

ISAIAH 50:10-11 - FIRE AS A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

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Isaiah 50:10-11 has recently attracted considerable scholarly attention, not only because it is a response or supplement to the third Song of the Servant, but mainly due to its interpretational ambiguities. In the past, many studies have been devoted to address the textual and translational problems of these two verses. In the scholarly literature not enough attention has been paid, however, to the rich light terminology found in this short pericope. This paper, therefore, argues that a systematic study of light imagery and highlighting of the light terminology will be very beneficial in elucidating the textual, translational and most importantly its interpretational problems.

- ^{10a} Who among you fears the Lord?
who obeys the voice of His Servant?
who walks in darkness and has no light?
- ^{10b} Let him trust in the name of the Lord
and rely upon his God
- ^{11a} Look all of you are kindlers of fire,
who encircles yourselves with sparks,
walk in the light of your fire,
and in the sparks you have kindled!
- ^{11b} This is what you shall have from my hand:
you shall lie down in torment. (NKJ)

Introduction

The use of rhetorical questions is a striking feature of the literary style of Isa 50. In this rather brief chapter, we find three rhetorical units: vv. 1-3 contain YHWH's speech of disputation against Israel (cf. 42:18-25, 43:22-28). In vv. 4-9 the third Song of the Servant can be found. Finally vv.10-11 include both an exhortation to be faithful and a threat of punishment to the disobedient.¹ This pericope (50:10-11) has attracted considerable scholarly attention, not only because it is a response or supplement to the third Song of the Servant,² but mainly due to its interpretational ambiguities. This short passage confronts the exegete with problems mainly on three levels. Firstly, scholars are very much divided with regard to the unity, composition and redaction of the text. Secondly, there is uncertainty as to the speaker (the subject) of these verses and also the identity of the addressee remains unclear. Finally, exegetes also find it difficult to translate and interpret these two verses, mainly due to syntactical and textual problems. In order to understand the meaning of various questions found in this chapter, we need to understand not only the rhetorical nature of these questions, but we must also analyze various metaphors used in them.³ In the following analysis of the text, we will therefore focus on the light/fire imagery in the text. A closer examination of the light/fire metaphors in the text will allow for a better interpretation of this difficult text, solving

¹ Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40–66*, WBC (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 119.

² Many exegetes consider this pericope as a response/supplement to the 'Song of the Servant' like the ones we find at 42:5-7 and 49:7-12. While these two passages expand the theme of the preceding songs, these two verses 50:10-11 are a hortatory address. Cf. George W. Wade, *The Book of the Prophet Isaiah: with an Introduction and Notes*, Westminster Commentaries (London: Methuen, 1911), 325-326.

³ Herbert G. Grether, "Translating the Questions in Isaiah 50," *The Bible Translator* 24 (1973): 240. In the eleven verses of this chapter, we find ten questions and most of them are rhetorical.

a number of its interpretational difficulties, particularly the formulation of rhetorical questions.

Before we focus on the translation and interpretation the passage, it is helpful to refer at least briefly to the importance of the concept of light in the book of Isaiah. In Hebrew, the root רָאָה 'wr is the most important and frequently occurring lexeme for 'light'. It appears rather frequently in the Writings, particularly in the book of Job and Psalms (34 times in each book, out of a total of 166 occurrences in the Hebrew Bible). In the Prophetic books, the root רָאָה 'wr appears 54 times, out of which 30 occurrences are found in the book of Isaiah alone. Moreover, light metaphors are remarkably frequent in the book of Isaiah (15 times). In contrast, we find only eight (or perhaps nine) texts containing light metaphors in the Prophetic Literature outside of Isaiah. The majority of these occurrences are found in texts dealing with the day of YHWH or with divine punishment in which the absence of light is referred to.⁴ The light metaphor is so vital to the theological message of the Book of Isaiah, not only because of the sheer number of times it occurs in the Isaianic corpus but also the novelty with which this imagery is used in the book. In other words, light metaphors in Isaiah refer to a wide range of conceptual domains. Thus the central theme of the entire book of Isaiah in the words of Quinn-Miscall is: "Let us walk in the light of the Lord."⁵

The Context and Demarcation of the Pericope

There is no consensus among the scholars concerning the demarcation of the final unit (50:10-11) and connection between the three distinctive units of chapter 50. Some scholars following Duhm consider the Songs of the Servant as independent, and connect 50:1-3 with the previous section (49:14-26), others are in

⁴ Jer 13:16, 25:10, Lam 3:2, Ezek 43:2, Dan 9:17, Hos 6:5, Micah 7:8-9, Hab 3:4 and Zeph 3:5 (debatable). Day of YHWH or his punishment in Jer 4:23, Ezek 32:7-8, Amos 5:18,20, 8:9, Hab 3:11 and Zech 14:6-7.

