter text; 6) History of Interpretation: historical recognition of same echoes by other previous readers; 7) Satisfaction: making sense of the proposed interpretation of the echoing Scriptures (cf. Robbins 1996a:102; Schultz 1999:39).
social code, social relationship; and 4) historical intertexture, which consists of multiplicity of data and nature of data. In Robbins’ opinion, intertexture aims “to ascertain the nature and result of processes of configuration and reconfiguration of phenomena in the world outside the text” (Robbins 1996b:40). For the purpose of this study, we shall first examine the presence (or absence as the case may be) of intertexture in the book of Isaiah and thereafter, determine if there is any connection or allusion to other texts including ancient Near Eastern texts. In addition, as Robbins (1996b:59-60) indicates, we have to bear in mind that sometimes there are not clear cut boundaries in intertexture. We should hasten to add, therefore, that not all instances of lexical or phrasal similarities can be considered allusions or echoes, as in many cases, it is equally probable that the author/narrator makes use of formulaic or stereotype languages, which are not in the least uncommon in ancient Near Eastern writings. For now, we shall consider the types of intertexture in greater detail.

3. 1 Oral-scribal intertexture

In this section, we would like to follow Robbins’ analysis in order. According to Robbins (1996b:40) oral-scribal intertexture is composed of five essential aspects: “recitation, recontextualization, reconfiguration, narrative amplification, and thematic elaboration,” which describe “a text’s use of any other text outside of itself, whether it is an inscription, the work of a Greek poet, non-canonical apocalyptic material, or Hebrew Bible.” Thus, we shall probe the book of Isaiah according to these five categories of oral-scribal intertexture

3.1.1 Recitation

According to Robbins (1996b:41), recitation is “the transmission of speech or narrative, from either oral or written tradition, in the exact words in which the person has received the speech or narrative or in different words.” However, sometimes, there may be a similarity between the terminology and the general content of the passage. In this segment, therefore, we shall examine the way in which exact words are quoted or appear in texts as well as the similarity between the languages and themes.

3.1.1.1 Isaiah 24:6-7 and Jeremiah 23:10

The first case of recitation is between Isaiah 24:6-7 and Jeremiah 23:10. It depicts an image of God’s curse and judgment as a result of the people’s sin.

Isaiah 24:6-7
6Therefore a curse devours the earth, and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt; therefore the inhabitant of the earth are burned, and few people are left. 7 The new wine dries up, the vine
languishes, all the merry-hearted sigh.

It is clear from the above verses that parallels can be observed between Isaiah 24:6-7 and Jeremiah 23:10 on both verbal and thematic levels. In this regard, it is considered that the author of Isaiah 24:6-7 recited Jeremiah 23:10 as a new interpretation in a new circumstance (Rudman 2000:407-8). In Jeremiah 23:10, God’s judgment is focused on religious leaders, especially, on the false prophets and priests in Jerusalem. Even though he considered priests and some other categories of people (24:2), but in a broader sense, the author of Isaiah maintains that God’s punishment is not centred on mere religious leaders confined to a certain place, but rather has a universal focus, i.e., “the inhabitants of the earth” (24:6-7).

3.1.1.2 Isaiah 24:8 and Lamentation 5:15

These two verses express a theme of absence of joyfulness because of God’s judgment.

As Kaiser (1974:184) notes, the verse in Lamentation is an expression of sadness because of the end of joy. The situation of Lamentation 5:15 is a plea for God’s mercy, since God allowed his city Zion to be deserted. In this miserable atmosphere, the author of Isaiah 24:8 re-applied the theme to a universal disaster (Sweeney 1988). It is God’s judgment that makes all joyous hearts and lives to melt away from the earth (Oswalt 1986:448).
3.1.1.3 Isaiah 24:16b and Isaiah 21:2b/ Isaiah 33:1/ Isaiah 48:8b

The recitation of Isaiah 24:16, especially, of 24:16b appears in Isaiah 21:2b, Isaiah 33:1 and Isaiah 48:8b where God’s judgment is expressed in a rather emotional manner. Of interest is the fact that Isaiah 24:16b can be considered as not only linked to the so-called First Isaiah but also to Deutero-Isaiah.

Isaiah 24:16b
But I said, I pine away, I pine away. Woe is me! the treacherous deal treacherously, the treacherous deal very treacherously.

Isaiah 21:2b
2 A stern vision is told to me; the betrayer betrays, and the destroyer destroys. Go up, O Elam, lay siege, O Media; all the sighing she has caused I bring to an end.

Isaiah 33:1
1 Ah, you destroyer, who yourself have not been destroyed; you treacherous one, with whom no one has dealt treacherously! When you have ceased to destroy, you will be destroyed; and when you have stopped dealing treacherously, you will be dealt with treacherously.

Isaiah 48:8b
8 You have never heard, you have never known, from of old your ear has not been opened. For I knew that you would deal very treacherously.

More than one hundred years ago, Delitzsch (1889:427) noted the recitation of Isaiah 24:16b in Isaiah 21:2 and Isaiah 33:1. Consequently, some scholars (cf. Wildberger 1978:910; Clements 1980:204; Sweeney 1988:44-5; Childs 2001:180) under the influence of Delitzsch, add Isaiah 48:8 especially because the small portion of 48:8b is similar to Isaiah 24:16b. The claim is that the author of Isaiah 24:16 must have been influenced or had influence on the so-called writers of First and Second Isaiah.

As Sweeney (1988:44-5) and Childs (2001:180) indicate, the main argument and implication in Isaiah 24:16 is its universal motif. For instance, while Isaiah 21:2 focuses on God’s punishment, specifically, on Babylon; Isaiah 33:1 on the “treacherous one” and Isaiah 48:8 on the house of Jacob, the author of Isaiah 24:16 in fact sets the objective of a worldwide track: that the attacker of the treacherous in the treacherous deal treacherously, the treacherous deal
very treacherously deals with “the major enemy of God in the world” (Sweeney 1988:45).


This is a typical recitation that is a “replication of exact words of words in another written text” (Robbins 1996b:41).

Isaiah 24:17-18a
17 Terror, and the pit, and the snare are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth! 18 Whoever flees at the sound of the terror shall fall into the pit; and whoever climbs out of the pit shall be caught in the snare. For the windows of the height are opened, and the foundations of the earth tremble.

Jeremiah 48:43-44
43 Terror, pit, and trap are before you, O inhabitant of Moab! says the Lord. 44 Everyone who flees from the terror shall fall into the pit, and everyone who climbs out of the pit shall be caught in the trap. For I will bring these things upon Moab in the year of their punishment, says the Lord.

Lamentation 3:47
Terror, pitfall have come upon us, devastation and destruction.

The theme of unavoidable judgment in Isaiah 24:17-18 is already alluded in Amos 5:18-19 which has the background of an eschatological mood of “the day of the Lord” (cf. Young 1969:174; Blenkinsopp 2000:356; Childs 2001:180; Polaski 2001:115):

Amos 5:18-19
18 Alas for you who desire the day of the Lord! Why do you want the day of the Lord? It is darkness, not light; 19 as if someone fled from a lion, and was met by a bear; or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall, and was bitten by a snake.

Indeed, when we compare the passages, the similarity is most striking in terms of verbal repetition and motif.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>פֶּרֶת בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל</td>
<td>נֹלַת וּשְׂפֵּא</td>
<td>סוּלֶל מָכָא נָאֵב</td>
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<td>יִשְׂרָאֵל נִלְכָּט</td>
<td>פֶּרֶת בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל</td>
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<td>יִשְׂרָאֵל נָאֵב</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Some scholars debate the idea of which text influenced the other text, especially in the case of Isaiah 24:17-18a and Jeremiah 48:43-44a because of their closeness. There are three main issues at stake in this regard (cf. March 1966:60; Polaski 2001:114). First, Isaiah 2:17-18a is the older text and is quoted by Jeremiah (cf. Duhm 1902:147; March 1966:60; Kaiser 1974:190). Second, several scholars (cf. Henry 1967:197; Wildberger 1978:938; Clement 1980:204; Johnson 1988:42; Sweeney 1996:329; Blenkinsopp 2000:356) suggest that Jeremiah is the former source and is quoted by the author of Isaiah 24:17-18a. Finally, in contrast to these two opinions, some other scholars (cf. Ludwig 1961:101; Redditt 1972:95-9; Habets 1974:79; Lewis 1985:83; Polaski 2001:114) propose that neither the author of Isaiah 24:17-18 nor that of Jeremiah borrowed from the other but they are both influenced by the pattern of a Sprichwort (proverb) and Drohwort (threat) which are well-known speeches at that time, as in for instance, the imaginative hunter’s pit which is dug for the capture of large animals. Lamentation 3:47 is a good example of this popular speech (Polaski 2001:114) and it is “the germ of the saying” (Gray 1912:419).

In our opinion, there is much insight in the above suggestions but if we consider the second stance more seriously, while respecting the first and third proposals, it appears rather significant to the understanding of Isaiah 24:17-18. The reason is that as Rudman (2000:406) observes, the image of God’s judgment in Isaiah 24:17-18 is a new interpretation of Jeremiah 48:43-44 rather than “just a simple quote”. For instance, the Jeremianic oracle focuses on a limited concept in terms of location, that is, on the “inhabitants of Moab (רַוִּיז הַמָּעָב)” but the author of Isaiah 24:17-18 broadens Jeremiah’s view and reshapes it into “the inhabitants of the earth (רַוִּיז הַאָדָם)” which, according to Sweeney (1996:329), is the main emphasis of the interpretation, that is, a sign of a “universalizing” direction in terms of God’s cosmic
3.1.1.5 Isaiah 24:20 and Amos 5:2

There is another comparable example of recitation in a small part of Isaiah 24:20: *it falls, and will not rise again* with Amos 5:2: *fallen, no more to rise, is maiden Israel.*

**Isaiah 24:20**

20 The earth staggers like a drunkard, it sways like a hut; its transgression lies heavy upon it, and it falls, and will not rise again (יִשְׂרָאֵלָהּ נַעֲמָתָהּ נַעֲמָתָהּ וּנְאָמֶרֶתָהּ נַעֲמָתָהּ).

**Amos 5:2**

2 Fallen, no more to rise, is maiden Israel (יִשְׂרָאֵלָהּ נַעֲמָתָהּ נַעֲמָתָהּ וּנְאָמֶרֶתָהּ נַעֲמָתָהּ) forsaken on her land, with no one to raise her up.

Many scholars recognize that the author of Isaiah 24:20 recited Amos 5:2 (cf. Duhm 1902:148; Gray 1912:420; Plöger 1968:57; Habets 1974:82; Kaiser 1974:191; Wildberger 1978:910; Watts 1985:325; Johnson 1988:42; Polaski 2001:115). Both texts portray an image of God’s judgment but the direction of God’s punishment in each of them is different. The author of Isaiah 24:20 generalizes his interpretation. In other words, while Amos 5:2: focuses on the fall of Israel/the house of Israel: *Fallen, no more to rise, is maiden Israel* (יִשְׂרָאֵלָהּ נַעֲמָתָהּ נַעֲמָתָהּ וּנְאָמֶרֶתָהּ נַעֲמָתָהּ), Isaiah 24:20 focuses on “the earth”: *The earth staggers like a drunkard, it sways like a hut; its transgression lies heavy upon it, and it falls, and will not rise again* (יִשְׂרָאֵלָהּ נַעֲמָתָהּ נַעֲמָתָהּ וּנְאָמֶרֶתָהּ נַעֲמָתָהּ). If this understanding is correct, the motive behind the author of Isaiah’s strong argument in 24:20 becomes clear, i.e., “universal understanding” (Sweeney 1988:45). Furthermore, here the “lamentation over the whole dead earth” can be observed, in contrast to Amos 5:2, where the lament is for the house of Israel (Polaski 2001:116).

3.1.1.6 Isaiah 24:23b and Micah 4:7b/ Isaiah 52:7

The concept of God’s reign on Mount Zion/Jerusalem is found in Isaiah 24:23 but also in Micah 4:7 and Isaiah 52:7 (Wildberger 1978:910). In other words, the metaphor of God’s kingdom is manifested (Blenkinsopp 2000:357). The question is, “What is the suggestion or implication in Isaiah 24:23?”

**Isaiah 24:23b**

23 Then the moon will be abashed, and the sun ashamed; *for the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before his elders, gloriously.*
At first glance, there is a similarity in words and themes between Isaiah 24:23 and Micah 4:7 and Isaiah 52:7. However, as Blenkinsopp suggests that a deeper consideration shows they are somewhat different. For instance, while Micah 4:7 and Isaiah 52:7 are concerned with the restoration of the daughter of Zion/Jerusalem in that day, Isaiah 24:23 is more closely related to “the climatic moment in a sequence of apocalyptic events” through God’s cosmic judgment and the “event on the vision of the royal throne of God” (Blenkinsopp 2000:357). Once again, the important thing to keep in mind is the motif of universalizing in Isaiah 24:23 (Sweeney 1988:44).

3.1.1.7 Isaiah 25:1 and 1 Kings 3:7

Isaiah 25:1

O Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you, I will praise your name; for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure.

It seems that no one notes a possible between Isaiah 25:1 and 1 Kings 3:7. In our view, there is a clear lexical connection between the two texts.

1 Kings 3:7

And now, you are my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in.
David. In this verse, Solomon expresses his intimate relationship with God. Likewise, the writer of Isaiah 25:1 states his deep personal affirmation of God even though the context of each text is different. Whereas 1 Kings 3:7 is a prayer for God’s help after enthronement as king, Isaiah 25:1 is a song of God’s wonderful deeds, in which punishment is unleashed on a world power, the “fortified city.” It is clear that the author of Isaiah 25:1 intentionally recites 1 Kings 3:7 in order to praise God’s act in universal judgment.

3.1.1.8 Isaiah 26:21a and Micah 1:3a

Isaiah 26:21a
21 For behold the Lord comes out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will disclose her blood shed, and will no longer cover her slain.

Micah 1:3a
3 For behold, the Lord is coming out of his place, and will come down and tread upon the high places of the earth.

These identical phrases represent a typical phrase of God’s judgment. Furthermore, as Sweeney (1988:45) mentions, while the author of Isaiah 26:21 cites Micah 1:3, the author clearly indicates intentional interpretation, which is the motif of universalizing. Isaiah 24:21 is a part of a petition to urge the people to wait for the Lord’s involvement (Sweeney 1996:341) and it is also a pronouncement of God’s imminent punishment on the inhabitants of the earth, while Micah 1:3 is an announcement of God’s judgment against Samaria, which indicates, in a sense, localization in contrast to the universal phenomenon in Isaiah 26:21. It is also a clear evidence of the historical and social contexts of both texts.

3.1.2 Recontextualization
In a way, recontextualization is different from recitation. Unlike recitation which focuses on the communication of “exact words,” recontextualization focuses on “texts without explicit statement” (Robbins 1996b:48). It is the way a word or statement in Scripture is re-interpreted in a new context.
3.1.2.1 Isaiah 24:1, 3-6, 18-20 and Isaiah 13:9-11, 13/ Genesis 6:13

God’s judgment is described vividly in Isaiah 24:1, 3-6, 18-20 as well as in Isaiah 13:9-11, 13 and Genesis 6:13.

Isaiah 24:1, 3-6, 18-23

1 Behold the Lord is about to lay waste the earth and make it desolate, and he will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants.

3 The earth shall be utterly laid waste and utterly despoiled; for the Lord has spoken this word.

4 The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers; the haughty people of the earth languish.

5 The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant.

6 Therefore a curse devours the earth, and its inhabitants are guilty; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few people are left.

18 Whoever flees at the sound of the terror shall fall into the pit; and whoever climbs out of the pit shall be caught in the snare. For the windows of the height are opened, and the foundations of the earth tremble.

19 The earth is utterly broken, the earth is torn asunder, the earth is violently shaken.

20 The earth staggers like a drunkard, it sways like a hut; its transgression lies heavy upon it, and it falls, and will not rise again.

On that day the Lord will punish the host of the height in the height, and on earth the kings of the earth.

22 They will be gathered together as prisoners in a pit; they will be shut up in a prison, and after many days they will be punished.

23 Then the moon will be abashed, and the sun ashamed for the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before his elders, gloriously.

Isaiah 13:9-11, 13

9 See, the day of the Lord comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the earth a desolation, and to destroy its sinners from it.

10 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.

11 I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will put an end to the pride of the arrogant, and lay low the insolence of tyrants.

13 Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken out of its place, (טילפֻנְי אֱלֹהֵי וְהֶשְׁכִּיתֵי מְסֻפָּרִים מִסֻפָּרִים וַיִּתֵּן עָלָיו אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה יִתְחַסְּפֹּרֵהוּ), at the wrath of the Lord of hosts in the day of his fierce anger.

Genesis 6:13

13 And God said to Noah, “I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence because of them; now I am going to destroy them along with the earth.”

Seitz (1993:181) notes that Isaiah 24 is similar to story of Noah’s flood in Genesis 6:13, that is, in terms of God’s judgment. If Seitz’s observation is correct, then it can be assumed that the author of Isaiah 24 recontextualizes Noah’s event into God’s eschatological or apocalyptic judgment. This case is parallel to Isaiah 13:9-11, 13, that is, there are comparable images of God’s cosmic judgment in Isaiah 24 and 13:9-11, 13; for instance, God’s judgment on the
heaven and the earth, expressed with the metaphor of an earthquake (24:1, 19-20; 13:13) and of the darkening of the sun and the moon (24:23; 13:10). In our view, even though these texts, Isaiah 13:9-11, 13, announce “a cosmic judgment” (Polaski 2001:104) or exhibit a cosmic character, they clearly point to God’s oracle against Babylon (13:1). In contrast, the author of Isaiah 24 does not direct judgment at any specific location or people but rather at the earth or the inhabitants of the earth. Furthermore, the author of Isaiah 24 tactically employs Noah’s story, which may be an event well-known to the people, to illustrate the seriousness of God’s judgment. The recontextualization of universal punishment is a vivid picture in Isaiah 24.

3.1.2.2 Isaiah 24:1 and Genesis 11:8-9

The connection between Isaiah 24 and the book of Genesis is once again re-affirmed in Genesis 11:8.

Isaiah 24:1
1 Behold the Lord is about to lay waste the earth and make it desolate, and he will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants

Genesis 11:8-9
So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. 9 Therefore it was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

According to Kaiser (1974:182) and Collins (2004:395), Genesis 11:8 is recontextualized in the Isaiah 24:1. The question is, “Why does the author of Isaiah 24:1 borrow from Genesis 11:8 which is part of the story of the tower of Babel?” According to Genesis 11:3-4, the people’s intention in planning a tower is to protect themselves. One of the ways of ensuring security is to build a strong city and tower:

3 And they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.” And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. 4 Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.”

God’s response immediately follows in Genesis 11:8-9. God came down not to bless but to punish (Walton 2005:44). God’s way of meting out judgment is to disperse the people: The Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth. The remarkable point is

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that the author of Isaiah 24:1 reuses this story in a new context - an eschatological or apocalyptic context. In Isaiah 24:1, God punishes the inhabitants of the earth, using the method of scattering but the way of God’s judgment is somehow different from Genesis 11. In other words, God does not merely scatter the people, he does so with powerful military images and earthquake: Behold the Lord is about to lay waste the earth and make it desolate, and he will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants. The reader of Isaiah is thus reminded that there is no protection outside God.

### 3.1.2.3 Isaiah 24:7-9 and Isaiah 5:11-12

**Isaiah 24:7-9**

7 The new wine dries up, the vine languishes, all the merry-hearted sigh. 8 The mirth of the timbrels is stilled, the noise of the jubilant has ceased. 9 They do not drink wine with singing; strong drink is bitter to those who drink it.

**Isaiah 5:11-12**

11 Ah, you who rise early in the morning in pursuit of strong drink, who linger in the evening to be inflamed by wine, 12 whose feasts consist of lyre and harp, tambourine and flute and wine, but who do not regard the deeds of the Lord, or see the work of his hands!

As part of God’s judgment, Isaiah 24:7-9 describes the people’s unhappy circumstance which has resulted in the absence of merry feasts with wine, music, and song (Gray 1912:412). However, the situation in Isaiah 5:11-12 is different. There, God announces judgment because the people are drunk with strong drink and wine, and enjoy musical instruments without considering God’s work. Therefore, the author of Isaiah 24:7-9 recontextualizes Isaiah 5:11-12, where the focus is on social injustice of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to accommodate a more universal situation, i.e., the judgment of the inhabitants of the earth.

### 3.1.2.4 Isaiah 24:18b and Genesis 7:11b/ Genesis 8:2b

It is interesting to note once again the allusion between Isaiah 24 and Noah’s flood story in Genesis.

**Isaiah 24:18b**

18b For the windows of the height are opened, and the foundations of the earth tremble.

**Genesis 7:11b**

11b And the windows of the heavens were opened

Additionally, Gray (1912:420) and Tucker (2001:212) point out that Genesis 7:11 and 8:2 belong to the P (Priestly) document. In Genesis 7:11, God’s judgment is described as a flood which is caused by opening the windows of heaven (Barker 2003:516) and in Genesis 8:2, the windows of the heavens were closed in order to end the flood. The main reason for the flood was the people’s transgression. This human transgression is severely against the purpose of God in creation. In response, God tried to kill the people through flood which also reverses God’s creation. In Isaiah 24:18, the author intentionally recontextualizes Noah’s flood story in a universalizing direction and an eschatological (apocalyptic) time in order to judge the transgression of the inhabitants of the earth.

3.1.2.5 Isaiah 27: 2-5 and Isaiah 5:1-7


Isaiah 27: 2-5

2 On that day: A pleasant vineyard (טִBarButton), sing about her! 3 I, the Lord, am its keeper; every moment I water it. I guard it night and day so that no one can harm it; 4 I have no wrath. If it gives me thorns and briers (דְּרָשִׁים וּבְרֵיהָ), in battle, I will march against it. I will burn it together. 5 Or else let it cling to me for protection, let it make peace with me, let it make peace with me.

Isaiah 5:1-7

1 Let me sing for my beloved my love-song concerning his vineyard (גּושֵׁנַי). My beloved had a vineyard (טִBarButton) on a very fertile hill. 2 He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted (שְׁנַבְשָׁם) it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; he expected it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes. 3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard (טִBarButton) 4 What more was there to do for my vineyard (טִBarButton) that I have not done in it? When I expected it to yield grapes, why did
it yield wild grapes? 5 And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard (וַיְהַלַּךְ נֵבֶל). I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. 6 I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and it shall be overgrown with thorns and briers (יָתֹר וְיָרָע). I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. 7 For the vineyard (וָשֵׁי אֶת הַגֹּואָלה) of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the people of Judah are his pleasant planting; he expected justice, but saw bloodshed; righteousness (רְחַיָּב), but heard a cry (יְרַע).)

In Isaiah 5:1-7, there is a clear expression of God’s judgment but it is not judgment joyfully executed but rather carried out with sorrow and grief.

[H]e neither rebukes the people’s ingratitude nor bewails their prospect of ruin and disgrace. The prophet’s sympathy is for God whose care for the vineyard had been of no avail. God’s sorrow rather than the people’s tragedy is the theme of this song. The song contains a gentle allusion to the grief and the disappointment of God. He feels hurt at the thought of abandoning the vineyard he had rejoiced in, and in which he had placed so much hope and care.

(Heschel 1962:84-5)

The author of Isaiah 27:2-5 reverses and recontextualizes Isaiah 5:1-7 into God’s salvation and protection (cf. Jacob 1970:325; Kaiser 1974:224; Oswalt 1986:493; Sweeney 1988:50; Nielsen 1989:116; VanGemeren 1990:268; Seitz 1993:196-7; Laato 1998:183). The text speaks of God’s care and protection of his vineyard and the hope of God’s salvation in that day (Carroll 1979:148). In the words of Polaski (2001:366), here, the people are continually depicted as God’s vineyard but the important shift is that the Lord is described as its “benevolent protector instead of its passionate lover.”

### 3.1.2.6 Isaiah 27:11bc and Isaiah 1:3/ Hosea 1:6

**Isaiah 27:11bc**

When its boughs are dry, they are broken; women come and make a fire of them. For this is a people without understanding; therefore he that made them will not have compassion on them, he that formed them will show them no favor.

**Isaiah 1:3**

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

**Hosea 1:6**

She conceived again and bore a daughter. Then the Lord said to him, “Name her Lo-ruhamah, for I will no longer have pity on the house of Israel or forgive them.”
In Isaiah 1:3, the wickedness of Judah and Jerusalem who do not understand their God is compared with the ox that does not know its owner. Similarly, Hosea 1:6 announces God’s judgment to the house of Israel through Hosea’s daughter name: “Name her Lo-ruhamah, for I will no longer have pity on the house of Israel or forgive them.” Thus, it can be remarked that Isaiah 1:3 and Hosea 1:6 are more focused on southern Judah and northern Israel, respectively, than on the world.

By contrast, Isaiah 27:11 shows that God will punish the people of the world without mercy because they are without understanding. As Tucker (2001:227) remarks, the author of Isaiah 27:11 recontextualizes Isaiah 1:3 and Hosea 1:6 as universal punishment. It is the people of the earth who do not understand and for that reason they are under God’s wrath.

### 3.1.3 Reconfiguration

The primary interest of reconfiguration is the reformulation of previous traditions (Robbins 1996a:107). In a way, both recitation and recontextualization are similar to reconfiguration, but reconfiguration focuses more on relating a circumstance in a way that creates a new occurrence in relation to a previous tradition (Robbins 1996b:50).

#### 3.1.3.1 Isaiah 24:13 and Isaiah 17:6


**Isaiah 24:13**

13 For thus it shall be in the midst of the earth and among the nations, as the shaking of an olive tree, as at the gleanings when the vintage is ended.

**Isaiah 17:6**

6 Gleanings will be left in it, as when an olive tree is beaten - two or three berries in the top of the highest bough, four or five on the branches of a fruit tree, says the Lord God of Israel.
Isaiah 17:6 is based on an oracle concerning Damascus (17:1), Ephraim (17:3) and Jacob/Israel (17:4, 6), which are all under God’s judgment. However, Isaiah 24:13, does not explicitly discuss the punishment of a specific people or nation but “it refers to the punishment of the city of chaos, in the midst of the earth and its peoples, indicating the universal or cosmic scope of this punishment” (Sweeney 1988:43). In this regard, Isaiah 24:13 apparently intends to make the reader realize that the prophecy in 17:6 has now been fulfilled: “Ein Leser fühlte sich an 17:6 erinnert und wollte bezeugen, daß jene jesajanische Weissagung nun zur Erfüllung kommen werde” (Wildberger 1978:898). In other words, Isaiah 17:6 is somehow reconfigured in Isaiah 24:13 as a worldwide judgment.

3.1.3.2 Isaiah 24:14-16a and Isaiah 42:10-13


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148 It is sometime translated as “to raise the voice” without יִגְכִּים (HALOT 6362. cf. Isaiah 3:7).

As far as we are concerned, even if it cannot be ascertained that the author of Isaiah 24:14-16a was indeed influenced by Isaiah 42:10-13, a parallel can be observed between them as shown above. However, in the interpretation, the passage is reconfigured. For instance, Isaiah 42:10-13 focuses on a people, the light of nations, who praise God with a new song; and this is in “the context of the new creation” (Redditt 1972:331-2). Even Isaiah 24:14-16a is a song of praise to God and the context is within an eschatological (apocalyptic) turmoil and God’s universal judgment.

3.1.3.3 Isaiah 25:4-5 and Isaiah 4:5-6/ Isaiah 32:1-2


Isaiah 25:4-5

For you have been a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in his distress, a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat. For the blast of the ruthless was like a rainstorm against a wall, the noise of aliens like heat in a dry place, you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds; the song of the ruthless was stilled.

Then the Lord will create over the whole site of Mount Zion and over its places of assembly a cloud by day and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night. Indeed over all the glory there will be a canopy. It will serve as a pavilion, a shade by day from the heat, and a refuge and a shelter from the storm and rain.

A king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule with justice. Each will be like a hiding place from the wind, a covert from the tempest, like streams of water in a dry place, like the shade of a great rock in a weary land.
The texts depict an image of God’s protection through nature. The context of Isaiah 4:5-6 is the future glory of the survivors in Zion/Jerusalem which will accompany God’s protection once the city is cleansed of its transgression (Rudman 2000:407). Like Isaiah 4:5-6, the author of Isaiah 32:1-2 expresses *the wind* and *the shade* as a metaphor of the protection offered by the king and princes who will reign over the people in righteousness and justice in the future (Sweeney 1988:46). In the case of Isaiah 25:4-5, the situation and context are similar to Isaiah 4:5-6 and Isaiah 32:1-2. The author of Isaiah 25:4-5 states that God deserves praise because he not only defeats the fortified city but he also provides the protection that the people need, especially the poor and the needy who suffered under the rule of that city. As Sweeney (1988:46) rightly emphasizes, the author of 25:4-5 has reconfigured Isaiah 4:5-6 and Isaiah 32:1-2 into “universal concerns.” Unlike Isaiah 4:5-6 and Isaiah 32:1-2, although the writer of 25:4-5 deliberately omits certain particular references, he applies God’s protection to the poor and needy in the world (Rudman 2000:407).

### 3.1.3.4 Isaiah 25:11b-12 and Isaiah 2:9-17

**Isaiah 25:11b-12**

11 Though they spread out their hands in the midst of it, as swimmers spread out their hands to swim, 11b his pride will be laid low despite the struggle of their hands. 12 The high fortifications of your walls will be brought down, laid low, cast to the ground, even to the dust.

**Isaiah 2:9-17**

9 And so people are low and everyone is brought low - do not forgive them! 10 Enter into the rock, and hide in the dust from the terror of the Lord, and from the glory of his majesty. 11 The haughty eyes of people shall be brought low, and the pride of everyone shall be low; and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day. 12 For the Lord of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up and low; 13 against all the cedars of Lebanon, lofty and lifted up; and against all the oaks of Bashan; 14 against all the high mountains, and against all the lofty hills; 15 against every high tower, and against every fortified wall; 16 against all the ships of Tarshish, and against all the beautiful craft. 17 The haughtiness of people shall be low, and the pride of everyone shall be brought low; and the Lord alone will be exalted on that day.

As can be noted, connections exist between Isaiah 25:11b-12 and Isaiah 2:9-17, especially in terms of words and themes (Vermeylen 1977:365-6). Regarding lexical connections, Sweeney (1988:47) provides a good explanation:

Thus, יִבְרָשָׁתָה “he brings down,” corresponds to the four occurrences of this verb root in Isa 2:9, 11, 12, and 17. The noun יֵדֶע “his pride,” corresponds to the noun יֵשָׁה “high,” in Isa 2:12.

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149 Doyle (2000:248) notes an interesting point concerning God’s protection through nature and the phenomenon in ancient Near Eastern traditions in which the term (ט) implies that “the final and climatically most significant protective image of the three [sic] in which the Lord is identified with ‘shade’… In Egypt, the goddesses Hathor and Nut were presented as tree goddesses, while Sumerian royal hymns portrayed the King as a tree of life which provided shadow and protection to his people.”
which is derived from the same root. The appearance of שלמה “high, exalted,” in Isa 25:12 corresponds with שלמה “and he shall be exalted,” in Isa 2:11, 17. The word, גּוֹפֶּה “your walls,” compares with גּוֹפֶּה “wall,” in Isa 2:15 and גּוֹפֶּה “fortification,” corresponds to גּוֹפֶּה “fortified,” in the same verse. The verb שלמה “he shall lay low,” appears twice as שלמה “and he is low,” in Isa 2:9 and as שלמה “and it shall be low,” in Isa 2:11, 17. Finally, the noun, חָלֶה “dust,” appears in Isa 2:10.

As Sweeney indicates, the close lexical connection between Isaiah 25:11b-12 and Isaiah 2:9-17 is clearly visible. Additionally, the themes are equally related; Isaiah 2:6-21 portrays God’s judgment pronounced on the arrogant especially against the house of Jacob and its people on that day while Isaiah 25:11b-12 depicts God’s punishment on Moab. Why then does the writer of Isaiah 25:11-12 reconfigure Isaiah 2:9-17 and suddenly singles out a specific nation, Moab as the most hated object? There are some unresolved arguments in scholarly circles on the above question; for instance, the issue of whether Moab is a historical or symbolic figure (cf. Lindblom 1938:38-9; Plöger 1968:62-3 Kaiser 1974:204; Clement 1980:210-11; Sweeney 1988:47). In our judgment, if we follow Oswalt’s (1986:46) figurative understanding of “Moab symbolizing the rest of the nations” and Childs’ (2001:185) view of Moab as a symbol of arrogance among the nations, we may appreciate once again the intention of the author of Isaiah 25:11-12 which is God’s universal judgment on the nations which refuse God’s sovereign rule on Mountain Zion.

3.1.3.5 Isaiah 26:5 and Isaiah 2:6-21

Isaiah 26:5

5 For he has brought low the inhabitants of the height; the lofty city he lays low. He lays it low to the ground, casts it to the dust.

Isaiah 2:6-21

6 For you have forsaken the ways of your people, O house of Jacob. Indeed they are full of diviners from the east and of soothsayers like the Philistines, and they clasp hands with foreigners. 7 Their land is filled with silver and gold, and there is no end to their treasures; their land is filled with horses, and there is no end to their chariots. 8 Their land is filled with idols; they bow down to the work of their hands, to what their own fingers have made. 9 And so people are low (שד), and everyone is brought low - do not forgive them! 10 Enter into the rock, and hide in the dust from the terror of the Lord, and from the glory of his majesty. 11 The haughty eyes of people shall be brought low (שד), and the pride of everyone shall be low (שד); and the Lord alone will be exalted (שד) in that day. 12 For the Lord of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up and low (שד); 13 against all the cedars of Lebanon, lofty and lifted up; and against all the oaks of Bashan; 14 against all the high mountains, and against all the lofty hills; 15 against every high tower, and against every fortified wall; 16 against all the ships of Tarshish, and against all the beautiful craft. 17 The haughtiness of people shall be low (שד), and the pride of everyone shall be brought low (שד); and the Lord alone will be exalted (שד) on that day. 18 The idols shall utterly pass away. 19 Enter the caves of the rocks and the holes of the ground, from the terror of the Lord, and from the glory of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth. 20 On that day people will throw away to the moles and to the bats their idols of silver and their idols of gold, which
they made for themselves to worship, to enter the caverns of the rocks and the clefts in the crags, from the terror of the Lord, and from the glory of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth.

Most of the credit for the explication of the connection between Isaiah 25:11b-12 and Isaiah 2:9-17, goes to Sweeney (1988:47-8), who also proposes a thematic and lexical association between Isaiah 26:5 and Isaiah 2:6-21 (Vermeylen 1977:365-66). First, Sweeney (1988:47-8) demonstrates the occurrence of related words in the two passages:

Thus, the root of הִשְׁדָּה, “he lays low,” appears three times in this passage, as indicated above (Isa 2:9, 11, 17). The adjective הָבִּי, “lofty, exalted,” appears in verbal form to describe the exaltation of YHWH in Isa 2:11, 17. The root of the verbs הָלָּא and הָלָּא, “to bring down,” appears four times, as indicated above (Isa 2:9, 11, 12, 17). The noun זֶרֶב, “dust,” appears in Isa 2:10. Finally, the noun וַסָּכָה, “high,” corresponds to the five appearances of its root in Isa 2:11, 12, 13, 14, and 17.

According to Sweeney, this lexical relationship also leads to the idea which is shared between Isaiah 26:5 and Isaiah 2:6-21. In Isaiah 2:6-21, the writer of the song expresses God’s judgment on the arrogant, including not only the house of Jacob but also the people of the earth, on that day. As a result, the Lord alone will be exalted (2:11). This kind of image concerning God’s punishment is also employed in Isaiah 26:5. For instance, the writer employs the concept that God will punish the people who dwell on high and in a city described as the “lofty city” which is possibly “the city of chaos” (24:10) and “the fortified city” (25:2); a symbol of human pride (Sweeney 1988:48). At any rate, the interesting point is that the author of Isaiah 26:5 has reconfigured Isaiah 2:6-21 by symbolizing the city. In other words, in Isaiah 26:1, there is “a strong city” which symbolizes God’s salvation and blessing in contrast to “the lofty city” in 26:5 representing the human ego and which anticipates the realization of Isaiah 2:6-21. Moreover, as the image of God’s punishment is retained because of the people’s haughtiness.

3.1.3.6 Isaiah 26:17-18 and Isaiah 13:8/ Isaiah 66:7-9

The image of a pregnant woman in Isaiah 26:17-18 appears also in Isaiah 13:8 and Isaiah 66:7-9.

Isaiah 26:17-18

17 Like a pregnant woman, who writhes and cries out in her pangs when she is near her time, so were we before you, O Lord; 18 we were pregnant, we writhed, but like we gave birth only to wind. We have won no salvation on the earth, and no one is born to inhabitants of the world.
Isaiah 13:8
8 And they will be dismayed. Pangs and agony will seize them; they will be in anguish like a woman in labor. They will look aghast at one another; their faces will be aflame.

Isaiah 66:7-9
7 Before she was in labor she gave birth; before her pain came upon her she delivered a son. 8 Who has heard of such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall a land be born in one day? Shall a nation be delivered in one moment? Yet as soon as Zion was in labor she delivered her children. 9 Shall I open the womb and not deliver? says the Lord; shall I, the one who delivers, shut the womb? says your God.


Furthermore, an interesting point is that apart from the lexical link, their contexts are similar in terms of the themes of childbirth and God’s judgment. In Isaiah 13:8, the author employs childbirth metaphor to convey agony and labour but it was not directed against Babylon which will face God’s judgment on the day of Lord. The situation is somewhat different in Isaiah 66:7-9 which describes Zion as a pregnant woman giving birth to her children, a seeming allusion that probably includes the people of Israel in God’s worldwide judgment (66:15-16; cf. Sweeney 1988:49). In the case of Isaiah 26:17-18, the author utilizes the metaphor of childbirth; a painful labor in which no one is born to inhabit the earth (26:18).

What is the implication of Isaiah 26:17-18 therefore? Why and how does the author of Isaiah 26:17-18 reconfigure Isaiah 13:8 and 66:7-9? The answer is that even the writer of Isaiah 26:17-18 employs the metaphor of childbirth to depict God’s judgment on Babylon (Isa 13:1,
8) and the re-establishment of Israel in Zion as the heart of a global revival and God’s worldwide judgment (Isa 66:7-9, 15-16). The author of Isaiah 26:17-18 reconfigures these major themes to universalize the direction of God’s punishment followed by a universal rebirth which focuses on Zion; this is one of the main themes in Isaiah 24-27 (Sweeney 1988:49).

3.2 Cultural intertexture

Cultural intertexture is based on the “insider” information that specific people or community experience and learn of their distinctive cultural knowledge through communal interaction (Robbins 1996b:58). According to Robbins (1996b:58), the notion of cultural intertexture is manifested “in word and concept patterns and configurations: values, scripts, codes, or systems (e.g., purity, law, covenant); and myths (e.g., wisdom, Oedipus, Hermes).” In practice, Robbins (1996b:58) indicates that cultural intertexture materializes in texts either through reference (the occurrence of a word, phrase or clause that refers to a personage or tradition known to the people in a culture; cf. Robbins 1996a:110); or through allusion (the incorporation of identifiable elements from other sources, whether previous or contemporaneous, textual or extra-textual; cf. Miner 1993:38-9) and through echo (a word or phrase which evokes or potentially evokes, a cultural tradition; cf. Robbins 1996a:110).

3.2.1 Isaiah 24:3 and Egyptian oracles and prophecy

Isaiah 24:3

3 The earth shall be utterly laid waste and utterly despoiled; for the Lord has spoken this word.

The Prophecy of Neferti

Re must begin the foundation (of the earth over again).

The land is completely perished, (so that) no remainder exists, (so that) not (even) the black of the nail survives form what was fated.

(ANET 1969:445)

Isaiah 24:3 shows an interesting connection with Egyptian prophecy. In ANET’s Third Edition (1969:684), it is suggested that Egyptian oracles and prophecy, especially, “the Prophecy of Neferti” dated from the 18th dynasty (ca. 1350-1100 BCE) even though older, is similar to Isaiah 24:3.

In Isaiah 24:3, the earth faces devastation because of God’s judgment. Likewise, in the Prophecy of Neferti, The land is completely perished because of the Egyptian god, “Re.” However, ANET sounds a note of caution that in applying ANET to the Bible, it should be take
into account that the author of Isaiah 24:3 might not necessarily use an Egyptian source even though some similarities exist between the two texts. With this caution in mind, it remains possible that the writer of our text uses the Egyptian oracles and prophecy as an illustration in declaring God’s universal judgment in Isaiah 24:3.

### 3.2.2 Isaiah 24:5a and Leviticus 18:24-30/ Numbers 35:33


**Isaiah 24:5a**

5The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant.

**Leviticus 18:24-30**

24 Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, for by all these practices the nations I am casting out before you have defiled themselves. 25 Thus the land became defiled; and I punished it for its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. 26 But you shall keep my statutes and my ordinances and commit none of these abominations, either the citizen or the alien who resides among you 27 (for the inhabitants of the land, who were before you, committed all of these abominations, and the land became defiled); 28 otherwise the land will vomit you out for defiling it, as it vomited out the nation that was before you. 29 For whoever commits any of these abominations shall be cut off from their people. 30 So keep my charge not to commit any of these abominations that were done before you, and not to defile yourselves by them: I am the Lord your God.

**Numbers 35:33**

33 You shall not pollute the land in which you live; for blood pollutes the land, and no expiation can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed in it, except by the blood of the one who shed it.

According to Isaiah 24:5a, the people who live in the world polluted the earth by breaking God’s law. The main cause of pollution is their transgressions. In Jewish culture, especially in
the Scriptures, it is a far-reaching notion that the earth could be defiled by human iniquity, by aggression, the shedding of blood and even offensive sexual behaviour (Hayes & Irvine 1987:300). A good example is Numbers 35:33, which states that the land is defiled through the blood shed by a murderer (cf. Holladay 1978:196; Sheppard 2000:508). Another instance is Leviticus 18:24-30, which indicates that some improper sexual relations can defile not only the people but the land. Here, the question is, “Why does the author of Isaiah 24:5 allude to this important Pentateuchal law? In our opinion, it is a rhetorical strategy by the author to confirm that the inhabitants of the earth deserve God’s judgment: for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, and broken the everlasting covenant which is supposed to be obeyed. Consequently, the author of Isaiah 24:5 applies this religious cultural principle to an eschatological (apocalyptical) world judgment.

3.2.3 Isaiah 24:5b and Genesis 9:16

Isaiah 24:5b

The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant.

Genesis 9:16

When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.

Thus, some scholars indicate a connection in terms of Noahic eternal covenant (cf. Lack 1973:67; Holladay 1978:196; Blenkinsopp 2000:351; Childs 2001:179). When scholars’ suggestions on the lexical and thematic connection are considered, the assumption is that the author of Isaiah 24:5b applies the familiar covenant of Noah in a new context. Genesis 9:16 shows that God punished the people with the great flood because “The Lord saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5; cf. Seitz 1993:180). Nevertheless, in spite of the people’s transgressions, God manifested his love by making the perpetual covenant with Noah and stopping the flood (Genesis 9:16). The exciting point is that just as the flood was a world phenomenon, God’s covenant is not limited to only Israel but is
extended to the whole world: “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth” (Genesis 9:17; cf. Childs 2001:179).

In the specific cultural background of Genesis 9:16, the author of Isaiah 24:5 reuses God’s remarkable blessing in apocalyptic judgment. Childs (2001:179) explains this shift in a short but brilliant way: “In Genesis, God wrought a new beginning in history; in Isaiah, he announced its end.” Why did God want to end it? Perhaps, one of the answers can be gleaned from Doyle’s observation that ל’ (א[,] ו) may be considered as a “metaphor for marriage” that describes the relationship between the Lord and his people who dishonoured marital faithfulness.150

3.2.4 Isaiah 24:10 and Genesis 1:2

Isaiah 24:10
The city of chaos is broken down,
נִבְרַחֵת מְרָצוֹן

Genesis 1:2
The earth was as formless void
וּבָהֵן לֹא מִשְׁמָרָה

The theme of chaos in Isaiah 24:10 appears also in Genesis 1:2 (cf. Blenkinsopp 2000:352; Tucker 2001:211; Collins 2004:395). Before God created the cosmos, the earth was in chaos (נִבְרַחֵת). The author of Isaiah 24:10 relates this primeval creation history or “myths of beginnings,” to “the future;” an apocalyptic time, which focuses on the city in God’s judgment (Collins 2004:395).

3.2.5 Isaiah 24 and Deuteronomy 28


1) The people will be scattered (Deut 28:36, 63-64; Isa 24:1)
Deut 28:36, 63-64

150 Doyle (2000:230) further considers the “understanding of the violation of the בָּרָה הָעַלָּה in Isa 24:5, at least potentially, as an expression of abandonment of faith expressed as an ‘adulterous’ violation providing grounds for abandonment and rejection by YHWH and the feared experience of ‘widowhood’ which was its consequence. Understood in the broader context of the relational metaphors of the entire textural complex (YHWH is a husband), the בָּרָה הָעַלָּה might be considered a reference to the violation of marital fidelity and as a metaphor for the rupture of the faith relationship between YHWH and his people”.

107
The Lord will bring you, and the king whom you set over you, to a nation that neither you nor your ancestors have known, where you shall serve other gods, of wood and stone.

And just as the Lord took delight in making you prosperous and numerous, so the Lord will take delight in bringing you to ruin and destruction; you shall be plucked off the land that you are entering to possess. The Lord will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other; and there you shall serve other gods, of wood and stone, which neither you nor your ancestors have known.

Isa 24:1

1Behold the Lord is about to lay waste the earth and make it desolate, and he will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants.

2) Lending relationships will be confused (Deut 28:44; Isa 24:2)

Deut 28:44

44 They shall lend to you but you shall not lend to them; they shall be the head and you shall be the tail.

Isa 24:2

2And it shall be like the people, like the priest; like the slave, like his master; like the maid, like her mistress; like the buyer, like the seller; like the lender, like the borrower; like the creditor, like the debtor.

3) The land will suffer drought (Deut 28:22-24; Isa 24:4, 7)

Deut 28:22-24

22 The Lord will afflict you with consumption, fever, inflammation, with fiery heat and drought, and with blight and mildew; they shall pursue you until you perish. 23 The sky over your head shall be bronze, and the earth under you iron. 24 The Lord will change the rain of your land into powder, and only dust shall come down upon you from the sky until you are destroyed.

Isa 24:4, 7

4The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers; the haughty people of the earth languishes.

7The new wine dries up, the vine languishes, all the merry-hearted sigh.

4) Few people will remain (Deut 28:62; Isa 24:6, 13)

Deut 28:62

62 Although once you were as numerous as the stars in heaven, you shall be left few in number, because you did not obey the Lord your God.

Isa 24:6, 13

6Therefore a curse devours the earth, and its inhabitants are guilty; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few people are left.

13 For thus it shall be in the midst of the earth and among the nations, as the shaking of an olive tree, as at the gleanings when the vintage is ended.

5) The supply of wine will be destroyed (Deut 28:39, 51; Isa 24:7, 9, 11)

Deut 28:39, 51

39 You shall plant vineyards and dress them, but you shall neither drink the wine nor gather
the grapes, for the worm shall eat them.

51 It shall consume the fruit of your livestock and the fruit of your ground until you are destroyed, leaving you neither grain, wine, and oil, nor the increase of your cattle and the issue of your flock, until it has made you perish.

Isa 24:7, 9, 11

7 The new wine dries up, the vine languishes, all the merry-hearted sigh.

9 They do not drink wine with singing; strong drink is bitter to those who drink it.

11 There is an outcry in the streets for wine; all joy is darkened; the gladness of the earth is banished.

6) There will be urban destruction (Deut 28:52; Isa 24:10, 12)

Deut 28:52

52 It shall besiege you in all your towns until your high and fortified walls, in which you trusted, come down throughout your land; it shall besiege you in all your towns throughout the land that the LORD your God has given you.

Isa 24:10, 12

10 The city of chaos is broken down, every house is shut up for entering.

12 Desolation is left in the city, the gate is battered into ruins.

7) Houses will be left empty (Deut 28:30; Isa 24:10)

Deut 28:30

30 You shall build a house, but not live in it. You shall plant a vineyard, but not enjoy its fruit.

Isa 24:10

10 The city of chaos is broken down, every house is shut up for entering.

As Polaski observes, there is a clear connection between Isaiah 24 and the Deuteronomic law. A consideration of the similarities and the purpose behind Isaiah 24 can lead to the proposal that the author of Isaiah 24 re-applies the curses initiated for covenant destruction in Deuteronomy 28 to God’s universal curse and judgment on the earth and its inhabitants who have violated the eternal covenant in Isaiah 24.

3.2.6 Isaiah 25:6 and Exodus 24:9-11/ Akkadian myths


Isaiah 25:6

6 The Lord of hosts will make for all peoples on this mountain a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.

אֱרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים יִקְדִּישׁ לְכֶם לְפָנֵי עַומְתֵּיכֶם פְּרָי לְחָדָר וּמַרְאָה וּבָשָׂר מַגָּו ווּתַּיִשׁ
Exodus 24:9-11
9 Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel. Under his feet there was something like a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness.
10 God did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; also they beheld God, and they ate and drank.

Enūma elīš (the creation epic)
They set up in it an abode for Marduk, Enlil, (and) Ea

The context of Isaiah 25:6 is “the great banquet of joy on Zion” (Plöger 1968:60) after the establishment of the kingship of God (24:23; cf. Kaiser 1974:192). As mentioned above, the interesting point is that some scholars observe echoes in some of the expressions such as “this mountain” as referring to Zion in Isaiah 25:6 and “on the mountain” as Mount Sinai in Exodus 24:12. Furthermore, the author of Isaiah 25:6 draws the image of a covenant meal between God and his people on the mountain (Isa 25:6 and Ex 24:9-11). More fascinating is the point that the culture of sharing a meal is a well-known religious metaphor, especially in the context of divine war. Typically, “when the battle has been won, the gods assemble and celebrate the victory with a great banquet” (Smith 1992:789; cf. Blenkinsopp 2000:358). A good example is Enūma elīš (the creation epic) in which a great banquet follows the triumph and succession to the kingship of Marduk (ANET 1969:69).

What then is the implication of Isaiah 25:6? In our view, the writer of Isaiah 25:6 was well-acquainted with the Pentateuch and ANET traditions. However, in this apocalyptic (eschatological) situation, he intentionally extends previous traditions to a new situation. For instance, the meal motif is re-interpreted as a “universal pilgrimage feast” (Polaski 2001:169; cf. Plöger 1968:61; Wildberger 1978:961; Wodecki 1992:41-3); “opposite universalism” (Redditt 1972:213-4, 360); “universality and particularity” (cf. Oswalt 1986:463; Johnson 1988:62-64). Further, the phrase, the elders of Israel in Exodus 24 is extended to cover “all peoples” and is “signifying reconciliation and communion” (Tucker 2001:216; cf. Levin
In additional, the Babylonian god Marduk is replaced by Yahweh whose “new order of divine rule includes all peoples” (Childs 2001:184).

### 3.2.7 Isaiah 25:7-8 and Ugaritic myths


**Isaiah 25:7-8**

7 And he will swallow up on this mountain the face of the shroud shrouding all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; 8 he will swallow up death forever. Then Adonay the Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken.

Poem about Baal and Anath (Baal and Mot)

(ii)
One lip to earth and one to heaven,
He stretches his tongue to the stars.

**Baal enters his mouth**

Descends into him like an olive-cake,
Like the yield of the earth and trees’ fruit.

Sore afraid is Puissant Baal,
Filled with dread is the Rider of Clouds;
“Begone! Say unto Godly Mot (mith),

……

Be gracious, O Godly Mot (mith);
Thy slave I, Thy bondman for ever.

(vi)
We came upon Baal
Fallen on the ground:
Puissant Baal is dead,
The Prince, Lord of Earth is perished.

*(ANET 1969:138, 139)*

In ancient Near Eastern mythical culture, it is typical for deities to assemble and celebrate their victory with a grand feast after defeating their opponents (cf. Weinfeld 1983:113; Smith 1992:789; Sweeney 1996:337). In the context of Ugaritic Baal-Anath epic, there is a conflict and war between Baal and Mot (mith), (Lewis 1992:922-4). According to the above text, Mot, who is Baal’s main enemy, swallowed Baal as a symbol of defeating and rule over him (cf. Healey 1995:1129; Smit 2002:45; Curtis 2005:136). On the other hand, the context of Isaiah
25:7-8 is after the inauguration of God’s kingship (Isa 24:23), and this is followed by a great banquet (Isa 25:6). In Isaiah 26:7-8, that great feast is connected to the triumph over the primordial adversary Mot (מְזַח). The interesting contrast is that God will swallow up death forever (25:8) which according to Healey (1995:1129) means that, “Yahweh makes nonsense of the law of Canaanite myth by himself swallowing the swallower.”

It is remarkable that the author of Isaiah 25:7-8 employs the most inclusive and universal kinds of language\(^{151}\) such as “all peoples (כָל־בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל)” “all nations (כָל־גוֹלָל)” “all faces (כָל־חֵי)” and “all the earth (כָל־כָּלָה)”, who are invited to God’s banquet after the defeat of “Mot (מְזַח)”. Why does the author of Isaiah 25:7-8 communicate the motifs of universalism and time (cf. Lewis 1985:116; Seitz 1993:191-192; Rossing 1999:145; Childs 2001:184) through the Ugaritic Baal-Anath myth? It seems to us that Gunkel and Collins rightly capture the intention of the writer of Isaiah 25:7-8. According to Gunkel (1885), “Urzeit gleicht Endzeit;” that is, “the primeval time is like the end time” (quoted by Collins 2004:395). Interpreting Gunkel’s idea, Collins (2004:395) claims that it is “to explain the use of ancient myths in apocalyptic writings” and to emphasize its apocalyptic time as a reference to the aged “myths of beginnings,” which is now anticipated the future. Indeed, God’s coronation on Mount Zion is a great symbol of universal blessing, that is, “the hope of a radical new world order apart from evil and sickness” (Childs 2001:185).

### 3.2.8 Isaiah 26:2 and Psalm 118:19-20


**Isaiah 26:2**

> Open the gates, so that the righteous nation that keeps the truth may enter in.

> Open the gates, so that the righteous nation that keeps the truth may enter in.

**Psalm 118:19-20**

> Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it.

As scholars note, the author of Isaiah 26:2 uses the image of pilgrimage (cf. Psalm 118:19-20) which refers to participation in Jerusalem from all divisions of the land (Deut 16; cf. Grogon

\(^{151}\) Some scholars oppose this universalism because of phrases such as “on this mountain” and “his people” (25:7-8), and the Moab pericope (25:10; cf. Redditt 1972:213-4, 360) but Seitz (1993:191) rightly argues that we can interpret “his people” as “one not in contrast to all nations but inclusive of them.”
Moreover, there is a similarity in theme regarding morality; the condition for entering Jerusalem is probably “not cultic purity but that sort of ethical righteousness” (Oswalt 1986:471; cf. Blenkinsopp 2000:365). However, a closer examination will show some differences as well. For instance, in Psalm 118:19-20, it is the righteous who may enter the gates of righteousness whereas in Isaiah 26:2, a more inclusive language, the righteous nation is employed to identify those who may go through the gate.

What then is the implication in Isaiah 26:2? According to Childs and Polaski, the writer of Isaiah 26:2 connects with the notion in Isaiah 25:6-8 that God’s banquet is available universally but there is also a clear boundary in Isaiah 26:2 that “all nations may be included, but only if they are reformulated as a single nation which is defined as righteous” (Polaski 2001:224). In other words, the invitation is open to all the inhabitants and nations, “yet those characterized as God’s people are always identified by a response of righteousness” (Childs 2001:190). God’s world-wide blessings of Isaiah 25:6-8 are then kept for individuals and the righteous (Psalm 118:19-20) who “keep faith” in an eschatological (apocalyptic) time (Polaski 2001:224).

### 3.2.9 Isaiah 26:19 and Daniel 12:2/ Akkadian myths

**Isaiah 26:19**

19 Your dead shall live, my corpses shall rise. O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy!

For your dew is a radiant dew, and the earth will cast out the dead.

\[\text{יְמהיָה רֵעֵיתֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשָּׁחֵץ אַלּוֹת שִׂמְךָ משִׂיחָה} \]

Daniel 12:2

2 Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

\[\text{הִמֵּשׁ מְשַׁקֵּר אָדָםָה שִׂמֵּשׁ אַלּוֹת לֵאמָר נֵאַלָּה} \]

**Descent of Ishtar to the Nether World**

Yea, the daughter of Sin set [her] mind
To the dark house, the abode of Irkal[la],
To the house which none leave who have entered it,
To the road from which there is no way back,
To the house wherein the entrants are bereft of light,
Where dust is their fare and clay their food,
(Where) they see no light, residing in darkness,
(Where) they are clothed like birds, with wings for garments,
(And where) over door and bolt is spread dust.

\[\text{אַלּוֹת לֵאמָר} \]

(ANET 1969:107)

The above texts show interesting motifs of resurrection from the dead and the dust in Isaiah 26:19, Daniel 12:2 and even in Akkadian myths (cf. Gray 1912:446; Kaiser 1974:217; Oswalt

From the two interpretations above, one would wonder why the author of Isaiah 26:19 uses the concepts of resurrection from the dead (Daniel 12:2 and Ezekiel 37; cf. Miller 2000:166) and the dust which portray a widespread understanding of the underworld in ancient Near Eastern literatures such as Akkadian myths (Oswalt 1986:487). In this regard, Childs (2001:191-2) explains the main intention of the writer of Isaiah 26:19:

> Many now agree that this scholarly distinction is quite irrelevant for understanding the function of the promise within the context of chapter 26. The point being made is that the ultimate status of the believing community of Israel, which lives at an intersection of two dispensations within God’s economy, is not determined by the rules of the old age. The sign of the new is not that pain and misery cease, but that the promised life in God’s kingdom extends even beyond the grave.

Indeed, it is a courageous and confident confession of hope and faith based on God’s ultimate triumph over death, especially, in the time of crisis.

### 3.2.10 Isaiah 26:20 and Genesis 7:16/ Exodus 12:22-23


**Isaiah 26:20**

> 20 Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until the wrath is past.

**Genesis 7:16**

> 16 And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the Lord shut him in.

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Exodus 12:22-23
22 Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood in the basin. None of you shall go outside the door of your house until morning. 23 For the Lord will pass through to strike down the Egyptians; when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over that door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you down.

God’s judgment on the earth is imminent in Genesis 7:16 (Seitz 1993:196). In this context, even though God’s punishment is inevitable due to the people’s transgressions, God’s grace abides on Noah (and his family): the Lord shut him in. In the event of the Passover in Exodus 12:22-23, God’s anger would be expressed through dreadful judgment but the Israelites can escape it by staying at home and sprinkling the blood of the Passover lamb upon their doorposts and lintels (Hayes & Irvine 1987:314).

In the case of Isaiah 26:20, the author employs a similar motif to explain that God’s judgment is not directed towards his people: “Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until the wrath is past.” By contrast, the verse which follows implies that God’s punishment is a universal judgment meant to punish the inhabitants of the earth (Tucker 2001:222): “For the Lord comes out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will disclose the blood shed on it, and will no longer cover its slain” (v.21). Indeed, it is a “promise and fulfilment” that God will punish the wicked but save his people in the time of universal judgment (Childs 2001:192).

3.2.11 Isaiah 27:1 and Psalms 74:13-14/ Job 26:13/ Isaiah 51:9-10/ Hittite myths/ Ugaritic myths

Isaiah 27:1
On that day the Lord will punish with his cruel sword, the great and the strong, Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will kill the dragon that is in the sea.

Psalms 74:13-14
3 You divided the sea by your might; you broke the heads of the dragons in the waters. 14 You crushed the heads of Leviathan; you gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness.
Job 26:13

13 By his wind the heavens were made fair; his hand pierced the fleeing serpent.

Isaiah 51:9-10

9 Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord! Awake, as in days of old, the generations of long ago! Was it not you who cut Rahab in pieces, who pierced the dragon? 10 Was it not you who dried up the sea, the waters of the great deep; who made the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to cross over?

The myth of Illuyankas

The Dragon Illuyankas came up with [his children] and they ate (and) drank. They drank every amphora dry and quenched their thirst. Thereupon they are no longer able to descend to their lair. Haupasiyas came and trussed the Dragon Illuyankas with a rope. The Strom-god came and killed the Dragon Illuyankas and the gods were with him.

Poem about Baal and Anath (Baal and Lotan)

If thou smite Lotan, the serpent slant,
Destroy the serpent tortuous,
Shalyat of the seven heads


In Isaiah 27:1, the objects of God’s punishment are Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and the dragon that is in the sea. This mystical animals appear in Psalm 74:13-14 as the dragons in the waters and the heads of Leviathan. The Psalmist states that God demonstrates his mighty power by defeating the primordial monster. In wisdom literature, Job 26:13 also confirms that God punishes the fleeing serpent in Job’s reply that God’s

152 Gibson (1978:68) suggests another translation:

For all that you smote Leviathan the slippery serpent
(and) made an end of the wriggling serpent,
The tyrant with seven heads?

153 Gunkel (2006:30-2) also notes that Isaiah 27:1 is connected to Babylonian myths.
mighty power is immeasurable. Furthermore, the writer of Isaiah 51:9-10 identifies the name of the sea-monster differently as Rahab and the dragon. The context here is based on the Exodus which proclaims that through God’s mighty power, God saved his people from the slavery of Egypt and brought them to the Promised Land. In a similar way, God will save his exiled people. The remarkable point here is that the Scriptures quoted above are all influenced by the sea-monster motif found in Ancient Near Eastern literatures such as Hittite and Ugaritic myths. In the Hittite myth, the Strom-god came and killed the Dragon Illuyankas while in the Ugaritic myth, Baal defeats the sea-god Yam, Lotan (Leviathan) or the seven-headed serpent.

Why does the author of Isaiah 27:1 employ the ancient motif of cosmic conflict not only from other Scriptures but also from ancient Near Eastern literatures? As Oswalt (1986:490) points out, the scribe of Isaiah 27:1 deliberately adopts a well-known mythical story of the sea/chaos monster of the ancient Near East which is also widespread in other parts of Scriptures. As in the other Scriptures above, the writer of Isaiah 27:1 verifies God’s universal triumph over Leviathan, the monster of chaos which symbolizes the power of evil in the world (Sheppard 2000:509). However, in our opinion, the main point is that God’s victory over the primordial sea-monster will be carried out “on that day”, i.e., an eschatological-apocalyptic time. To put it another way, Childs (2001:197) states clearly that, “The apocalyptic promise of the new age of divine rule is signaled by the slaying of the dragon.” Collins (2004:398) further adds that, “In the Canaanite myths, this battle is located in the beginnings of history. In Isa 27:1 it is projected into the future, to express the hope that ‘on that day’ the Lord will eradicate the source of all the problems in the world”.

3.3 Social intertexture

In social intertexture, the primary attention is on social phenomena (Robbins 1996a:117). According to Robbins (1996b:62), social knowledge is commonly held by all persons of a region, no matter what their particular “cultural” location may be and the social information entails the following four types:

a. social role (soldier, shepherd, slave, athlete) or social identity (Greek, Roman, Jew);
b. social institution (empire, synagogue, trade workers’ association, household);
c. social code (e.g., honor, hospitality);
d. social relationship (patron, friend, enemy, kin)
3.3.1 Social identity and social institution

In respect of social intertexture, we would like to discuss the social identity and the social institution of the city. The reason is that the city in Isaiah 24:27 is understood as a metaphor for the people and the powers of the nations and even for the empire. Furthermore, the author of Isaiah portrays the image of the city with exchangeable words: city, Jerusalem, Zion, and mount/mountain (Motyer 1993:16-7). These words will be examined in the following sequence: city; Jerusalem/Zion and mount/mountain.

3.3.1.1 City in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, the term city רְגוֹן is widespread; 1,092 times (HALOT II, 1995:821-2; TLOT 2, 1997:840-3 [Hulst]; cf. BDB 746; Even-Shoshan 1992:858-62; NIDOTE 3, 1997g:396-9 [Price]; TDOT 11, 2001:51-7[Otto]; TDNT 4, 1968:516-35 [Strathmann]). The semantic field of the city and its related terms are identified thus: רְגוֹן (HALOT III, 1996:1142-3; TWAT 7, 1993:178-9 [Mulder]; NIDOTE 3, 1997d:988-9 [Price]; Frick 1977:42-4). In the Old Testament, the nominative רְגוֹן, town or city, a synonym of ישראל, occurs in Aramaic 9 times and in Hebrew 30 times and is used mainly in poetry and passages in higher literary style. חוּר the outside, street, the space outside a house, occurs 164 times in the Old Testament (BDB 1979:299-300; HALOT I, 1994:298-9; NIDOTE 2, 1997e:52-3[Price]). Additionally, מָרָא (TDOT 5, 1986:131-39 [Hamp]; NIDOTE 2, 1977:249-50 [Rooker]): The nominative occurs in the earlier narratives of the Old Testament with the meaning of “settlement, village.” כְּסִי the open villages and the watchtowers (HALOT II, 1995:494-5; NIDOTE 2, 1997f:710[Price]). It occurs only in the plural and is distinguished from רְגוֹן (1 Chron. 27:25; Song 7:12; Neh. 6:2). The term, מְרָא, occurs 20 times in the Old Testament and is always associated with the levitical cities of refuge and asylum (cf. Nu 35:12, 15; Nu 35:25-28; HALOT II, 1995:628; NIDOTE 2, 1997:1088-9 [A.E. Hill]). The word, מֵתָרְשָה, occurs only once in the Old Testament with the meaning ‘designated cities’ (Josh 20:9; HALOT II, 1995:558; NIDOTE 2, 1997c:878 [Price]) while the nominative: מִרְבִּי occurs only three times (Esth 9:19; Ezek 38:11; Zech 2:4 [8]) and signifies villages without walls, i.e., the open country (HALOT III, 1996:965; NIDOTE 3, 1997:681-3 [Grisanti]). In the case of מַרְבָּה, the word refers to a broad open place in a city or village; an open plaza in the city set against the inner wall of the gate (HALOT III, 1996:1212-3; NIDOTE 3, 1997b:1092-3 [Price]). The nominative מַרְבָּה occurs four times in the Old Testament and is used only in poetry with reference to a street in a town or city (Prov 7:8;
According to Hulst (1997:881) and HALOT II, 1995:821, the 1092 occurrences of the word, city יְרוּם in the Old Testament exclude the word נַכְרִי. Our position is that the occurrence of the city (יְרוּם 1092 times) should be analysed alongside the instances of נַכְרִי (39 times) in the Old Testament. This will give us a total occurrence of about 1131 (cf. TDOT 2001:51-67 [Otto]). The reason for including נַכְרִי is its closeness with יְרוּם. It is used as an interchangeable synonym (cf. Isa. 1:26, 22:2; 25:2).

Table 3:1 - Statistics of the city (יְרוּם and נַכְרִי) in the Old Testament

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Christian Bible</th>
<th>Hebrew Bible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Division</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentateuch 176</td>
<td>Genesis</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exodus</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leviticus</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Numbers</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deuteronomy</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History Books 592</td>
<td>Joshua</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Judges</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ruth</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Samuel</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Samuel</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Kings</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Kings</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Chronicles</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Chronicles</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ezra</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nehemiah</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Esther</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry 47</td>
<td>Job</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Psalms</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proverbs</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ecclesiastes</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Song of Songs</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prophetic Books 316</td>
<td>Isaiah</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jeremiah</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lamentations</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ezekiel</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Daniel</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hosea</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joel</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amos</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obadiah</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jonah</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Micah</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nahum</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Habakkuk</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zephaniah</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Haggai</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zechariah</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Malachi</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To define the city or to answer the question, “What is a city?” is not an easy task (Grabbe 2001:29). One of the main reasons, according to Barkay (1992:329), is based on our misconception. For instance, the modern tendency is to define the city as “large sites, well fortified, where the building density is greater than in sites termed villages.” By contrast,
according to the biblical period, a city is “any place built by royal initiative or housing a representative of the central authority; even a small site or isolated fort was called a city” (Barkay 1992:329; cf. Joshua 15:20-63). Furthermore, in the Old Testament, the word יֹּֽעַ describes a wide variety of permanent settlements. In reviewing the physical aspects of the city in ancient Israel, Aharoni (1979:106-7) shows that four main features determine the original choice of the city site as follows:

(1) Strategic: “the ancient settlement was primarily dependent upon its own arrangements for defence”;

(2) Water supply: “the urban populations were made dependent upon a spring or well of fresh water because of the difficulty in storing up a quantity sufficient for the whole year”;

(3) Thoroughfares: “highways always played an important role in the history and economy of the country”;

(4) Agricultural land: “since a major portion of the town’s economy was based upon agriculture, the nearness of fertile lands was an important factor in choosing an urban site”.

Moreover, as Aharoni indicates, the primary function of the city was ensuring security, that is, defending its people against enemy attacks. However, it should also be noted that the city can echo the new self-assurance of the nation as well as accommodate the growing population:

1) a fortified structure for defensive purposes; (2) a walled, permanent settlement; (3) a quarter within such a settlement, especially the citadel containing the temple or temples and the administrative quarters; (4) in a more comprehensive political and economic sense, the city includes the citadel, the fixed settlement, and is the center of and marketplace for the surrounding secondary settlements of a less permanent nature.


Even though the Bible has many other important subjects and themes, as the above statistics shows, the concept of the city is also freely distributed. Above, we have highlighted the physical character of the city, it is nonetheless important to understand the metaphorical or theological side of city as well. The reason is that, on a theological level, one can see a mingling of all human history and destiny in the city that inevitably connects to God. In this regard, Fahlbusch (1999:577) rightly surmises that, in the Bible, from Genesis through Revelation, “the city is a central locus of the development of sinful humanity and of the drama of God’s action both in a response of judgment and in an initiative of grace and salvation.” In other words, the major pictures of the city in the Old Testament theology are ambivalent.
images, i.e., the city is the object of God’s judgment and salvation, for example. We shall consider the city from a theological standpoint in Chapters 5 and 6.

### 3.3.1.2 City in the book of Isaiah

In the book of Isaiah, the word city (רְעֵי/ירֵי) appears 55 times. In Isaiah 24-27, it appears nine times: 24:10; 24:12; 25:2 (3x), 3; 26:1, 5; 27:10. We shall investigate the use of the term, city, with respect to the concept of judgment and salvation because it is the over-riding theme in the text and it is therefore crucial to this study. When the context clearly indicates the name of the city, it will be noted; otherwise, we shall make a footnote.

רְעֵי (55x)

1:7, 8, 21, 26 (2x); 6:11; 14:17, 21, 31; 17:1, 2, 9; 19:2, 18 (2x); 22:2 (2x), 9; 23:16; 24:10; 24:12; 25:2 (3x), 3; 26:1, 5; 27:10; 29:1; 32:13; 32:14, 19; 33:8; 33:20; 36:1, 15; 37:13, 26, 33, 34, 35; 38:6 (2x); 40:9; 42:11; 44:26; 45:13; 48:2; 52:1; 54:3; 60:14; 61:4; 62:12; 64:9; 66:6.

(ירֵי Isaiah 1:21, 26; 22:2; 24:10; 25:2; 26:5; 29:1; 32:13; 33:20)

Table 3.2 - The city in the book of Isaiah

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>City name</th>
<th>Hebrew Description</th>
<th>English Description</th>
<th>J/S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:7</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>יְרוּעַל</td>
<td>Your cities are burned with fire</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:8</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>יְרוּעַל</td>
<td>Like a besieged city</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:21</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>יְרוּעַל</td>
<td>How faithful city has become a whore!</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:26a</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>יְרוּעַל</td>
<td>You shall be called the city of righteousness</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:26b</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>יְרוּעַל</td>
<td>The faithful city</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:11</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>יְרוּעַל</td>
<td>Until cities lie waste</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:17</td>
<td>Babylon</td>
<td>יְרוּעַל</td>
<td>Overthrew its cities</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:21</td>
<td>Babylon</td>
<td>יְרוּעַל</td>
<td>Cover the face of the world with cities</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:31</td>
<td>Philistia</td>
<td>יְרוּעַל</td>
<td>Wait, O gate; cry, O city</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:1</td>
<td>Damascus</td>
<td>יְרוּעַל</td>
<td>Will cease to be a city</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:2</td>
<td>Damascus</td>
<td>יְרוּעַל</td>
<td>Her cities will be deserted forever</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:9</td>
<td>Damascus</td>
<td>יְרוּעַל</td>
<td>Their strong cities will like the deserted places</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19:2</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>יְרוּעַל</td>
<td>City against city</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19:18a</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>יְרוּעַל</td>
<td>There will be five cities</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19:18b</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>יְרוּעַל</td>
<td>Will be called the city of Sun</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22:2a</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>יְרוּעַל</td>
<td>Tumultuous city</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22:2b</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>יְרוּעַל</td>
<td>Exultant city</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22:9</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>יְרוּעַל</td>
<td>Breaches in the city of David</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23:16</td>
<td>Tyre</td>
<td>יְרוּעַל</td>
<td>Go about city, you forgotten prostitute!</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24:10</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>יְרוּעַל</td>
<td>The city of chaos is broken down</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24:12</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>יְרוּעַל</td>
<td>Desolation is left in the city</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25:2a</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>יְרוּעַל</td>
<td>Made a city into a heap</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25:2b</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>יְרוּעַל</td>
<td>Fortified city into a ruin</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25:2c</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>יְרוּעַל</td>
<td>Palace of strangers is a city no more</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25:3</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>יְרוּעַל</td>
<td>Cities of ruthless nations will fear you</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26:1</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>יְרוּעַל</td>
<td>We have a strong city in the land of Judah</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26:5</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>יְרוּעַל</td>
<td>He lay low the lofty city</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27:10</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>יְרוּעַל</td>
<td>The fortified city is solitary</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

154 In this context, the strong city implies Jerusalem/Zion.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verses</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29:1</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>כשם שמדת אדום...ךונך עתיד</td>
<td>Woe, Ariel, the city where David encamped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32:13</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>והフレק צלחה...ךונך עתיד</td>
<td>Growing up in thorns and briers; for the jubilant city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32:14</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>The populous city deserted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32:19</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>The city will be utterly laid low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33:8</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>Its cities are despised</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33:20</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>The city of our appointed festivals!</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36:1</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>אשרו על כל שתיו שלמה</td>
<td>Sennacherib against all the fortified cities of Judah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36:15</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>Nor let Hezekiah make…this city not given</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37:13</td>
<td>Sepharvaim</td>
<td>Where is the king of the city of Sepharvaim?</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37:26</td>
<td>Assyria</td>
<td>Fortified cities crash into heaps of ruins</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37:33</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>King of Assyria: not come into this city</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37:34</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>He will not come into this city</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37:35</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>For I will defend this city to save it</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38:6a</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>I will deliver this city</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38:6b</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>I will defend this city</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40:9</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>Do not fear; say to the cities of Judah</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42:11</td>
<td>Kedar</td>
<td>Let its cities lift up their voice</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44:26</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>The cities of Judah, they shall be rebuilt</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45:13</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>Cyrus will build my city</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48:2</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>They call themselves after the holy city</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52:1</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>The holy city: unclean enter you no more</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54:3</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>Descendants will settle the desolate cities</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60:14</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>They shall call you the city of Lord</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61:4</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>They shall repair the ruined cities…</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62:12</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>You shall be called, a city not forsaken</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64:9</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>Your holy cities have become a wilderness</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Several points can be observed from the above illustration. First, the table shows that the city in Isaiah is primarily regarded as the object of God’s judgment and salvation. The interesting point is that even the relationship between judgment and salvation is a dialectical one. God’s judgment is the dominant theme in the so-called First Isaiah, while in the so-called Second Isaiah, the focus is on God’s blessing. Second, it appears that there are two kinds of cities; Seitz (1993:172) refers to the text as “a tale of two cities”. One city is under God’s judgment and the other one is under God’s salvation. Additionally, it is intriguing that the city of Jerusalem/Zion and God’s chosen city, which are dominant figures in the book of Isaiah, constitute the object of God’s judgment and salvation.

The question is, “What is the implication of the above observation for Isaiah 24-27?” It seems worthwhile to note that of the 55 appearances of the city in the book of Isaiah, the identity of the city in Isaiah 24-27 remains obscure except in 26:1 (Jerusalem). Thus, we may ask: Is this deliberate or accidental? It seems that the author of Isaiah 24-27 intentionally portrays the city ambiguously in an apocalyptic (eschatological) setting. In this “tale of two cities”, Isaiah 24-27 focuses on the city under God’s judgment but there is one exceptional case in 26:1 in which a strong city in the land of Judah (obviously Jerusalem/Zion), is under God’s protection (Sheppard 2000:508). In this connection, we must keep in mind that the writer describes this

155 The English text (cf. NRSV) is Isaiah 64:10 while the Hebrew text (cf. BHS) is Isaiah 64:9.
chosen Jerusalem/Zion, which goes through God’s purification also undergoes God’s universal judgment. More importantly, God’s dreadful judgment and remarkable salvation are performed in dialectical sequence in the apocalyptic (eschatological) future in Jerusalem/Mount Zion. Finally, as Biddle (1995:11) indicates, the personification of the city is lacking in Isaiah 24-27 but rather, “the book discusses specific, named, even personified, cities (13-23, 29-33, 49-66), it depicts a given enemy city (Babylon, Isa 47) as the representative of enemy cities in general; now it portrays the “city of chaos” as an archetype.”

However, in the case of Doyle (2000:222-9), even though he acknowledges the suggestion of Darr (1994b), who, like Biddle (1995), hesitates to identify with the personification of Zion in Isaiah 24-27, Doyle (2000:227) seems to recognize a possible connection and he speaks of “the ultimate restoration of the city to YHWH as his faithful wife with reference to Jerusalem”. In our judgment, both Biddle’s idea of a representative enemy and Doyle’s view of a personal connection with a feminine metaphor are important insights in the study of the city in Isaiah 24-27.

### 3.3.1.3 Jerusalem/Zion and mountain in the book of Isaiah

In examining the use of the term, city, we immediately note that it deeply connects Jerusalem/Zion with the word, Mountain. In Isaiah 24-27, Jerusalem appears twice (24:23; 27:13) while Zion appears once (24:23). Furthermore, the word, Mountain occurs five times (24:23; 25:6, 7, 10; 27:13). Therefore, just as in the study of the city, we shall consider Jerusalem/Zion along with the word, Mountain in relation to judgment and salvation in the book of Isaiah.