⁵ Peter D. Quinn-Miscall, *Reading Isaiah: Poetry and Vision* (London: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 86.

clined to read the whole of chapter 50 as a single unit.⁶ Arguments for the former division are the following: The failure of Israel to respond to YHWH is the main theme in 49:14–50:3. But in contrast, the Servant projects himself as YHWH's obedient listener in the third Song of the Servant (50:4-9). While 50:1-3 focuses mainly on the broken relationship between YHWH and Israel, the following section deals with the intimate relationship between YHWH and his loyal Servant.⁷ The nation Israel is deaf and blind (42:18-19), but the Servant is obedient and faithful.

On the other hand, those scholars who argue for the unity of the chapter point out that there is an apparent change of addressee in 50:1 when compared to 49:14-26. Thus Isa 50:1-3 seems to function as a transition from the preceding major section to the present cycle. In this brief trial speech, YHWH proves the unreasonableness of Israel's claim that he has abandoned them. However, the content of vv. 1-3 and vv. 4-11 does not seem to be closely related. While the former unit appears to be a message from YHWH to an unbelieving Israel, the latter is a soliloquy by the Servant who trusts in the Lord. Koole draws attention to the contrast between the Servant and the nation Israel. While in vv. 2-3 Israel refuses to recognize the rightfulness of God's judgment, in vv. 4-9 the Servant accepts the verdict but continues to place his trust in God.⁸ Thus Oswalt claims vv. 1-3 can only serve as an introduction to vv. 4-11.

There is, however, a broader consensus when it comes to the beginning of a new section at v. 4. This division is attested both in MT and in 1QIsa.⁹ Nevertheless, there is less agreement when it comes to the closing of the pericope. Some of the scholars con-

⁶ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 316.

⁷ While underlining the contrast between Zion and the Servant, Motyer states: "The contrast between the Servant who is Israel and Zion who used to be Israel (48:1-2) is complete." Cf. J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah. An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: 1993), 393.

⁸ Jan L. Koole, *Isaiah 49–55*, HCOT, vol. 2 (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1997), 103.

⁹ We also find a demarcation after v. 9, though not very clear. While the MT has a caesura between v. 9 and v. 10, 1QIs^a has a small space between them. See Koole, *Isaiah 49–55*, 122.

sider vv. 4-11 as a closely connected unit. But the majority of the present day scholars considers that vv. 10-11 constitute a clearly distinct unit from the previous one. The recurring divine name (the Lord God) in vv. 4-9 does not occur in 50:10-11. Further, vv. 4-9 is a monologue, whereas vv. 10-11 is an address.¹⁰ The Servant is no longer the speaker, but the one spoken about. Therefore, the majority of the scholars view it as a commentary-like addition, something like the literary development of 49:7 in relation to 49:1-6, aimed at drawing out the implications of what is said before.¹¹

The Unity, Composition and Redaction of the Text

One of the main problems we face while understanding and interpreting 50:10-11 concerns its unity, composition and redaction. The content of these verses seems to be in line with the pessimistic message of Trito-Isaiah (chapters 56–66). Thus it has been argued that the date of its composition is much later than Deutero-Isaiah (chapters 40–55). The contrasting fate of two opposite parties is often mentioned in Trito-Isaiah (57, 65, 66, cf. Mal 3:16–4:3). The distinction between those faithful to the law and those who were unfaithful is clearly noted in the post-exilic times (66:5). Isa 50:11 looks very similar to 66:24. Hence, scholars consider this text as belonging to the post-exilic community.¹² Those scholars who deny these two verses as originally from Deutero-Isaiah argue that there is not much connection between the content of these two verses and the general preaching of Deutero-Isaiah. Duhm, for instance, argues that these two verses refer to two opposing groups of people, the devout and the faithless within Israel. This was not found during the exilic period, rather

¹⁰ John Goldingay and David Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, ICC, vol. 2 (London: T & T Clark, 2006), 205.