#### A. Jerusalem ירושלים (49x)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Hebrew Description</th>
<th>English Description</th>
<th>J/S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:1</td>
<td>זַהְפִּיקַת יְדֵי יְהוָה</td>
<td>Vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:1</td>
<td>אָרֹן יְבִא הַמַּחֲצֵה</td>
<td>Isaiah saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:3</td>
<td>מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה</td>
<td>The word of the Lord from Jerusalem</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:1</td>
<td>יִתְנָה בְּנֵי וֹא הָיָם</td>
<td>The Lord of hosts is taking away from Jerusalem and from Judah</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:8</td>
<td>בְּנֵי הָיוָה מְלֹאךְ יְהוָה</td>
<td>For Jerusalem has stumbled and Judah has fallen</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:3a</td>
<td>וְזֶרֶם יְהוָה דְמָעָה</td>
<td>Remains in Jerusalem will be called holy</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:3b</td>
<td>כֹּלְאֹכְחָנוּ לֵאמֵנִי וּבַיְתָם</td>
<td>Everyone who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:4</td>
<td>אֶת הַמִּלְחָמָה אֲשֶׁר לְאָדָם וּלְיַהֲזָא</td>
<td>The Lord cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:3</td>
<td>זָאָה צַוָּה יְהוָה אֶת הָעֵדָה שֶׁפֶיְּרוּ</td>
<td>Now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah judge</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3 - Jerusalem in the book of Isaiah
Table 3.4 – Zion in the book of Isaiah

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse Hebrew Description</th>
<th>English Description</th>
<th>J/S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:8</td>
<td>Daughter Zion is left like besieged city</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:27</td>
<td>Zion shall be redeemed by justice</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:3</td>
<td>For out of Zion shall go forth instruction</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:16</td>
<td>Because the daughters of Zion are haughty</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:17</td>
<td>The Lord will afflict the heads of the daughters of Zion</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:3</td>
<td>Whoever is left in Zion will be called holy</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

156 Hebrew (BHS) is Isaiah 64:9 while NRSV is Isaiah 64:10.
C. Jerusalem and Zion in parallel occurrence (17x)

Table 3.5 – Jerusalem/Zion in the book of Isaiah

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Jerusalem and Zion: Parallel</th>
<th>J/S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2:3</td>
<td>Many peoples shall come and say, &quot;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.&quot; For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:3</td>
<td>Whoever is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy, everyone who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem.</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:4</td>
<td>Once the Lord has 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.</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:12</td>
<td>When the Lord has finished all his work on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, he will punish the arrogant boasting of the king of Assyria and his haughty pride.</td>
<td>S/J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:32</td>
<td>This very day he will halt at Nob, he will shake his fist at the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of the daughter of Jerusalem.</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4:4 He has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion S
4:5 The Lord will create over the whole site of Mount Zion S
8:18 The Lord of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion S
10:12 The Lord has finished all his work on Mount Zion J
10:24 My people, who live in Zion, do not be afraid of the Assyrians S
10:32 He will shake his fist at the mount of the daughter of Zion J
12:6 Shout aloud and sing for joy, o inhabitants of Zion S
14:32 What will one answer, “the Lord has founded Zion”? J
16:1 By way of the desert, to the mount of the daughter of Zion J
18:7 Gift will be brought to Mount Zion S
24:23 For the Lord of hosts will reign on mount Zion S
28:16 See, I am laying in Zion a foundation stone J
29:8 Fight against Mount Zion J
30:19 O people in Zion, you shall weep no more S
31:4 The Lord of hosts … fight upon Mount Zion S
31:9 Says the Lord, whose fire is in Zion S
33:5 He filled Zion with justice and righteousness S
33:14 The sinners in Zion are afraid J
33:20 Look on Zion, the city of our appointed festivals! S
34:8 Lord has… vengeance, a year of vindication by Zion’s cause J
35:10 Come to Zion with singing S
37:22 She scorns you—virgin daughter Zion J
37:32 From Mount Zion a band of survivors S
40:9 Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good S
41:27 I first have declared it to Zion S
46:13 I will put salvation in Zion for Israel my glory. S
49:14 But Zion said, “The Lord has forsaken me,” S
51:3 Come to Zion with singing S
51:10 I will comfort Zion S
51:11 Come to Zion with singing S
52:1 Awake, put on your strength, O Zion! S
52:2 Lose the bonds from your neck, O captive daughter Zion S
52:7 Who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.” S
52:8 They see the return of the Lord to Zion S
52:9 He will come to Zion as Redeemer S
59:20 He will come to Zion as Redeemer S
60:14 The Lord of the Holy One of Israel S
61:3 To provide for those who mourn in Zion S
62:1 For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent S
62:11 Say to daughter Zion, “see, your salvation comes” S
64:9 Zion has become a wilderness J
66:8 Yet as soon as Zion was in labor she delivered her children S

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of Jerusalem.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Hebrew Description</th>
<th>English Description</th>
<th>Implied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2:2</td>
<td>בַּעַלְיָה</td>
<td>In day to come</td>
<td>Jerusalem S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:2</td>
<td>בַּעַלְיָה</td>
<td>the mountain of the Lord's house</td>
<td>Jerusalem S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:3</td>
<td>לֹא יִשְׁפַּתּ</td>
<td>Shall be established</td>
<td>Jerusalem S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:3</td>
<td>לֹא יִשְׁפַּתּ</td>
<td>the highest of the mountains</td>
<td>Jerusalem S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:14</td>
<td>לְתַלְתֵּי לְתַלְתֵּי</td>
<td>Against all the high mountains</td>
<td>Judah J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:5</td>
<td>יָקָחְתָּ הַיָּמָן</td>
<td>The Lord will create over the whole site of Mount Zion</td>
<td>Jerusalem S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:25</td>
<td>נֹעֲזָה</td>
<td>The mountains quaked</td>
<td>Judah J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:25</td>
<td>נֹעֲזָה</td>
<td>All the mountains, you will not go there</td>
<td>Judah J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:18</td>
<td>נָשַׁא</td>
<td>The Lord of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion</td>
<td>Jerusalem S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:12</td>
<td>נָשַׁא</td>
<td>The Lord has finished all his work on Mount Zion</td>
<td>Jerusalem J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:32</td>
<td>נֶפֶשׁ רָעָה</td>
<td>He will shake his fist at the mount of daughter of Zion</td>
<td>Jerusalem J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:9</td>
<td>נָשַׁא</td>
<td>They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain</td>
<td>Jerusalem S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:2</td>
<td>נֹעֲזָה</td>
<td>On a bare mountain raise a signal</td>
<td>Babylon J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:4</td>
<td>נֹעֲזָה</td>
<td>Listen, a tumult on the mountains</td>
<td>Babylon J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:13</td>
<td>נֹעֲזָה</td>
<td>I will sit on the mountain of assembly</td>
<td>Babylon J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:25</td>
<td>נֹעֲזָה</td>
<td>On my mountains? trample him under foot</td>
<td>Assyria J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:1</td>
<td>נֹעֲזָה</td>
<td>way of the desert, to the mount of daughter Zion</td>
<td>Moab J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:13</td>
<td>נֹעֲזָה</td>
<td>Chased like chaff on the mountains before wind</td>
<td>Israel J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:3</td>
<td>נָשַׁא</td>
<td>When a signal is raised on the mountains, look!</td>
<td>Cush J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:6</td>
<td>נָשַׁא</td>
<td>They shall all be left to the birds of prey of the mountains</td>
<td>Cush J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:7</td>
<td>נָשַׁא</td>
<td>Gifts will be brought to Mount Zion</td>
<td>Jerusalem S</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. Mountain רַם (57x)


Table 3.6 – Mountain in the book of Isaiah

157 It seems to be Jerusalem. Here, the object of God’s judgment is Assyria.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22:5</td>
<td>A cry for help to the mountain&lt;sup&gt;158&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Jerusalem J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24:23</td>
<td>For the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion</td>
<td>Zion S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25:6</td>
<td>On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make...</td>
<td>Zion S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25:7</td>
<td>He will destroy on this mountain</td>
<td>Zion J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25:10</td>
<td>The hand of the Lord will rest on this mountain</td>
<td>Zion S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27:13</td>
<td>Worship the Lord on the holy mountain</td>
<td>Jerusalem S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28:21</td>
<td>For the Lord will rise up as on Mount Perazim</td>
<td>Perazim J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29:4</td>
<td>Fight against Mount Zion</td>
<td>Zion J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30:17</td>
<td>Left like a flagstaff on the top of a mountain</td>
<td>Judah J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30:25</td>
<td>On every lofty mountain...brooks running...water</td>
<td>Zion S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30:29</td>
<td>Sound of the flute to go to the mountain of Lord&lt;sup&gt;159&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Assyria J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31:4</td>
<td>The Lord of hosts...fight upon Mount Zion</td>
<td>Zion S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33:3</td>
<td>The mountain shall flow with their blood</td>
<td>Nations J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37:24</td>
<td>I have gone up the heights of the mountain&lt;sup&gt;160&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Assyria J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37:32</td>
<td>From Mount Zion a band of survivors...</td>
<td>Zion S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40:4</td>
<td>Every mountain&lt;sup&gt;161&lt;/sup&gt; and hill be made low</td>
<td>Jerusalem S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40:9</td>
<td>Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion</td>
<td>Zion S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40:12</td>
<td>Weighed the mountains in scales&lt;sup&gt;162&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Judah S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41:15</td>
<td>You shall thresh the mountains and crush them&lt;sup&gt;163&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Nations J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42:11</td>
<td>Let them shout from the tops of the mountains</td>
<td>Judah S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42:15</td>
<td>I will lay waste mountains&lt;sup&gt;164&lt;/sup&gt; and hills</td>
<td>Judah S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44:23</td>
<td>Break forth into singing, O mountains</td>
<td>Israel S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49:11</td>
<td>I will turn all my mountains into a road</td>
<td>Zion S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49:13</td>
<td>O mountain, into singing!</td>
<td>Zion S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52:7</td>
<td>How beautiful upon the mountains</td>
<td>Zion S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54:10</td>
<td>The mountains may depart...my steadfast love not...</td>
<td>Zion S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55:12</td>
<td>Be led back in peace; the mountain shall burst forth into singing</td>
<td>Zion S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56:7</td>
<td>These I will bring to my holy mountain</td>
<td>Zion S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57:7</td>
<td>Upon a high and lofty mountain</td>
<td>Israel J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57:13</td>
<td>Inherit my holy mountain</td>
<td>Israel S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63:19</td>
<td>So that the mountains would quake...&lt;sup&gt;165&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Babylon J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64:2</td>
<td>You came down, the mountains quaked...&lt;sup&gt;166&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Babylon J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65:7</td>
<td>Because they offered incense on the mountain</td>
<td>Judah J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65:9</td>
<td>From Judah inheritors of my mountains</td>
<td>Judah S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65:11</td>
<td>Who forget my holy mountain</td>
<td>Jerusalem J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65:25</td>
<td>They shall not hurt on all my holy mountain</td>
<td>Jerusalem S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66:20</td>
<td>They shall bring...to my holy mountain Jerusalem</td>
<td>Jerusalem S</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above charts, certain points can be observed. First of all, the term of Jerusalem (which appears 49 times) is interchangeable with Zion (which appears 47 times) and both Jerusalem and Zion are parallel to each other 17 times. The interesting point is that a typical feminine expression, “daughter Zion” appears about nine times. Moreover, this phrase is rendered as the “virgin daughter Zion” and is compared with “daughter Jerusalem” as synonyms in 37:22 (Follis 1992:1105). The above observation has made some scholars to...

<sup>158</sup> NRSV translates it as plural “mountains” but the Hebrew text is singular.

<sup>159</sup> Here, “the mountain of the Lord” may imply Jerusalem/Zion.

<sup>160</sup> This context is God’s announcement of judgement on Sennacherib who gathers the nations.

<sup>161</sup> This is a song for God’s people who are coming home from Babylonian exile.

<sup>162</sup> The context is God’s salvation on Judah illustrating God’s mighty power in creation.

<sup>163</sup> In this context, God encourages Israel while He punishes the nations.

<sup>164</sup> In this, context of a hymn of praise, God blesses Judah while He judges the nations.

<sup>165</sup> The Hebrew text is Isaiah 63:19 but English translations are Isaiah 64:1 (cf. NRSV).

<sup>166</sup> In Hebrew, it is Isaiah 64:2 but in English, it is Isaiah 64:3.
conclude that Jerusalem and Zion are almost interchangeable (Groves 2005:1020) while some others scholars distinguish between Zion and Jerusalem (Berges 2001:54-82). However, as noted earlier, Jerusalem and Zion\textsuperscript{167} are deeply connected in the book of Isaiah. Indeed, as the above table shows, this motif of Jerusalem/Zion is associated with all the three parts of the book of Isaiah (Rendtorff 1993a:167), and functions as an “inclusio” on which the entire book is composed; Isaiah begins and concludes with an emphasis on Zion/Jerusalem (Wells 2000:132). Furthermore, in the same way as the city, Jerusalem/Zion is primarily linked to the object of God’s judgment and salvation in a dialectical relationship (cf. Ryken 1998c:980; Walker 2004:589-92) and God’s judgment is more in First Isaiah than in Second and Third Isaiah which focus largely on God’s salvation. Eventually, Jerusalem/Zion is experiences God’s salvation and care, but in contrast, other nations face God’s judgment. This is an important indication that Jerusalem/Zion is the focal place where God’s grand drama is enacted (Carr 1996:188-218). It is not exaggeration to say that without Jerusalem/Zion, it will be difficult to picture God’s redemptive work, for “the centrality of Jerusalem/Zion is as God’s chosen dwelling place, climaxing in this divine deliverance” (Schultz 2005:343).

Regarding the word, mountain, which appears 57 times, it is also deeply linked with Jerusalem/Zion, especially Zion, i.e. the phrase, “Mount Zion” appears about eight times. People’s pilgrimage to Zion the holy mountain/ Jerusalem in peace (Eaton 1997:83) is one of the grand motifs in the book of Isaiah (cf. 2:2-4; 66:18-23; \textit{Die Völkerwallfahrt zum Zion} Wildberger 1957:62-81; see also Van der Ven, Dreyer & Pieterse 2004:163).

Concerning Isaiah 24-27, what can we learn from the above analysis? First of all, like the book of Isaiah, Mount Zion/Jerusalem is vividly associated with God’s cosmic drama of judgment and salvation in Isaiah 24-27. For instance, in Mount Zion/Jerusalem, God will manifest his kingship (24:23); in the same place, he will celebrate his great feast inviting not only his people but all the people and nations and finally, he will defeat death (25:6-8; cf. Eissfeldt 1965:323). Eventually, on the holy mountain of Zion/Jerusalem, people from all nations will come to worship the living God (27:12-13). Another important point is that in the midst of the apocalyptic crisis, even though Mount Zion/Jerusalem go through purification during God’s judgment, it will ultimately remain unharmed (cf. the notion of “Zion’s inviolability;” Hayes 1963:419-26); and will become a shelter for the righteous nation on that day (25:4-5; 26:2; cf. Seitz 1993:182-3).

\textsuperscript{167} We shall deal with the so-called “Zion theology or tradition” under ideological and theological texture.
3.3.2 Social code – “on (in) that day” in the book of Isaiah

Under the social code, we shall address the eschatological-apocalyptic phenomenon that would occur “on (in) that day” in the book of Isaiah as well as the uses of the expression, “on that day” in terms of judgment and salvation. The phrase “on (in) that day” appears seven times in Isaiah 24-27: 24:21; 25:9; 26:1; 27:1, 2, 12, 13.

Table 3.7 – ‘On that day’ in the book of Isaiah

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Hebrew Description</th>
<th>English Description</th>
<th>Connection</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2:11</td>
<td>בָּא הַיּוֹם אֶל הַיָּמִים בָּא הַיּוֹם</td>
<td>The pride of everyone shall be humble in that day</td>
<td>House of Jacob</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:17</td>
<td>הַיּוֹם הַבְּרָאתִים הָאֵלֶּה</td>
<td>The pride of everyone shall be brought low on that day</td>
<td>Arrogance</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:20</td>
<td>יִקְּבֹר הָעִיר יִקְּבֹר הָעִיר</td>
<td>On that day people will throw away</td>
<td>Arrogance</td>
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165 NRSV translates it as “from that day” but the Hebrew literal meaning is “on that day.”
166 This context implies a connection with a mountain and this may be associated with Jerusalem/Zion.
An important study of the expression “on that day” has been conducted by DeVries (1975) in his, *Yesterday Today, and Tomorrow: Time and History in the Old Testament*. According to DeVries, the occurrence of the phrase, “on that day,” can be grouped into several categories which can be associated with God’s future judgment and salvation in the book of Isaiah. For instance, DeVries (1975:295-331) claims that within the prophetic corpus, there are: (a) Glosses (4:1); (b) Incorporating supplements; (c) Transitional formulae (3:7; 22:20, 25; 29:18; 30:23); and (d) Concluding formulae (2:11, 17; 10:27; 20:6; 27:1; 31:7; 52:6). In our opinion, DeVries’ incorporating supplements appear to be more related to the important motif of this study, that is, God’s judgment and salvation (1975:298-310):

1) Judgment against Israel, expanding judgment against Israel (cf. 2:20; 3:18; 5:30; 7:18, 20, 23)
2) Judgment against the nations, expanding judgment against the nations (cf. 17:9; 19:16, 19; 23:15)
3) Judgment against Israel, expanding judgment against the nations (cf. 17:4)
4) Salvation, expanding salvation (cf. 11:10f; 12:1, 4)
5) Salvation, expanding judgment against the nations (cf. 10:20; 17:7; 19:18, 21, 23, 24)
6) Salvation, expanding judgment on Israel (cf. 4:2; 7:21; 28:5)

From DeVries’ study, it can be noted that “on that day” in the book of Isaiah is mainly associated with God’s judgment and salvation on Israel and the nations in the distant future. Furthermore, the above table shows that this time expression is mainly found in the so-called First Isaiah. There is only one reference in Second Isaiah (Isa52:6).

The important question is, “What does the above study reveal about Isaiah 24-27? First, the author of Isaiah 24-27 applies this time phrase “on that day” to the eschatological-apocalyptic moment (Prinsloo 1987:88). Another important observation is that in the book of Isaiah, the expression, “on that day” is used in the context of God’s judgment and salvation upon limited regions such as Israel and other nations. However, the milieu of Isaiah 27-27 is somewhat different; even though the focus of God’s judgment and salvation is limited to Mount

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170 The image of the vineyard implies Jerusalem/Zion (cf. Isaiah 5:1-7).
171 The context here is the judgment on Ephraim’s leaders.
Zion/Jerusalem and its inhabitants, it is also extended universally to include heaven, the earth, and the inhabitants of the earth. Finally, as in the book of Isaiah, the writer emphasizes the grand theme that God’s judgment is inevitable even on his people and his chosen place, Mount Zion/Jerusalem; but that is not an end of story. God’s love and salvation will prevail “on that day” in the holy mountain Zion/Jerusalem where righteous people will worship him.

3.3.3 Social relationship


Isaiah 24:2 and Hosea 4:9

Isaiah 24:2

\[2 \text{And it shall be like the people, like the priest; like the slave, like his master; like the maid, like her mistress; like the buyer, like the seller; like the lender, like the borrower; like the creditor, like the debtor.}\]

Hosea 4:9

\[9 \text{And it shall be like people, like priest; I will punish them for their ways, and repay them for their deeds.}\]

Isaiah 24:2 and Ezekiel 7:12

Ezekiel 7:12

\[12 \text{The time has come, the day draws near; let not the buyer rejoice, nor the seller mourn, for wrath is upon all their multitude.}\]

In the context of Hosea 4:9, the author notes that God accuses Israel because the people are guilty of swearing, lying, and murder; and stealing and adultery break out; bloodshed follows bloodshed (4:2). They also fail to gain the knowledge of God (4:1, 6). Therefore, God will punish them and the result will be “like people, like priest.” God rejects both the religious
leaders (priests) and the lay people (4:9). Similarly, Ezekiel 7:12 can be compared to Hosea 4:9, in a sense, even though the stress is more on the economic life: “the buyer” and “the seller”. The texts both describe God’s impeding judgment on Israel because of their moral and religious behaviours: *I will judge you according to your ways and I will punish you for all your abominations* (7:3b).

The writer of Isaiah 24:2 seems to have in mind Hosea 4:9 and Ezekiel 7:17 in reference to different groups of people and roles in the society, that is, people and priest (cultic, religious life); master and servant (domestic, household); buyer/seller and lender/borrower, creditor/debtor (economic world) who will be under God’s judgment (cf. Calvin 1948:167-8; Clements 1980:201; Hayes & Irvine 1987:300; Brueggemann 1998:190; Childs 2001:178; Tucker 2001:211). However, the main difference is that, concerning God’s punishment, the author of Isaiah 24:2 applies these relationships in a universalizing direction (cf. Delitzsch 1889:421; Sweeney 1988b:44). In other words, God’s judgment extends to a broader region and to more people: the earth and its inhabitants in the eschatological-apocalyptic time.

### 3.4 Conclusion

We have attempted to study the intertexture of Isaiah 24-27 using Robbins’ three kinds of intertexture: 1) oral-scribal intertexture; 2) cultural intertexture; and 3) social intertexture.

Form the above study, a summary table which indicates the intertexture of Isaiah 24-27 has been provided. In the process, we admitted that it is possible for some other people to come up with a different suggestion. We have therefore tried to come to terms with major scholars’ views in accomplishing this difficult task. The table which follows represents a summary of the oral-scribal intertexture and cultural intertexture:

### Table 3.8 - Oral-scribal intertexture and cultural intertexture

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<td>Prophet</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Leviathan Rahab</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prophet</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Leviathan Serpent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Prophet</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>Dragon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some observations can be drawn from the above summary. First, the influence of other parts of the book of Isaiah on Isaiah 24-27 can be observed thus: in the so-called First Isaiah - about 12 times; in Second Isaiah - about four times and in Third Isaiah - once. The summary shows that Isaiah 24-27 is most connected to First Isaiah and shows some influence of Second Isaiah but the least association with Third Isaiah. Thus, it seems as if the connection is against many scholars’ opinions which consider Isaiah 24-27 a late addition and that it should be recognized as “Fourth Isaiah” or “Isaiah apocalypse”.

Secondly, the author of Isaiah 24-27 seemed to be well-acquainted with ancient Near Eastern literatures such as Akkadian Myths (cf. Enûma eliš; Descent of Ishtar to the Nether World); Ugaritic Myths (cf. Poems on Baal and Anath; Baal and Lotan); Hittite Myths (cf. The myth of Illuyankas); and Egyptian Oracles and Prophecy (cf. The prophecy of Neferti). From the rhetorical point of view, the author of Isaiah 24-27 re-applies these literatures, which, at that time, were somehow familiar to the audience/reader to persuade them and to project into the future.

Finally, the author of Isaiah 24-27 was influenced by or influenced other parts of the Hebrew Bible quite extensively: Torah - about 12 times; Nebi’im - about 10 times; and Kethuvim - about six times. This suggests that the author of Isaiah 24-27 intentionally applied Jewish biblical tradition to the reader/audience. Thus, it seems that Isaiah 24-27 as a framework, and the Old Testament as a whole, are in dialogue with each other (McConville 2002: xxviii).

Table 3.9 – Isaiah 24-27 in relation to other texts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hebrew Bible</th>
<th>Appearance</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Theological Tradition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Torah</td>
<td>Gen 1:2</td>
<td>Creation</td>
<td>Pentateuch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen 6:13;</td>
<td>The great flood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen 7:11b;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen 7:16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen 8:2b</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen 9:16</td>
<td>Covenant with Noah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen 11:8-9</td>
<td>The tower of Babel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ex 12:22-23</td>
<td>Passover</td>
<td>Pentateuch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ex 24:9-11</td>
<td>On the Mount with God</td>
<td>USBT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lev 18:24-30</td>
<td>Purification from defilement</td>
<td>Holiness code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Num 33:33</td>
<td>Blood pollution</td>
<td>Pentateuch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deut 28</td>
<td>Blessing and cursing</td>
<td>Deuteronomistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Kings 3:7</td>
<td>Solomon’s prayer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jer 23:10</td>
<td>False Prophets</td>
<td>Prophet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In sum, it is clear that many oral-scribal intertextures and cultural intertextures have influenced Isaiah 24-27. However the main issue is that the author of Isaiah 24-27 has re-applied other Scriptures and ancient Near Eastern texts to describe God’s universal judgment and salvation in an eschatological-apocalyptic time.

3) Social intertexture

Under social intertexture, we examined the city in connection with Mount Zion/Jerusalem in terms of God’s judgment and salvation. Furthermore, under social code, we focused on the eschatological-apocalyptic phenomenon that is expressed in the phrase, “on (in) that day.”

First, we noted that the city (מַיִם and מִיִּתי) appears 55 times in the book of Isaiah and in Isaiah 24-27, appears nine times: 24:10; 24:12; 25:2 (3x), 3; 26:1, 5; and 27:10. From the illustration table, it is shown that the city in Isaiah is mainly regarded as the object of God’s judgment and salvation. This trend is also depicted in Isaiah 24-27 but in a slightly different way. For instance, the city is depicted as being predominantly under God’s judgment (cf. “the city of chaos” - 24:10; “the palace of aliens” - 25:2; “the lofty city” - 26:5; “the fortified city” - 27:10) but another city, under God’s salvation, also comes into the picture (cf. Mount Zion/Jerusalem; 24:21; 25:6-8; 26:1; 27:12-13). What more, the dialectical sequence of God’s judgment and salvation on the city will happen “on that day.”

Second, we observed that in the book of Isaiah, Jerusalem appears 49 times (but in Isa 24-27, twice) while Zion occurs 47 times (but in Isa 24-27, only once). Moreover, Zion and Jerusalem are found in parallel usage; 17 times and both are associated with the three parts of the book of Isaiah as the focal place where God’s grand drama is performed and as the object of God’s judgment and salvation in a dialectical relationship. On the other hand, the word, mountain appears in the book of Isaiah 57 times; and five times in Isaiah 24-27 while the phrase, “Mount Zion” appears about eight times and is profoundly associated with
Jerusalem/Zion, especially Zion, where people go on pilgrimage. Thus, in Isaiah 24-27, Mount Zion/Jerusalem is colourfully portrayed in God’s grand drama of judgment and salvation as the place that will eventually come under God’s protection and become a refuge for the righteous nations in God’s eschatological-apocalyptic time.

Finally, the expression, “on that day,” appears 45 times in the book of Isaiah and seven times in Isaiah 24-27. In the book of Isaiah, it is mainly connected with God’s judgment and salvation of Israel and the nations in a future time but in Isaiah 24-27, it is applied to God’s eschatological-apocalyptic moment and in the context of a universal phenomenon. The author stresses that God’s love and salvation will ultimately triumph “on that day”, in that apocalyptic time on the holy mountain Zion/Jerusalem where the righteous nation and people will worship the living God.
Chapter 4

Social and cultural texture of Isaiah 24-27

In the previous chapter, we examined the intertexture of Isaiah 24-27 based on Robbins’ three kinds of intertexture: 1) oral-scribal intertexture; 2) cultural intertexture; 3) social intertexture. The analysis shows that far from being just a soliloquy, Isaiah 24-27 contains diverse voices i.e., from the Pentateuch; prophetic literatures, Wisdom and even ancient Near Eastern literatures. Consequently, the social and cultural texture of Isaiah 24-27 are analyzed based on the knowledge of intertexture. Here, the focus is not just on the intertexture of the text but on its social and cultural nature (Robbins 1996a:144, 1996b:71).

Social and cultural texture (also called “social-scientific criticism”) is especially influenced by sociological and anthropological theories in searching the character of the social and cultural voices in the text (cf. Klein et al 1992:443; Martin 1993:103; Robbins 1996b:71). Even though this approach is a recent development in biblical study (from around 1970s onwards; cf. Whitelam 1998:35), it has long influenced sociology especially in the 19th and 20th centuries. For instance, Karl Marx focused on the economic and social dimensions of historical change while Ernst Troeltsch emphasized sect-church typology. Another thoughtful and prominent socialist, Max Weber, concentrated on the study of Israelite prophets from the viewpoint of charisma and its routinization whereas Émile Durkheim studied society as an integrated whole, that is, as an “organic” community. Furthermore, Mary Douglas examined the social and religious implication of ritual purity even as Edmund Leech investigated the structural explanation of sacrifice. For his part, J.G Peristiany highlights the concepts of honor and shame as fundamental principles in Mediterranean societies, etcetera (cf. Wilson 1984:13-6; Mayes 1989; Gottwald 1992:80).

In biblical studies, especially in the Old Testament, the influence of the above-mentioned works is reflected mainly in the sociological and anthropological approaches of several scholars172 including biblical prophets and other religious leaders (Lindblom 1962; MeKane 1979; Blenkinsopp 1983, 1995; Tucker 1985; Sawyer 1987; Grabbe 1995; cf. Carroll 1997:78-108) welcomes this social science approach but also notes that some problems are involved; these he refers to as “sociology of knowledge: modernism.” In other words, our modern social assumptions may affect our understanding of ancient societies: “a modern tendency to assume society’s prerequisite need for formal institutions may interfere when reconstructing the tradition-process behind the Hebrew prophets by limiting scholars’ pre-understanding (and therefore limiting the number of intelligible options available to them)” (Herion 1997:81, cf. Mayes 1989:120-4; 1993:39).
Regarding the sociological approach, Malamat (1976) focuses on Israelite leaders or judges from the perspective of Weber’s charismatic person. For Hanson (1979, 2001), the focus is on the social and religious conflicts, especially between “the priestly-Zadokite” and “the visionary,” which eventually led to the emergence of the Israelite apocalyptic movement. Gottwald (1979, 1985) who is deeply influenced by Marx’s theory, insists that the nation of Israel emerged from a peasants’ revolt which was chiefly initiated by the dedication to an egalitarian social structure and a monotheistic belief. In Frick’s (1977) work, *The City in Ancient Israel*, he applies the typology of Sjoberg to ancient Israelite society. The main argument is that the distinction between the pre-industrial and the industrial city is compared to the urban and the rural city in ancient Israel. For his part, Petersen (1981) uses the role theory to analyze the various social functions of Israelite prophets. He focuses on two main types of social functions namely peripheral possessions’ prophecy such as Elijah and Elisha’s and central morality prophecy such as Isaiah and Jeremiah’s (cf. Wilson 1984:26-7; Culley 1985:184-9; Carroll 1989:204; Mayes 1989; Gottwald 1992:81).

In the case of the anthropological approach, Mendenhall (1973) works on the reconstruction of the ancient Israelite state before the monarchy became decisively established through ethnological theories. Wilson’s (1980, 1984) main study in which the anthropological approach is used (Lewis 1971), describes the social functions of Israelite prophecy as an “intermediary” role that requires the co-operation and support of the society. As for Carroll (1977, 1979, 1980), he takes into account the cultural relativity of our contemporary societies as he applies the social psychological theory of “cognitive dissonance” to ancient Israelite prophets. Another scholar who uses the anthropological approach is Overholt (1982, 1989). His study focuses on American Indian ethnographers and their American Indian Ghost Dance movement which addresses peoples’ responses such as “acceptance, rejection and indifference” when the prophets deliver divine messages. For Overholt, this phenomenon is somehow connected to the process of Israelite prophecy (cf. Petersen 1981:20; Buss 1982:9-30; Wilson 1984:27, 1985:352-4; Rogerson 1989:26; Domeris 1994:160-166; Rodd 1997:29).

The present chapter is primarily concerned with the socio-cultural setting in Isaiah 24-27 in terms of its different stages such as the pre-exilic, the exilic, and the post-exilic. Thereafter, the social texture of Isaiah 24-27 will discussed. One way of examining this subject is to shift the focus from religious reactions to the social circumstances. In this regard, we shall consider

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173 Some scholars (cf. Long 1977, 1982:31-53; Carroll 1977, 1979, 1980) also try to understand the specific religious phenomenon as prophetic conflict, that is, using social psychology and cognitive dissonance theory.
Robbins’ (1996a: 147-50; 1996b: 72-4), categorization of Bryan Wilson’s typology of religious groups into seven major responses (the conversionist, the revolutionist, the introversionist, the gnostic-manipulationist, the thaumaturgical, the reformist, and the utopian) to the world. Finally, concerning the cultural texture, Robbins’ five types of culture rhetoric will be used.

4.1 Social-cultural settings in different periods

The subject of socio-cultural setting shall be addressed here because the Scripture, especially our text, Isaiah 24-27, was not written or delivered in a socio-cultural vacuum (cf. Gitay 1997: 63-72; Polaski 1999: 20). It was transmitted in real social situations (McKenzie 2005: 69). Thus, our concern here is how different real audiences (“implied readers”) understand the city in terms of God’s judgment and salvation within the prophetic eschatological-apocalyptic Sitz im Leben. Concerning the city, therefore, it is possible to hear different voices in different periods (i.e. pre-exilic, exilic, and post-exilic). For this reason, we shall pay attention to the pre-exilic, the exilic, and the post-exilic periods because, as shown in Chapter 1 of this study, many scholars suggest that Isaiah 24-27 might be connected to these three periods. Consequently, it is our belief that the study of this kind of social-cultural setting is an important process in understanding the “social and cultural texture of Isaiah 24-27.” However, we also acknowledge that our study of the different periods is a tentative attempt because there is no clear indication of the historical background of Isaiah 24-27.

4.1.1 Pre-exilic faith community

In this segment, we shall consider the socio-cultural background of Isaiah 24-27 in relation to the Iron Age II, especially the eighth and seven centuries. In a sense, this kind of dating contradicts the view of many critical scholars who associate Isaiah 24-27 with a later period. As we take into account their view in the section which follows under the exilic and post-exilic period, it is equally important to acknowledge that some scholars support an early dating as we have noted in Chapter 1. However, it is clear that critical scholars base their assumptions or postulations on a particular period, i.e. exilic or post-exilic period (Baloyi 2007: 105-23).

Concerning the time frame between the Iron Age and the Hellenistic period\(^{174}\) in Palestine, the approximate archaeological periods proposed by some scholars (cf. Mazar 1990: 30;

\(^{174}\) We are aware that, at times, scholars do not agree on the different archaeological periods. For example, Miller and Hayes (1986: 26-7) identify the Persian Period as 600-332 BCE and the Hellenistic Period as 332/3-63 BCE.
The social-political situation

According to Isaiah 1:1, Isaiah’s vision covers the period of four different kings in Judah: *The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, the Kings of Judah.* Thus, some scholars (cf. Bright 1981:290-292; Miller & Hayes 1986:340-341; Blenkinsopp 2000:98; McConville 2002:1-2) indicate that Isaiah’s main work is mixed up with several important political events such as the reign of Tiglath-pileser III in Assyria and Ahaz’s alliance with Tiglath-pileser (734-732) during the Syro-Ephramite war; Sargon II’s war against Philistia (713-711); Hezekiah’s alliances with Egypt, and finally, Sennacherib’s war (705-701) during Hezekiah’s revolt. Consequently, it seems inevitable that these international political situations are deeply embedded in the work of Isaiah and his message (Greenberg 1979:114).

Following this observation, it becomes imperative to understand the political situation at the time of Isaiah. Even though some chronological difficulties are inevitable, the political leaders and their times of reign in Judah and in the neighbouring countries are listed below (cf. Albright 1945:16-22; Bright 1981:471; Miller & Hayes 1986:350-1; Blenkinsopp 2000:105; Matthews 2002:78):

**Table 4.1 Political situation at the time of Isaiah**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judah</th>
<th>Assyria</th>
<th>Babylonia</th>
<th>Egypt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uzziah (783-742)</td>
<td>Tiglath-pileser III (745-727)</td>
<td>Merodach-baladan (721-710 and 703)</td>
<td>Osorkon IV (720-715)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jotham (742-735)</td>
<td>Shalmaneser V (726-722)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Shabaka (712-697)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahaz (735-715)</td>
<td>Sargon II (721-705)</td>
<td>Nebuchadnezzar (605-562)</td>
<td>Necho II (609-595)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hezekiah (715-687)</td>
<td>Sennacherib (704-681)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josiah (640-609)</td>
<td>Ashurbanipal (667-627)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, according to Weinfeld (1979:54), in the time of Isaiah, there was a pivotal moment which affected not only Judean history but also the world. It was the appearance of
the new superpower, Tiglath-pileser III in Assyria: “The ascent to power of Tiglath-pileser III was a turning-point in the history of mankind, where for the first time a superpower swallowed up smaller nations, terminating their aspirations, struggles, and hopes”.

Consequently, in this global power game between Assyria and Egypt, Judah could have a short opportunity for its independence through tricky military policy and alliances but this also brought with it heavy consequences as in Assyria’s forceful control and taxation of Judah (cf. Albertz 1994:167-70; Matthews 2002:78). This heavy taxation by Assyria inevitably affected the Judean society in a very negative way (Hopkins 1996:138-9).

The political situation on both the internal and the international levels, without doubt, influenced the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. This is primarily well-demonstrated in population changes. The demographic study of Palestine in the Iron II period is somewhat debatable and a difficult task. Recently, the Palestinian archaeologists, I. Finkelstein and M. Broshi, reconfigured some previous studies, which are said to be based mainly on biblical statements; these studies include Albright’s figure which put Palestine’s population in the eighth century BCE at approximately one million and Baron’s estimate of between one million and 1.3 million. Finkelstein (1993:59-66) and Broshi (1993:17) who both claim that their studies are founded on new archaeological information, suggest that in the eighth century, the combined population of the two kingdoms was approximately 460 000 (Israel: + 350 000 and Judah: + 110 000; cf. McNutt 1999:151). Consequently, Finkelstein (1993:63) points out the interesting phenomenon that the suggested population, especially that of the kingdom of Judah, noticeably changed: “In the 10th century, the sedentary population of the Judean Hills was only ca. 3 percent of the total population of the country, as compared to ca. 10 percent in the 8th century B.C.E. and ca. 20 percent in the 7th century B.C.E.” This kind of dramatic shift in population suggests that the population of Israel declined considerably (McNutt 1999:151). It is argued that this shift was the outcome of “two waves of immigration into Judah: one after the fall of Samaria in 721 BCE and the other after Sennacherib’s campaign of 701 BCE” (Broshi 1993:17; cf. Avigad 1980:55; Mazar 1992:101; Shiloh 1993:704). According to Avigad (1980:46-8), one of the archaeological evidences of city development, especially in Jerusalem, is the fortification wall which is forty meters long and seven meters wide, at the site of which “Iron Age II pottery and the same red earth were found”.

The above phenomenon can be described as “the development of urbanization” which is a major character shift from Iron Age I to Iron Age II (McNutt 1999:151). Moreover, it can be
presumed that this kind of sudden increase in population and urbanization could cause a lot of problems in the society, especially in the city, which is characterized in the Bible. Without doubt, some of these social conflicts in the city of Jerusalem are clearly described in the book of Isaiah (cf. 1:21-23):

21 How the faithful city has become a whore! She that was full of justice, righteousness lodged in her - but now murderers! 22 Your silver has become dross, your wine is mixed with water. 23 Your princes are rebels and companions of thieves. Everyone loves a bribe and runs after gifts. They do not defend the orphan, and the widow's cause does not come before them.

Furthermore, as the texts indicate, these kind of social abuses are mainly initiated by social authorities and elite groups (Dearman 1988:60):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Isaiah</th>
<th>Title Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:17</td>
<td>Exhortation for justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:21-28</td>
<td>Officials (שְׁרוֹן)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Judges (שָׁאוֹר)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Counselors (שְׁפִלָּה)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thieves, bribery, corruption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:2</td>
<td>Judge (שָׁאוֹר)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Removed from the land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:14</td>
<td>Officials (שְׁרוֹן)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elders (שְׁפִלָּה)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plunder the poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:1-2</td>
<td>Administrators (שְׁרוֹן)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perversion of justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plunder of widows (שָׁאוֹר)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>orphans (שְׁפִלָּה)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Perhaps the socio-political situation discussed above can account for the reason why so many times the prophets’ messages focused on justice and righteousness (Zimmerli 1985:249). Their messages are prophetic criticisms of social abuses and were meant to “challenge the state of society as a whole” (Albertz 1994:159). Consequently, messages probably stirred up the gap between the “upper class and lower class” (Reviv 1979:145. cf. De Vaux 1997:73)175. As Sparks (1998:195) rightly indicates, these social conflicts between different classes “played an important role in Southern prophetic traditions.” In the area of religion, there were “official (national) and ‘popular’ religions” (McNutt 1999:176). The religious distinctions could also evoke social tension and according to Barkay (1992:329), the inclination to highlight the “unification and centralization of the cult at Jerusalem” can lead to criticism of the cult and to syncretism (Albertz 1994:171-5).

175 However, according to Bendor (1996:264-79), even though there were social conflicts, “the kinship group” such as bet ‘ab and mispahab “continued to exist throughout the period from the settlement up to the end of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah;” and that could protect and guard their nahala - “patrimony”. This observation seems to be in contrast with Weber (1952:56-7) and Alt (1959:348-72) who point out some social conflicts as being “urban and rural, elite and peasant” (McNutt 1999:160). In our judgment, even if Bendor’s insight is important for understanding Ancient Israelite society from the perspective of kinship structure, it is also important to consider some of the social classes because “wealth was generally associated with political, military, or even religious power” in the society (McNutt 1999:162).
4.1.2 Exilic faith community

Before studying the socio-cultural situation in detail, we would like to examine a theory which is suggested by Gabriel Barkay, an archeologist specialized in Jerusalem of the Iron Age period. Barkay (1992:305; 1993:106-9) raises some questions on archaeological periods, especially the 586 BCE date, which is regarded as the end of the Iron Age period. For Barkay (1992:305), the problem is that such dating is mainly based on “historical considerations” rather than “the material culture.” In addition, he argues that the misunderstanding is deeply rooted in certain beliefs that some modern scholars hold; the “propaganda” of exilic ideology176: “It was probably the traumatic destruction of the First Temple which made the returnees’ ideological position regarding Jerusalem as uninhabited prior to their arrival there acceptable to later generations” (1993:107).

What therefore is Barkay’s proposal? According to him, the fall of Jerusalem to Babylon in 586 BCE can not be spotted at the end of the Iron Age material culture. The Iron Age material culture came to an end “only at the end of the sixth century, when Persian authority was established” (Barkay 1992:373). It seems that Barkay’s conclusion is influenced by Albright (1949:141-2), who assigned the Babylonian period to the Iron Age III archaeological surveys that took place at places such as Bethel, Gibeah, Mizpah, Beth Zur, etcetera. However, his assertions are based primarily on his personal excavations of sites in Jerusalem such as the burial caves of Ketef Hinnom,177 the burial caves near the Sultan’s Pool, and the west of the Western Hill, where ceramic assemblages were found, indicating “a clear continuation of the Iron Age into the 6th century BCE” (Barkay 1992:373; 1993:109).

We are inclined to disagree with Barkay’s suggestion that the people of the exilic period relied on ideological prejudices but we grant that he rightly indicates an important social-cultural phenomenon which can easily be overlooked. He claims that even though the Jewish symbol, Jerusalem Temple was destroyed and some elite groups were exiled, some people remained in

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176 There are heated debates concerning this matter. For instance, according to Blenkinsopp (2002:169-87), B. Mazar, a late prominent Israeli archaeologist and E. Stern, a leading Israeli archaeologist intentionally supported the so-called “myth of the empty land” or a “tabula rasa” theory in order to sustain the “Judaeo-Babylonian immigrant community;” that became eventually associated with the modern Zionist ideological movement. In our judgment, even though Blenkinsopp has some valuable insight, it is important to maintain a humble and modest attitude when criticizing someone of having a political agenda. Personally, one hopes to see more constructive criticisms based on mutual understanding in scholarly debates; for “real dialogue requires a more concerted effort to understand the presuppositions of the partners in conversation!” (H.L. Bosman 2006:460).

177 These sites probably belonged to some wealthy Jerusalem families and show that life continued after the fall of Jerusalem. For instance, a repository was found which contained: “burial gifts of pottery (more than 260 whole vessels); jewelry (more than a hundred pieces of silver, as well as gold); arrowheads; bone and ivory artifacts; alabaster; beads of various sizes, colors and materials; a piece of pre-blown glass; and a rare early coin” (Shanks 1995:116; cf. Barkay 1994:93-5).
the land who not only carried on with their lives but the culture as well. Indeed, because biblical study is ordinarily based on the text of the Bible, it is difficult to investigate certain material cultures in detail. Therefore, because of this limitation and the idiosyncratic character of the Bible, Barkay’s insight is an important contribution to biblical study, especially to understanding the material culture in the pre-exilic and the exilic period. Some other scholars share this view (cf. Carroll 1992:79-93; McNutt 1999:182-4; Blenkinsopp 2002:169-87).

The social-political situation

Stern (2001: li) proposes the following time frame:

Table 4.3 – Social political situation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judah</th>
<th>Neo-Babylonia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Josiah (640-609)</td>
<td>Nabopolassar (625-605)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jehoahaz (609)</td>
<td>Nebuchadnezzar II (605-562)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jehoiakim (608-598)</td>
<td>Amel Marduk (561-560)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jehoiachin (597)</td>
<td>Nergal Shar Usur (560-556)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zedekiah (596-586)</td>
<td>Nabonidus (556-539)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The period indicated above covered the Babylonian conquest of Judah, especially, the fall of Jerusalem. There is little doubt that the fall of Jerusalem (586 BCE) was a significant event in the Judean society. This is clearly portrayed in 2 Chronicles 36:17-21:

17 Therefore he brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their youths with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or young woman, the aged or the feeble; he gave them all into his hand. 
18 All the vessels of the house of God, large and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and of his officials, all these he brought to Babylon. 
19 They burned the house of God, broke down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its palaces with fire, and destroyed all its precious vessels. 
20 He took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had made up for its sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept sabbath, to fulfil seventy years.

The following Scriptures describe the people who remained in the land:

2 Kings 24:14
14 He carried away all Jerusalem, all the officials, all the warriors, ten thousand captives, all the artisans and the smiths; no one remained, except the poorest people of the land.

2 Kings 25:11-12
11 Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried into exile the rest of the people who were left in the city and the deserters who had defected to the king of Babylon - all the rest of the population. 
12 But the captain of the guard left some of the poorest people of the land to be vinedressers and tillers of the soil.
Jeremiah 39:10
10 Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left in the land of Judah some of the poorest people who owned nothing, and gave them vineyards and fields at the same time.

Jeremiah 40:7
7 When all the leaders of the forces in the open country and their troops heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam governor in the land, and had committed to him men, women, and children, those of the poorest of the land who had not been taken into exile to Babylon,

Jeremiah 52:16
16 But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left some of the poorest people of the land to be vinedressers and tillers of the soil.

2 Chronicles 36:21
21 ...to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had made up for its sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.

Why were the people who remained in the land referred to as “some of the poorest people of the land?” Moreover, 2 Chronicles 36:21 states that the land became an “empty land” (Carroll 1992:79). However, it is clear that the land was not empty (Birch et al 1999:345); therefore, Carroll (1992:79-93) and Albertz (1994:371-2) challenge this idea. We consider this kind of dispute important in theological understanding. It is also inevitable to assume that there were conflicts between the groups in Judah and those in exile (Albertz 1994:373-4). Further, with respect to the people in exile in the Old Testament, three main exilic events are recorded, that is in 597, 586 and 582 BCE (Weinberg 1992:35):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deportation</th>
<th>2 Kings</th>
<th>Jeremiah</th>
<th>2 Chronicles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I 597</td>
<td>24:14</td>
<td>24:1</td>
<td>36:6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24:16</td>
<td>52:28</td>
<td>3023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II 586</td>
<td>25:11</td>
<td>39:9-10</td>
<td>36:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>52:29</td>
<td>832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III ?</td>
<td>25:26</td>
<td>43:5-6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV 582</td>
<td>52:30</td>
<td>745</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Exiles</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>4600</td>
<td>8000-10000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The problem, however, is that the biblical figures are sometimes contradictory and this causes great debates among scholars (Purvis and Meyers 1999:202). For instance, while 2 Kings records a total of eighteen thousand remnants, Jeremiah notes 4600 and 2 Chronicles’ estimate is between eight thousand and ten thousand people. According to Weinberg, even though it is difficult to estimate the number of deported people, his conclusion is that “it would be safe to say the total number of the exiles, plus the emigrants, was about 20,000, or some 10% of the population of Judah” (Weinberg 1992:37; cf. Smith-Christopher 1991:75).
The indication is that most of the people remained in the land of Judah and carried on with their lives there.

Furthermore, the question is, “What class of the people were deported to Babylon? According to the Old Testament, they were mainly the upper class or the elites of the society (Weinberg 1992:37):

Table 4.5 – Social class of exiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deportation</th>
<th>Identity of the exiles</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I 597</td>
<td>Royal court</td>
<td>2 Kgs 24:12, 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Judean aristocracy</td>
<td>2 Kgs 24:14; Jer 24:41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Soldiers and officers</td>
<td>2 Kgs 24:14, 16;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Artisans from Jerusalem</td>
<td>2 Kgs 24:14, 16; Jer 24:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II 586</td>
<td>Representatives of the Priestly and non-Priestly elite</td>
<td>2 Kgs 25:18-20; Jer 52:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘The rest of the people left in the city’ (Jerusalem)</td>
<td>2 Kgs 25:11; Jer 39:9; 52:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60 men from the אֲרֵמָה אִיש</td>
<td>Jer 52:25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nevertheless, the Old Testament also testifies that the people in exile were not only in the Babylonian Gola but also in the Egyptian Gola (cf. Jer 44:1); while some others lived in the Jewish military colony in Elephantine (Albertz 1994:374). According to Smith-Christopher (1991:79), even though the community of Babylonian exiles suffered under a harsh rule, they could carry on their lives in terms of their social and religious commitments:

[T]he exile community was certainly numerous enough to be settled in communities large enough to maintain a clear communal identity, and to have sufficient numbers to reproduce such traditional forms of self-governance as elders, heads of families, and gatherings of elders to hear…..

( Smith-Christopher 1991:76)

On the religious situation in Judah, Miller and Hayes (1986:426) suggest that : “1) Cultic worship continued in Judah during the ‘exilic’ period and 2) Mizpah seems to have been one of the sites of such worship.” Cultic activities probably also continued at the site of the Temple in Jerusalem and three factors support such a claim (Miller & Hayes 1986:426):

1) No reference is made to the destruction or desecration of the Jerusalem altar in conjunction with the Babylonian burning of the Temple (II Kings 25:9). Thus it may have remained in use.
2) The cultic laments in the Book of Lamentations seem to presuppose worship at the site of the destroyed sanctuary and city. 3) When the Persians replaced the Babylonians as the dominant Near Eastern power, they returned the Temple vessels to Jerusalem. This makes more sense if one assumes that they were being returned for use in some ongoing cult.
4.1.3 Post exilic faith community

The social-political situation

According to Bright (1981:360), Albertz (1994:437), and Stern (2001: li), a time frame for the Persian period is proposed thus:

Table 4.6 – Persian period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persia (Achaemenids)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cyrus II (559-529)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambyses II (528-523)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darius I (522-486)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xerxes (485-465)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artaxerxes I (464-424)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darius II (423-405)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artaxerxes II (404-359)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artaxerxes III (358-338)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arses or Xerxes II (338-335)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darius III (335-331)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During this period, Judah was as a Persian province (McNutt 1999:190) and it is significant to note that Isaiah offers an imperial vision of God’s plan which enables human beings to understand both domestic affairs and international politics (Birch et al 1999:312). It is also important to note that even though the so-called “Second Temple period” was launched in 515 BCE, “it would have been impossible to conceive the second temple in the same way as had been the case with the first temple” (Birch et al 1999:418). In other words, it was beyond their expectation and “the achievement of this goal was attended by bitter disappointment” (Bright 1981:368).

Archaeological evidences of the Persian period in Israel include Akko, Shikmonah, Tel Megadim, Dor, Tel Mevorakh, Mikhmoret, Tel Michal, Ashdod, Tell el-Hesi, Tell Jemmeh, Tell Ser’a, Hazor, and Ein Gedi (Stern 1985:69-74). More importantly, these archaeological evidences also offer glimpses to the people’s way of life. In Nehemiah 7 and Ezra 2, we find the following evidence of the structure of the community of those who returned to their homeland from up to 458/457 (Weinberg 1992:27, 42, 80):

Table 4.7 – Statistics of returnees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Collective</th>
<th>Males %*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ‘Men of the people of Israel’</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16 722/15 520</td>
<td>54.9/53.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Collectives named after localities</td>
<td>14/16</td>
<td>8 684/8 635</td>
<td>28.5/29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Levites</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Consequently, Weinberg (1992:42) claims that, “By adding the individual entries, we have a grand total of 31,089 (Neh. 7) or 29,818 (Ezra 2) men. This contradicts the evidence of Neh. 7.66 = Ezra 2.64 - ‘the whole community to a man was 42,360’.” Recently, however, Carter (2001:51) challenged Weinberg’s suggestion that the population ranged “between 13 000 and 21 000 for Yehud in the Persian period according to recent archaeological surveys.”

It is also worth noting that many different communities did not return to Judah but settled in foreign countries:

Jews lived in diverse areas, and most important were Egypt, Syria-Palestine, and Mesopotamia. They preserved the testimonies of their forebears and yet confronted conditions different from those described in that literature. As a result, it would be fundamentally inappropriate to think about Judaism as some sort of monolithic entity. There were multiple voices.

(Birch et al 1999:420)

As for the Judean, Weinberg (1992:53; cf. pp.49-61) claims that “the citizen-temple community (Bürger-Tempel-Gemeinde) of the sixth to fourth century B.C.E.” is constituted around the Temple which was a vital and indispensable foundation.

Nevertheless, there were class conflicts, especially between the priests and the people; and this was a typical Persian period phenomenon (Albertz 1994:570-5). Ezra’s ban on intermarriage is a classic example (Ezra 9-10). Some scholars (cf. Smith-Christopher 1994:243-65; Berquist 1995:117-8) try to explain the phenomenon but according to Hoglund (1992:35), it was a deeply rooted one:

…in a transformation of the Restoration community. The fact that the intermarriage issue is linked to communal self-identity within the postexilic community is vital for establishing boundaries to any analysis of the transformation of the postexilic community in the mid-fifth century.

Other social conflicts involved “the relationship between Jews and Samaritans” (Bright 1981:409). As far as the religious situation was concerned, Hellenization was the main issue as Brueggemann (2002b:150-1) rightly indicates:

First, its mood and intent were cosmopolitan, denying every historical particularism. Second, Hellenization was essentially an urban phenomenon, which focused in the cites and claimed them as vehicles for and expressions of the new vision of universal humanity. Third,
Hellenization was inevitably a program of cultural and intellectual enlightenment that was antithetical to the unquestioning fideism of Ezra.

4.2 Social texture: specific social topics

According to Robbins (1996b:71), the main question that social texture evokes is: “What kind of a social and cultural person would anyone be who lives in the ‘world’ of a particular text?”

Here, an answer to this question will be based on specific social topics which are prompted by B. R. Wilson’s (1969) typology.

4.2.1 Seven religious responses to the world

The following seven responses to the world are the kinds of social rhetoric that can be described as religious discourse (cf. Wilson 1969:364-71, 1973:22-6; Robbins 1996a: 147-50, 1996b:72-4):

1. The Conversionist
   The conversionist response is characterized by a view that the world is corrupt because people are corrupt. If people can be changed, the world will be changed. Salvation is considered to be available not through objective agencies but only by a profound and supernaturally wrought transformation of the self. The world itself will not change, but the presence of a new subjective orientation to it will itself be salvation.

2. The Revolutionist
   The revolutionist response declares that only the destruction of the world - natural world but also, more specifically, the social order - will be sufficient to save people. Supernatural powers must perform the destruction because people lack the power if not to destroy the world then certainly to re-create it. Believers may themselves feel called upon to participate in the process of overturning the world, but they know that they do no more than assist greater powers and give a testimony of faith by their words and deeds.

3. The Introversionist
   The introversionist response views the world as irredeemably evil and considers salvation to be attainable only by the fullest possible withdrawal from it. The self may be purified by renouncing the world and leaving it. This might be an individual response, of course, but as the response of a social movement it leads to the establishment of a separated community preoccupied with its own holiness and its means of insulation from the wider society.

4. The Gnostic-manipulationist
   The gnostic-manipulationist response seeks only a transformed set of relationships — a transformed method of coping with evil through a particular and distinctive knowledge. Whereas the foregoing orientations reject the goals of society as well as the institutionalized means of attaining them and the existing facilities by which people might be saved, the gnostic-manipulationist rejects only the means and the facilities. Salvation is possible in the world, and evil may be overcome if people learn the right means, the secret knowledge, improved techniques, to deal with their problems.

5. The Thaumaturgical
   The thaumaturgical response focuses on the individual's concern for relief from present and specific ills by special dispensations. The request for supernatural help is personal and local,
and its operation is magical. Salvation is immediate but has no general application beyond the
given case and others like it. Salvation takes the form of healing, assuagement of grief,
restoration after loss, reassurance, the foresight and avoidance of calamity, and the guarantee
of eternal (or at least continuing) life after death.

6. The Reformist
The reformist response views the world as corrupt because its social structures are corrupt. If
the structures can be changed so that the behaviors they sanction are changed, then salvation
will be present in the world. This response, then, assumes that evil may be dealt with
according to supernaturally given insights about the ways in which social organization should
be amended. Investigation of the ways of the world and recommendations for amending it are
the essential orientation. The specific alterations to be made are revealed to people whose
hearts and minds are open to supernatural influence.

7. The Utopian
The Utopian response seeks to reconstruct the entire social world according to divinely given
principles, rather than simply to amend it from a reformist position. The goal of a Utopian
response is to establish a new social organization that will eliminate evil. It is much more
radical than the reformist response because it insists on complete replacement of the present
social organization. The Utopian response differs from the revolutionist response by insisting
that people themselves remake the world rather than that a divine power destroy this present
world and re-create another. In turn, a Utopian response is more active and constructive than
an introversionist response of simply withdrawing from the world.

4.2.2 Responses to the world of Isaiah 24-27
A close look at Isaiah 24-27, shows that it consists mainly of conversionist and revolutionist
arguments with some thaumaturgical, reformist, gnostic-manipulationist, utopian and
introversionist elements.

4.2.2.1 Conversionist
It is argued that the world is corrupt because its people are corrupt. With this logic, the
conversionist argument suggests that if people can be changed, then the world will be changed.
In the case of Isaiah 24-27, certain strong conversionist views can be observed. First, one of
the main views is that people deserve God’s judgment because of their transgressions. God’s
impending eschatological-apocalyptic judgment is provoked by people’s wrongdoings.
According to Isaiah 24:5, God’s dreadful judgment comes because the earth lies polluted
under its inhabitants. The writer indicates that the primary meaning of “the pollution” is
connected to the commandments of the Torah and moral pollution (cf. Brueggemann
1998:192; Grogon 1986:152; Blenkinsopp 2000:351-352; Childs 2001:179): They have
transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant (24:5). According
to Number 35:33, bloodshed by a murderer can defile the land (cf. Holladay 1978:196;
Sheppard 2000:508). Subsequently, this murderous wickedness is clearly demonstrated in
26:21: For the Lord comes out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their
iniquity; the earth will disclose her bloodshed, and will no longer cover her slain.
Furthermore, the people’s depravity is continually emphasized: *Its transgression lies heavy* (24:20); *the treacherous deal treacherously, the treacherous deal very treacherously* (24:16b), and *he will deal perversely* (26:10). In addition, the inhabitants of the earth are described emphatically as belonging to the *cities of ruthless nations* (25:3); their activity as *the blast of the ruthless* (25:4a); and their song as *the song of the ruthless* (25:5b; cf. Brueggemann 1998:198). Their cruelty is rooted in *their pride* (25:11) and this arrogance is symbolized as the city (cities) in *the fortified city* (25:2; 27:10) and *the inhabitants of the height, the lofty city* (26:5), for example. Therefore, the people are described as the wicked (26:10) in contrast to the righteous (26:7).

To counter the above negative descriptions, the people are urged to change their ways and hearts, that is, in terms of their social and religious lives. Firstly, the eschatological-apocalyptic era of transformation requires a spiritual change of heart and commitment (VanGemeren 1990:268) as in religious atonement in 27:9: *Therefore by this the guilt of Jacob will be expiated, and this will be the full fruit of the removal of his sin: when he makes all the stones of the altars like chalkstones crushed to pieces, no sacred poles or incense altars will remain standing.* This kind of idolatry, which will eventually be crushed, is the main reason for God’s impending judgment (cf. Clements 1980:222; Laato 1998:183).

Secondly, in the midst of the people’s corruptions and the eschatological-apocalyptic crisis, emotions such as faith, joy, prayer, and relationship with God are encouraged in Isaiah 24-27. For instance, the author encourages the people to *sing for joy* (24:14) and *be glad and rejoice in his salvation* (25:9); for a *song will be sung* (26:1) and they should *sing for joy!* (26:19; cf. Young 1969:169; Watts 1985:334-5; Hayes & Irvine 1987:302). These kinds of positive emotions are completely in contrast to the atmosphere of 24:7-9: *All the merry-hearted sigh. The mirth of the timbrels is stilled, the noise of the jubilant has ceased, the mirth of the lyre is stilled. they do not drink wine with singing. In 24:11: There is an outcry in the streets for wine; all joy is darkened; the gladness of the earth is banished and in 25:5, the contrast deepens: The song of the ruthless was stilled. Furthermore, in line with the encouragement to sing, a similar theme of praise the Lord is explicitly stated. In the midst of God’s judgment, there is a song of praise in 24:14-16a: 14 They lift up their voices, they shall exult in the Lord's majesty, they cry out from the sea. 15 Therefore in the dawning light glorify the LORD; in the coastlands of the sea the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. 16 From the ends of the earth we hear songs: glory to the Righteous. Additionally, this kind of praise follows God’s wondrous works in 25:1: O LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you, I will praise your name;*
Thirdly, the encouragement of faith in endurance and prayer is one of the main emphases of the text. People are urged to be patient in times of crisis: *This is our God; we have waited for him, This is the LORD! we have waited for him* (25:9). *O LORD, we wait for you* (26:8). The expression, “we wait” is a typical statement of confident hope (Oswalt 1986:477). Further, this hope is more consolidated by keeping faith and trusting God: *keeps faith* (26:2); *they trust you* (26:3; cf. Miscall 1993:68). These attitudes of waiting and trusting are continually practised in remembering: *O LORD our God, other lords besides you have ruled over us, but only in you we kept the remembrance of your name* (26:13; cf. Delitzsch 1889:444); and in praying: *Your name and your renown are the soul's desire* (26:8). *My soul yearns for you in the night, Surely, my spirit within me earnestly seeks you* (26:9).

Fourthly, the relationship between God and his people (nation) is compared to an intimate covenant relationship (27:2-5):

> On that day: A pleasant vineyard, sing about her!  
> I, the LORD, am its keeper; every moment I water it. I guard it night and day so that no one can harm it;  
> I have no wrath. If it gives me thorns and briers; In battle, I will march against it. I will burn it together.  
> Or else let it cling to me for protection, let it make peace with me, let it make peace with me.

In addition, this relationship is expressed in God’s protection (25:4-5):

> For you have been a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in his distress, a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat. for the blast of the ruthless was like a rainstorm against a wall,  
> the noise of aliens like heat in a dry place, you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds; the song of the ruthless was stilled.

People are invited into God’s abundant feast (25:6):

> The LORD of hosts will make for all peoples on this mountain a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.

God’s empathy with his people’s suffering is also described (25:8):

> Then Adonay the Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken.

### 4.2.2.2 Revolutionist

It is argued that only the destruction of the world, the natural world as well as the social order, will be sufficient to save people. Threats from the enemy city and its arrogant assertions of control in human affairs are interpreted from God’s point of view, that is, they will come to an end “on that day”. When “that day” comes, the world will be purged through the fire of divine
wrath so that all people may live, at least, in peace, justice, and obedience to the laws of God (Sheppard 2000:508). Isaiah 24-27 vividly illustrates the revolutionist argument, especially, in 24:1-21. Isaiah 24:1-20 describes the destruction of the earth and the cosmos. The picture begins on a cosmic scale of God’s judgment (24:1):

1 Behold the LORD is about to lay waste the earth and make it desolate, and he will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants.

This divine punishment will directly affect the society (24:2):

2 And it shall be like the people, like the priest; like the slave, like his master; like the maid, like her mistress; like the buyer, like the seller; like the lender, like the borrower; like the creditor, like the debtor.

Once again, God’s judgment is emphasized and it will happen because of God’s direct involvement (24:3-4):

3 The earth shall be utterly laid waste and utterly despoiled; for the LORD has spoken this word. 4 The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers; the haughty people of the earth languish.

The iniquity of the inhabitants of the earth will result in God’s judgment and furthermore, it will affect their lives in practical ways (24:5-9; 26:21):

5 The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant. 6 Therefore a curse devours the earth, and its inhabitants are guilty; therefore the inhabitants of the earth burned, and few people are left. 7 The new wine dries up, the vine languishes, all the merry-hearted sigh. 8 The mirth of the timbrels is stilled, the noise of the jubilant has ceased, the mirth of the lyre is stilled. 9 they do not drink wine with singing; strong drink is bitter to those who drink it.

21 For the LORD comes out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will disclose her bloodshed, and will no longer cover her slain.

The revolutionist rhetoric is highlighted through God’s judgment on the “the city of chaos” which is symbolized as the pinnacle of human life (24:10-12):

10 The city of chaos is broken down, every house is shut up for entering. 11 There is an outcry in the streets for wine; all joy is darkened; the gladness of the earth is banished. 12 Desolation is left in the city, the gate is battered into ruins.

God’s judgment is focused on the fortified city (25:2, 10b-12):

2 For you have made the city a heap, the fortified city a ruin; the palace of aliens is a city no more, it will never be rebuilt.

However, God’s judgment shifts from the unnamed fortified city to a specific and named city, Moab (25:10b-12):
The Moabites shall be trodden down in its place as a heap of straw is trodden down in the water of a dung-pit. He will spread out his hands in the midst of it, as swimmers spread out to swim, He will bring down his pride together with the cleverness of his hands. The high fortification of your walls He will bring down, He will lay low, He will cast to the ground, even to the dust.

Consequently, God’s punishment will be poured out on the unnamed city (26:5-6; 27:10):

5 For he has brought low the inhabitants of the height; the lofty city he lays low. He lays it low to the ground, He casts it to the dust. 6 The foot tramples it, the feet of the poor, the steps of the needy.

God’s judgment on the earth using the image of militancy and flood and even earthquake are once again described in a graphic way (24:17-20):

17 Terror, and the pit, and the snare are upon you, O inhabitants of the earth! 18 Whoever flees at the sound of the terror shall fall into the pit; and whoever climbs out of the pit shall be caught in the snare. For the windows of the height are opened, and the foundations of the earth tremble. 19 The earth is utterly broken, the earth is torn asunder, the earth is violently shaken. 20 The earth staggers like a drunkard, it sways like a hut; its transgression lies heavy upon it, and it falls, and will not rise again.

God’s universal judgment including the authorities of the earth, of the king and of the heaven are also indicated (24:21-22):

21 On that day the LORD will punish the host of the height in the height, and on earth the kings of the earth. 22 They will be gathered together prisoners in a pit; they will be shut up in a prison, and after many days they will be punished.

Again, God’s universal judgment is through God’s inauguration of his kingship on Mount Zion/Jerusalem:

**Isaiah 24:23**

Then the moon will be abashed, and the sun ashamed; for the LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before his elders, gloriously.

**Isaiah 27:10**

For the fortified city is solitary, a habitation deserted and forsaken, like the wilderness; the calf will graze there, there it will lie down, and strip its branches.

In contrast to this declaration of judgment, the text is also explicit on God’s future restoration of the world and his people (Sheppard 2000:508), i.e., the restoration of the city of Jerusalem, of Mount Zion:

**Isaiah 24:23**

Then the moon will be abashed, and the sun ashamed; for the LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before his elders, gloriously.
Isaiah 25:6-9
6 The LORD of hosts will make for all peoples on this mountain a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. 7 And he will swallow up on this mountain the face of the shroud shrouding all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; 8 He will swallow up death forever. Then Adonay the Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. 9 It will be said on that day, behold, this is our God; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Isaiah 26:1
1 On that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; he sets up salvation, walls and bulwarks.

Isaiah 27:12-3
12 On that day the LORD will thresh from the channel of the Euphrates to the Wadi of Egypt, and you will be gathered one by one, O people of Israel. 13 And on that day a great shophar will be blown, and those who were lost in the land of Assyria and those who were driven out to the land of Egypt will come and worship the LORD on the holy mountain at Jerusalem.

4.2.2.3 Introversionist
One of the main introversionist arguments is that the society and the world are too distorted to resolve the problems and this view recommends the fullest possible withdrawal from the world. It appears that the text of Isaiah 24-27 does not support the introversionist argument. The reason is that there is no suggestion that God’s salvation is given when people are completely withdrawn from the world. However, one might argue that there are some signs of introversionist rhetoric. For instance, in Isaiah 26:20, it is possible to link some expressions to the introversionist argument: Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until the wrath is past. However, in the context of 26:20, these activities are part of God’s judgment; people are encouraged to be patient and see God’s work (26:21): For the LORD comes out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will disclose her bloodshed, and will no longer cover her slain. There is also some eexpressions which may indicate introversionist argument in 27:10: For the fortified city is solitary, a habitation deserted and forsaken, like the wilderness; the calf will graze there, there, it will lie down, and strip its branches. The phrases: “solitary, deserted and forsaken, and like the wilderness” describe the aftermath of God’s dreadful punishment and are not meant to encourage people to hide themselves from the society. Therefore, the above cases are not signs of pulling out from the society. Furthermore, in contrast to introversionist arguments, Isaiah 25:6-8 strongly emphasizes the invitation of all nations to a joyous eschatological-apocalyptic banquet which is “a feast beyond comparison for its richness of food and extravagance of drink” (Seitz 1993:190; cf. Prinsloo 1987:88):
The LORD of hosts will make for all peoples on this mountain a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. 7 And he will swallow up on this mountain the face of the shroud shrouding all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; 8 He will swallow up death forever. Then Adonay the Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken.

4.2.2.4 Gnostic-manipulationist

The Gnostic-manipulationist argues for the way in which a particular and distinctive knowledge can cope with evil and have salvation and its argument is somehow expressed in 26:9-10:

9 My soul yearns for you in the night, Surely, my spirit within me earnestly seeks you. For when your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness. 10 If favor is shown to the wicked, he will not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness he will deal perversely and he will not see the majesty of the LORD.

Furthermore, this Gnostic-manipulationist rhetoric may also be indicated in 27:11:

11 When its boughs are dry, they are broken; women come and make a fire of them. For this is a people without understanding; therefore he that made them will not have compassion on them, he that formed them will show them no favor.

In our judgment, however, it is clearly in line with eschatological-apocalyptic expectations. In other words, the people are not encouraged to know a particular and distinctive knowledge to overcome crisis and evil.

4.2.2.5 Thaumaturgical

The thaumaturgical focuses on the individual’s concern for relief from present and specific ills through special dispensations. The emphasis here is more on the performance of oracles and miracles rather than on having a specific knowledge.

The thaumaturgical argument is expressed in 24:23 as God defeats one of the cosmic powers:

23 Then the moon will be abashed, and the sun ashamed; for the LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before his elders, gloriously.

It is illustrated in the Canaanite mystical theme of 25:7-8:

7 And he will swallow up on this mountain the face of the shroud shrouding all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; 8 He will swallow up death forever.
This kind of Canaanite mystical theme is demonstrated to show resurrection from death in 26:19:

19 Your dead shall live, my corpses shall rise. O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a radiant dew, and the earth will cast out the dead.

The Canaanite mystical theme is once again employed to describe God’s victory over the monstrous animal in 27:1:

1 On that day the LORD will punish with his cruel sword, the great and the strong, Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will kill the dragon that is in the sea.

**4.2.2.6 Reformist**

The reformist argument is that the world is corrupt because its social structures are corrupt and is vaguely illustrated in 25:4-5 and 26:5:

Isaiah 25:4-5

4 For you have been a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in his distress, a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat. For the blast of the ruthless was like a rainstorm against a wall, 5 the noise of aliens like heat in a dry place, you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds; the song of the ruthless was stilled.

Isaiah 26:5

5 For he has brought low the inhabitants of the height; the lofty city he lays low. He lays it low to the ground, He casts it to the dust. 6 The foot tramples it, the feet of the poor, the steps of the needy.

By encouraging a very strong sense of identity and an understanding of the world, this argument attempts to encourage people to involve themselves in the world through good deeds. However, Isaiah 24-27 is more of an encouragement for people who are waiting for God’s intervention. The author encourages faith: they needed to wait for God who is their “Rock” (26:4), and their God will most certainly judge the exalted and exalt the oppressed (26:5-6, 10-11). The people do not take justice into their own hands but wait quietly for the Divine Warrior to act on their behalf (26:9). The author insinuates that the restoration process may be gradual; he encourages the godly to wait quietly for the Divine Warrior to act in vengeance (VanGemeren 1990:267).

**4.2.2.7 Utopian**

It is argued that people should inaugurate a new social system free from evil and corruption to run the world. According to Weinfeld (1983:114), the utopian image of Jerusalem gained strength with time (27:12-13):

27:12 On that day the LORD will thresh from the channel of the Euphrates to the Wadi of
Egypt, and you will be gathered one by one, O people of Israel. 13 And on that day a great shophar will be blown, and those who were lost in the land of Assyria and those who were driven out to the land of Egypt will come and worship the LORD on the holy mountain at Jerusalem.

The verse may appear to suggest that the system is the source of evil. As we indicate in the conversionist argument, an urban system like the city is a symbol of evil which is under God’s judgment but there is no encouragement to build a new social system free of evil and corruption in order to run the world.

In sum, a look at Isaiah 24-27 shows that the main arguments are conversionist and revolutionist with some traces of thaumaturgical, reformist, Gnostic-manipulationist, utopian and introversionist arguments. The various arguments may lead to conflicts in the faith community on social, political, religious issues. Therefore, we shall address this phenomenon in Chapter 5 under Ideological Texture.

4.3 Cultural texture: final cultural categories

The dominant Sitz im Leben (life-setting) in Isaiah 24-27 is city life (e.g. 24:2: shows a typical city life) but agricultural motifs are also present e.g., drought and vineyard (24:7-9, 11; 27:2-5); thorns and briers (27:4); blossom and shoots (27:6); field and wildness (27:10-11); hut (24:20); and grape harvest (24:13). Furthermore, there is lack of wine (24:7-9; cf. Grogon 1986:153) as a result of the drought (24:1-4).

4.3.1 Typology of culture rhetoric

The categories under cultural texture identify most decisively people's cultural location, which concerns the manner in which they present their presuppositions, reasons and arguments to both themselves, and to others. Thus, the categories serve to separate people based on various cultures. The cultural categories appear in the form of different types of cultural rhetoric in the New Testament. A recent study of the sociology of culture has afforded Robbins (1993:447-67; 1994a: 189-94; 1994b: 59-81; 1996a: 167-74; 1996b: 86-9) some insight into different types of culture, and he has developed a typology of culture rhetoric as follows:

1. Dominant culture rhetoric presents a system of attitudes, values, dispositions, and norms that the speaker either presupposes or asserts are supported by social structures vested with power to impose its goals on people in a significantly broad territorial region.

2. Subculture rhetoric imitates the attitudes, values, dispositions, and norms of dominant culture rhetoric, and it claims to enact them better than members of the dominant status. This rhetoric implies that a network of groups and institutions exists for supporting persons...
throughout their entire life cycle. Both sexes, all ages, and complete family groups are perceived to have a stake in this rhetoric...

3. **Counterculture or alternative culture rhetoric** rejects explicit and mutable characteristics of the dominant or subculture rhetoric to which it responds. The term is best reserved for intracultural phenomena; counterculture rhetoric is a culturally heretical rhetoric that evokes “a new future,” not an alien rhetoric that evokes the preservation of an “old culture (real or imagined)”... Counterculture rhetoric evokes the creation of “a better society, but not by legislative reform or by violent opposition to the dominant culture.” The theory of reform manifest in its rhetoric provides an alternative and hopes “that the dominant society will ‘see the light’ and adopt a more ‘humanistic’ way of life”... It evokes a willingness to live one’s own life and let the members of the dominant society go on with their “madness.” Yet an underlying theme is the hope of voluntary reform by the dominant society in accord with a different model of “the good life.” Hence, one would expect fully developed counterculture rhetoric to express a constructive image of an alternative, better way of life. It provides a relatively self-sufficient system of action by grounding its views in a well-developed, supporting ideology...

4. **Contraculture or oppositional culture rhetoric** is a “short-lived, counter-dependent cultural deviance” of dominant culture, subculture, or counterculture rhetoric... It is “group culture” rhetoric rather than subculture or counterculture rhetoric. Contraculture rhetoric implies groups “that do not involve more than one generation, which do not elaborate a set of institutions that allow the group to be relatively autonomous and self-sufficient, and which do not sustain an individual over an entire life span”... Contraculture rhetoric is primarily a reaction-formation response to some form of dominant culture, subculture, or counterculture rhetoric. This means that it does not create an alternative response on the basis of values it develops out of a different system of understanding, but it simply reacts in a negative way to certain values and practices in another culture...

5. **Liminal culture rhetoric** is at the outer edge of identity... It exists only in the language it has for the moment. In some instances, liminal culture will appear as people or groups experience transition from one cultural identity to another. In other instances, liminal culture exists among individuals and groups that have never been able to establish a clear social and cultural identity in their setting...

### 4.3.2 Cultural categories of Isaiah 24-27

As mentioned previously, God’s wonderful works such as judgment and salvation in Isaiah 24-27 centre on the city. In that context, there is God’s contra- and counter culture against this dominant cultural power can be seen. In other words, “The prophetic task in such a social world is to maintain a destabilizing presence, so that the system is not equated with reality, so that alternatives are thinkable, so that the absolute claims of the system can be criticized” (Brueggemann 1994:223).

#### 4.3.2.1 Dominant culture

The dominant culture in Isaiah 24-27 is city life or urban life (24:2, 7-12):

**Isaiah 24:2**

2 And it shall be like the people, like the priest; like the slave, like his master; like the maid, like her mistress; like the buyer, like the seller; like the lender, like the borrower; like the creditor, like the debtor.

It is a typical urban life relationship among different groups of people and different roles in

Furthermore, it is a description of city life in which people cry out for lack of wine because of severe drought and mourn because of the destruction of the city.

Isaiah 24:7-12

7 The new wine dries up, the vine languishes, all the merry-hearted sigh. 8 The mirth of the timbrels is stilled, the noise of the jubilant has ceased, the mirth of the lyre is stilled. 9 They do not drink wine with singing; strong drink is bitter to those who drink it. 10 The city of chaos is broken down, every house is shut up for entering. 11 There is an outcry in the streets for wine; all joy is darkened; the gladness of the earth is banished. 12 Desolation is left in the city, the gate is battered into ruins.

Consequently, God’s judgment is on the king and the city which are the symbols of power and the authority of city life.

Isaiah 24:21-22

21 On that day the LORD will punish the host of the height in the height, and on earth the kings of the earth. 22 They will be gathered together prisoners in a pit; they will be shut up in a prison, and after many days they will be punished.

Isaiah 25:2-3

2 For you have made the city a heap, the fortified city a ruin; the palace of aliens is a city no more, it will never be rebuilt. 3 Therefore strong peoples will glorify you; cities of ruthless nations will fear you.

Isaiah 25:10-12

10b The Moabites shall be trodden down in its place as a heap of straw is trodden down in the water of a dung-pit. 11 He will spread out his hands in the midst of it, as swimmers spread out to swim, He will bring down his pride together with the cleverness of his hands 12 The high fortification of your walls He will bring down, He will lay low, He will cast to the ground, even to the dust.

Isaiah 26:5

5 For he has brought low the inhabitants of the height; the lofty city he lays low. He lays it low to the ground, He casts it to the dust. 6 The foot tramples it, the feet of the poor, the steps of the needy.

Isaiah 27:10

10 For the fortified city is solitary, a habitation deserted and forsaken, like the wilderness; the calf will graze there, there it will lie down, and strip its branches.

4.3.2.2 Counterculture (alternative culture)

The king, the Temple Court and the army are the central power institutions in ancient Israel (Carroll 1989:218) but Isaiah 24-27 describes the temple in Zion/Jerusalem as the centre in terms of God’s power because God reigns there. Here, the emphasis is different because it is a typical phenomenon in the ancient Near East and even in Israel that a walled city is a symbol of protection, security and prosperity. People conduct their businesses in the city, therefore,
city life is a symbol of wealth and blessing. However, the text of Isaiah 24-27 describes a contrary situation. God will destroy this mighty human pride: the city. The city is described, in some sense, as the epitome of a ‘once-for-all’ future disorder that will be faced by the human society and indeed, by the whole world (Polaski 1999:23); but this city is now under God’s dreadful judgment (24:10-12; 25:2-3, 10-12; 27:10).

In contrast to the dominant culture of city life, the author of Isaiah 24-27 urges the people to trust God alone: This is our God; we have waited for him, This is the LORD! we have waited for him (25:9). Other expressions of trust include: O LORD, we wait for you (26:8); keeps faith (26:2) and he trusts you (26:3). The reason behind this argument is that God will build an alternative city wherein, he will reign (24:23): Then the moon will be abashed, and the sun ashamed; for the LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before his elders, gloriously. In this context, God encourages them to build a counter community; the aim of the texts is to comfort the people, convince them that Yahweh still reigns, and call on them to honour Yahweh (Prinsloo 1987:89). Under counterculture or alternative culture, Isaiah 26:1-6 picks up the central message of Isaiah; the author portrays Jerusalem as a city of “salvation,” in “perfect peace” and a refuge for those who continue to maintain “trust” in God. Conversely, “the lofty city,” which offers false security through moral compromise and international alliances, will be made low (Sheppard 2000:509). In the counterculture category, to trust or more emphatically, to hope in God is the most important attitude in the faith community because God will bring them into Mount Zion/Jerusalem as an alternative place to worship him.

Isaiah 27:12-13
12 On that day the LORD will thresh from the channel of the Euphrates to the Wadi of Egypt, and you will be gathered one by one, O people of Israel. 13 And on that day a great shophar will be blown, and those who were lost in the land of Assyria and those who were driven out to the land of Egypt will come and worship the LORD on the holy mountain at Jerusalem.

4.4 Summary and Conclusion
The text of Isaiah 24-27 consists of mainly conversionist and revolutionist arguments with some elements of thaumaturgical, reformist, gnostic-manipulationist, utopian and introversionist arguments. The conversionist argues that the world is corrupt because its people are corrupt. In the case of Isaiah 24-27, strong conversionist views have been observed. One of the main views is that people deserve God’s judgment because of their transgressions. Consequently, they are urged to change their conducts and hearts in terms of the social and religious ways of life. In this regard, the findings are: Firstly, the eschatological-apocalyptic
era of transformation entails a spiritual change of heart and commitment. Secondly, in the midst of the people’s corruptions and the eschatological-apocalyptical crisis, positive emotions such as faith, joy, prayer, and relationship with God are encouraged in Isaiah 24-27. Thirdly, the encouragement of faith in endurance and prayer is also a focus of the argument.

The revolutionist argues that only the destruction of the world, the natural world as well as the social order, will be sufficient to save people. Therefore, it was shown that Isaiah 24:1-20 describes the destruction of the earth and the cosmos. The picture of God’s judgment begins on a cosmic scale. In contrast to this judgmental argument, explicit terms for God’s future restoration of the world and his people are also employed (Sheppard 2000:508), i.e., the restoration of the city of Jerusalem/Mount Zion.

One of the main introversionist arguments is that the society and the world are too distorted to resolve their problems and for this reason, the fullest possible withdrawal from the world is recommended. In contrast to introversionist arguments, Isaiah 25:6-8 throws an open invitation to all nations to a joyous eschatological-apocalyptic banquet which is “a feast beyond comparison for its richness of food and extravagance of drink.”