¹¹ Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 395. Kaiser considers them as a liturgical response, something similar to the paranetic endings of some psalms of confidence, thanksgiving and lament (also see Schoors, Beuken, Clifford). Cf. Koole, *Isaiah 49–55*, 123.

¹² Koole, *Isaiah 49–55*, 122.

only in the post-exilic times. Hence it cannot be from the preaching of Deutero-Isaiah. Other scholars like Elliger¹³ and Westermann argue that there is no affinity between the language of Deutero-Isaiah and 50:10-11.¹⁴ In the same vein, Wade considers this section to be an insertion by a later editor who tried to persuade his contemporaries to follow the voice of the Servant and to encourage their faith.¹⁵

Many scholars, however, argue that these two verses are very much part of Deutero-Isaiah. Childs, for instance, contends that this oracle rightly fits into the theology of Deutero-Isaiah. He also maintains that the real purpose and meaning of this oracle can be grasped only if we consider it as part of Deutero-Isaiah. The theme of a disobedient Israel who continues to reject God's salvation is gradually built up from ch. 48. First it is only the Servant who trusts and bears faithful testimony to God, but later in ch. 53 the faithful Israel finally accepts the salvific plan of God manifested in the life of the Servant. Even though the work of a redactor is evident in 50:10-11, Childs argues, it is done with clear knowledge of the entire Deutero-Isaiah corpus.¹⁶ Arguing along similar lines, Blenkinsopp claims that these two verses are crucial for interpreting not only this passage but also chs. 40–55 as a whole.¹⁷ Brueggemann also considers this chapter to be a unity even though he admits that it is not so obvious. The positive message of v. 10 reflects the pronouncement of vv. 4-9, whereas the negative connotation of v. 11 resonates the theme of transgression mainly spoken of in vv. 1-3.¹⁸ While arguing for the unity of the chapter, Koole points out various inter-relations within the chapter. For him, the whole of chapter 50 is characterized by the recurrent motifs of misery on the one hand and divine power to save

¹³ Karl Elliger, *Deuterijosaja in Seinem Verhältnis zu Tritijosaja* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1933), 31 ff.

¹⁴ Koole, *Isaiah 49–55*, 122.

¹⁵ Wade, *The Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, 325.

¹⁶ Childs, *Isaiah*, 396.

¹⁷ Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, AB 19B (New York, NY: Doubleday, 2003), 322. He has also outlined various thematic and linguistic interconnections between vv. 10-11 and the rest of Deutero-Isaiah.

¹⁸ Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 124-125.

on the other hand. Verse 10 points back not only to the suffering Servant in vv. 4-9, but also to the judgment of vv. 2b-3. The Lord's question in v. 2a is answered by the Servant in vv. 4ff. Israel is persuaded to pay attention to it in v. 10.¹⁹ He claims that "the voice of his Servant" (v. 10) clearly points backward to 50:4, whereas "fear the Lord" (v. 10) clearly points forward to 51:1,7. Finally, the threat of 50:11 clearly links up both with vv. 2b-3 and with v. 9b.²⁰

Moreover, as Melugin points out, the three sections are also stylistically related. The same pattern (*mī...hēn* sequence) is found in v. 1,8ff., and 10ff. Even though Melugin concedes that vv. 10-11 do not continue the genre of vv. 4-9 and admits a structural change, he nevertheless considers them as one unit. While outlining various inter-relations between vv. 1-3 and 4-9(11), he accentuates that vv. 1-3 are an attempt to persuade Israel to have confidence in God, while vv. 4-11 are Israel's confession of confidence.²¹ P. van der Lugt argues for the unity of this chapter with the help of strophic arguments. He notes that there is an alternation of stanzas with three strophes of two lines with a stanza with two strophes of three lines each (it has parallels in 47:5-7 and chs. 8-9; and Ps 142:51).²² The final strophe forms an appropriate conclusion to the whole poem. Thus the style and thought are characteristic of the prophet.²³

Another important theme that strongly supports the view that this pericope is close to the teaching of Deutero-Isaiah is the presence of the light terminology. The use of words like light, darkness, fire and flame are very much part of the teaching of

¹⁹ Koole, *Isaiah 49-55*, 123.