The gnostic-manipulationist argues for the way in which a particular and distinctive knowledge can cope with evil. However, Isaiah 24-27, is clearly in line with eschatological-aposioptetic expectation. In other words, it does not encourage a particular and distinctive knowledge to overcome crisis and evil.

On the other hand, the thaumaturgical argument focuses on the individual’s concern for relief from present and specific ills by special dispensations. The emphasis is on the performance of oracles and miracles rather than on possessing specific knowledge. It is also noted that some Canaanite mystical themes are applied to describe God’s defeat of the monstrous animal and of Mot.

Further, the reformist argument is that the world is corrupt because its social structures are corrupt. The author cautions that the restoration process may be gradual; he encourages the godly to wait quietly for the Divine Warrior to act in vengeance.

Lastly, the utopian argues that people should inaugurate a new social system free from evil and corruption to run the world. One of the urban systems like the city, which is under God’s
judgment, is a symbol of evil but there is no encouragement to build a new social system free
from evil and corruption in running the world.

It was observed, in addition, that city life is the dominant *Sitz im Leben* (e.g. 24:2, which
shows a typical city life). Nevertheless, agricultural motifs are also present in the text. The
cultural categories of Isaiah 24-27 equally show that the dominant culture is city life. It
describes urban life relationships among different groups of people and different roles within
the society. Additionally, God’s judgment is on the city that is a symbol of power and
authority of city life.

In contrast to the dominant culture of city life, the author of Isaiah 24-27 urges people to trust
God alone. This reflects counterculture; to trust or more emphatically, to hope in God is the
most important attitude within the faith community, for God will bring them into Mount
Zion/Jerusalem, the alternative place to worship him.
Chapter 5
Ideological and theological texture of Isaiah 24-27

The aim of studying the ideological texture of our text is to show that dominant groups have the power to make their own sectional interests appeal to others as the universal one (Robbins 1996a:193-99; cf. Tinder 1989:221-8; Carroll 1990:309-11; Wittenberg 1994:167-72; Gottwald 1996:136-49; Yee 1999:534-7; Meyer 2005:11-64; Tate 2006a:173-4). According to Clines (1995:10-11) and Dyck (2000:108-28), ideology can be regarded as an integrated system of beliefs, assumptions and values, not necessarily true or false, which reflects the needs and interests of a group or class at a particular time in history. This integrated system proceeds from the need to understand, to interpret to self and other, to justify, and to control one’s place in the world. Ideologies are shaped by a specific view of reality shared by groups’ specific perspectives on the world, society, and humanity, and on the limitations and potentialities of human existence. Ideological texture concerns the way the text itself and the interpreters of the text position themselves in relation to other individuals and groups (Robbins 1996b:4). For Robbins, the spectrum of ideology of socio-rhetorical criticism occurs in four special locations: 1) in texts; 2) in authoritative traditions of interpretation; 3) in intellectual discourse; and 4) in individuals and groups (Robbins 1996b:1).

Regarding ideological texts, the task is to explore the manner in which the discourse of a text presents comprehensive patterns of cognitive and moral beliefs about humans, society and the universe that are intended to function in the social order. The investigation especially seeks to identify the intersection of ideas, ideals and social action and to detect the collective needs and interests the patterns represent. Three ways of analyzing the ideological texture of the text are: 1) By analyzing the social and cultural location of the implied author through social and cultural data built into the language of the text; 2) by analyzing the ideology of power in the text; and 3) by analyzing the ideology in the mode of intellectual discourse in the text (Robbins 1996b:110-5).

However, it is important to note that the relation between theology and ideology is a subtle one. The reason is embedded in our life experience that theology sometimes can become an ideology when it is used to support sociological realities, such as the institutions of slavery and patriarchy, or a capitalistic economy. To clarify the distinction, Miller (1976:464-479; cf. 2000:635) proposes three criteria for distinguishing between theology (faith) and ideology, at least in ancient Israel:
1. The possibility and presence of self-criticism which means also the possibility of judgment as the end of Israel’s history.
2. The positive relationship of Israel with the other nations of the world. A sense of responsibility vis-à-vis other people so that Israel’s own particular interests do not totally define its goal or mission and Israel’s place in the world is set at least in part for the well-being of the nations.
3. The moral demand for justice and righteousness as the central characteristics of human conduct.

Miller’s points can be restated thus: First, theology is open to the voice of self-criticism as expressed mainly in the preaching of the great prophets. Second, theology looks beyond the narrow interests of the social group to other peoples who live beyond the political boundary and are included in God’s concern. We shall see that this ecumenical horizon belongs peculiarly to the Davidic theology, which envisions “the city of God” as a world centre where the nations will ultimately come to find peace and well-being (Isa 2:2-4; 27:12-13; 66:18-21). Third, theology hears a moral demand for justice, being rooted and grounded in the cosmic order; it is a universal moral demand. This also is a major accent of Davidic/Zion theology (Anderson 1999:198-9).

5.1 Ideological texture of Isaiah 24-27
The study of the ideological texture of the text will focus on how the social ethos expresses or promotes the interests of a particular social group.

Ideological texture can be regarded as a reasonable expansion of social and cultural textures but is also deeply connected to the theological substance of the text (cf. P.D. Miller 1976; B.W. Anderson 1999:198-9; Bloomquist 2003:172). In this context, ideology is seen as one way of understanding the text. In other words, in contrast to theology which is an open-ended and ongoing discussion, ideology is beyond criticism. According to J.B. Thompson (1990:7), “ideology is meaning in the service of power.” This means that it is possible to have an ideology that is opposed to another ideology in situations of conflict. To put it on other way, it is “a sociological term that refers to a body of ideas and practices intended to justify or sanction a socio-political program” (Anderson 1999:197).

5.1.1 Ideological conflict between communities
A typical ideological texture in Isaiah 24-27 is the conflict between groups. The expression, the poor and the needy (25:4; 26:6), may suggest that there are social power struggles in terms of the economic and political structures because in most cases, powerful political or religious
groups control the society and the economic life.

Thus, in his monograph, “Theocracy and Eschatology” Plöger (1968) reflects on this issue. On Isaiah 24-27, he presents an interesting point of view. He divides Isaiah 24-27 into two main structures: Isaiah 24-26 and Isaiah 27 (Plöger 1968:53-78). Isaiah 24-26 consists of self-contained independent traditions, which have been set to shape a single narrative that is expanded by the additions of secondary material. From this understanding, Plöger (1968:76) claims that in chapter 26, there is a social (in his mind theological) conflict; a clash between the “righteous and godless” over the legitimacy of eschatology:

The traditional contrast of righteous and godless is used, but it is clear that this contrast has been given a contemporary meaning; the righteous are those who accept the eschatological insight revealed in the preceding description, namely the fact that history is hastening to its end, while the godless are included among the enemies of Yahweh because they refuse to acknowledge this same insight (xxvi. 7-11).

In Plöger’s view, this clash did not take place outside but was clearly “an internal (Jewish) division” between a party which holds an eschatological faith and a community which was not attracted to such a scheme. Plöger (1968:76) categorizes the second group as holding the “eschatologically disinterested view which emerged in the historical work of the Chronicler, a view which probably reflects the position of the ruling classes and especially the priests.”

In the case of Redditt, he is dissatisfied with the attempts made by historical and form critical studies to resolve the identity of “the city” in the songs of Isaiah 24-27 (24:10-1a 25:1-5; 26:5-6; 27:10-11). Consequently, he suggests a socio-anthropological approach for gaining new insights on the matter. In using that approach and in a similar way to Albertz (1994), Redditt (1986:330) considers the text from a “peasant perspective”178 especially in two of the city psalms. He claims that, “Isaiah 25:1-5: reflects the peasant resentment of the city for its pride and ruthlessness”. Moreover, “Isaiah 26:5-6: exhibits the same attitude and probably originated in peasant life… while Isaiah 27:7-11 derives from a revitalist179 group.”

However, it is interesting to note that concerning the implications of the “peasant perspective” for understanding Isaiah 24-27, Redditt (1986:330) ends up contradicting himself. For

178 According to Redditt (1986:319), peasants are “small landholders under capitalism, feudalism, or bureaucratic empires. Peasants are neither tribal horticulturalists nor capitalists who happen to make a living by farming. Still less are they the wage earners hired by such a farmer. Peasantry exists at the level of the household which subsists on its own produce.”

179 The revitalist movement “attempts to restabilize a society that has undergone significant disorientation. Revitalist groups may come from any social class, but they usually arise among the people who feel oppressed” (Worsley 1968:225, quoted in Redditt 1986:327).
instance, if there is a question: “Should one assume a physical continuity between the peasant Sitz for the two songs and the revitalist group behind 27:7-11 or even Isaiah 24-27?” Redditt’s answer is, “No, not at all.” The main reasons are as follows:

The first is that Isaiah 24-27 as a whole was so pro-Jerusalem that its whole program for the future revolved around that city. The second is that there is no additional peasant thinking in 27:7-11 or the whole of Isaiah 24-27. The third is that much of the poetry of the chapters is too refined to assume it was derived from and written down by rustic peasants.

(Redditt 1986:330)

Thus, Redditt (1986:330-331) claims a new idea that the author or redactor who must have belonged to the “nationalistic” group must have represented Isaiah 24-27 from “prophetic materials” and the group must “have envisaged of itself as the righteous (26:1-10, 20-21). It felt betrayed (24:16b) and powerless (26:18).” In other words, this group was “reacting to internal pressure, that objected to the priestly theocracy which had emerged under the supervision of the Persians after the disappearance of Zerubbabel” (p.331). In that social context of conflict, claiming a peasant background for the psalms seems reasonable: “The peasant songs attacked the city, the establishment, and constituted useful fodder for the author/redactor of Isaiah 24-27, who could combine that feeling into his vision of a purified, glorious future for Jerusalem” (Redditt 1986:332).

Additionally, Hanson contributes a rather insightful perspective to the development of apocalyptic eschatology in the book of Isaiah through his monograph, The Dawn of Apocalyptic (1979). Like Plöger, Hanson makes an important statement by distinguishing the relationship between “the priestly-Zadokite” group which returned from exile with a long tradition of authority and “the visionary,” which was “an alliance of dissident, alienated elements, especially those holding to the eschatological message of the prophets” in the post-exilic community in Jerusalem (Hanson 1979:217). This kind of viewpoint is influenced by sociological scholars such as Karl Mannheim,180 Ideology and Utopia - an Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge (1936); Max Weber,181 The Sociology of Religion (1963); and Ernest Troeltsch,182 The Social Teaching of the Christian Church (1960), who all emphasize the

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180 Mannheim’s main influence on Hanson’s view is an indication that there were two conflicting mentalities: “ideological” and “utopian.” The ideological was mainly orchestrated by the governing party and by contrast, the utopian consisted of “certain oppressed groups.” The main conflict between them is that the former tried to keep existing structures as “absolute and eternal” while the latter attempted to challenge and change it (Mannheim 1936:40-173; cf. Hanson 1979:213).

181 Weber, like Mannheim, scrutinizes the “two mentalities and their socio-economic roots.” He argues that in periods of crisis, prophetic groups stepped in, in order to transform the “established order,” while the nobility and the priests hesitated to change but rather try to maintain the status quo (Weber 1963:66-106; cf. Hanson 1979:213-4).

182 For Troeltsch, the emphasis is on two types of religious parties. For instance, the main power institution was “overwhelmingly conservative.” They not only compromised with the world but also dominated and their way of
relationship between the ruling classes, and the alienated and oppressed groups (Hanson 1979:211-6).

According to Hanson (1979:314), Isaiah 24-27 shows conflicts between “the visionary and hierocratic group”:

If the city of chaos, the destruction of which is celebrated by the apocalypse, is the Jerusalem controlled and defiled (in the eyes of the visionists) by the hierocratic party, then the composition could stem from a point fairly late in the sixth century, perhaps from the period of the temple controversy ca. 520.

Hanson further demonstrates his interest in Isaiah 24-27 in *The People Called: The Growth of Community in the Bible* ([1986]2001). He regards the text as “the growth of an apocalyptic response to adversity” and shares similar features with other apocalyptic literatures such as Ezekiel 38-39 (Hanson 2001:269-71). According to Hanson (2001:271-3), Isaiah 24:1-25:9 is the first literary unity which “borrowed intact from the Conflict Myth,” and the literary compositions of visionaries are epitomized in apocalyptic perspective such as the dualistic expressions of curse-blessing, earth-heaven, past-future, chaos-new creation. Furthermore, Hanson (2001:272) explains his idea of the social conflict between the visionaries and the hierocrats through Isaiah 24:14-18a; he claims that it “would fit extremely well into the polemic of visionary dissidents against the Zadokite temple-rebuilding program”:

*But I say,*  
*I pine away, I pine away. Woe is me!*  
*For the treacherous deal treacherously, the treacherous deal very treacherously.*  
*Terror, and the pit, and the snare are upon you,*  
*O inhabitants of the earth! (Isaiah 24:16b-17)*

Albertz’s sociological understanding, especially of class conflict in texts, is well-expressed in Isaiah 24-27. For him, the text “was not sparked off by a great historical event but arose entirely out of the theological reflections of a group. So it is easier to put into a sociological context” (Albertz 1994:570). According to Albertz (1994:571), the evidence of this class tension is pretty obvious in that “its contrast between ‘righteous’ (יהויה יִשְׂרָאֵל Isa.24.16; 26:7) and ‘wicked’ (לָשְׁנָה, 26:10; cf. ‘faithless’ פַעַם, 24:6; ‘ruthless’ יִתְנַשֵּׂא, 25:2,5) or ‘poor’ (מצְרִיך, 25:4; מַן, 26:6; יח, 25:4; 26:6) and ‘oppressor’ (יָרָה, 25:4f), which we found both in the proclamation and the piety of lower-class circles orientated on prophecy”.

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life became a norm. They seldom taught eschatological ideas because they focused mainly on this world. On the other hand, according to Hanson (1979:215-6), “the oppressed and idealistic groups within the lower classes” were referred to as “the sect” and they criticized the idea of world dominion and challenged the official ruling institution. They also concentrated on eschatological visions because they never believed that mere human power could change the world (Troeltsch 1960:336-80).
Albertz’s analysis of social conflict emanates principally from the idea of social economic unfairness and for this reason, Albertz (1994:570-2) believes that they built up an eschatological assurance of salvation for the lower-class circles. Hence, this eschatological belief inevitably provides a significant community role and explains the re-appearance of the theme of the crushed city. In the midst of God’s judgment on the city (or cities) which is, according to Albertz, an accomplishment of the lower-class group’s desire, “the heights” of the population of the earth (24:4) also became affected. Furthermore, God’s judgment manifested in practical life situations, and especially on people who previously had social privileges (24:2; Albertz 1994:573).

In our judgment, even though some scholars hesitate to study Isaiah 24-27 from the point of view of social conflict, scholarship should be open to these new insights in studying this difficult text. Moreover, it may prove helpful to appreciate the efforts of the above-mentioned scholars that there are some possibilities of social tension in the post-exilic Judean community.

5.1.3 Ideological conflict concerning Zion theology

The ideological texture of the argument in Isaiah 24-27 is expressed against some false understanding of Zion theology (or more correctly, is expressed here as “Zion ideology”). The false Zion theology is somehow connected to ideology. In other words, Zion’s inviolability is the main issue here. False security was the main false ideology which connected the people; even though they were sinners, they believed that they were safe because they lived in Jerusalem (Bright 1981:289-90). The city of Jerusalem/Zion is the symbol of God’s presence with his people because he dwells there (Zimmerli 2002:10). The so-called Zion theology originated from the Israelite belief that the Lord lived in Zion/Jerusalem, especially after Jerusalem’s dramatic rescue from Assyrian invasion during Sennacherib’s war (cf. B. Mazar 1992:101). The Israelites supposed that as long as Zion stood, it would be well with them because the Lord lived in Zion. Their conception of the city was that it was a symbol of protection and safety (Weinfeld 1979:56), where they could also obtain God’s blessing. The important point here is that a popular and profound thinking among the people was that God’s protection and salvation were almost guaranteed if they lived in Jerusalem. However, Isaiah 24-27 clearly states that this is a wrong idea. God’s judgment is inevitable when there are transgressions (cf. Wildberger 1957:62-81; Hayes 1963:419-26; Roberts 1973:329-44, 1983:15-25; Levenson 1985; Strong 1997:1315-21; Renz 1999b:77; Walker 2004:589-92; Groves 2005:1019-25).
As noted in our study of inter-texture, Zion theology’s idea of a conditional relationship is highlighted especially by Doyle’s (2000) suggestion that Isaiah 24-27 is a metaphoric expression of a conjugal relationship between God (as a husband) and the city (as a wife/widow). Through the marriage metaphor, it is possible to understand God’s judgment and salvation more clearly. Jerusalem/Zion as the wife of God had confidence and enjoyed the husband’s protection but she forgot her covenantal responsibility through adulterous/idolatrous behaviors (24:5-6; 26:21; 27:9). The picture of this intimate relationship can help to appreciate the reason God became so furious with his unfaithful wife. Nevertheless, in this judgment by God, God’s salvation of his city/wife is also envisaged. In that covenant relationship of marriage, God never abandoned his beloved wife.

5.1.4 Conclusion

The ideological texture of the argument in Isaiah 24-27 shows a conflict between groups. The term, the poor and the needy (25:4; 26:6), may suggest that there were social power struggles in both the economic and the political spheres since in most cases, powerful political or religious groups control the society and the economic life. Furthermore, the ideological texture of the argument in Isaiah 24-27 is expressed against some false understanding of Zion theology (or more correctly, as “Zion ideology”). False security was the main false ideology which connected the people; although they were sinning, they believed that they were safe because they lived in Jerusalem.

This observation is well spelt out by Renz (1999b:101-2) who argues that there are distinctions between basic affirmations and related beliefs in the book of Ezekiel which can be applied to our study. Renz’s charts are reproduced below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>basic affirmation</th>
<th>related positive belief</th>
<th>related negative belief</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God subdues chaos</td>
<td>Fighting against the nations</td>
<td>Fighting against Zion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zion is the centre</td>
<td>of YHWH’s protection</td>
<td>of YHWH’s judgment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, Renz (1999b:102) points out that due to Jerusalem’s idolatry and injustice, Zion tradition can be conflicted with its ideology:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YHWH, is present on Zion , the divine mountain and</th>
<th>YHWH, the creator of the cosmos, subdues chaos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YHWH protects Zion and</td>
<td>YHWH protects order</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In our discussion of the ideological texture of Isaiah 24-27, we have established that there were conflicts in the community between the wicked/ruthless, on the one hand, and the poor/needy, on the other hand. Furthermore, on the ideological level, there is a focus on Zion theology. The misunderstanding of Zion theology leads to Zion ideology, i.e., the assumption that Zion/Jerusalem is always safe and protected. This false understatement caused the people’s misbehaviour and consequently, God’s judgment came upon them. In this line of argument, ideological texture is inevitably linked to theological texture (sacred texture). In other words, the necessary process is that they must undergo the right theological assessment.
5.2 Theological texture of Isaiah 24-27

At this juncture, we arrive at the core of this study, that is, the theological understanding of the city. Even though it is possible to study the historical, literary, and other features of the Bible, Hebrew Bible is fundamentally theological in nature\(^{183}\) (cf. Fretheim 1997:143; Rendtorff 2005:1). Hence, Rendtorff (1993a:40-1) clearly states:

The Hebrew Bible is itself a theological book. That means that the Bible does not only become theological through interpretation by a later-elaborated theology, be it rabbinc or Christian; rather, it is possible and necessary to find the theological ideas and messages of the biblical texts themselves. At the same time, this implies that the authors of the biblical texts should be deemed to be in a certain sense theologians, who had theological ideas and purposes in mind when they spoke or wrote their texts, and even when they assembled the texts into larger units of books.

Furthermore, in line with this theological conviction, Robbins (1996b:130) rightly indicates the importance of studying the theological (sacred) texture of a text by involving other textures:

The aspects of sacred texture are embedded deeply in the inner texture, intertexture, social and cultural texture, and ideological texture of a text. For this reason, a major way to gain a fuller understanding of the meanings and meaning-effects of sacred texture is through analysis and interpretation of other textures in the context of an understating of its sacred texture.

In line with Robbins’ recommendation, it is time to study our final texture, the “theological texture” with the insight drawn from our previous textural studies, namely, the inner, inter-, social, cultural, and ideological textures. Here, the expression, “theological texture” is based on Robbins’ sacred texture. According to Robbins (1996b:120), the “sacred texture” attempts to find out the divine aspects of a text. In other words, it is interested in God and religious life, i.e., the relation of the human to the divine. For the reason that the sacred texture is deeply concerned with theological matters, the term “theological texture” is hereby preferred.

In order to demonstrate this texture, Robbins (1996b:120-30) suggests the following themes for directing an examination of the sacred aspects of a text: deity, holy person, spirit being, divine history, human redemption, human commitment, religious community, and ethics. Consequently, these eight types can be categorized into three subjects (Moon 2004:24): the divine aspects (deity, holy person, spirit being and divine history); the interaction between the divine and the human (divine history and human redemption); and the human aspects (human commitment, religious community, and ethics). We shall consider these aspects in detail.

5.2.1 Early theological understanding

However, before we proceed, it is useful to present a summary of existing trends in the theological interpretation of Isaiah 24-27 in order to argue more clearly why a “socio-rhetorical” approach to the text in question has the potential to add to existing research in this regard. Needless to say, reviewing the entire history of previous studies is beyond the scope of this study. Thus, we shall focus on some specific time periods and faith communities. In other words, the theological interpretation of our text is well-illustrated in the traditions of different faith communities and their historical and theological understanding of the city. In line with Van der Kooij (2001:220-39), we shall examine the phases of the earliest versions in terms of “the history of interpretation and reception.” For our study purpose, it is interesting to look at how ancient faith communities theologically understood certain biblical subjects such as ‘the city’ in their socio-rhetorical situation. On this subject, early faith communities’ understanding of the city is well articulated in the reading of the Septuagint (Jewish), the Qumran (Jewish), and the Targum (Jewish), and the Vulgate (Christian). We believe that these examples of early theological understanding epitomize the way the interpreters’ theological awareness could influence certain parts of Isaiah 24-27, especially the city in Isaiah 25:2-3; 26:1-2, 5. Furthermore, this kind of theological understanding on the part of early faith communities is firmly rooted in and resonates with biblical traditions. In other words, the biblical text itself demonstrates the faith community’s understanding of the word of God in time of crisis and turbulence as in the fall of the temple and the exile/post-exile shaped their reflections of what was wrong and how to understand the will of God. Below is a table of the different versions of the text of Isaiah 24-27 and the order is from the earliest to the latest version:
Table 5.1 - Comparison of ancient versions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Texts</th>
<th>Qumran/MT</th>
<th>LXX</th>
<th>Targum</th>
<th>Vulgate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25:2-3</td>
<td>&quot;For you have made the city a heap, the fortified city a ruin; the palace of aliens is a city no more, it will never be rebuilt. Therefore strong peoples will glorify you; cities of ruthless nations will fear you.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;For you have made the city a heap, strong cities so that their foundations fall: the city of wicked men shall not be built forever. Therefore shall the poor people bless you, and cities of injured men shall bless you.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;For thou hast reduced the city to a heap, the strong city to ruin, the house of strangers, to be no city, and to be no more built up for ever. Therefore shall a strong people praise thee, the city of mighty nations shall fear thee.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26:1-2</td>
<td>&quot;2Open the gates, let the just nation, that kept the law with a perfect heart may enter in.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;26:1 In that day shall this canticle be sung in the land of Judah: 'we have a strong city; and he shall make salvation its wall and bulwark.'&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;in die illa cantabitur canticum istud in terra luda urbs fortitudinis nostra salvator ponetur in ea murus et antemurale&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26:5</td>
<td>&quot;26:1 On that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; he sets up salvation, walls and bulwarks. Open the gates, so that the righteous nation that keeps the truth may enter in.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;26:1 In that day they shall sing this song in the land of Judea; Behold a strong city; and he shall make salvation its wall and bulwark. Open the gates, let the nation enter that keeps righteousness, and keeps truth, who did humble and brought down them that dwell on high; you shall cast down strong cities, and bring them to the ground.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;'quia incurvabit habitantes in excelso eam murus et antemurale humiliabit humiliabit eam usque ad terram detruhat eam usque ad pulvorem&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

184 The Qumran text is dated between the mid-second century BC and the early first century AD (Vermes 1976:210; Blenkinsopp 2006:20; Roberts 2006:274). Hence, according to the order of the versions, the Qumran text is located after the LXX and the MT, dated between the ninth and the eleventh centuries AD (Barth lelemy 1976:882-3; Revell 1992:599), and is located after the Vulgate. However in this study, the MT along with the Qumran text shall be allocated the first place. There are two reasons for this option. First, even though there are some differences between the MT and the Qumran text, in the case of Isaiah 24-27, especially 25:1-5 and 26:1-6, the Qumran text is virtually identical with the present MT (cf. Goshen-Gottstein 1981, Blenkinsopp 2000:76-7). Second, our study is more focused on the LXX, the Targum, and the Vulgate than the Qumran/MT. Here, the MT is based on the BHS (Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia 1987).

185 Chilton renders it as “strong fortress.” The emendation of “fortress” to “city” here is based on the NBDB (1979:501).
Table 5.2 - Summary of the three translations with MT/1QIsa\(^{a}\) concerning the city

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trans.</th>
<th>25:2a</th>
<th>25:2b</th>
<th>25:2c</th>
<th>25:3</th>
<th>26:1</th>
<th>26:5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MT(^{189}) 1QIsa(^{a})</td>
<td>הורש</td>
<td>הורש</td>
<td>הרוש</td>
<td>הרוש</td>
<td>הרוש</td>
<td>הרוש</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LXX</td>
<td>פְדוֹלֵס</td>
<td>פְדוֹלֵס</td>
<td>פְדוֹלֵס</td>
<td>פְדוֹלֵס</td>
<td>פְדוֹלֵס</td>
<td>פְדוֹלֵס</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targum</td>
<td>חֶלֶב</td>
<td>חֶלֶב</td>
<td>חֶלֶב</td>
<td>חֶלֶב</td>
<td>חֶלֶב</td>
<td>חֶלֶב</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulgate</td>
<td>civitatem(^{195})</td>
<td>urbem fortem</td>
<td>urbem fortem</td>
<td>urbs fortitudinis</td>
<td>urbs fortitudinis</td>
<td>urbs fortitudinis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above demonstrates that previous Christian and Jewish communities attempted to find out the meaning of “the city” by combining the historical (socio) and the literary (rhetorical), in terms of theological understanding. It is useful to consider more details. Even though it is not certain which city the Qumran Pesher (Pesharim) community preferred in Isaiah 25:1-3 and Isaiah 26:1-2, 5 because we do not have these portions of the Pesher (interpretation) in the Qumran text, it can be assumed that the Qumran community had an interpretation of the text (Blenkinsopp 2006:98-128). A good example is that 4QpIsa\(^{c}\) quotes Isaiah 10:19 and after that, in the next line, the Pesher states that, “The interpretation of this word concerns the region of Babylon.” It is surprising to note the classification of the opponent city as Babylon, regardless of the unambiguous state of Assyria in Isaiah 10:5, 12, 24 (Roberts 2006:280). Again, according to Roberts (2006:281), 4QpIsa\(^{c}\) probably does not

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\(^{189}\) Here we shall continue to combine the MT and the 1QIsa\(^{a}\)texts; the reason is, as we mentioned above, that there is not much difference between two texts, at least in Isaiah 24-27. This is well echoed in Roberts’ (2006:274-5) statement that, “The variant readings in the Isaiah scrolls do not point to a textual family or recension distinct from that represented in the MT.”

\(^{190}\) In the LXX 25:2a & b, the word city is in plural compared to the MT/1QIsa\(^{a}\) which is singular (cf. Gray 1912:426-7; Wildberger 1978:951-2; Watts 1985:328; Oswalt 1986:456; Blenkinsopp 2000:361).

\(^{191}\) The LXX renders it as “strong city” like the MT/1QIsa\(^{a}\). This strong city is the “city of salvation” and the city of Jerusalem (cf. Van der Kooij 2001:234-5). In our opinion, it is the only city that we are sure of its identity (cf. 24:10; 24:12; 25:2 (3x), 3; 26:1, 5; 27:10).

\(^{192}\) As in 25:2a & b, in the LXX 26:5, the word, city is also plural whereas in the MT/1QIsa\(^{a}\), it is singular. Another interesting point to note is that the LXX changes the meaning of the MT/1QIsa\(^{a}\) slightly, i.e., “the lofty/high city” into “strong cities.”

\(^{193}\) Like the MT/1QIsa\(^{a}\) and other versions, the Targum’s 26:1, “a strong city,” obviously points to Jerusalem, the city of salvation and mercy (Van der Kooij 2001:230-1).

\(^{194}\) “Strong city” appears in 25:2b, 25:6 and 26:5 in the Targum. Van der Kooij (2001:231) asserts that the author of the Targum contrasts the “strong city” in 25:2b and 26:5 with the “strong city” in 26:1, which he regards as Rome and Jerusalem, respectively.

\(^{195}\) The Vulgate renders “the city” as two similar but different words. For instance, 25:2a, 25:2c and 26:5 translates it as “civitatem” or “civitas” while 25:2b and 26:1 render it as “urbem” or “urbs.” An interesting remark is that civitas is regarded as a general description of an ordinary city or state while urbs is a walled town or city. Thus, it seems that Jerome considered textual contents in his translation. In a textual context, 25:2a, 25:2c and 26:5 describe the city as the ‘destroyed city’ while 25:2b and 26:1 portray it as ‘the strong city’ fortified with a wall.
consider Babylon or Assyria as historical but rather assumes it is “to be understood as a code word for the more contemporary foreign enemies of the Qumran community, either the late Seleucid state or Rome”, because the enemies are identified as “Kittim” (the “Kittim of Asshur” and the “Kittim in Egypt”), which usually implies the Romans.

In the case of the LXX, according to Seeligmann (1948:112), the rendition of the LXX 25:1-5 are paraphrases of the Hebrew text. It seems that the author of the LXX is open to a free interpretation in order to resonate with his idea or theology (Van der Kooij 2001:234). Furthermore, Van der Kooij (2001:236) claims that there is a possibility that the “strong city” in the LXX 25:2b and 26:5 can be understood as the Seleucid Empire. One of his arguments is based on the time frame; the LXX was “written about the middle of the second century BCE, at the time when Jerusalem and Judah were part of the Seleucid Empire.” His argument indeed appears “plausible” as he asserts but it requires a more cautious position for we do not know of a certainty what kind of city the author of the LXX intended. In addition, it is probable that the LXX 25:2c renders the Hebrew text (cf. MT/1QIsa) רֵיָה as “the city of wicked men”. It is interesting to note that the phrase, “the city of wicked men” appears only here (cf. Van der Kooij 2001:233). This rareness causes Van der Kooij to wonder whether it is in “a general sense” or “a particular place.” In considering a context such as, the “wicked are the ungodly persons, rich and powerful, on earth (24:8; 26:10),” Van der Kooij (2001:233-4) suggests that this powerful city of wicked men could be Babylon (cf. LXX Isa 13 and 47). It appears to us that it is a good example of contextual theology that reflects the social situation at that time (Tate 2006a:74).

The Targum seems to translate the Hebrew text (cf. MT/1QIsa) רֵיָה as “open cities”, which probably does not reflect a walled city; the Vulgate version also seems to echo this phenomenon (cf. Van der Kooij 2001:229). According to Van der Kooij (2001:229-30), the “open cities” (Targum) and the “strong city” in 25:2b can be identified with Rome. Furthermore, Isaiah 25:2c highlights the interesting nature of the Targum in terms of its “explanatory and paraphrastic renderings” (p.229). The Targum also appears to translate the Hebrew text (cf. MT/1QIsa), “the palace of strangers a city no more” or “the palace of strangers is a city no more” (Doyle 2000:219) as “a temple of the Gentiles will never be built in the city of Jerusalem!” According to Van der Kooij (2001:229-30) and other scholars (Schürer 1973:540), this expression, “a temple of the Gentiles” may indicate “the plan of the Roman Emperor Hadrian (in 130 AD) to build a temple for Jupiter Capitolinus in Jerusalem.” It seems that Van der Kooij and Schürer have strong points to support their claims.
Finally, in the case of the Vulgate, the understanding of its interpretation concerning ‘the city’ is rooted in Jerome’s commentary as Jerome’s work combines his translation with a commentary on the book of Isaiah (cf. Van der Kooij 2001:226-9; Wilken 2007:221). For instance, in his attempt to identify the “strong city” in 25:2b, Jerome offers two different understandings. For Jerome, the Jews understand this destroyed strong city as Rome: *civitatemque subversum Romam interpretanture, quae delenda sit penitus*, while Christians consider this strong city as the earthly Jerusalem: *civitas quondam fortis Hierusalem intellegitur; quae facta est domus alienorum* (Kelly 1975:299). Jerome’s claim is rooted in the phrase *domus alienorum* “the house of strangers” of which it is noted that “since 135 CE the city of Jerusalem is inhabited by strangers” (Van der Kooij 2001:227). It seems that Jerome’s interpretation reflects his religious and political circumstance. In addition, Jerome renders it as “the city of our strength is the saviour.” The notable thing is that Jerome translates the Hebrew word πρός “salvation” to *Salvator* “saviour” in order to bring in Jesus, the Saviour. This is a clear evidence of theological understating in terms of “Christological-messianic sense” (Blenkinsopp 2000:78; cf. Gray 1912:438-9; Scholl 2000:100; Van der Kooij 2001:227-8). Furthermore, for Jerome, this strong city must be the Jerusalem in heaven, for “Jerusalem will never be rebuilt” (Van der Kooij 2001:228; cf. Clements 1980:212) and, in our view, Jerome tries to avoid a conflict with his interpretation on the city in 25:2 and 26:5 where the earthly Jerusalem is represented. The above study is summarized in the following way (Van der Kooij 2001:237):

**Table 5.3 – The strong city in various translations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>J/S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1QIsa*/MT</td>
<td>25:2a</td>
<td>the city</td>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1QIsa*/MT</td>
<td>25:2b</td>
<td>the fortified city</td>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1QIsa*/MT</td>
<td>25:2c</td>
<td>the palace of strangers a city</td>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1QIsa*/MT</td>
<td>25:3</td>
<td>a city of ruthless nation</td>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>J/S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1QIsa*/MT</td>
<td>26:1</td>
<td>strong city</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1QIsa*/MT</td>
<td>26:5</td>
<td>the lofty city</td>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Septuagint</td>
<td>25:2a</td>
<td>cities</td>
<td>Seleucid empire</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Septuagint</td>
<td>25:2b</td>
<td>strong cities</td>
<td>Babylon</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Septuagint</td>
<td>25:2c</td>
<td>city of the wicked man</td>
<td>Babylon</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Septuagint</td>
<td>25:3</td>
<td>cities of injured men</td>
<td>Babylon</td>
<td>J/S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Septuagint</td>
<td>26:1-2</td>
<td>city of salvation</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Septuagint</td>
<td>26:5</td>
<td>strong cities</td>
<td>Seleucid empire</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targum</td>
<td>25:2a</td>
<td>open cities</td>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targum</td>
<td>25:2b</td>
<td>strong city</td>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targum</td>
<td>25:3</td>
<td>the city of Jerusalem</td>
<td>No pagan temple in Jerusalem</td>
<td>J/S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targum</td>
<td>26:1-2</td>
<td>strong city</td>
<td>Jerusalem, city of salvation</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targum</td>
<td>26:5</td>
<td>strong city</td>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulgate</td>
<td>25:2a,b</td>
<td>the city, strong city</td>
<td>Jerusalem on earth; Jews: Rome</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulgate</td>
<td>25:3</td>
<td>the city of mighty nations</td>
<td>Jerusalem on earth</td>
<td>J/S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulgate</td>
<td>26:1-2</td>
<td>the city of our strength</td>
<td>Jerusalem in heaven</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulgate</td>
<td>26:5</td>
<td>the high city</td>
<td>Jerusalem on earth; Jews: Rome</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the above study shows, it is interesting to note that the Septuagint, the Targum and the Vulgate not only translate the Hebrew text but also provide a theologized trend of the text of Isaiah as prophecy, “predicting events in the recent past, the present and the near future of the authors and their communities” (Van der Kooij 2001:237). For instance, the city was related to Babylon, the Seleucid Empire, the city of Rome, or Jerusalem which is an object or symbol of God’s judgment and salvation. In other words, early faith communities clearly contemporized the city or cities as the place where divine activities such as judgment and salvation are also adumbrated in their socio-rhetorical situation. In view of the above argument, therefore, the important question to ask is, “What do God’s judgment and salvation entail?” The following table is an attempt to answer this question (Van der Kooij 2001:224-38):

### Table 5.4 – Elements of judgment and salvation in Isaiah 24-27

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>J/S</th>
<th>Elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Septuagint</td>
<td>25:2a</td>
<td>Judgment</td>
<td>The rendering, “their foundations fall”, is an expression of God’s judgment in terms of the total annihilation of the strong cities. Moreover, the interpretation, “the city of wicked men” may refer to a group of persons who are religiously ungodly or a politically powerful nation like Babylon under God’s punishment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25:2b</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25:2c</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25:3</td>
<td>Judgment/Salvation</td>
<td>Here, the comparison of the expression in the LXX with the 1QIsaa'/MT is an interesting one: LXX: ‘the poor people’ and ‘cities of injured men’ 1QIsaa'/MT: ‘strong people’ and ‘the city of strong nations’ The LXX rendering seems to reflect the people’s contemporary situation in terms of their religious, social and political conditions. To identify themselves as ‘the poor people’ and ‘cities of injured men’ suggests that they were undergoing injustice and unrighteousness from ‘the city of wicked men’. In contrast, even though they are ‘poor people’, they bless God, for under God’s judgment, ‘the city of wicked men’ shall not be built forever.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targum</td>
<td>25:2a</td>
<td>Judgment</td>
<td>The rendering, “a temple of the Gentiles will never be built in the city of Jerusalem!” is a remarkable theological expression in the socio-rhetorical circumstance. It reflects the Roman Emperor Hadrian’s plan to build the temple in Jerusalem. Here, the author of the Targum appears to express the community’s theological trust and conviction that God will defeat pagan gods such as the Emperor’s by preventing him from building a heathen temple in Jerusalem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25:2b</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26:1-2</td>
<td>Salvation</td>
<td>As in other translations, that the city refers to Jerusalem in the Targum is not in doubt. The interesting point is that unlike other renderings, the city, Jerusalem is symbolized by ‘salvation and mercy’ under God’s blessing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulgate (Commentary)</td>
<td>25:2a.b</td>
<td>Judgment</td>
<td>In his commentary, Jerome’s Christian view is that in contrast to the Jew’s understanding that Rome was under God’s judgment, Jerusalem was under God’s punishment, because it was inhabited by strangers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25:3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26:1-2</td>
<td>Salvation</td>
<td>Jerome continually emphasized his Christian view in a Christological and eschatological sense. For instance, the former is expressed in: “The city of our strength is the saviour” and the latter shows that the city is not “the city of Jerusalem on earth” but rather it must be “the city of Jerusalem in heaven,” i.e., “the heavenly city (urbs caelestis)”. Thus, Jerome’s main argument is that God’s blessing on the city is through Jesus Christ in his eschatological time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, in view of the above study, our argument is that a “socio-rhetorical” approach can be an excellent way of adding to existing research, that is, a complementary methodology.
in the diachronic and synchronic aspects of reading the text. Thus, Robbins’ three subjects mentioned above will be applied to the present theological discussion. In this application, the focus will be on divine action, especially God’s judgment on and salvation of the city and the human response, that is, as a faith community.

5.2.2 Divine aspects

As mentioned above, Robbins’ sacred text can be interchanged with the term, theological text. In this usage, one of the main issues is God’s act and speech in terms of revelation and that God’s involvement is overwhelming is clearly stated in Chapter 2 of this study. This means that “divine aspects” inevitably involve “divine revelation.” Therefore, it is important to consider these issues from a rhetorical point of view and especially in prophetic speech. The reason is that when God’s nature and human limitation are considered, it is difficult to understand God’s intention or thought without God’s self-disclosure. Consequently, Tate (2006e:321) insists that revelation in the biblical case is God’s self-disclosure (Argall 2000:1123). The way of God’s self-disclosure is manifested by God’s “personal relationship with a people through speaking and acting” (Patrick 1999:16).

Furthermore, in line with Tate’s suggestion, divine revelation is manifested in several other ways (Tate 2006e:321): anthropic revelation which is illustrated in human forms such as “the hand of the Lord” (Isa 25:10); general revelation (cf. natural revelation), which is “the self-disclosure of God, through the structures of the natural world, that is accessible apart from faith or direct revelation” (e.g. Isa 24-27). In this self-disclosure of God, the important thing is the communication between “divine self-communication” (Schneiders 1999:46) and the human being (M. Buber’s term: “I–thou encounter”; cf. Patrick 1999:16; S. Williams 2005:680). Here, the basis of our conviction is that, “Scripture is a medium of the divine self-gift for all who approach it in faith” (Schneiders 1999:46).

As Patrick (1999:14) rightly indicates, “divine revelation” is manifested in “human time and space.” Therefore, when we are dealing with divine revelation, another important matter to consider is the sacred space or the place where God’s self-disclosure is interwoven. Space functions as a key role between God’s work and human response (Gorman 1990:32). In the Old Testament, especially in our text, Isaiah 24-27, the city, Mountain, Jerusalem/Zion and temple became sacred geography (cf. McConville 2002:32-5; Gordon 2004). In this regard, Ollenburger (1987) is right when he remarks that Zion becomes “the city of the great king,” which implies “a theological symbol of the Jerusalem cult.” Indeed, the so-called Zion
theology/tradition is deeply involved with “divine revelation.” According to scholars (cf. Hayes 1963:419-26; Roberts 1973:329-44, 1983:15-25; Ollenburger 1987; Renz 1999b:79-80; Walker 2004:589-92; Groves 2005:1019-25), Zion theology/tradition\textsuperscript{196} has the following five motifs\textsuperscript{197}:

1) The divine mountain: Zion is “the highest mountain,” the mountain on which God dwells as also in Mount Zaphon in Canaanite mythology (cf. Isa. 2:2=Mic. 4:1; Ezek. 40:2; Ps. 48:2; Isa. 24:23; 25:6, 7, 10; 27:13);
2) The river of paradise: Zion is the source of the river(s) of paradise (Ezek. 47:1-12; Joel 3:18; Zech. 13:1; Ps. 46:4);
3) The conquest of chaos: Zion is the place where the victory of the Creator God over the unruly waters of chaos is celebrated (Ps. 46:1-5; Isa. 17:12-14; 27:1), especially over the sea monster, Leviathan;
4) The defeat of the nations: Zion is the place where God’s crushing victory over rebellious nations and their rulers at the gates of Jerusalem is celebrated (Isa. 14:32; 17:12-14; 18:1-6; 29:1-8; 31:4-9; Ezek. 38-9; Joel 3:9-21; Ps. 46:6-11; 48:4-8; Isa. 24:10; 24:12; 25:2 (3x), 3; 26:1, 5; 27:10, especially 26:1-5);
5) The pilgrimage of the nations: Zion is the place to which the nations will come as pilgrims to worship the Lord (Isa. 2:2-4=Mic. 4:1-4; Isa. 18:7; Zech. 14:16-19; Ps. 76:11-12; Isa. 27:12-13).

As the important theological motif of Zion tradition in Old Testament shows, it is also worthwhile to note that Zion tradition is integrated with pre-existing traditions such as Canaanite mythology, ancient Israelite traditions and the mythology of the Jebusite, in which, in our view, the cosmic nature of God’s judgement is clearly shown. Furthermore, Zion theology, as stated above, may be summarized as the belief in an innate and unconditional inviolability of Zion (Hayes 1963:419-23) because of God’s dwelling in and protection of it. Consequently, this confidence is mainly rooted in the belief in: “1) the establishment of a royal dynasty; 2) the creation of a fixed religious center” by God (Weinfeld 1983:75-115).

\textsuperscript{196} It is based on the consideration of “a complex of ideological or theological motifs which was applied to Zion after David’s conquest of the city” (Renz 1999b:78) or to “the ancient temple mount” (Strong 1997:1314). Furthermore, even though the study of Zion theology is historically complex (Levenson 1992:1101-2), it is presumed to come from certain components such as Canaanite mythology (cf. Hayes 1963:419-26; Von Rad 1965:155-8); ancient Israelite traditions such as the tent and the ark (de Vaux 1997:294-302); pre-Davidic Jerusalem cult such as the mythology of the Jebusite (Kraus 1986:78-84); and the Davidic royal court (cf. Hayes 1963:420; Roberts 1973:329-44).

\textsuperscript{197} The first four are suggested by Rohland (1956) and the fifth is added by Wildberger (1957:62-81).
This Zion theology or tradition, which is connected to the city, the mountain or Jerusalem/Zion is well stated in Chapter 3 of this study. For instance, the word, city ( Netanyahu and יִשְׂרָאֵל) appears 55 times in the book of Isaiah, with nine of it in Isaiah 24-27 (24:10; 24:12; 25:2 (3x), 3; 26:1, 5; 27:10). In most of the occurrences, the term, city is connected to Jerusalem/Zion. Even though in Isaiah 24-27, Jerusalem/Zion is not directly mentioned in connection with the city, it can be implied from the context that the city refers to Jerusalem/Zion. Furthermore, concerning the word, mountain, which occurs 57 times and five times in Isaiah 24-27 (24:23; 25:6, 7, 10; 27:13), like the word, city, its connection also to Jerusalem/Zion is overwhelming. In the book of Isaiah, the word, Jerusalem is found 49 times and Zion 47 times. In spite of the few occurrences of Jerusalem; two times (24:23; 27:13) and Zion, once (24:23) in Isaiah 24-27, the important role of Jerusalem/Zion is definitely implied and this is already examined in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 of this study.

However, the nature of the references to Zion theology in Isaiah 24-27 is somehow ambivalent. In other words, the function of the Zion tradition is resonated in critical ways thus:

1) Weinfeld’s suggestion (1983:75-115) is that “the chosen House” and “the House of David” received theological legitimisation not only in the monarchy period but also in prophetic literature (cf. Von Rad 1965:155-75; Tucker 2001:38-9). However, according to Isaiah 24:23, no royal dynasty is mentioned; only God alone reigns on Mount Zion/Jerusalem. It seems to imply that its emphasis on the kingship of Yahweh might be used as the foundation for a critique of the royal court, i.e., the Davidic dynasty (cf. Ollenburger 1987:146-7; Renz 1999b:85).

2) Isaiah 24-27 is strongly against certain notions such as “unconditional inviolability of Zion.” It is opposed to a false or simple belief and promise about Jerusalem’s safety (McConville 2002:34). In contrast, God will judge even Zion/Jerusalem when its inhabitants practice abominable things such as injustice, unrighteousness and idolatry.

3) Isaiah 24-27 also reflects God’s restoration or salvation of his city, Zion/Jerusalem. It resembles ostensibly the historical Zion/Jerusalem after the exiles but on the other hand, it is the eschatological or the apocalyptic New Jerusalem (McConville 2002:34). For instance, in Isaiah 25:6-8, God invites all peoples and nations to his great banquet on Mount Jerusalem/Zion where he will swallow up death forever and wipe away tears from all faces. Another example is 26:19, which states that the dead shall live.

4) Lastly, it is important to note that Zion is an important place not because of Zion theology but of God’s presence that makes Zion a sacred place (Renz 1999b:95).
At this point, some ambivalence in Zion theology in Isaiah 24-27 can be noted. Some scholars such as McConville, Ollenburger, and Renz, criticize Zion theology somewhat rightly, in terms of the Davidic royal dynasty and its failed task. However, in our view, Weinfeld’s (1983:115) argument is also needed to show that God’s covenant never fails: “We are witness to the paradoxical fact that dynastic kingship and a permanent sanctuary, which were regarded as transgressions at the dawn of Israelite history, became a great incentive and a lever for the heralding of salvation to Israel and the peoples of the world” [Weinfeld’s Italics]. Furthermore, as Strong (1997:1314-21) and McConville (2002:32-7) emphasize, Zion theology finds its main expression in the phrases: “the Lord is the great king,” “the great king-protector,” and “the great king-provider. These ideas shall be developed subsequently.

According to Robbins, the divine aspects involve the deity, the holy person, and spirit beings. Nonetheless, in this discussion, these shall be modified to emphasize divine action, especially of God’s judgment and salvation of the city while other aspects of God’s character will also be discussed. The reason for this is that the focus of the text of Isaiah 24-27 is on God and his action rather than on a “holy person and spirit beings.” According to Robbins (1996b:120), this is the realm of theology par excellence, that is, the nature of God and God’s action and revelation. As the prominent figure of God’s appearance and activity in the inner texture is already noted, Isaiah 24-27 is a text in which God’s work dominates. God’s action manifests mainly in judgment and salvation, especially of the city.

5.2.2.1 Deity

According to Robbins (1996b:120), the term, deity is explained as follows:

God, or divine being, may exist in the background or in a direct position of action and speech in a text. This is the realm of theology par excellence—the nature of God and God’s action and revelation. Sometimes there is simply reference to God or a god in a text. Sometimes God speaks and acts like another character in the story.

In Isaiah 24-27, divine activity is deeply entangled with personal pronouns with symbolic connotations.

Table 5.5 - Description of the Divine (personal pronouns and divine appearances)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Speech</th>
<th>J/S</th>
<th>Metaphor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24:1</td>
<td>The Lord lays waste (הָיָתָה הָבָשָׂה)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd person)</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>King, Warrior, Judge, Husband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The Lord has spoken this word (וַיֹּאמֶר הַשֵּׁם הַדָּבָר)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd person)</td>
<td>J</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The majesty of the Lord (יָרֵד הַכַּלָּא)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd person)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15a</td>
<td>Glory to the Lord (וְעֵלֵי הַשֵּׁם)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd person)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15b</td>
<td>The name of the Lord, the God of Israel (שֵׁם הַגֵּדְוָה חַיָּה אֵל אֶשֶּׁר אָבָא)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd person)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Glory to the Righteous One (וְעֵלֵי הַשֵּׁם אֲשֶׁר בְּיוֹדְעֵי הַיָּשָׁר)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd person)</td>
<td>J</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

182
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Pronoun/Person</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>183.21</td>
<td>The Lord will punish (הָעִבֶּדְוֹ כַּלּוֹ)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd person)</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23a.183</td>
<td>The Lord of hosts will reign (כָּלִים יְכַלּוֹ)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd person)</td>
<td>J/S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23b.183</td>
<td>His elders (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25a.183</td>
<td>O Lord, You are my God (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd &amp; 2nd person)</td>
<td>J/S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b.183</td>
<td>I will exalt you, I will praise your name (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (2nd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1c.183</td>
<td>For You have done wonders (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (2nd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.183</td>
<td>You have made the city a heap (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (2nd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a.183</td>
<td>Strong people will glorify you (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (2nd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b.183</td>
<td>Cites of ruthless nations will fear you (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (2nd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.183</td>
<td>You have been a refuge to the poor (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (2nd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.183</td>
<td>You subdued the heat (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (2nd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.183</td>
<td>The Lord of hosts will make for all peoples (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd person)</td>
<td>J/S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.183</td>
<td>He will destroy on this Mountain (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8a.183</td>
<td>He will swallow up death (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8b.183</td>
<td>The Adonay Lord will wipe away the tears (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8c.183</td>
<td>The disgrace of his people He will take away (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8d.183</td>
<td>For the Lord has spoken (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9a.183</td>
<td>This is our God; we have waited for him, so that we might save us (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd person)</td>
<td>J/S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9b.183</td>
<td>This is the Lord for whom we have waited (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9c.183</td>
<td>Rejoice in his salvation (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.183</td>
<td>The hand of the Lord will rest on this mountain (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.1.183</td>
<td>He set up victory like walls and bulwarks (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd person)</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a.183</td>
<td>You keep in peace (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (2nd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b.183</td>
<td>Because they trust in you (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (2nd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a.183</td>
<td>Trust in the Lord forever (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4b.183</td>
<td>For in Yah Lord is an everlasting rock (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a.183</td>
<td>For he has brought low the inhabitants of the height (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd person)</td>
<td>J/S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5b.183</td>
<td>The lofty city he lays low. He lays it low to the ground (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.183</td>
<td>O Just One, you make smooth the path of the righteous (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd &amp; 2nd person)</td>
<td>S Judge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8a.183</td>
<td>In the path of your judgments (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (2nd person)</td>
<td>J/S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8b.183</td>
<td>O Lord, we wait for you (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd &amp; 2nd persons)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8c.183</td>
<td>Your name and your renown are the soul’s desire (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (2nd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9a.183</td>
<td>My soul yearns for you (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (2nd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9b.183</td>
<td>My spirit within me earnestly seeks you (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (2nd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9c.183</td>
<td>When your judgments are in the earth (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (2nd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.183</td>
<td>Do not see the majesty of the Lord (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd person)</td>
<td>J/S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11a.183</td>
<td>O Lord, your hand is lifted up (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd &amp; 2nd persons)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11b.183</td>
<td>Let them see your zeal for your people (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (2nd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11c.183</td>
<td>Let the fire for your adversaries (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (2nd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12a.183</td>
<td>O Lord, you will ordain peace (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd &amp; 2nd persons)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12b.183</td>
<td>You have done for us (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (2nd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13a.183</td>
<td>O Lord our God, other lords besides you have ruled over us (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd &amp; 2nd persons)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13b.183</td>
<td>But we acknowledge your name alone (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (2nd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.183</td>
<td>You have punished and destroyed them (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (2nd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15a.183</td>
<td>You have increased the nation, O Lord (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd &amp; 2nd persons)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15b.183</td>
<td>You have increased the nation; you are glorified (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (2nd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15c.183</td>
<td>You have enlarged all the borders of the land (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (2nd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16a.183</td>
<td>O Lord, in distress they sought you (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd &amp; 2nd persons)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16b.183</td>
<td>When your chastening was on them (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (2nd person)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.183</td>
<td>So were we before you O Lord (יִתְבַּצְרִית)</td>
<td>Indirect (3rd &amp; 2nd persons)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As God’s dominant figure is demonstrated in the inner texture and in the above table, Isaiah 24-27 is constructed through God’s direct and indirect involvement. For instance, in considering the occurrence of personal pronouns, the dominance of the divine concept becomes clearer. Divine appearances in the first person “I, my, and me” occur 10 times, the second person “you and your” occur 36 times, while the third person “he, his, and him” occur 24 times. Moreover, the prophet clearly indicates God’s direct association with judgment and salvation through the phrases: “for the Lord has spoken this word” (24:3) and “for the Lord has spoken” (25:8). The interesting point is that the first person singular pronoun (in the direct speech) is clearly associated with God’s salvation while the second and third person singular pronouns are basically related to God’s judgment. Thus, it seems that the rhetorical strategic is that, even though God’s punishment is heavy and severe, God’s intimate and covenantal love and salvation are eventually manifested overwhelmingly to persuade reader/audience in apocalyptic (or eschatological) time to have strong assurance in God’s promise.

Table 5.6 - Summary of personal pronouns of the Divine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pronouns</th>
<th>Number of occurrence</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>J/S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Per. Sing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>27: 3 (3x), 4 (3x)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My</td>
<td>27: 5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me</td>
<td>27: 4, 5 (2x)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Per. Sing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You</td>
<td>25: 1 (2x), 2, 3, 4, 5; 26: 3 (2x), 7, 8, 9 (2x), 12 (2x), 13, 14, 15 (4x), 16, 17</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>J/S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your</td>
<td>25: 1; 26: 8 (3x), 9, 11(3x), 13, 16, 19 (2x); 27: 8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>J/S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Per Sing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He</td>
<td>24: 1; 25: 7, 8, 9, 11; 26: 1, 5 (3x); 27: 1, 7 (2x), 8, 11(3x)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>J/S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His</td>
<td>25: 8, 9; 26: 21; 27: 1, 7, 8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>J/S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Him</td>
<td>25: 9 (2x)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Furthermore, several names of God appear in Isaiah 24-27. For instance, the Lord (יהוה), occurs 28 times in 24:1, 3, 14, 15 (2x), 21, 23; 25:1, 6, 8 (2x), 9, 10; 26: 4 (2x), 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 21; 27:1, 3, 12, 13; God (ג ODא) appears four times in 24:15; 25: 1, 9; 26: 13 ; Adonay (אדוניא), is found once in 25:8 ; Yah (י) occurs once in 26:4 ; the Righteous One (צדק) is used once in 24:16; and the Just One ( Seas) occurs once in 26:7. Interestingly, these overwhelming divine involvements are expressed through images or metaphors. According to Brueggemann (1997b:230-61; cf. Rendtorff 2005:609-22), these images of God can be classified into two: “metaphors of governance” as in King, Judge, Warrior and Father; and “metaphors of sustenance” as in Artist, Healer, Gardener-Vinedresser, Mother and Shepherd. Thus, concerning Isaiah 24-27, some metaphoric characters are also noted such as God as King, Judge, and Warrior, Gardener-Vinedresser and Husband (cf. Miller 1965:39-46, 1982:103; Millar 1976:65-102; Longman III & Reid 1995; Peels 1995:276-83; Doyle 2000:371-6).

emphasizes that one of the central motifs in Isaiah 24-27 is “the triumph of Yahweh and his unchallenged reign as king.” God reigns as king in the city especially on Mount Zion/Jerusalem, which is his “throne” (Williamson 1998b:240; cf. Eichrodt 1967:509) after, as Judge, he punishes the world, its inhabitants and the heavenly powers (Isa 24:1-22):

24:23 Then the moon will be abashed, and the sun ashamed; for the LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before his elders, gloriously.

The name, the Lord of hosts (יהוה הצבאות), especially the epithet יהוה, refers not only to the concept of God’s kingship but also to God as Warrior (as in military usage). After his initial enthronement on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem as the King (Isa 24:23), God offers a great banquet (Day 1985:148) inviting all nations and people along with his people (Isa 25:6-8). Furthermore, God’s empathy with his people who are under great suffering is manifested in his effort to “wipe away the tears” and “take away the disgrace of his people”:

25:6 The Lord of hosts will make for all peoples on this mountain a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. 7 And he will swallow up on this mountain the face of the shroud shrouding all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; 8 he will swallow up death forever. Then Adonay the Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken.

Judgment and salvation totally depend on God’s kingship or sovereignty. In this line of argument, McConville (2002:33) affirms that, “Kings in the ancient world, however had a responsibility from their god to maintain justice in society. This is clear from the prologue to the Babylonian king, Hammurabi’s law code”:

Prologue
When lofty Anum, king of the anunnaki,
(and) Enlil, lord of heaven and earth,
the determiner of the destinies of the land,
determined for Marduk, the first-born of Enki,
the Enlil functions over all mankind,
made him great among the Igigi,
called Babylon by its exalted name,
made it supreme in the world,
established for him in its midst an enduring kingship,
whose foundations are as firm as heaven and earth—
at that time Anum and Enlil named me
to promote the welfare of the people,
me, Hammurabi, the devout, god-fearing prince,
to cause justice to prevail in the land,
to destroy the wicked and the evil,
that the strong might not oppress the weak

(ANET 1969:164)
As the above study shows, God’s kingship is somewhat inclined to criticize the Davidic royal line and its failure in terms of social, ethical, and religious matters. In other words, the replacement of the Davidic kingdom is a critical engagement of Zion theology. The king could be idealized, i.e., he was supposed to be a model in the demonstration and practice of justice and righteousness, especially in the chosen city of Jerusalem/Zion (cf. Janzen 1994:140-2; Rendtorff 2005:646). When the kings of Israel failed, God’s reign commenced from Jerusalem/Zion where his temple was located and the people settled. Once again, God’s kingship demonstrated what earthly kings were supposed to do but did not to do.

B. God as Judge

As mentioned above (cf. Miller 1965:39-46, 1982:103; Alonso-Schökel 1987:181; Halpern 1993:415; Peels 1995:279), the King is also the Judge. As the Judge in Isaiah 24-27, God punishes the world and its inhabitants (24:1-22) and the fortified city but protects the poor and the needy and promotes justice and righteousness.

It is interesting to note that there is a progression in the judgment of the city. First of all, God judges the city which symbolizes the centre of the world and life.

24:10 The city of chaos is broken down (יִשָּׁכֶר הָבָשָׁתָה), every house is shut up for entering. 11 There is an outcry in the streets for wine; all joy is darkened; the gladness of the earth is banished. 12 Desolation is left in the city (יָשְׁבָה פְּנֵי אָרֶץ), the gate is battered into ruins.

The above representative city is here described as the fortified city which symbolizes human power, protection and security. However, the symbol of mighty power and arrogance is portrayed as becoming “a heap”, “a ruin”, and “solitary” under God’s judgment. This is definitely “the city of chaos” and “the desolate city” that is “laid low”. Furthermore, if we consider Zion theology critically, Zion/Jerusalem can be under God’s judgment and this may mean that “God is the enemy of Israel” (Doyle 2000:155).

25:1 O LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you, I will praise your name; for you have done wonders, plans formed of old, faithful and truth. 2 For you have made the city a heap (יָשְׁבָה לְמָשָׁל), the fortified city a ruin (יָשְׁבָה לְמָשָׁל), the palace of aliens is a city no more, it will never be rebuilt 3 Therefore strong peoples will glorify you; cities of ruthless nations will fear you.

26:5 For he has brought low the inhabitants of the height; the lofty city he lays low (יָשְׁבָה לְמָשָׁל). He lays it low to the ground, He casts it to the dust. 6 The foot tramples it, the feet of the poor, the steps of the needy.

27:10 For the fortified city is solitary (יָשְׁבָה לְמָשָׁל), a habitation deserted and forsaken, like the wilderness; the calf will graze there, there he will lie down, and strip its branches.
Here the city is regarded as a national group (like the Moabites) and is represented as the evil city. Rhetorically, Jerusalem can be likened to Moab, that is, the holy city is like a Gentile or an enemy city when its people abandon God’s covenantal law.

**25: 10b The Moabites shall be trodden down** (בָּאָמ וַעֲדָנָּו) in its place as a heap of straw is trodden down in the water of a dung-pit. 12 The high fortification of your walls He will bring down, He will lay low, He will cast to the ground, even to the dust.

In contrast to the city described above and its miserable situation, there is another city that will receive God’s salvation. God as Judge will restore his city Jerusalem “on that day”. Here other people may share God’s salvation with contemporary Israel signifying that God’s judgment is not the end of his work but rather salvation.

**26:1** On that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: **We have a strong city; he sets up salvation** (כָּרְאָל אֶלְּיַשְׁבָּה, מִגְוָעְנִים), walls and bulwarks 2 Open the gates, so that the righteous nation that keeps the truth may enter in.

In the midst of the judgment of the city, God protects the poor and the needy. It implies that in contrast to the proud and haughty city that is under God’s punishment, the poor and the needy are under God’s protection. Consequently, it is demonstrated that God’s salvation is very practical and, it is clearly applied to the community, especially “the poor and the needy”:

**25:4** For you have been a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in his distress (לְאָרָאם פָּנַי, לְאָרָאם פָּנַי), a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat. For the blast of the ruthless was like a rainstorm against a wall, 5 The noise of aliens like heat in a dry place, you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds; the song of the ruthless was stilled.

Furthermore, God promotes justice and righteousness (Rendtorff 2005:630-32). In other words, one of the reasons why the city deserves God’s judgment is the lack of “justice and righteousness”. God’s covenantal love and salvation are not unconditional but rather they are based on the community’s responsibility such as “justice and righteousness”. One of the ways the people can show their love for God is to practise “justice and righteousness”:

**26:7** The way for the righteous is level; O Just One, you make smooth the path of the righteous (שֵׁלַח נְכַל הַכְּשִׁד אֲשֶׁר חָשַׁב, מִשְָׁל בְּלִי כֵּלָה). 8 Surely, in the path of your judgments, O LORD, we wait for you; your name and your memory are the soul's desire. 9 My soul yearns for you in the night; Surely, my spirit within me earnestly seeks you. For when your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness (לְמַעְרֹת אֲשֶׁר חָשַׁב). 10 If favor is shown to the wicked, he will not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness he will deal perversely and he will not see the majesty of the LORD.

**C. God as Warrior**

God has been seen as King and Judge but here God is depicted as Warrior (cf. Miller 1965:39-46; Peels 1995:277; Perdue 1997:228-9), expresses his mighty power through holy wars (cf.
Von Rad [1958]1991) or divine wars (cf. Weippert 1972:485; Jones 1989:299-321; Ollenburger 1991:12-33). This “Divine Warrior” motif in Isaiah 24-27 is well demonstrated by Cross (1973) in his *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*; in Hanson (1979:313-4; cf. 2001:271), which stresses divine combat and victory; and in Millar’s (1976:65-102) discussion of divine war, threat, war, victory and feast. The most intriguing part is that, in the midst of judgment, God as Warrior defeats the heavenly, the earthly, and the sea powers, that is, the cosmic powers.

It seems that the author of Isaiah 24-27 attempts to show that God’s power is incomparable when considered in the light of ancient Near Eastern mythological powers. As noted in Chapter 3, in the ancient Near Eastern context, especially in Canaan, these cosmic entities had a strong influence on people’s lives. Thus, after God’s judgment on the nations in Isaiah 13-23, it is apparent that the God who reigns on Mount Zion/Jerusalem can control everything. Therefore, from a rhetorical point of view, it is a powerful theological persuasion and confidence that the people who trust in God and wait for his salvation will never be disappointed. The reason is that God’s judgment will include not only the world and its inhabitants but also the source of evil power and suffering. Hence, God’s salvation is completed through the judgment of the powers of heaven and earth, Death (Mot) and the Sea monster:

God as Conqueror of the power of heaven and earth:

24:21 On that day the LORD will punish the host of the height in the height, and on earth the kings of the earth.

22 They will be gathered together prisoners in a pit; they will be shut up in a prison, and after many days they will be punished.

23 Then the moon will be abashed, and the sun ashamed; for the LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before his elders, gloriously.

God as Conqueror of death:

25:7 And he will swallow up on this mountain the face of the shroud shrouding all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; 8 He will swallow up death forever. Then Adonay the Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken.

The Conqueror of death manifests through resurrection:

26:19 Your dead shall live, my corpses shall rise. O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a radiant dew, and the earth will cast out the dead.

God as Conqueror of the Sea monster:

27:1 On that day the LORD will punish with his cruel sword, the great and the strong,
Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will kill the dragon that is in the sea.

However, there is an interesting ambiguity in this rhetorical point of view. The author of Isaiah 24-27 intended to show that the same powerful Divine Warrior can be Israel’s enemy when his people failed to follow his will (Doyle 2000:155-6). This kind of ambiguous act on the part of God posed a strong challenge to the common belief - “Zion theology” - of that time. This point is well-illustrated throughout Isaiah 24-27 and also in Lamentation 2:5:

**Lamentations 2:5** The Lord has become like an enemy; he has destroyed Israel; He has destroyed all its palaces, laid in ruins its strongholds, and multiplied in daughter Judah mourning and lamentation.

As the author of Lamentation clearly shows in the verse above, the event of the exile can symbolize God’s punishment on Israel as an enemy:

The reflex of the Exodus is the Exile. If the Exodus shows God’s power on behalf of Israel, the Exile displays God’s power against Israel. The Exodus is an expression of God’s grace; the Exile displays his judgment. In the Exodus event we witness God as Israel’s warrior; in the Exile, he is Israel’s enemy.

(Longman III & Reid 1995:52)

Conversely, God’s covenantal love never ceases. God as Warrior eventually saves the people who first repent and then trust and wait on him (Longman III & Reid 1995:71). Moreover, divine salvation is manifested and experienced eventually in the sense that the people would worship God on the holy mountain of Zion/Jerusalem on that day:

**25:9** It will be said on that day, behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the LORD! We have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

**27:12** On that day the LORD will thresh from the channel of the Euphrates to the Wadi of Egypt, and you will be gathered one by one, O people of Israel. And on that day a great shophar will be blown, and those who were lost in the land of Assyria and those who were driven out to the land of Egypt will come and worship the LORD on the holy mountain at Jerusalem.

**D. God as gardener-inedresser**

As indicated in Chapters 2 and 3, God’s love is overwhelmingly expressed. It is remarkable that in the middle of God’s uncompromised judgment, God’s covenant love and salvation are expressed through the use of first person pronouns (10 times).

**27:2** On that day: A pleasant vineyard, sing about her! 3 I, the LORD, am its keeper; every moment I water it. I guard it night and day so that no one can harm it; 4 I have no wrath. If it gives me thorns and briers, in battle, I will march against it. I will burn it together. 5 Or else
let it cling to me for protection, let it make peace with me, let it make peace with me. 6 In days to come Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots, and fill the face of the world with fruit.

Furthermore, it can be noted that the city of Jerusalem/Zion became a vineyard where once again God’s protection and salvation are abundant. From a rhetorical point of view, like a vineyard which is completely dependent on the gardener/vinedresser’s protection and support, his people are not protected and saved by the city’s wall and mighty power but only by God’s power and love. Thus, God is deeply involved in their lives and they are profoundly affected by his engagement in their lives. Furthermore, here we can see God’s covenant love and salvation through God’s new creation after God’s judgment on his people is symbolized as a vineyard (Isa 5:1-7) in the eschatological or apocalyptic time (Fretheim 2005:2).

E. God as Husband

In addition to the above metaphors, God is also portrayed in conjugal relations. According to Doyle (2000:375-6; cf. Stienstra 1993; Perdue 1997:230), there is an interesting indication that in the image of Yahweh as husband and the city (Israel, Jerusalem/Zion) as a wife, a proper attitude is demanded by the husband: “The metaphor of YHWH as husband as it is presented in Isaiah 24-27 implies both a metaphor of sustenance (protection, sustenance, fecundity) and a metaphor of governance (punishment, demands of fidelity, conditions on relationship).” Additionally, Doyle (2000:371) emphasizes that “the relational/kinship metaphor of YHWH as the husband of Zion and of Zion as collective term for Jerusalem, its inhabitants and the people as a whole is likewise strongly represented.” Thus, this view of the city as community is an interesting one; Jerusalem/Zion becomes holy or a holy community. Furthermore, Zion represents a whole city community such as a corporate personality (cf. Porter 1965:361-8; H.W. Robinson 1981; Rogerson 1970:1-16; 1992:1156-7).

5.2.2.2 Holy person

Regularly a sacred text features one or more people who have a special relation to God or to divine powers. In New Testament texts, the holy person par excellence is Jesus the Christ… But there are other holy persons in New Testament texts as well. Priests, Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes have a status that associates them with holy things or holy ways. (Robbins 1996b:121)

As Robbins indicates, in New Testament context, Jesus the Christ is the holy person par excellence. In this line of theological understanding, it can be inferred that God in the Old Testament is not only holy but is also a holy person in a symbolic way.
In the book of Isaiah, the image of God as holy is one of the most important theological themes (Rendtorff 2005:632-34). According to Roberts (1982:131), one of the central Isaianic theologies is the Lord as “the Holy One of Israel (יהוה ידיד לי):” 1:4; 5:16, 19, 24; 6:3; 10:17, 20; 12:6; 17:7; 29:19, 23; 30:11-12, 15; 31:1; 37:23; 40:25; 41:14, 16, 20; 43:3, 14, 15; 45:11; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7; 55:5; 60:2, 14; 63:10-11), and it is used only of things that have a close relationship to God such as his abode, the mountain, the city, courts, the house, people, the way, or a special day (4:3; 35:8; 56:7; 57:13; 58:13; 62:9, 12; 63:15, 18; 64:9-10; 65:11; 66:20).

Furthermore, as the above study shows, the important point here is that God’s holiness is personalized in terms of speaking and acting in judgment and salvation. In this regard, God is holy and God’s judgment is executed through his reign on the holy mountain of Zion/Jerusalem (Isa 24:23); thus, God’s dwelling place is also holy: Worship the Lord on the holy mountain at Jerusalem יראה ה' על הפסג הזה (Isa 27:13). From a rhetorical point of view, it seems that the author of Isaiah 24-27 tries to convey the message that God’s judgment and salvation can be understood through God’s holiness. For instance, the iniquity and idolatry of the inhabitants of the world cannot withstand his holiness and his salvation emanates from the ethos of his holiness. Moreover, the contrast between two different holy characters (the priest and God) is illustrated in Isaiah 24-27. In other words, a supposedly holy person such as the priest (24:2) is under God’s judgment due to iniquity (24:5) showing that God is busy purifying the world, the land, and the city through his judgment and salvation in his holiness (Janzen 1994:160).

5.2.2.3 Spirit beings

Sacred texts often feature special divine or evil beings who have the nature of a spirit rather than a fully human being.

(Robbins 1996b:123)

There is not much mention of ‘spirit beings’ in Isaiah 24-27 but some scholars claim that their presence is implied. For instance, according to Davidson (2006:149), “the host of the height in the height” (24:21) can be understood as angels. If Davison’s understanding is correct, in this context, an angel is symbolized as the evil one who threatens God’s people and their lives; thus, it is under God’s judgment (cf. Eichrodt 1967:196, 199, 509; Wright 1983:108). Furthermore, as we mentioned elsewhere, in the ancient Near East, death (Mot; 25:8) and sea monsters such as the dragon (27:1) can be interpreted as spirit beings which can influence people’s lives. In Isaiah 24-27, these spiritual beings are depicted as a threatening but limited
power and thus, under God’s complete control (Eichrodt 1967: 510).

Consequently, the term ‘spirit’ in Isaiah 24-27 depicts a negative power as in “the blast of the ruthless” (25:4) or the “wind” (26:18) but in contrast, the human spirit is a ‘spirit’ that needs to search for God’s salvation while God’s spirit is shown as the spirit that carries out divine judgment and salvation (27:8). In other words, in 25:4, the Hebrew word for ‘spirit,’ נפש, is rather a metaphor describing the enemy’s power while God’s spirit is life-giving and comfort through his disciplinary judgment “on that day” (27:8). This observation seems to contradict Ma’s (1999:185) claim that “interestingly, there is no occurrence of God’s נפש in any manner. Only one, the human spirit is described as having the faculty to seek Yahweh (29:9)”. From a rhetorical perspective, it seems as if the divine spirit is ostensibly like the “city of ruthless nations” (25:3) but with the deepest theological conviction, the author of Isaiah 24-27 never fails to indicate that God’s spirit is continually ministering salvation and restoration to his faithful community.

Table 5.7 - Summary on spirit beings in Isaiah 24-27:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Hebrew</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25:4</td>
<td>דוד נפש</td>
<td>The blast of the ruthless</td>
<td>Like “city of ruthless nations” (25:3), this is a symbol of the enemy’s power which threatened the poor and the needy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26:9</td>
<td>ספוחתי</td>
<td>My spirit within me</td>
<td>A personal spirit seeking God’s salvation and help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26:18</td>
<td>עליה בחום</td>
<td>We gave birth only to wind</td>
<td>Here, spirit is depicted as wind implying nothingness or emptiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27:8</td>
<td>אחיו מרד</td>
<td>His fierce blast</td>
<td>God’s spirit is depicted as a judgmental spirit but the following sentence shows that it is a spirit of purification, discipline and restoration.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.3 The relationships between the divine and the human

There is an interaction between God’s activity and its impact on the human. In this segment, we shall examine the concepts of divine history and human redemption.

5.2.3.1 Divine history

This is the realm of eschatology and apocalyptic, or salvation history. From the perspective of eschatology, history moves toward the time of “last things.” From the perspective of apocalyptic, certain seers see revelations from heaven as the end-time approaches, making events and procedures of the end-time before they occur.

(Robbins 1996b:123)

As Robbins indicates, divine history is deeply connected to eschatology and the apocalyptic phenomena. Isaiah 24-27 has long been referred to as the ‘Isaiah apocalypse’, for there are certain characteristics that are similar to late apocalyptic literature (cf. Fohrer 1968:369-70;
Otzen 1974:196; Millar 1976:1; Johnson 1988:11). Here we can see that an account of this internal development suggests that the apocalyptic is the successor to the prophetic movement, and particularly to the future of hope of the prophets (Rowland 2006:191). Thus, it is important to note that there are continuities and discontinuities between prophecy and apocalypse (Oswalt 1981:291-2) in Isaiah 24-27.

As noted above, in Isaiah 24-27, divine history expresses God’s sovereign reign as King, Warrior and Judge, etcetera, from an apocalyptic perspective. Accordingly, in scholarly debates, there are different opinions about the relationship between Isaiah 24-27 and the apocalyptic. Hence, it is important to investigate how ‘Isaiah apocalypse’ is understood.

A. Definition of terminology
Some decades ago, Ernst Käsemann published his controversial essay on apocalyptic; his claim was that, “Apocalyptic was the mother of all Christian theology (1969:102).” However, much confusion has arisen concerning the definition of the term ‘apocalypse’ and its derivatives (Vorster 1986:166-9). The problem is that the word ‘apocalypse’ is often interchanged with the related term ‘apocalyptic’. In other words, “modern scholars have used the term ‘apocalyptic’ in more than one way, and this has been a constant source of confusion” (Knibb 1982:156).

1. Apocalypse
The genre, “apocalypse”, is derived from the Greek word Apokalypsis, that is, “revelation, disclosure” (Oepke 1965:563-92; Mundle 1978:309-16; Holtz 1990:130-2). It appears in the opening line of the book of Revelation (1:1). Apocalypse embraced mysteries, occult lore and books of all kinds, among them cultic ritual, alchemy, astrology and other esoteric wisdom (Oepke 1965:571). The term is often used to refer to “literary compositions which resemble the book of Revelation, i.e., secret divine disclosures about the end of the world and the heavenly state” (Koch 1972:18).

In another sense, Koch (1972:24-7), one of the pioneers of this effort, suggests that the ‘apocalypse’ be considered as a literary form which has certain characteristic features described below:

1) discourse cycles (frequently called “visions”) between the apocalyptic seer and a heavenly being, revealing the secret of man’s destiny;
2) spiritual turmoil depicting the spiritual turmoil of the seer that accompanies the vision;
3) a paraenetic discourse conveying an eschatological ethic, or an introductory legend illustrating proper behavior;
4) pseudonymity, bearing the name of some ancient worthy;
5) mythical images rich in symbolism;
6) composite character

Consequently, Hanson (1976:28-34; 1979:11-12;) has developed Koch’s suggestions and has proposed the following terms and meanings:

1. apocalypse: designates a literary genre;
2. apocalyptic eschatology: a system of thought, i.e. to distinguish apocalyptic eschatology from the prophetic literature;
3. apocalypticism: denotes a ‘symbolic universe’; a movement of the ideology.

One of the most important studies on the genre of ‘apocalypse’ appeared in *Semeia* 14 (The Society of Biblical Literature Genres Project). The group defines apocalypse as:

[A] genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world. 

(Collins et al 1979:9)

In response to the above statement, VanderKam (1998:307-11) appraises Collins’ claim both positively and negatively by showing that the merit of Collins’ definition is that it notes the “diversity in the principal contents of the apocalypse.” However, two items need to be re-

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198 Vorster (1986:166-9) also clarifies the meanings of the terms in a similar way: apocalypse: a type of text; apocalyptic perspective: a viewpoint from which one experiences the realities around one; apocalyptic movement: a social grouping within a society; apocalyptic or apocalypticism: a crisis phenomenon.

199 In other words, this is “a religious perspective which focuses on the disclosure (usually esoteric in nature) to the elect of the cosmic vision of Yahweh’s sovereignty - especially as it relates to his acting to deliver his faithful - which disclosure the visionaries have largely ceased to translate into the terms of plain history, real politics, and human instrumentality due to a pessimistic view of reality growing out of the bleak post-exilic conditions within which those associated with the visionaries found themselves” (Hanson 1979:11-2).

200 These studies include all the texts classified as apocalypses and dated between 250 BC and 250 AD:
1) “historical” apocalypses with no otherworldly journey: Dan 7-12, 1 Enoch 85-90 (the Animal Apocalypse); 1 Enoch 93 & 91: (11) 12-17; (the Apocalypse of Weeks); Jub 23; 4 Ezra; 2 Baruch.
2a) apocalypses with an otherworldly journey and a review of history: the Apocalypse of Abraham.
2b) otherworldly journeys with cosmic and or political eschatology: 1 Enoch 1-36; 1 Enoch 72-82 (the book of the Heavenly Luminaries); 1 Enoch 37-71 (the Parables of Enoch); 2 Enoch; Test of Levi 2-5.
2c) otherworldly journeys with only personal eschatology 3) Baruch; Test of Abraham 10-15; Apocalypse of Zephaniah (Collins [ed] 1979:14-5)
visited: 1) the omission of the feature of pseudonymity from his formulation; 2) absence of any statement about function.

2. Apocalyptic

The ambiguity here is that the word ‘apocalypse’ is often interchanged with the related term ‘apocalyptic.’ The term, ‘apocalyptic’ has been used not only as an adjective to describe a literary genre but also as a noun or collective term (Koch 1972:20). This is well illustrated in Russell (1964:104)’s writing in which the term ‘apocalyptic’ is often used in an ambiguous way:

The character of Jewish apocalyptic throughout the intertestamental period is complex in the extreme; there are considerable differences between one book and another. There is, however, a homogeneity about it which justifies its classification as a distinct literary corpus. It is not always easy to define in what this homogeneity consists for, although it reveals certain fairly well-defined characteristics, apocalyptic is recognizable even when some of its formal characteristics are absent.