²⁰ Oswald, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*. Also see W. A. M. Beuken, "Jes 50:10-11: Eine kultische Paränese zur dritten Ebenprophetie," *ZAW* 85 (1973):168-182.

²¹ R. Melugin, *The Formation of Isaiah 40-55*, BZAW 141 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1976), 152f.

²² P. van der Lugt, "De strofische structuur van het derde knechtslied (Jes 50:4-11)," *FS Koole* (Kampen: Kok, 1978): 116 ff.

²³ James Muillenburg, "Isaiah Chapters 40-66," *The Interpreter's Bible*, ed. George A. Buttrick, vol. 5 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1956), 587.

Deutero-Isaiah.²⁴ While 50:10 refers to darkness which symbolizes the suffering of Israel and fits the historical situation of exile, 50:11 speaks about light (fire) which is an important theme in Deutero-Isaiah. Hence we may conclude by saying that even though this chapter may not be a unity in any obvious way and whether these verses belong originally to the preceding poem or not, their present position links them with it.²⁵

The speaker of this unit is YHWH. Scholars like Kaiser, North and Whybray,²⁶ basing themselves mainly on change of persons (3 plural forms in v. 10 and 1 & 2 plural forms in v. 11), separate the two verses into a prophetic word and a divine word. Whybray considers v. 10 as the pronouncement of the prophet and v. 11 as divine announcement of judgment.²⁷ In contrast, scholars like König, Melugin and Koole consider both these verses as divine word.²⁸ Goldingay also assumes that it is YHWH who speaks in both verses. References to YHWH in the third person in YHWH's own words are not uncommon and a shift to direct address and to YHWH's speech brings in more emphasis to vv. 10-11. Thus the speaker throughout is YHWH, the shifts from the third to the first person being characteristic of prophetic style.²⁹ The principal audience throughout the chapter seems to be the loyal disciples of YHWH's Servant, except for the wicked referred to in v. 11.³⁰

²⁴ These are recurring themes in Deutero-Isaiah: light (42:6,16, 45:7, 49:6, 51:4); darkness (42:7,16, 45:3,7,19, 47:5, 49:6); fire (42:25, 43:2, 44:15,16,19, 47:11, 54:16); and flame (43:2, 47:14).

²⁵ Muilenburg, "Isaiah Chapters 40–66," 587-588.

²⁶ Otto Kaiser, *Der Königliche Knecht* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), 78-82. Christopher R. North, *Second Isaiah: Introduction, Translation and Commentary to Chapters XL–LV* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967), 205. Norman Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66*, NCB (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1975), 152.

²⁷ Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66*, 153. Fohrer considers the form of these two verses different. While v. 10 is exhortation 'Mahnwort', v. 11 is a prophecy of warning 'Drohwort'.

²⁸ Koole, *Isaiah 49–55*, 122.

²⁹ Muilenburg, "Isaiah Chapters 40–66," 587.

³⁰ F. Duane Lindsey, "The commitment of the Servant in Isaiah 50:4-11," *BS* 139 (1982): 217. For Goldingay and Payne, the audience is the Deutero-Isaiah's own community in Babylon. Cf. Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 216.

Textual and Exegetical Notes

These two verses, one positive and the other negative, summarize the message of the whole chapter. The positive verbs like “fear, listen, walk, trust, rely upon” in v. 10 illustrate an encouraging image of what a God-fearing person may do. His faith and trust are associated not only with YHWH, but also intimately linked to his Servant. In fact, as Westermann rightly notes, living according to the teachings of the Servant is a concrete form of one’s faith and trust in YHWH.³¹ The positive attitude of the verse, however, is eclipsed by the interrogative “Who among you..?” which seems to imply a negative reply. This pessimistic tone is further explicated in v. 11.

Verse: 10 - “Who among you fears the Lord? Who obeys the voice of His Servant? Who walks in darkness and has no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord and rely upon his God.” (NKJ)

“Who among you reveres the Lord” - מִי *mī* can be either the interrogative ‘Who?’ (Duhm) or an indefinite ‘Whoever’ (Alexander). For Goldingay, even though grammatically it is an interrogative, rhetorically it certainly is indefinite. The question ‘who among you’ recurs from 42:23 (cf. 48:14) where it had the same significance. While the MT has a singular form, the Targum understands it as plural and render it: “those who revere YHWH” to denote the community as a whole. Goldingay rightly argues that v. 10a need not imply an acceptance of the idea that the community is divided into two groups wherein one follows the path of the Servant and the another does not. It may more plausibly imply an appeal to the whole community to identify itself as revering and obedient, even though walking in darkness.³² Out of the total thirteen occurrences in Deutero-Isaiah, it is only here that the verb מִי *yārē*’ does have a positive meaning, revere rather than fear.