Lindblom (1938:101, quoted by Russell 1964:105) defines apocalyptic by using a list of characteristics namely “transcendentalism, mythology, cosmological surveys, dualism, division of time into periods, teaching of Two Ages, numerology, pseudo-ecstasy, artificial claims to inspiration, pseudonymity, and esoterism”.

On the other hand, Russell (1964:105) notes that:

These various ‘marks’ belong to apocalyptic not in the sense that they are essential to it or are to be found in every apocalyptic writing, but rather in the sense that, in whole or in part, they build up an impression of a distinct kind which conveys a particular mood of thought and belief” (Russell’s italics).

Russell’s suggestion is further developed by Koch (1972:28-33) who argues that ‘apocalyptic’ is considered as ‘typical moods and ideas’ or ‘a movement of mind’ indicating. Koch’s findings can be summarized as follow:

1. an urgent expectation of the radical overthrow of all earthly conditions in the immediate future;
2. the end should come about through the cosmic catastrophe;
3. the time of this world is predetermined;

Koch (1972:13) also describes the apocalyptic in a general way as: “a complex of writings and ideas which were widespread about the turn of the era in Palestine, in the Israelite diaspora and in early Christian circles; but which can also appear in similar form in other religious situations and mental climates.”
4. a hierarchy of *angels and demons* mediate events in the two worlds and that victory is assured to the divine realm;
5. after final catastrophe, there will be a new *salvation* which is a tendency to universalism and a righteous remnant will taste the fruits of salvation in a heavenly Jerusalem;
6. inaugurating *the throne of God* and marking the end of the present age is the Son of Man’s ascension to the heavenly throne;
7. the *mediator with royal functions* such as the Messiah or the Son of Man often brings about the final redemption;
8) *glory* characterized the final state and sets it apart from what was prophesied.

Further, Dumbrell (1997:396-9) is more focused on the theological aspect of the apocalyptic. His suggestion on the apocalyptic theology of history can be summarized thus:

1. History as determined: the whole history as deterministically mapped out by God;
2. Dualism: evil forces rule in this age, but in the age to come God will reign supreme;
3. Kingdom of God: the universal challenge of unrighteousness demanded a universal righting of all wrongs, an elimination of evil on a global, even cosmic scale. God alone would be responsible for the coming of the kingdom;
4. Angels: a remarkable development as regards spirits and orders of angels;
5. Messiah/Son of Man: the note of a heavenly-appointed mediator;
6. Apocalyptic mythology and holy war: a larger extent than prophecy, the significant actions took place in heaven;
7. The Day of the Lord: this old prophetic term referring to the expected judgment of the world by Yahweh is a further motif of apocalyptic;

Having considered various scholarly definitions of ‘apocalypse’ and its derivatives, it is now time to answer the questions: How does the definition of apocalypse influence our understanding of Isaiah 24-27 as apocalypse? Does the Isaiah 24-27 text really deserve the name of apocalypse? Is it right to study the origins of apocalyptic through the so-called Isaiah apocalypse (chapters 24-27)?
B. Early/proto-apocalyptic

According to Russell (1964:89), even though the apocalyptic was well-developed in such books as Daniel and Enoch, we can see that the seeds from which they grew had already been sown in such passages as Ezekiel 38-39, Zechariah 1-8 and 9-14, Joel 3 and Isaiah 24-27. Russell (1964:91) supports his argument by noting that, “These several Old Testament prophecies cannot be called ‘apocalyptic’ in the sense that the name can be applied to books like Daniel and its successors, but it can be said that they contain the ‘stuff’ from which apocalyptic is made”. Russell (1964:91) further elaborates on Isaiah 24-27 and provides reasons for referring to the chapters as “proto-apocalypse”:

The final judgment of the nations and the consummation of all things is again the theme of Isaiah 24-27, an addition to the Book of Isaiah dating perhaps from the third or fourth century B.C. When Yahweh pronounces his judgment, the earth is turned upside down (24:1) and the sun and moon are darkened (24:23). In this great cosmic catastrophe even the host of heaven is to be punished (24:21). Most startling of all the teachings of these chapters is that of 26:19 which declares that the righteous dead will be raised in resurrection to share in the final redemption of God’s people. This belief is taken up and developed at great length, and with much variety of detail, by succeeding apocalyptic writers.

In line with Russell’s view, Cross (1973:343-6) also proposes a sixth century BCE origin for the apocalyptic and connects it to the reshaping of the prophetic tradition and of royal ideology. Cross (1973:345) argues that in Isaiah 24-27 the presence of elements of the “proto-apocalyptic” can be found. Cross (1973:346) shows that certain distinctive traits or patterns emerge from the text as follows:

One is the democratizing and eschatologizing of classical prophetic themes and forms. A second is the doctrine of two ages, an era of “old things” and an era of “new things.” A third element is the resurgent influence of myths of creation used to frame history and to lend history transcendent significance.

Like Cross, his disciple Millar (1976:114) also concludes that the genre of Isaiah 24-27 is “proto-apocalyptic”. His reason is that “the author emerges as one very much influenced by the work of Second Isaiah; one who shared in Second Isaiah’s visions for the reconstruction of

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202 Cook (1995:34) suggests that the term proto-apocalyptic is used to describe the “Persian-period religious texts, viewpoints, and the practices that have clear affinities with the full-blown apocalypticism found in the subsequent Hellenistic and Roman periods.”

203 Cross (1973:345) claims that we could discern a lot of transformation in the character of prophecy, for instance, “The myths of creation, in short, were given an eschatological function (25:6-8).”

204 Cross (1973:346) also emphasizes that the mythic lore of Canaanite (Ugaritic) is an important source of apocalyptic research: “With the recovery of the Canaanite mythic and epic poetry, certain judgments about the character of apocalyptic syncretism must be modified. It has become vividly clear that the primary source of mythic material informing Jewish apocalyptic was old Canaanite mythic lore. This, of course, is not to dispense with all resort to Iranian, Mesopotamian, or Greek borrowing in describing the evolution of apocalyptic. It does mean, however, that many apocalyptic traditions go back through earliest Israel to Canaanite sources so that more rather than fewer continuities with the old biblical community must be recognized.”
Hanson, also a student of Cross, (1976; 1979; 1985; 1987; and 1992) argues convincingly about the origins of the apocalyptic. Hanson (1979:27) insists that, “The dawn of apocalyptic is genuinely a dawning; that is, prophetic eschatology did not break into apocalyptic eschatology suddenly and without an intervening period of transition.” Hanson (1979:27, 313-14) then distinguishes Second Isaiah as the “proto-apocalyptic” and Isaiah 24-27 (including Third Isaiah and Zechariah 9-10) as the “early-apocalyptic.”

Some other scholars equally affirm Isaiah 24-27 as “proto-apocalyptic.” Like O. Kaiser (1974:179), VanGemeren (1990:266) considers Isaiah 24-27 as “the little Apocalypse”, because:

Isaiah 24-27 proclaims judgment and deliverance. God’s judgment rests on all creation (24:1). His judgment is likened to a massive holocaust, a war and an earthquake (vv. 3-4, 10-12, 19-21). In contrast, Yahweh will shine forth gloriously and victoriously in the establishment of his kingdom and in his subjugation of the regime of evil, autonomy, and rebellion.

Pagán (1992:324) also argues that Isaiah 24-27 deserves the name apocalyptic for the following reasons:

1) Judgment is imminent and will fall on the whole earth;
2) Heaven and earth will be filled with sadness and moved to pity;
3) The day of the Lord will bring judgment to the kings of the earth and to the heavenly powers;
4) The sun and the moon will grow dark;
5) Death and tears will be destroyed;
6) The dead will rise;
7) The day of judgment will be one of triumph over the mythological monsters;
8) On the day of judgment the trumpet will sound and all of Israel will worship Yahweh in Zion.

C. Late apocalyptic

Duhm (1902:172-194), whose work was a classical study of the Isaiah apocalypse, divides the structure of the text into two parts, namely eschatological apocalypses and songs concerning the destruction of a particular city. Like Duhm’s, Smend (1884:161-224) also supports the late apocalyptic phenomenon on the basis of the arguments that there was the description of the destruction of the earth (24:18-20); the meal on Mount Zion (25:8); and the notice of resurrection (26:19) in the text. In addition, there was the blowing of the great trumpet (27:13), the use of the three beasts as veiled history (27:1), the concept of world judgment and the messianic era as a future event.
D. Transition between prophetic eschatology and apocalyptic

Vriezen (1966:74) indicates that Isaiah 24-27 is a typical case in which prophecy manifests in a more recent form, that is “the spirit of prophecy is there, but mingled with various speculative ideas.” Thus Vriezen (1966:365) concludes that Isaiah 24-27 is “the borderline between prophecy and apocalyptic,” because there is the weight on the cosmic element and personal salvation in terms of a transcendent light inherent in Israel. For Clements (1980:196-200), however, he argues that it is difficult to call it “a true apocalypse,” even though it exhibits some eschatological features. In Clements’ (1980:196) judgment, therefore, the elements of Isaiah 24-27 “represent an important stage of hermeneutical development between prophecy and apocalyptic and thus form a bridge between the prophetic books of the Old Testament and the later apocalypses of the inter-testamental period” (House 1998:284).

For his part, Grogon (1986:149-50) proposes that, “Isaiah 24-27 stand on the border between prophetic eschatology and apocalyptic”, for there are not only descriptions of universalism (apocalyptic) but also particular indications of peoples and places (eschatological future). Vorster (1986:170) also supports this idea claiming that: “During the latter part of the 6th century and also during the 5th century, apocalyptic movements came to the fore in Israel from time to time (cf. Isa 24-27; 56-66; Malachi; Zech 9-14).” For Sawyer (1987:81), it is clear that “Isaiah 24-27 illustrates just how short a step it is from prophecy to apocalyptic … visions of the end of the world, astronomical portents, an eschatological banquet, the last judgment, and the resurrection of the dead, in what has been called the Isaiah apocalypse”. Similarly, Preuss (1996:254) observes that there are tendencies of apocalyptic development in certain parts of the Old Testament such as Zechariah 9-11; 12-14; Isaiah 24-27; and Joel which “point clearly to this transition from prophecy to apocalyptic”. Additionally, Polaski (1999:19) notes an interesting point concerning Isaiah 24-27. He claims that here we may “see the beginnings of apocalyptic thought. Perhaps here, also, we can seek the first stirrings of an apocalyptic rhetoric”.

E. Prophetic eschatology

Some scholars claim that the text of Isaiah 24-27 belongs to prophetic eschatology rather than apocalyptic. However, before examining those views, it is important to consider prophecy and eschatology. First, concerning prophecy, Dumbrell (1997:394-6) suggests that the main character is the “communication from God regarding the implications of his relationship with his people” in an eschatology on the plane of history. In other words, it portrays the eschatological future in historical terms, while focusing on particular places (Mount
Regarding eschatology, Carroll (2000:420-2) remarks that the term eschatology mainly focuses on “expectations of an end time, whether the close of history, the world itself, or the present age”. In Old Testament prophecies, especially in exilic and postexilic periods, there were some tensions and questions concerning God’s action to re-establish Israel’s destiny, particularly its postponed restoration. In that difficult situation, apocalyptic eschatology emerged (Carroll 2000:420-21).

Further, Lindblom (1938:101) claims that Isaiah 24-27 is eschatological rather than apocalyptic. He calls this view the “Isaianic Cantata” (1938:155). Millar (1976:4) suggests that Lindblom makes Isaiah 24-27 closer to prophecy than to apocalyptic: “It was important to recognize that prophetic language of the future may function simply to renew the present age and not at all imply a return to chaos and inauguration of a new age.” Consequently, Kaufmann (1960:384) strongly rejects naming Isaiah 24-27 as apocalyptic. He argues that:

＞The judgment of ‘the host of heaven in heaven’ refers neither to the fallen angels nor to the angelic patrons of the nations; the reference is simply to eclipses, as part of the terrors of the day of doom - a motif of early literature(e.g., Amos 4:13; 5:8; Hos 4:3; Isa 13:10, 13) which the later apocalypses borrowed.

For Fohrer (1968:369), Isaiah 24-27 is a collection of “prophetical liturgy” and Plöger (1968:53), argues that the term “Isaiah –Apocalypse” is not very “appropriate”. He elaborates on three eschatological texts: Isaiah 24-27, Zechariah 12-14 and Joel; and shows that these classical prophets contained a prophetic eschatology (1968:53-107). Furthermore, Eissfeldt (1965:323) claims that, “This is entirely made up of eschatological prophecies in general terms, in that it begins with the threat of the downfall of the world and ends with the promise of the return of the Jewish Diaspora”. Both Rendtorff (1985:191-2) and Oswalt (1986:440) do not agree that Isaiah 24-27 should be called the ‘apocalypse of Isaiah’ but rather, suggest that the chapters be considered as prophetic eschatology. In the case of Watts (1985:310), he is reluctant to call Isaiah 24-27 an apocalypse for “the literature is prophetic and liturgical in style. Only by stretching the definition and the dating of ‘apocalyptic’ can it be called that.” Hayes and Irvine (1987:298) develop this “prophetical liturgy” idea and suggest that, “Isaiah 24-27 was composed for use in a festival celebration.”

Tucker (2001:206) suggests that even though there are some typical characters of apocalyptic:
1) the judgment encompasses the whole earth and all who live; 2) to proclaim the final drama
of history; 3) specific apocalyptic motifs: the resurrection of the dead (26:19); judgment on the heavenly host (24:21-22); eschatological banquet of the nations on Mount Zion (25:6-8); the defeat of Leviathan (27:1); the darkening of the sun and moon (24:23), Isaiah 24-27 can not be called “Isaiah apocalyptic.” The main reason is that there is an absence of the fundamental marks of the genre of apocalypse namely: 1) the detailed revelation of the future; 2) a visionary through a dream or vision; the lack of the bizarre and otherworldly characteristics of vision reports in Daniel and Revelation. From these observations, Tucker (2001:207) concludes that Isaiah 24-27 can be recognized as a collection of eschatological prophecies.

In sum, we have tried to look at scholar’s definitions of ‘apocalypse’ and its derivatives. apocalypse: designates a literary genre; apocalyptic eschatology: a system of thought; apocalyptic or apocalypticism: a crisis phenomenon which refers to the ‘symbolic universe;’ a movement of the ideology. Furthermore, different suggestions and views exist in scholarly circle about the apocalyptic and the genre of Isaiah 24-27. Some of these suggestions are early/proto-apocalyptic, late apocalyptic, transition between prophetic eschatology and apocalyptic and prophetic eschatology. In our view, each position has its strong and weak points but being fully aware of scholar’s disagreements, we are inclined to see an initial transformation of prophetic eschatology into early apocalyptic seed in Isaiah 24-27. In other words, this view is close to that of the “transition between prophetic eschatology and apocalyptic.” The text itself seems to attest to this observation as earlier indicated in Chapters 2 and 3 of this study. Even though the title “apocalyptic is used for the study,” it is just to follow conventional scholarly usage in order to avoid confusion because of the reality that a lot of scholars still retain the term “apocalyptic” in their writings.

5.2.3.2 Human redemption

Human redemption is the transmission of benefit from the divine to humans as a result of events, rituals, or practices. As a result of things that happen or could happen if people do them, divine powers will transform human lives and take them into a higher level of existence. Perhaps the result will be the changing of the mortal nature of humans—namely, a state of existence that leads to death—into an immortal nature, a state where they will no longer die. (Robbins 1996b:125-6)

After God’s severe judgment, God’s redemption is expressed; the poor and the needy experience God’s salvation especially in Isaiah 25:4-5.

25:4 For you have been a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in his distress
(מעי לבה שנוי לאמני), a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat. For the blast of the ruthless was like a rainstorm against a wall, 5 The noise of aliens like heat in a dry place, you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds; the song of the ruthless was stilled.

Furthermore, this redemption is manifested through the victory over death and in the promise by the Lord to “wipe away the tears from all faces”:

25:7 And he will swallow up on this mountain the face of the shroud shrouding all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; 8 He will swallow up death forever (מכל למות כל מה). Then Adonay the Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken (ותהי אזור קיומם מעלה ידفاء וחרפת שם יזיר מעלה ידفاء). Moreover, human redemption is eventually culminated in two main ways: the resurrection from the dead and the restoration of Israel. The first is the resurrection from the dead. Even though it is debatable whether personal or national resurrection is intended, this is a very rare concept in Old Testament theology (cf. Daniel 12:2) and demonstrates God’s power over death.

26:19 Your dead shall live, my corpses shall rise (יהיה מותךولوجي😱иш三個تحرير). O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy! For your dew is a radiant dew, and the earth will cast out the dead.

Secondly, God’s salvation is experienced through the restoration of Israel. God never intends to eliminate his people permanently but rather through the purification of judgment, the salvation is his final act:

27:6 In days to come Jacob shall take root, Israel shall be blossom and put forth shoots, and fill the whole world with fruit (שָׁמֵש יֶתֶם יִשְׂרָאֵל יַקְרַר יְצָר וַעֲרַב יְצָר וַעֲרַב שְׁמַר וַעֲרַב שְׁמַר). This purpose of salvation is actualized through a call from exile and the restoration of the worship the Lord on the holy mountain at Jerusalem:

27:12 On that day the LORD will thresh from the channel of the Euphrates to the Wadi of Egypt, and you will be gathered one by one, O people of Israel. 13 And on that day a great shophar will be blown, and those who were lost in the land of Assyria and those who were driven out to the land of Egypt will come and worship the LORD on the holy mountain at Jerusalem (הlopedia לבודה מורה תפוקת מים מסתבך). Lastly, human redemption or the people’s well-being completely depends on their obedience as illustrated in the expressions, “trust” and “waited”. Thus, it is good to examine the human aspects.
5.2.4 The human aspects
This concerns mainly human activities with regard to human commitment, religious community, and ethics.

5.2.4.1 Human commitment
The other side of what God or holy persons do for Humans is human commitment to divine ways. The sacred texture of a text, therefore, regularly includes a portrayal of humans who are faithful followers and supporters of people who play a special role in revealing the ways of God to humans. In Christian texts, this special form of human commitment is usually called discipleship. The issue is the response of humans at the level of their practices.

(Robbins 1996b:126)

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the author of Isaiah 24-27 seems to ask his audience/readers to decide their destiny by choosing between the “fortified city” and God. As Eichrodt (1967:257) correctly indicates, individuals can decide for or against God, but it seems the above answer is obvious because it is a rhetorical question. In God, they have hope and salvation. In rhetorical persuasion, human commitment is a very practical matter. In the midst of God’s severe judgment, the author/narrator expresses his agony: I say, I pine away, I pine away. Woe is me!

(24:16). This shows that initially, the prophet is so depressed but he gradually regains his confidence and he begins to praise God’s salvation and trust his covenantal promise:

25:1 I will exalt you, I will praise your name; for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure

His emotions and faithfulness are further demonstrated through words such as “waited” (25:9 [2x]; 26:8), “keep” (26:2,3), “trust” (26:3,4), “desire” (26:8), “yearn” (26:9), “seeks” (26:9), “learn” (26:9), “acknowledge” (26:13), “cling” (27:5), “make peace” (27:5 [2x]), and “worship” (27:13). The interesting observation is that there are no words to encourage people to focus on political and military powers but rather they are urged to recognize that they are “politically impotent”, because their human power will never save them from God’s judgment (McKenzie 1974:157). Initially, it seems as if God’s judgment prevails and the people are in despair but from chapter 25 onward, people’s commitment to and confidence in God’s salvation become deeper (Oswalt 2005:76-84).

5.2.4.2 Religious community
Human commitment regularly is not simply an individual matter but a matter of participating with other people in activities that nurture and fulfil commitment to divine ways.

(Robbins 1996b:127)
In the community of Isaiah 24-27, the righteous, the wicked and the ruthless are all found. However, the religious community is encouraged to wait, hope, trust and eventually praise God while the inhabitants of the earth who depend on the “fortified city” face God’s punitive action.

Moreover, as shown under the ideological texture, there are conflicts within the community, especially between the wicked and the righteous. First, the people’s transgression on religious issues is illustrated:

24:5 The earth lies polluted (כִּבְשָׁם) under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant (כִּבְשָׁם תֵּבְּשָׁם חַי תְּבֵּשָׁם שֻלֶּם). 6 Therefore a curse devours the earth, and its inhabitants are guilty (חַי מָשָׁה שֻלֹּמָה תְּבֵּשָׁם), therefore the inhabitants of the earth burned, and few people are left.

Thereafter, they are depicted as “cities of ruthless nations” and their actions as “the blast of the ruthless”:

25:3 Therefore strong peoples will glorify you; cities of ruthless nations (כִּבְשָׁם נֵבֶל תֶּרֶם) will fear you. 4 For you have been a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in his distress, a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat. For the blast of the ruthless was like a rainstorm against a wall (כִּבְשָׁם מָשָׁה שֻלֶּם קֵרָמ), 5 the noise of aliens like heat in a dry place, you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds; the song of the ruthless was stilled (כִּבְשָׁם מָשָׁה שֻלֶּם קֵרָמ).

Again, they are identified as “Moabites”, symbolizing an evil city and nation:

25:10b The Moabites (בֹּאָמֶה) shall be trodden down in its place as a heap of straw is trodden down in the water of a dung-pit. 11 He will spread out his hands in the midst of it, as swimmers spread out to swim, he will bring down his pride together with the cleverness of his hands 12 The high fortification of your walls He will bring down, He will lay low, He will cast to the ground, even to the dust.

Eventually, they are portrayed as “the wicked”:

26:10 If favor is shown to the wicked (שָׁדַי), he will not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness he will deal perversely and he will not see the majesty of the LORD. 11 O LORD, your hand is lifted up, but they do not see it. Let them see your zeal for your people, and be ashamed. Let the fire for your adversaries consume them.

In contrast, in the midst of God’s judgment on the wicked, there is the righteous who completely trusts in God in the time of tribulation:

26:1 On that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; he sets up salvation, walls and bulwarks. 2 Open the gates, so that the righteous nation (בֹּאָמֶה) that keeps the truth may enter in. 3 Those of steadfast mind you keep in peace, peace for he trusts in you. 4 Trust in the LORD forever, for in Yah the LORD is an everlasting rock.

7 The way for the righteous (לָכְדֹּר לָכְדֹּר) is level; O Just One, you make smooth the path of
the righteous (גָּאוֹן בָּטֶפֶן). 8 Surely, in the path of your judgments, O LORD, we wait for you; your name and your memory are the soul's desire. 9 My soul yearns for you in the night, Surely, my spirit within me earnestly seeks you. For when your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness (גָּאוֹן).

5.2.4.3 Ethics

For Robbins (1996b:129), ethics\(^{205}\) can be described as the responsibility and commitment of human beings to God. Hence, it combines theological and moral issues:

Ethic concerns the responsibility of humans to think and act in special ways in both ordinary and extraordinarily circumstances. When addressed in the context of religious commitment, the special ways of thinking and acting are motivated by commitment to God.

In Isaiah 24-27, there are several expressions of ethical topics and issues. Ethical motifs are connected to personal, social, economic, political, religious, and natural matters, including animals. We maintain that it is possible for some other people to consider these issues in a different way but at this point, we shall inquire into scholars’ understanding of the above-mentioned ethical subjects, and to determine whether the issues have been adequately addressed. In our view, there is a strong connection between the ethical and the theological points of view. Therefore, concerning the relationship between Old Testament ethics and theology, W. Kaiser (1983:3) rightly observes that:

[The ethics of the Old Testament] is concerned with the manner of life the older covenant prescribes and approves. Its ethical contents are not offered in isolation, but are viewed as demands, actions, and character that God expects from men and women. These close connections between ethics and theology constitute one of the distinctive features of the Bible’s own set of ethics (cf. Field 1996:343; Grenz 1997:23; Wright 2005:259-260).

Furthermore, Childs holds a canonical view that “the Old Testament’s portrayal of ethical

\(^{205}\) It is significant that the final part of the “theological texture” (sacred texture) is the subject of ethics. However, the tendency of many scholars is to be uncomfortable with Old Testament ethics. The main reasons are based on some examples such as capital punishment for adultery (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22); disfigurement as a penalty for assault (Ex. 21:23-4; Lev. 24:19-20) and lepers as communal and religious outcasts etcetera (Lev. 13-14; cf. Barton 1998:1-2; Brock 2007: ix). Furthermore, in early church history, there was a typical case in which one Marcion rejected God’s law and wrath in the Old Testament and accepted only the loving God and the Gospel in the New Testament (cf. Birch 1991:29). Unfortunately, these kinds of attitude have continued to gain influence and as Knight (1995:1) claims, sufficient study of Old Testament ethics was lacking throughout the early 20th century, even though we should acknowledge some of the works of scholars such as Hempel ([1938]1964, 1962), Eichrodt ([1964]1967), and Van Oyen (1967). However, in the face of rapid changes in social and global issues and moral degeneration and trying to appreciate the Hebrew Bible again, attitudes of scholars have changed since 1980 and some important studies on Old Testament ethics have begun to appear. In our judgment, the main contributions of the studies are the recognition of the complexity of the Hebrew Bible as a body of literature “with multiple literary forms, diverse strata and varied perspectives,” (Knight 1995:2) and the handling of the Hebrew text in canonical way and from the community context (cf. Hauerwas 1981; Birch & Rasmussen 1989; Kaiser 1983; Birch 1991; Janzen 1994; Otto, 1994; Rodd 2001; Barton 2003; Wright 2004). Indeed, recently, social scientific methods (cf. Meeks 1986; Wilson 1984; Albertz 1994; Knight 1995) and the canonical approach (cf. Hauerwas 1981; Fowl & Jones 1991; Childs 1993; Birch 1991, 2001) are applied in order to overcome previous “systematic or dogmatic” study of Old Testament ethics.
behavior is inseparable from its total message respecting Israel, that is to say, from its theological content” (Childs 1993:676). Thus, we may refer to Old Testament ethics as “theological ethics” (Barton 1998:58). In this line of argument, we may say that theology and ethics combine together (Birch 2001:301). Hence, in our view, true religion or theology is somewhat demonstrated in an ethical response. In other words, human commitment and religious community are essentially based on ethical substance. On theological and ethical bases, therefore, one would ask, “What does entail it to read Old testament ethics in a theological way, especially with respect to Isaiah 24-27?”

1) Ethics concerning the laws, the covenant and purity

Isaiah 24:5-6

5 The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant. 6 Therefore a curse devours the earth, and its inhabitants suffer for their guilty; therefore the inhabitants of the earth dwindled, and few people are left.

Clear ethical expressions appear in Isaiah 24:5-6. As noted in Chapter 2 under Inner Texture, the people had become contaminated (e.g. by bloodshed; cf. Rodd 2001:17) because they have defiled the laws and ruined the covenant (cf. Noahic covenant). The interesting point, as Verhey (1993:203) observes, is that God’s judgment is most cases based on the covenant that the inhabitants of the world abandoned. Thus, it seems that the violation of the laws, the statutes, the everlasting covenant as the reason for God’s judgment is somewhat opposed to the notion of “natural law or order” which Barton continually advocates (cf. Barton 1978:60; 1995:15-17; 2003:148). People do not just receive God’s curse because they violate natural laws but because they violate God’s covenant and law. Subsequently, one may infer that what constitutes purity in the eyes of the author is deeply rooted in God’s laws and covenant which demand obedience and observation. In other words, the covenant must be respected through mutual commitment between God’s love and human responsibility.

This notion of covenantal ethic has received attention in theological studies. One of the 20th century theological giants, Walther Eichrodt, in his Theology of the Old Testament (1961-1967), attempts to find out the “center (Mitte)” or the governing principle of God’s covenant with Israel through his systematized study. In our judgment, Eichrodt’s concept of covenant influences his understanding of the ethics in Isaiah 24-27. For instance, Eichrodt notes that God’s judgment is evoked because the sinful world breaks ‘covenant’ in apocalyptic circumstances leading to a “gulf between the holy God and the sinful world” (Eichrodt
The “covenant-breaking” will only be restored or fulfilled when “the perfect sovereignty of God” is manifested in the eschaton (Eichrodt 1961:486-7 [Eichrodt’s italics]). Furthermore, according to Eichrodt (1967:253-9), God’s covenant is typified in the notion of “the God-Man relationship”. In this bond, individuals are urged to respond to “the shaping of life in accordance with the standard of the Law...as task appointed by God” in universalistic situation (Eichrodt 1967:256[Eichrodt’s italics]). Thus, in our view, Eichrodt rightly tries to balance God’s grace with human responsibility and even though some tensions seem to exist between individualism and communalism, his observation of individual responsibility in faithful and ethical life is one of his useful contributions to our study. However, like Hempel, Eichrodt shows a tendency to “systematize” Old Testament ethics into “core or unifying principles” (Barton 2003:16). In other words, Eichrodt’s study focuses on the central concept of “covenant”. Thus, for him, it is logical to assume that Old Testament ethics is embedded in the notion of covenant. Nevertheless, Eichrodt ignores the complexity of Old Testament ethics as he “tends to emphasize the diachronic axis and ignore the synchronic to the detriment of both” (Barton 2003:19).

2) Ethics concerning holiness

Isaiah 27:13

13And on that day a great trumpet will be blown, and those who were lost in the land of Assyria and those who were driven out to the land of Egypt will come and worship the LORD on the holy mountain at Jerusalem.

In the above verse, the ethic of purity is closely connected with holiness. According to Isaiah 27:13, people who returned from exile will worship God on the holy mountain at Jerusalem. Some scholars regard this notion of “holy” in an ethical sense (cf. Wright 1997:591; Barton 1995:17). Unfortunately, this concept of holiness is almost never examined from an ethical perspective in Isaiah 24-27. It is our opinion that from previous socio-rhetorical analyses, it is somewhat clear that the author of Isaiah 24-27 rhetorically persuades his audience or readers to accept the reality that Jerusalem is not just a holy place, without God, this city becomes a “city of chaos” (24:10) and a “city made a heap” (25:2), even though it was a “fortified city” (25:2; 27:10) and a “lofty city” (26:5). In contrast, Jerusalem can only become holy when God reigns (24:23) and rests (25:10) “on this mountain.” Thus, this realization was a great blow to people who believed Zion theology in an ideological way. Furthermore, it also seems apparent that God’s holiness will resonate not just with the strong and beautiful temple but with the faith community which practises righteousness and justice.
3) Ethics concerning social conflict (the righteous, the wicked and the ruthless), oppression and suffering

**Isaiah 24:16**

16 From the ends of the earth we hear songs of praise, of glory to the **Righteous One**. But I say, I pine away, I pine away. Woe is me! For the treacherous deal treacherously, the treacherous deal very treacherously.

**Isaiah 25:3-5**

3 Therefore strong peoples will glorify you; **cities of ruthless nations** will fear you. 4 For you have been a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in their distress, a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat. When the blast of the ruthless was like a winter rainstorm, 5 the noise of aliens like heat in a dry place, you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds; the song of the ruthless was stilled.

**Isaiah 25:8**

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

**Isaiah 26:2-3**

2 Open the gates, so that the **righteous nation** that keeps faith may enter in. 3 Those of steadfast mind you keep in peace - in peace because they trust in you.

**Isaiah 26:6**

6 The foot tramples it, the feet of the poor, the steps of the needy.

**Isaiah 26:7**

7 The way of the righteous is level; O Just One, you make smooth the path of the righteous.

**Isaiah 26:9**

9 My soul yearns for you in the night, my spirit within me earnestly seeks you. For when your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.

**Isaiah 26:10**

10 If favor is shown to the wicked, they do not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness they deal perversely and do not see the majesty of the LORD. 11 O LORD, your hand is lifted up, but they do not see it. Let them see your zeal for your people, and be ashamed. Let the fire for your adversaries consume them.

All through Isaiah 24-27, one of the dominant concepts is the conflict between the righteous and the wicked and between the ruthless and the poor. Identifying who these people are is a rather complicated issue. The righteous and the poor can be considered “in the religious sense of being ‘pious’ and ‘devoted to God’” (Rodd 1990:210. cf. Polaski 1999:28). On the other hand, in the book of Isaiah, Barton (2003:146-7) claims that the “oppression of the poor is seen as focused specifically on the expropriation of ancestral land (5:8-10) and on miscarriage of justice (1:23; 3:9; 5:23; 10:1-2; 29:21)”. Moreover, in the previous study of ideological texture, it was noted that various scholars such as Plöger (1968), Redditt (1986), Hanson (1979, 2001), and Albertz (1994) clearly demonstrate that social conflicts existed which also caused oppression and suffering in the society. However, there are differences of opinion
concerning the groups: visionaries/the hierocrats (Hanson); faith group/ruling classes of priests (Plöger); social privileges/lower-class Judeans (Albertz); the peasant/the priestly theocracy (Redditt). We should add that, a critical prophetic spirit continually operated in the exilic and post-exilic Israel. It warned that the ideological Zion theology that focused on the temple in Jerusalem while trying to “cover-up their social misdemeanours” (Barton 2003:151) would no longer be acceptable; neither in the contemporary society nor in the new apocalyptic society. In other words, this prophetic character continued to survive in a society where injustice persisted. It functioned as a diatribe against the ruthless and the wicked and it also encouraged people who faithfully trusted and waited on God to hold on to the hope that “on that day” God would save and lead them into the new transformed holy city of Jerusalem/Zion to worship him there.

From a theological point of view, the influence of Gerhard von Rad, whose two-volume *The Theology of the Old Testament* ([1958, 1961]1962, 1965) focuses more on history (historical dynamism) such as re-telling (*Nacherzählung*) the history or confessions of Israel. He also opposed the search for the centre (*Mitte*) but argued for the diversity of themes in the Old Testament. His stimulating study focuses mainly on the righteousness of Jahweh. Von Rad (1962:377) claims that, “From the earliest times onwards Israel celebrated Jahweh as the one who bestowed on his people the all-embracing gift of his righteousness”. The interesting point is that this righteousness is “always a saving gift. It is inconceivable that it should ever menace Israel” (Von Rad 1962:377). Furthermore, in his view, this theme gradually developed from earlier literature to the exilic and post-exilic texts. Thus, he boldly asserts that “older Israel simply did not know of the demand of a righteousness in relationship to Jahweh” which manifested only at a later stage (Von Rad 1962:377). A good example is “the so-called liturgies of the gate” as in Isaiah 26:2: “Open the gates, so that the righteous nation that keeps faith may enter in” which illustrates “a question about Israel’s righteousness, her readiness for her part to say yes to the relationship of community offered to her by Jahweh” (Von Rad 1962:378). However, when we ask how the notion of “a righteousness in relationship to Jahweh” is manifested in society, the answer is not clear in terms of theological ethic in social conflict. Of course, it is unfair to judge von Rad for not approaching Isaiah 24-27 the way Plöger, Redditt, Hanson, and Albertz did but one can not help but wish his reflections were deeper.

before God” must be rooted in “the response of obedience” because the gift of Yahweh’s gracious love is embedded in people’s requirement and responsibility. Thus, for Zimmerli, “There is obvious tension between what the law given by Yahweh seriously requires on the one hand, and on the other, the concomitant superabundance that is an unearned gift” (Zimmerli 1993:143). In this tension, however, “human righteousness” and “Israel’s holiness” are indispensable for real life (Zimmerli 1993:143-4). Concerning our study, God’s covenantal love and human obedience are demonstrated in God’s judgment on the wicked and their power (Isa 24) and, in contrast, God’s great salvation manifests in his reign on Mountain Zion/Jerusalem and in the great banquet to which all the nations and his people are invited (Isa 25-27; cf. Zimmerli 1993:229-30). In our judgment, one of Zimmerli’s contributions is the explanation that the theological ambiguity between God’s judgment and salvation is manifested in “crisis and hope” in Isaiah 24-27. In other words, God’s people who experience crisis because of the power of the wicked and God’s judgment, still hold on to hope and salvation because of “the mystery of Yahweh’s plan” (Zimmerli 1993:197). Nevertheless, like von Rad, Zimmerli also overlooks the social problem, that is, the theological ethical view point.

4) Ethics concerning transgression, guilt and religious sin

    Isaiah 24:6
    6 Therefore a curse devours the earth, and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt; therefore the inhabitants of the earth dwindled, and few people are left.

    Isaiah 24:20
    20 The earth staggers like a drunkard, it sways like a hut; its transgression lies heavy upon it, and it falls, and will not rise again.

    Isaiah 26:20-21
    20 Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourselves for a little while until the wrath is past. 21 For the LORD comes out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will disclose the blood shed on it, and will no longer cover its slain.

    Isaiah 27:9
    9 Therefore by this the guilt of Jacob will be expiated, and this will be the full fruit of the removal of his sin: when he makes all the stones of the altars like chalkstones crushed to pieces, no sacred poles or incense altars will remain standing.

In the book of Isaiah as a whole, the practice of idolatry was one of the main reasons why the people were under God’s judgment. The phenomenon is not peculiar to Isaiah 24-27. As earlier noted, with respect to transgression and guilt, injustice and unrighteousness, idolatry was regarded as one of the most serious religious sins in the Judean society and it is well-depicted in Isaiah 27:9. The practice of idolatry had saturated the entire society and social
injustice reigned. From this observation, it can be said that unrighteousness and idolatry go in hand in hand. It is our desire that scholars would inquire deeper into this relationship from the perspective of theological ethics. Additionally, unrighteousness and idolatry can be considered to be deeply connected to human pride.

5) Ethics concerning pride

Isaiah 25:10
10 The Moabites shall be trodden down in their place as straw is trodden down in a dung-pit. 11 Though they spread out their hands in the midst of it, as swimmers spread out their hands to swim, their pride will be laid low despite the struggle of their hands. 12 The high fortifications of his walls will be brought down, laid low, cast to the ground, even to the dust.

Isaiah 26:5
5 For he has brought low the inhabitants of the height; the lofty city he lays low. He lays it low to the ground, casts it to the dust.

Isaiah 27:10
10 For the fortified city is solitary, a habitation deserted and forsaken, like the wilderness; the calf will graze there, there he will lie down, and strip its branches.

The author typified the city’s arrogance and pride through the expression the “fortified city” and the “lofty city”. Barton (2003:147) rightly observers that this human pride appears to “lead to all the attempts at self-defense” and “hence to commit idolatry”. Furthermore, in our opinion, this pride also leads to Zion ideology that encourages the people ostensibly to follow God’s will but in their hearts, they despise God’s ways. Pride manipulates people making them to be “wise in their own eyes” (5:21) but eventually, that wisdom becomes “folly” (Barton 2003:147). According to Barton, pride is a serious sin that deserves God’s judgment: “Folly and pride are sins because they are attempts to supplant God as the chief, indeed the only real power in the universe – in Shakespearean terms, an offence against ‘degree’, the proper hierarchy in the world, where God is supreme and human powers are subject to God” (Barton 2003:152). Thus, the author of Isaiah 24-27 continually urged the people to “trust” in God in humility, for in that faith is God’s salvation.

6) Ethics concerning environmental issue

Isaiah 24:1-13
Now the LORD is about to lay waste the earth and make it desolate, and he will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants. 2 And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the slave, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the creditor, so with the debtor. 3 The earth shall be utterly laid waste and utterly despoiled; for the LORD has spoken this word. 4 The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers; the heavens languish together with the earth. 5 The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant. 6 Therefore a curse devours the earth, and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt; therefore the
inhabitants of the earth dwindled, and few people are left. The wine dries up, the vine languishes, all the merry-hearted sigh. The mirth of the timbrels is stilled, the noise of the jubilant has ceased, the mirth of the lyre is stilled. No longer do they drink wine with singing; strong drink is bitter to those who drink it. The city of chaos is broken down, every house is shut up so that no one can enter. There is an outcry in the streets for lack of wine; all joy has reached its eventide; the gladness of the earth is banished. Desolation is left in the city, the gates are battered into ruins. For thus it shall be on the earth and among the nations, as when an olive tree is beaten, as at the gleaning when the grape harvest is ended.

In Isaiah 24-27, especially in 24:1-13, there are vivid illustrations of environmental catastrophes. However, the cause of this disaster is not based on human “exploitative agricultural methods” (Osborn 1993:91) but rather on “the sin of which this is the judgment” (Rodd 2001:247). In other words, “since this is divine judgment it is Yahweh who has caused the desolation of the earth, not effect of human exploitation” (Rodd 2001:247). We do not consider that Rodd’s aim is to disregard human responsibility concerning environmental problems which we now face but rather he evokes the seriousness of human sin from a theological ethical point of view. Even though the cause of environmental problems is debatable, in Isaiah 24-27, it is clear that God judged the earth because of human sin.