The Hebrew in verse 10 is ambiguous, resulting in diverse renderings. While translating and interpreting this verse, the most

³¹ Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 124.

³² Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 215-216.

important problem is to decide the extent of the question with which the verse begins. The syntax of the verse is ambiguous as the relative clause of the second bicolon ('who walks.....no light') could possibly apply to the Servant or more likely applies to those addressed ('who among you...?').³³ The syntactical relationships among the six verbal and quasi-verbal clauses (RSV – fears, obeys, walks, has, trusts, and relies) have been understood and interpreted in several ways. Beuken who has extensively dealt with the syntactical problem of relating various clauses to one another has pointed out three possibilities. Firstly, the relative clause in v. 10b as well as all of the following verbal clauses refer to the Servant: "The Servant who walks in darkness....trusts in the name of YHWH and relies upon his God." Secondly, the final two verbal clauses in v. 10b refer to someone other than the Servant: "Let that one trust and rely on his God." Thirdly, to consider all the verbal clauses occurring after the particle אֲשֶׁר *ʾasher* as referring to someone other than the Servant: "When he walks in darkness without light, let him trust and rely on his God."³⁴ A challenge "to trust in God even though it implies walking on the path of darkness" is posed to anyone who fears the Lord and follows the teaching of the Servant. While Hanson considers that this challenge is directed to some political group, Childs considers it addressed to individuals in the singular.³⁵

The Vulgate and Targum take the whole of v. 10 as one sentence. In Vulgate 10b: "One who walked in deep darkness and had no brightness..." refers to the Servant. Targum's pluralizing the Servant makes this singular relative clause refer back to the addressee. Similarly, the LXX which takes v. 10b as an independent relative clause does not describe the Servant but refers to the reverer of YHWH in v. 10a. The LXX signals this change by a move from a third person singular jussive in v. 10a to a second person plural imperative in v.10b οἱ πορευόμενοι ... πεποιθήατε

³³ David G. Firth and H. G. M. Williamson, *Interpreting Isaiah: Issues and Approaches*, (Nottingham: Apollos, 2009), 119. See also Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, 329.

³⁴ Childs, *Isaiah*, 395. Beuken has favoured the third position. See Beuken, "Jes 50:10-11: Eine kultische Paränese zur dritten Ebenprophetie," 168ff.

³⁵ Childs, *Isaiah*, 396. See also Paul D. Hanson, *Isaiah 40–66, Interpretation* (Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1995).

“You who walk ..., trust...” The MT divides this verse so as to link this bicolon with the one that follows. Following the opinion of the majority of the recent exegetes as well as translations, it seems better to confine the question to v. 10a. Thus, as Goldingay claims, the question at the beginning of the verse ends after the first bicolon not after the first colon (LXX) nor after v. 10b, nor at the end of v. 10 (Vulg).³⁶

The final part of this verse gives an encouragement. The imperfect verb יִבְטַחַּ yibtaḥ “he will trust” is probably a modal imperfect stating what should be done. While Koole prefers an obligatory imperfect “he must trust,”³⁷ North and NIV translate this verb as a jussive “let him trust.”³⁸ The idolaters put their trust in their idols (42:17) and Babylon in her own wickedness (47:10), whereas the faithful who fear YHWH are called to trust in the name of YHWH. Those who place their trust in YHWH are sure to find support and help (Pss 9:11, 13:6, 25:2, 37:3, etc.). The fact that those who are surrounded by darkness can continue to hope in YHWH is often affirmed in the Scriptures (Mic 7:8, Pss 18:29, 112:4, etc.). If the darkness symbolizes the divine anger and punishment, the trust in him will indicate the light of hope.³⁹

Verse: 11 - “But all of you are kindlers of fire, lighters of firebrands. Walk in the flame of your fire, and among the brands that you have kindled! This is what you shall have from my hand: you shall lie down in torment.” (NRS)

This verse begins with an emphatic הִנֵּה *hēn* “see, behold” which introduces the judgment of YHWH that is impending upon those who reject YHWH and refuse to listen to the voice of his Servant. Those addressed here are called “who kindle a fire” (64:1, cf. Deut 32:22, Jer 15:14, 17:4).⁴⁰ A major issue in this verse is the correct

³⁶ Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 216-217. A majority of the scholars consider RSV and NRSV as ambiguous and follow the rendering of NEB. Cf. Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66*, 152-154.