Nevertheless, there is hope because on “the other side of God’s judgment, the prophets saw and announced God’s faithfulness to his people in God’s own good future. God will reign and establish both peace and justice - not only in Israel but among all the nations, and not only among the nations but in nature itself” (Verhey 1993:204).

7) Ethics concerning commercial loans

Isaiah 24:2

And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the slave, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the creditor, so with the debtor.

It is interesting to note that Isaiah 24:2 deals with economic problems. According to Rodd (2001:146), the issues probably concerned “commercial credit”. Based on our observations in Chapter 2 under Inner texture, it seems to us that the Judean society, especially its commercial life was riddled with economic injustice (cf. Dearman 1988: 60; Barton 2003:134).

8) Ethics concerning kingship and political issue

Isaiah 24:21-23

On that day the LORD will punish the host of heaven in heaven, and on earth the kings of the earth. They will be gathered together like prisoners in a pit; they will be shut up in a prison, and after many days they will be punished. Then the moon will be abashed, and the sun ashamed; for the LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before his elders he will manifest his glory.
Isaiah 26:3-4

3 Those of steadfast mind you keep in peace - in peace because they trust in you. 4 Trust in the LORD forever, for in the LORD GOD you have an everlasting rock.

In our earlier discussion of kingship and the political issues surrounding divine kingship, we noted that an important criticism is the failure of the Davidic dynasty and royal administration. In this regard, von Rad’s study contributes great insight. In the case of Zion theology which is illustrated in Isaiah 29:2-3: “Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be moaning and lamentation, and Jerusalem shall be to me like an Ariel. And like David I will encamp against you; I will besiege you with towers and raise siegeworks against you”, initially, Jahweh’s attitude against Zion contradicts traditional Zion theology but then it is followed by a “turning point of grace”. Hence, von Rad refers to it as a theological ambivalence: “Jahweh’s work for Zion is here given a remarkable theological ambivalence: it judges and saves at one and the same time” (Von Rad [1961] 1965:164). In our view, von Rad’s insightful contribution lies in the observation that although prophet Isaiah’s message to Zion was somehow not fulfilled and for this reason, “Isaiah’s disappointment was very deep”, surprisingly his message “remained a living organism, speaking directly to later generations as it had done to its own, and able even of itself to give to new prophecy” (Von Rad 1965:168). Indeed, von Rad’s work deeply resonates with the theological and ethical situation in Isaiah, especially Isaiah 24-27 in terms of Zion theology in that the exilic or post-exilic audience re applies it to its specific situation to reflect critically on God’s ambivalent work.

Furthermore, Barton indicates that Isaiah 26:3-4 is an expression of “Isaiah’s political message” and “its insistence on trust in God and the avoidance of all human expedients”. Thus, according to Barton (2003:149), Isaiah 26:3-4 has the “tendency to take Isaiah’s concrete political advice and turn it into a general spiritual counsel of quietness and trust - something that Christian tradition has done to the (clearly political) Isaianic oracle in 30:15: in returning and rest you shall be saved”.

From the above observation, we may assert that human politic and God’s or theological ethical politic are sometime complete at variance. For instance, the former is typified in the statement, “All the people did what was right in their own eyes” (Judges 20:25), while the latter is exemplified in the confession: “Those of steadfast mind you keep in peace - in peace because they trust in you. 4Trust in the LORD forever, for in the LORD GOD you have an everlasting rock” (Isa 26:3-4).
9) Ethics concerning animal

27:10

For the fortified city is solitary, a habitation deserted and forsaken, like the wilderness; the calf will graze there, there he will lie down, and strip its branches.

It is also interesting to note the mention of animals in connection with prophetic judgment. In this regard, Rodd (2001:230) remarks that:

A conventional way of emphasizing the utter devastation that is coming upon Israel or its enemies is to portray cities being destroyed so completely that they become the haunt of jackals and other wild animals (Isaiah 13:21-22; 14:23; 32:14; 24:11, 13-15; Jeremiah 10:22). They may even turn back to pasture (Isaiah 5:17; 17:2; 27:10).

The table below represents the summary of some views of scholars on the theological-ethical aspects of Isaiah 24-27. While we acknowledge that this summary does not cover the entire works of each scholar, it illustrates their major works which show their understanding of Isaiah 24-27 in terms of “theological ethics”.

Table 5.8 – Theological-ethical character of Isaiah 24-27

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<td>Von Rad ([1961]1965:347:350)</td>
<td>24:17-23, 26:19</td>
<td>Politics (God’s judgment on the whole world); A resurrection for the dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childs (1993:3145)</td>
<td>2001:173:179:181:191</td>
<td>24:27, 24:23, 24:5-6, 24:10, 24:23, 26:11, 27:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanson ([1986]2001:271, 277, 511:272:273)</td>
<td>24:5-6, 24:16-18a, 25:1-5, 6-8</td>
<td>Covenantal responsibility; Political conflict between Zadokite party and visionary; The vindication of the poor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3 Conclusion

In our discussion, the theological texture of Isaiah 24-27 is categorized into three subjects: the divine aspects (deity, holy person, spirit being, divine history), the interaction between the divine and the human (divine history, human redemption) and the human aspects (human commitment, religious community, and ethics).

**The divine aspects**

Regarding the concept of deity, God’s metaphoric character as King, Warrior, Judge, etcetera, is described in terms of judgment and salvation. On the concept of holy person, it is shown that God’s holiness is central to Isaianic theologies. Consequently, God’s holiness is embodied in his speech and action regarding judgment and salvation. In the case of spirit beings, Isaiah 24-27 depicts ‘spirit’ as a negative power, e.g. “the blast of the ruthless” (25:4) but God’s Holy Spirit carries out his judgment and salvation in life-giving comfort “on that day”.

**The interaction between the divine and the human**

Under divine history in the interaction between the divine and the human, the importance of noting the continuities and discontinuities between prophecy and apocalypse in Isaiah 24-27 was stressed. Some of the suggestions concerning the genre of Isaiah 24-27 include early/proto-apocalyptic, late apocalyptic, transition between prophetic eschatology and apocalyptic and prophetic eschatology. In this study, we are inclined to see an initial transformation of prophetic eschatology into early apocalyptic seed in Isaiah 24-27. This view is close to that of the “transition between prophetic eschatology and apocalyptic.” In the discussion on human redemption, it was noted that the poor and needy experience God’s redemption. Human redemption is eventually culminated in two main ways - resurrection from the dead and the restoration of Israel.
The human aspects

In the case of human commitment, the audience/readers are asked to decide their destiny by choosing between the “fortified city” and God. Human commitment is demonstrated through words such as “waited” (25:9 [2x]; 26:8), “keep” (26:2,3), “trust” (26:3,4), “desire” (26:8), “yearn” (26:9), “seeks” (26:9), “learn” (26:9), “acknowledge” (26:13), “cling” (27:5), “make peace” (27:5 [2x]), and “worship” (27:13). Consequently, the religious community is encouraged to wait, hope, trust and eventually praise God while the inhabitants of the earth who depend on the “fortified city” face God’s judgment.

The above summary touches mainly on ethics in relation to the law, the covenant and purity. The emphasis here is that the covenant must be operated as a mutual commitment between God’s love and human responsibility. Moreover, God’s holiness will not just be identified with the strong and beautiful temple but with the practice of righteousness and justice within the faith community. On social conflict, the emphasis is on the dichotomy between visionaries and hierocrats (Hanson 1979, 2001); faith groups and ruling classes of priests (Plöger 1968); the socially privileged class and the lower-class Judeans (Albertz 1994); and between the peasant and the priestly theocracy (Redditt 1986). This is examined in the light of von Rad’s righteousness in relation to Jahweh and Zimmerli’s response of obedience in the gift of Yahweh’s gracious love. For their transgression, guilt and religious sin, the people were under God’s judgment and because the practice of idolatry was prevalent in the society where social injustice also reigned.

It was also noted that the sin of pride leads to all attempts at self-defense. Thus, the author of Isaiah 24-27 urged the people to “trust” in God in humility, for in that faith is God’s salvation. On environmental problems, the view is that sin is the main cause of God’s judgment on the earth and regarding loans, Judean commercial life was characterized by economic injustice. Further, on kingship and political issues, it was observed that von Rad’s work contributes great insight to Zion theology as the exilic or post-exilic audience reapplies it to their specific situation to reflect critically on God’s ambivalent work.

The above study demonstrates the ambivalence of God’s work in judgment and salvation. However, even in this “ambivalence”, we must keep in mind that the author of Isaiah 24-27 does not subject his audience/readers to confusion or desperation. Rather, there is a clear rhetorical function that the ambivalence leads to God’s promise and assurance. In addition, Chapter 6, the theological interpretation of the city in the judgment and salvation of Isaiah 24-27 is considered an important subject. This chapter demonstrates that God’s action in terms of
judgment and salvation is centred on the city, especially the city of Jerusalem. It is remarkable, however, that God’s judgment and salvation can be clearly associated with theological ethic. On account of God’s holiness and presence, Jerusalem became the holy city. Therefore, the people who lived in Zion/Jerusalem were required to practise this same holiness. On the religious plane, they needed to forsake idolatry as well as worship and trust God alone. On the political-ethical level, they also needed to practise justice and righteousness; for being considered a chosen people without practising social justice is a delusion.
Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.1 Summary

In Chapter 1, the study began with a statement of the research problem. It was observed that previous approaches have concentrated on the identification of the city in Isaiah 24-27 from a historical and/or a literary viewpoint. In the historical approach, the main tendency has been to consider the physical character of the city such as the geography, population, building, social and economic structures, and historical reference. On the other hand, the literary approach generally tends to focus on the semantic, synthetic, and rhetorical aspects of the text including the figurative use of language and its implication. Therefore, the problem is that both approaches tend to overlook the multi-dimensional nature of the texture and more importantly, its theological implications. In order to solve this problem, two hypotheses are stated: (1) in Isaiah 24-27 the city plays a very significant role; (2) A theological interpretation is possible when Isaiah 24-27 is viewed in relation to judgment and salvation. Thus, the research sets out to describe some examples of significant theological interpretations of the city in Isaiah 24-27 with particular attention to God’s judgment and salvation. Hopefully, the research will contribute to the theological understanding of the city in Isaiah 24-27 from the perspective of the socio-rhetorical approach.

Chapter 2 focused on the ‘inner texture’ of Isaiah 24-27. This texture shows that the rhetorical strategy was intentionally expressed by the rhetorical structure. For instance, the repetitive texture reveals the city as “the city of chaos” [24:10]; “the fortified city” [25:2; 27:10]; “the cities of the ruthless” [25:3]; “a strong city” [26:1]; “the lofty city” [26:5]; that is, as an important element in Isaiah 24-27. Consequently, under the progressive texture and pattern, it is observed that God’s judgment is initiated in Isaiah 24 but from Isaiah 25-27, God’s salvation is progressively and dialectically emphasized. At first, the spotlight is on the earth/land/world but afterwards the centre of God’s action becomes the unknown city (cities). The rhetorical purpose behind this is further explained by the narrational texture and pattern showing that the author/narrator progressively reveals the name of the city from an unnamed city such as ‘the city of chaos’ or ‘the fortified city’ (cf. 24:10; 25:2; 27:10) to Zion/Jerusalem, the holy mountain (cf. 24:23; 27:13). Further, the study of the argumentative texture and pattern reveals the author’s reasons for God’s judgment of the city. The main reason is the city’s transgression (cf. 24:5-6). Under the sensory-aesthetic texture and pattern, it was noted
that through the repetition of certain sounds and words, divine kingship is emphasized in
terms of God’s sovereign power and reign against human kingship and authority in the
fortified city. Along this line of rhetorical persuasion, human responsibility is encouraged in
terms of praying, trusting, waiting and, practising justice and righteousness in order not to just
endure God’s judgment but also to see God’s salvation.

Chapter 3 examined the ‘intertexture’ of Isaiah 24-27 showing the rhetorical aspect of the text,
especially in the use of recitation, recontextualization, reconfiguration, cultural intertexture
and social intertexture. The rhetorical character of our text suggests that the author of Isaiah
24-27 was either influenced by or his writing influenced other texts in the Hebrew Bible. For
example, intertextual connection with the Torah could be found about 12 times; with the
Nebi’im about 10 times; and with the Kethuvim about 6 times (cf. Hos 4:9/Isa 24:2; Amos
5:2/Isa 24:20; Mic 4:7/Isa 24:23; Mic 1:3/Isa 26:21). Thus, the intertextual connection may
indicate that the author of Isaiah 24-27 intentionally applies biblical traditions to the
reader/audience in his new context in order to show and reinterpret God’s grand universal
drama of judgment and salvation of the city. Consequently, “these citations contribute to the
overall message of chs. 24-27 that YHWH is establishing divine rule over the entire world at
Zion and that Israel’s experience serves as a paradigm for that of the world at large” (Sweeney
1996:323; cf. Renz 1999a:249). The important observation is that God’s universal plan and
vision are vividly demonstrated, particularly through divine judgment and salvation and that
the centre of the universal drama is the city, Mountain Zion/Jerusalem. Furthermore, the
intertexture of Isaiah 24-27 illustrates God’s conjugal relationship with the city
Jerusalem/Zion. From this point of view, it can be observed that the author of Isaiah 24-27
evoked this intimate relationship to expose the seriousness of the people’s unfaithfulness and
its consequences.

In Chapter 4, which addressed the social and cultural texture of Isaiah 24-27, we considered
the pre-exilic, exilic, and post-exilic political and social situations in Israel and Judah, in
particular how international situations influenced Israel, especially southern Judah.
Furthermore, regarding the social and political turmoil explained under the social texture,
seven religious responses to the world are examined; in particular, the conversionist and
revolutionist arguments. We noted that the study of Isaiah 24-27 uncovers strong
conversionist views. For instance, one of the views is that God’s judgment is incurred because
of the people’s transgressions. Therefore, they are strongly challenged to change their lifestyle
in terms of the social and religious life by means of a spiritual change of heart and
commitment; persuasion of faith, joy, prayer, their relationship with God; and the encouragement of faith in prayer. Further, from a revolutionist point of view, Isaiah 24:1-20 describes a cosmic scale of God’s judgment. However, explicit statements are also made about God’s future salvation of the world and his people, i.e., the restoration of the city of Jerusalem/Mount Zion. Some other arguments in the text also include thaumaturgical, reformist, gnostic-manipulationist, utopian and introversionist. God’s initial judgment is clearly attributed to the people’s iniquity but gradually God’s salvation is revealed through the people’s response in faithful trust and justice in Zion/Jerusalem.

Additionally, the cultural texture shows that the dominant culture is a city life in which their security and power are supported by their trust in the fortified city. However, under counterculture, it is noted that trust in God is the most important attitude in the community of faith, for God alone will provide the true meaning of shalom and salvation. Thus, in these textures, it could be tentatively suggested that the exilic or post-exilic community of Judah were exposed to theological issues such as God’s judgment and salvation of the city of Zion/Jerusalem. This point is supported by the universal character of the message of Isaiah 24-27 with its focus on God’s rule of the nations and the return of Israel from exile to Zion (27:12-13), which corresponds well with the setting of the late sixth century BCE as represented in Deutero-Isaiah.

Chapter 5 combines the study of the ideological texture with the theological texture. The first section, 5.1 examines the ideological texture of Isaiah 24-27 and shows the conflict between different groups. The term, ‘the poor and the needy’ (25:4; 26:6) may suggest the presence of social power struggles in terms of both the economic and the political structures, for in most cases, powerful political or religious figures control the society and its economic life. Thus, God’s judgment on authorities that abuse their power through injustice is clearly demonstrated. Moreover, the ideological texture of Isaiah 24-27 is expressed against some false understanding of Zion theology (or more correctly, “Zion ideology”). This Zion theology is understood in terms of a conjugal relationship with God as husband and Jerusalem/Zion as wife/widow. While depending on their human power as a fortified city, the people failed to trust God alone and consequently, committed idolatry. Their false ideology caused a false sense of security and its consequence was God’s severe judgement. This will be discussed further in 6.2.1 below.

Moreover, in 5.2, the theological texture of Isaiah 24-27 is categorized into three subjects: the
divine aspects (deity: God as King, Judge, Warrior, Gardener-Vinedresser and Husband; holy person and spirit being), the interaction between the divine and the human (divine history and human redemption) and the human aspects (human commitment, religious community and ethics). Concerning the divine aspects, God’s metaphoric character is described as King, Warrior, Judge, Husband, etcetera. Here, divine kingship is highlighted in terms of judgment and salvation to replace human kingship which failed to execute justice and righteousness. Consequently, God as husband demanded faithful responsibility from his wife Jerusalem/Zion. Furthermore, in the relationship between the divine and human, it was noted that there are continuities and discontinuities between prophecy and apocalypse in Isaiah 24-27. However, our inclination in this study is toward an initial transformation of prophetic eschatology into early apocalyptic seed in Isaiah 24-27. Under the human aspects, the focus is on the ethical angle, for as a faith community, the people are bound to God’s covenant and law. In this line of theological ethical argument, it is demonstrated that human ethical responsibility to execute justice and righteousness is an essential part of a faith community.

Thus, the research question has been answered and the hypotheses have been proved and our findings can be summarised as follow:

Table 6.1 – Summary of findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Texture</th>
<th>Aspect</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inner &amp; Inter</td>
<td>The rhetorical strategy, according to Inner and Inter textures, is that through the prophetic genre of Judgement and Salvation, the narrator challenges the audience/reader to change their minds and attitudes, especially about the city. In other words, a fortified city never provides safety and peace but rather brings God’s judgment. In contrast, God alone provides salvation and protection through God’s reign on Mount Zion/Jerusalem. This rhetorical feature is intensified through the phrase: “God is the speaker” (24:3; 25:8).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social &amp; Cultural</td>
<td>The Inner and Inter rhetorical strategies are deeply embedded in the Social and Cultural context. In the midst of the historical and political confusion which was caused by international influence and Israel’s unfaithfulness and injustice, the people are encouraged to reflect on what happened and what will happen to the city under God’s sovereignty in the late sixth century.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideological &amp; Theological</td>
<td>In the Ideological texture, God’s judgment on Zion theology is demonstrated. In this texture, the narrator debunks the belief that Zion theology can become “Zion ideology” when it is located beyond prophetic voice and criticism. In this line of argument, the theological texture highlights God’s viewpoint such as universalism and restoration of Zion/Jerusalem through God’s salvation on the condition of human responsibility in the practice of justice and righteousness and of critical reflection. In other words, there is no immunity for Jerusalem/Zion. When she continues in rebellion against God, God’s judgment is inevitable, because God as husband does not allow Jerusalem/Zion as wife to engage in negative behaviours. Thus, both ideology and</td>
</tr>
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theology are dialectically reflected in terms of God’s judgement and salvation which are also dialectically combined on the basis of the people’s attitude in the city of Zion/Jerusalem.

6.2 Implication and contribution of study

As we indicated in Chapter 1, an overview of previous works on Isaiah 24-27 clearly show that the attempt to understand the city in this text is a difficult exercise. Even though there are many different suggestions in previous studies, it is hard to recall any understanding of the city from a ‘Zion theology’ perspective except Doyle’s observation of a conjugal relationship between God and his people. The reason for this is that, the contributions of most recent monographs and commentaries are in the areas of historical, form critical, literary, and even canonical discussions. Here are some examples:

| Table 6.2 – Summary of scholarly works on ‘the city’ Isaiah 24-27 |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Commentaries**            | **Aspect**                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Sweeney (1996)              | Sweeney’s commentary mainly combines form-critical method in with redaction criticism. Thus, the study examines topics such as the structure, genre, setting and intention of Isaiah 24-27 in order to show the liturgical setting of the rebuilding of the destroyed temple. |
| Blenkinsopp (2000)          | The study is based on historical criticism even though the author notes recent significant changes in Isianic study that is focused on the unity of the book. In his analysis of Isaiah 24-27, he suggests that the anonymous city is Babylon. |
| Childs (2001)               | The commentary represents Childs’ lifelong study of Isaiah from the perspective of the canonical approach. Thus, regarding Isaiah 24-27, he concentrates on the theological rather than the historical subject in order to present “a real world of oppressive rulers and proud cities, yet at the same time to view events as representative of a larger pattern within God’s eschatological purpose” (Childs 2001:174). |
| Johnson (1988)              | Like Sweeney, Johnson adapts a form-critical approach to argue that Isaiah 24-27 is not apocalyptic in nature and to show, in addition, that the unknown city is Jerusalem. |
| Doyle (2000)                | Doyle’s study focuses on the indicators of metaphorical types in order to study the author’s purpose. As a result, he reveals “YHWH as the husband of Zion and… Zion as a collective term for Jerusalem, its inhabitants and the people as a whole” (Doyle 2000:371). In this conjugal relationship, God’s judgment and salvation are understood. This study is mainly based on a literary approach rather than on historical criticism. |
| Nitsche (2006)              | Nitsche’s focus is on Isaiah 24-27 as a “dramatic text” which he compares with the Qumran Isaiah scroll in terms of the public narration of the three voices of the chorus: Isaiah’s, personified Zion’s and God’s. |

Further, this study has shown that in the text of Isaiah 24-27, Zion theology is criticised in the light of God’s kingship and the marital relationship conveyed in the covenant. Furthermore, God’s judgment and salvation are expressed in a dialectical way. In other words, God’s judgment is not just the end of the discussion, it is always mingled with God’s salvation.

From the above study, some contributions can be offered in the following regard:

- Criticism of Zion theology
6.2.1 Criticism of Zion theology

In this segment, our criticism of Zion theology will be in three parts as listed above.

6.2.1.1 Criticism of the city of Zion/Jerusalem

It appears that the chapters in our text are dominated by contrasts - a contrast between the strong city of salvation (Jerusalem) in the land of Judah, on the one hand, and the strong and fortified city or (two) cities which will be destroyed, on the other. This understanding is dominant among scholars (cf. Seitz’s ‘tale of two cities,’ 1997; and from a New Testament perspective, Rossing’s ‘choice between two cities,’ 1999). In our judgement, this view needs to be re-evaluated. The main reason is that the city in Isaiah 24-27 is described in ambivalence rather than in contrast: Jerusalem is equivalent to Babylon.

In the study of the city, it is observed that the city needs to change and to be reformed continually. In other words, as far as God is concerned, every city needs to be challenged and be ready to repent in order to follow his will. A critical reading or understanding of the above view seems to support Carroll’s concept of “the twin-souls-of-one-city” (Carroll 2001a:55). Carroll’s basic argument is that we cannot easily distinguish between “the two cities - the city of humankind and the city of God” (Carroll 2001a:55). His suggestion boils down to a reading of “the city as symbolic geography,” in the Bible:

Of course in topographical terms there are hundreds and thousands of cities in the Bible (cf. Isa. 25:3 ‘cities of ruthless nations’), but in the symbolic geography of the Book we may see each and every city as one aspect of the city of humankind. Whether that be the city of dreadful night or the city of peace and harmony or the city of chaos or the strong city or whatever, each city may be at any one time either faithful or whorelike, peaceful or warlike (or perhaps all these different incarnations at the same time). Taking such a symbolic reading to the city trope then leads on to readers making the obvious equation that Jerusalem equals Babylon in the symbolic geography of the Bible.

Carroll’s (2001a:56-7; [Carrol’s italics])

As Carroll himself acknowledges, his approach might sometimes be “unpalatable for the conventional ecclesio-theological reader of the Bible” (2001a:54). In our view, his work appears to focus mainly on “the dark side of the Bible.” Personally, one might also be somewhat uncomfortable with his typical Ideologiekritik reading of the Bible (cf. 1992:79-93;
1994:1-15; 1995:25-45; 2001b:102-16) but it should be acknowledged here that Carroll’s engagement with the text and his ideas qualify him as a critical dialogue partner for this study. Moreover, in the case of the study of Isaiah 24-27, especially of the city, Carroll’s idea is very insightful. In this study, we have endeavoured to draw on scholars’ opinions and debates as much as possible but Carroll’s proposal appears to challenge the views of many previous scholars. In other words, the description of the city as “the city of God” (Augustine’s term) versus “the city of men” or Jerusalem as a transcendental city versus Babylon as a heathen city, may be an inaccurate dichotomy.

In our view, which is somehow in contrast to previous scholarly position, every city represents a facet of human cities, which may reflect positive or negative aspects at any particular moment. This way of reading Isaiah 24-27, may imply that “Jerusalem is equivalent to Babylon” or vice versa. This is not to say that one disregards Jerusalem’s transcendental character as a holy city but rather one is challenged to consider Jerusalem in a different way, such as, as a human city as well as in terms of being the object of God’s judgment and salvation (McConville 2002:38). The point here is that there is a need for balance; and this could also apply to other national cities including Babylon. Carroll’s insight can remind us that different voices co-exist in understanding the city in Isaiah 24-27.

The above argument is well-illustrated when we consider that Jerusalem can be viewed from two sides. First, according to Towner (2000:16), Christians, especially in the West (and in our opinion, in Asia as well), tend to consider the city of Jerusalem as the holy city:

There never was a time in the religious tradition of the West that Jerusalem was simply a secular city. Beginning with our earliest Scripture, the Hebrew Bible, we have viewed it through the lens of the imagination as the earthly counterpart of the heavenly city of God. For the last 3 000 years, its terrible burden has been to be “the holy city” (Isaiah 52:1).

This kind of ideal and sacred Jerusalem is vividly depicted by Bernard of Cluny (quoted in Towner 2000:16), a 12th century poet:

Jerusalem the Golden, with milk and honey blest,
Beneath the contemplation sink heart and voice oppressed.
I know not, O I know not, what joys await us there;
What radiance of glory, what bliss beyond compare.
They stand, those halls of Zion, all jubilant with song.

206 For instance, some Old Testament texts depict several hated symbols of evil cities (or nations), such as Egypt, Nineveh and Babylon, as the object of God’s blessing. Consider Isaiah 19:25: whom the LORD of hosts has blessed, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my heritage; Jeremiah 29:7: But seek the welfare (shalom) of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.
And bright with many an angel, and all the martyr throng.
The Prince is ever in them, the daylight is serene;
The pastures of the blessed are decked in glorious sheen.

However, there is other side of the city of Jerusalem: the real one that is characterized by a human history of oppression, injustice, idolatry, etcetera.207

In sum, Carroll’s argument challenges our theological understanding of the city of Jerusalem. In other words, the name and place of Zion/Jerusalem are not immune to the contamination of sinful life and are never a guarantee for the security and salvation of the city. When there is transgression in the city, God’s judgment is inevitable and when there is repentance, God’s salvation is abundant.

6.2.1.2 Criticism of particularism in dialectical relationship with universalism

Regarding Zion theology, the relationship between universalism and particularism is important when examining God’s act toward Zion/Jerusalem (Anderson 1999:174). In Isaiah 24-27, there seems to be a dialectical relationship between universalism and particularism. For instance, in Isaiah 26:19, resurrection is promised only to the righteous while the wicked are expressly excluded (Jacob 1958:313). Nevertheless, on a deeper level, Jerusalem became a centre not only for Israelite pilgrims but for all nations (Isa 2:2-4; 27:12-13; 60; cf. Weinfeld 1979:57). Thus, Vriezen (1966:68) suggests that Isaiah 24-27 holds “both particularist and universalist traits,” that is, against “the character of Jewish particularism”.

Moreover, we may consider that universalism is developed on the particularism on which Zion theology (or ideology) was centred (Greenberg 1979:115). The structures of Isaiah 24:23 and 27:13 are constructed by an inclusio, especially in the theme of particularism. In Isaiah 24:23, God’s inauguration of kingship is pronounced on Mount Zion/Jerusalem and in Isaiah 27:13, the people of Israel then gather together on Holy Mount Zion/Jerusalem to worship God. As Kaminsky and Stewart (2006:139-163) indicate, we should not neglect to understand

207 One of the voices concerning the human side of the city of Jerusalem is well-described in Leonard Cohen’s lyric:

Jerusalem of blood
Jerusalem of amnesia
Jerusalem of idolatry
Jerusalem of Washington
Jerusalem of Moscow
Let the nations rejoice
Jerusalem has been destroyed
(Cohen 1984:#25, quoted by Carroll 2001:55)
that God’s universalism is conditioned by the particularism, that is, by “Israel’s election and the exaltation of Israel’s God” (Kaminsky & Stewart 2006:140). This argument is also supported by Preuss (1996:302) who claims that the “participation of the nations in the community of God’s people and in their salvation consequently is not only made possible by YHWH but at the same time is thought to be mediated by Israel and its destiny as well as by Jerusalem and its Zion...”

Furthermore, as the intertextures in Chapter 3 indicate, God’s universalism is vividly emphasised and developed but we have to consider, in addition, the significant theological change of tone from particularism to universalism. In this regard, it seems to us that Eichrodt’s statement remains important. Eichrodt (1961:487) asserts that God’s covenant is manifested in the theological character, especially in universalism such that even though there are “particularist and nationalist tendencies,” it is possible to see “the power of the universalist hope shine out more brightly.” In the line of Eichrodt’s argument, Gese (1981:83) also points out that Isaiah 25, the centre of the Isaiah apocalypse, shows by analogy to the Sinai revelation in Exodus 24 that at the end of time, the telos, the Zion revelation, will be there just as the Sinai revelation was there at the beginning. As Sinai has been replaced by Mount Zion, the world mountain, so Israel has been replaced by all the peoples. Consequently, Gese (1981:133) emphasizes that at the eschatological feast of the kingdom in Isaiah 25:1-10a, which corresponds to the feast of the Sinai covenant in Exodus 24 (cf. Isa 24:23c; Ex 24:9-11) but is celebrated on Mount Zion with all the nations, the song of thanksgiving is sung (vv. 1-4) and this transforms the feast into the thank offering of the entire spiritual community of God. Recently, it is continually echoed in Levin’s statement that the “vision holds out the ultimate prospect of an unconditioned community with God for all mankind, and its final redemption” (Levin 2005:127-128) in an apocalyptic day.

In other words, in universalism, God’s mighty kingship through judgment and salvation is expressed clearly in terms of the challenge against privileged particularism as Hengel (1974:181) expresses:

Apocalyptic took up the themes provided by the Old Testament prophecy, of Yahweh as the Lord of history, his judgment over the peoples, the liberation of Israel and the establishment of the rule of God, and incorporated them in a new universal, world-historical, indeed cosmic framework.

In sum, there is a critical engagement with Zion theology which shows that Jerusalem/Zion is not only accused and punished, but promises of salvation are also made about its future
This theological theme is also an important stream in the book of Isaiah which “can be described as the book of YHWH and Zion; that is the theme of the first chapter, and it recurs regularly through the whole book” (Ward 1991:64). It is important to note also that Zion/Jerusalem has her own particular relationship with God even though that particularism is in relation to universalism as Hengel reminds us in the statement above.

6.2.1.3 Criticism of human responsibility

As demonstrated above, reading the ‘city’ as a prophetic announcement is a theological-ethical challenge. It is important to note that God not only invites the faithful community into his holy city but also challenges them to live in the city by practising justice and righteousness (cf. Jacob 1958:20; Alzert 2002:94-5), even within a universal and eschatological framework (Wright 1997:590).

Under human accountability, God’s judgment and salvation are shown as dialectically related. For instance, for Zimmerli (1993:141), “life before God” must be rooted in “the response of obedience” because the gift of Yahweh’s gracious love is embedded in the people’s requirement and responsibility. Thus, in Zimmerli’s view, human accountability inevitably involves “the tension between what the law given by Yahweh seriously requires on the one hand, and on the other the concomitant superabundance that is an unearned gift” (Zimmerli 1993:143). However, in this tension, “human righteousness” and “Israel’s holiness” are indispensable for real life (Zimmerli 1993:143-4). In the text of Isaiah 24-27, God’s covenantal love and human obedience are demonstrated in God’s judgment on wicked people and powers (Isa 24) and, in contrast, God’s great salvation is revealed through his reign on Mountain Zion/Jerusalem and the great banquet to which all the nations and his people are invited (Isa 25-27; cf. Zimmerli 1993:229-30). This universal salvation is somewhat opposed to the attitude of some Israelites who refuse to take care of foreigner and abuse strangers.

Furthermore, concerning ethical and theological issues in the text, Childs (1993:681) claims that the prophetic message is “offering a direct confrontation with the transcending reality of God himself”, and that “the prophets’ demand for righteousness and truth called into question the whole of Israel’s religious and cultic practice (Isa 1:4ff)”. Thus, in the canonical process, it is important to note that like von Rad’s suggestion, the divine ethical imperative was formulated for later generations:

[A] prophet’s life as a concrete example of faithfulness was appended to his oracles to serve as a paradigm for post-exilic Israel (cf. Jer. 20:1ff.; 26:7ff.; 45:1ff.; cf. Isa. 53:1ff)… an
obedient remnant was drawn, not merely as an eschatological ideal, but of a concrete community of righteousness and faith which served as ‘signs and portents in Israel’ of the kingship of God (Isa. 8:16ff.)

(Childs 1993:682)

Thus, for Childs, God’s impending judgment is near and present in the community but God’s salvation has also never ceased in the faith community that practises justice and righteousness.

In addition, Preuss (1996:186) remarks that God’s election of Israel for communion with his world is the central theme of the Old Testament and this is expressed in terms of moral action; that the community which is chosen as a result of God’s free gift must practise an ethical lifestyle. In a practical sense, therefore, the centre of this ethics is culminated in “service to God”. Eventually, this “service to God” is more and more turned into “the ethics of response” through “justice and faithfulness to community” (Preuss 1996:186, 191). In fact, it remarkable that the ethics of Israel increasingly focused more on “the welfare of the community” than on “the good fortune of the individual” (Preuss 1996:193). Regarding our text, the faith community is encouraged to seek God’s salvation in the time of tribulation because God not only judges the nations (e.g. Moab; cf. 25:9-12) but also offers a great feast (25:6; cf. Preuss 1996:302).

Through the study of Isaiah 24-27, we have attempted to show that God’s kingship is expressed in an apocalyptic manner which is beyond human power and intervention in order to emphasize God’s absolute sovereignty in controlling human destiny, especially the city. In line with this odd literary genre, there still exist traditional prophetic thoughts which demand human responsibility on issues such as repentance, execution of social justice and righteousness in life (cf. Isa 25:4; Wolf 1962:843). In other words, even though there is the influence of evil spiritual power on the city, it also important to note that human responsibility in terms of moral and ethical life is inevitable in the faith community (Wright 1983:108). Indeed, the prophet’s emphasis is that the divine-human relationship is based on covenant and it entails responsibility (Birch 1991:246). Furthermore, human responsibility is deeply reflected in a marital relationship with God, as Doyle (2000) indicates.

In the end, what is the theological challenge for us? Why do we still care about the city - the city of Jerusalem? The reason is that God never gives up his love for the city and the city can still be a place to worship God and to practise justice and righteousness as Brown and Carroll (2000:11) show:
The city can be a tangible witness to God’s care for all people. Yes, the city can even capture something of Eden. And like that primeval couple, we are called upon to cultivate by the sweat of our brow the soil of God’s victory garden until it bears fruit, not a forbidden fruit, but the fruit of the knowledge of our Lord, who creates all things fresh and new.

When we consider the city as the community or people Israel (cf. Levenson 1992:1098; Goldingay 2001:18), the ethical life is inevitable. However, the issue at stake is that this ethical life is God’s command; God demands justice and righteousness in the community (McConville 2002: xx). In other words, the goal of the prophet was not “accurate prediction” but rather persuading the community to change (Carroll 1979:33, 67; Hutton 1994:128). According to Brown and Carroll (2000:4), in Scripture, the city constitutes a central context for faith and practice.

The people of Isaiah’s time were living in a transitional moment and in a time of tribulation. God’s reign was promised but it was yet to be completely established. The author and the people of Isaiah 24-27 experienced this difficult time but it did not cause them to despair or give up on life. Instead, they were encouraged to live in hope, trust, and faith. Furthermore, their lives needed to reflect the memory of God’s promise, salvation and commandment. The reason is that, from a theological-ethical perspective, the prophetic announcement is deeply rooted in their memory and in the experience of the divine in the Old Testament such as in Genesis 24:5 and in Exodus (cf. 25:6; 26:20; 27:1). In other words, they must not just live in the Promised Land or the city of Jerusalem/Zion but rather, they must practise justice and righteousness. Jerusalem should be a city of justice and righteousness (McConville 2002:33). In this ethical responsibility, they may live in hope in the time of tribulation:

Above all, the suffering community of Israel is instructed on life lived between the two ages. The perspective often fluctuated between participating in the suffering of the whole world (24:16b) and in entering into the celebration of the new in God’s eschatological banquet (25:6)

Childs (2001:173-4)

6.2.2 Korean context

From a Korean researcher’s perspective, one would conclude that human accountability poses an important theological-ethical challenge for the Korean society, and especially to Korean churches.

The country, which traditionally depended on agricultural environment, has undergone rapid economic growth since the 1960s when it began to focus on industrial development. This kind of growth inevitably brings significant social changes to the society as it transforms from a
rural to an urban society. The centre and symbol of this change is the capital city, Seoul, and its metropolitan region. In Seoul, “the population has seen a 400% increase in the last 35 years, reaching 20.2 million, nearly 45% of the total national population.” Consequently, Seoul’s growth “has been coupled with its near absolute dominance of the nation’s economic, political, social, and cultural scene” (Ha 1999:87).

The problem is that while many people enjoyed a comfortable life, “the city became more active in its economic role aggravating the conflict between the poor and the rich, the dehumanization phenomenon which accompanied this change as well as its various impacts on the society” (Im 1987:25).

In this situation, the Korean church is increasingly criticised for failing to execute justice and show ethical responsibility. In our opinion, the main reason behind this criticism is a theological matter. It appears that the church’s theology has become somewhat transformed into ideology by supporting capitalism while neglecting the poor and the minority in society. Consequently, Korea’s communal church became a self-interested individualistic church focused on its own development and benefit while avoiding social responsibility and justice. The Korean church failed to become an alternative (faith) community to the Korean society.

In order to overcome this challenge, the Korean church must first reflect on the criticism of Zion theology, a theology which became an ideology that promoted personal benefits and ignored other contrastive voices. Furthermore, in this line of argument, human ethical responsibility to the city as a factor in God’s judgment and salvation needs to be emphasized. Recently, some Korean churches have become rich and powerful but are neglecting the poor and the needy; this theological stagnation in such Korean churches can become a church ideology that is beyond prophetic voice and criticism. However, the prophetic voice should never be muted. Thus, Brueggemann’s (2002b:4) remark concerning the city is an important voice. He notes that the city which was “promised to create space for human joy and freedom became the very source of dehumanizing exploitation and oppression” such as economical segregation and racial prejudice, etcetera. Thus, an ethic of care or a communal ethos, which is rooted in the Korean tradition and the Bible, can be endorsed to complement the potential defects of an individualistic civil society and of the church (Kim 1999:31). This ethic of care should also demand from the faith community, human responsibility on issues such as repentance, execution of social justice and righteousness in life (cf. Isa 25:4; Wolf 1962:843), as we noted earlier. We can also recall our observation that the divine-human relationship is
based on covenant and that this entails responsibility.

6.3 Suggestions for further research

From our study of Isaiah 24-27, certain issues crop up, which need further attention. First, as we noted, Isaiah 24-27 needs to be considered within the framework of Isaiah 1-39 and even of the whole book. The reason is that not many scholars attempt to study the text in unity and as a whole but rather tend to see a fragmentary, disjunctive nature in the literary composition. However, it seems that by studying the text in relation to the whole, its theological meaning can be more easily discerned than in a study which focuses on the segments of text.

Secondly, in order to enhance this theological insight, a socio-rhetorical approach, which is one of the multi-dimensional approaches, may prove invaluable especially because this social-rhetorical method has not been employed much in Old Testament study when compared to New Testament study (cf. Gowler 1994:1-36; Gowler, Bloomquist & Watson 2003; Combrink 2007) and it is completely absent in studies of Isaiah 24-27. For this reason, greater attention to the different facets of this approach can be a refreshing change in future discussions of the text and of the book of Isaiah as a whole.

Furthermore, although the emphasis in this study is on the apocalyptic character of the book as observed in Isaiah 24-27, there is a new appreciation from prophecy to apocalyptic. Consequently, it appears that the study of the apocalyptic would require more attention, not only in Isaiah but in other books of the Hebrew Bible. It would be interesting also to investigate not only the eschatological-apocalyptic character of other prophetic texts such as Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, etcetera, but also from the perspective of God’s judgment and salvation using the socio-rhetorical method.

Finally, in Chapter 4, we raised the issue of possible social conflicts between the remnant of people in Judea and their brethren who returned from exile. The nature of the conflicts and the ways in which the two groups co-operated (e.g. in rebuilding the Temple) in spite of their conflicts would require further inquiry. This refers us to the subject of social justice, which is rather crucial in today’s world, especially in terms of the relationship between the poor and the rich. We are persuaded that this would demand urgent attention.
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