³⁷ Koole, *Isaiah 49–55*, 123.

³⁸ North, *Second Isaiah*, 205. See also Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 40–66* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2009), 386.

³⁹ Koole, *Isaiah 49–55*, 128.

⁴⁰ Muilenburg, “Isaiah,” 588.

rendering of the word תִּקְוֶה *ziqôth* which is a *hapax*. The LXX and Vulgate translate it as φλόξ and *flammae*. This word is commonly translated in various versions as ‘set alight’, but this emendation has little textual evidence. The rabbinical tradition understood the word to mean ‘sparks’, whereas Rignell understood this word as the ‘firewood’ of the altar and Rashi explained it in terms of ‘lightning’ (cf. Sir 43:13).⁴¹ However, most of the recent scholars and translations understand it as ‘firebrands’ aimed at the Servant. This view is based on Prov 26:18 wherein תִּקְוֶה *ziqqîm* is used along with ‘arrows’ and ‘death’. Koole prefers the interpretation of ‘fire’ as source of light, and he translates *ziqôth* as ‘torches’, similar to the meaning of the Akkadian *zîqtu/zîqu* II.⁴²

Several meanings are proposed for מְרַצֵּי *m^e’azz^erēy* which is uncertain. Firstly, it can mean ‘set alight’ like מְרַצֵּי *bi’ar^ethem* ‘to burn’ or ‘to consume’ in v. 11b which are chiastically related to each other. Secondly, it may also imply “you surround yourselves with the fire.” Thirdly, it could be understood as “providing oneself with” or “and arm yourselves with firebrands” (NJB).⁴³ The rendering of MT “those who provide themselves with firebrands” is supported by 1QIs^a, 1QIs^b and the Vulgate. The LXX also has a similar translation καὶ κατισχύετε φλόγα “and you feed a flame.” In Biblical Hebrew, the piel of רָצַר *’zr* usually means ‘to gird’ (cf. 2 Sam 22:40, Pss 18:33,40, 30:12, Isa 45:5). Literally, it means ‘to strengthen’. It is similar to the Arabic *azara*. In contrast, the Syriac has a variant reading meaning “and who set alight (firebrands)” which, as de Waard suggests, could represent a Hebrew *vorlage*.

⁴¹ The medieval scholars have explained it in diverse ways. “small bundles of combustibles, employed like matches, or as missiles in ancient warfare” (Albert Schultens), “fuel” (Lowth), “burning arrows, fiery darts” (Gesenius, cf. Eph 4:16) and “torches” (Michaelis). For a detailed discussion on the opinion of various medieval scholars, see Joseph A. Alexander, *A Commentary on Isaiah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1992), 257-258.

⁴² Besides Prov 26:18, it also is documented in various forms in Sir 43:13, Rabbinic Hebrew, and Aramaic. Etymologically and semantically it is comparable to the Akkadian, *zîqtu/zîqu* “torches” (CAD Z:133-134), and especially the expression *zîqâte ušanmaru* “they light the torches” (CAD Z:133, N/1:217) which is the exact equivalent of the emended reading in this colon. Cf. Paul, *Isaiah 40–66*, 355.

⁴³ de Waard, *A Handbook on Isaiah*, 186.

The use of the same Syriac verb as in the second half line of 11b for the Hebrew verb רָעַב *b'r* could just as well be the result of a contextual harmonization.⁴⁴ However, most of the recent exegetes and translations reject such an interpretation saying that רָזָא *'zr* does not form a good parallel with preceding חָדַק *qdh* 'to kindle' and subsequent רָעַב *b'r* 'to set alight'. Thus they prefer hiphil of רָזָא *'ôr* 'to kindle' (cf. 27:11, Mal 1:10).⁴⁵ Therefore, the majority of the English translations like RSV, NRSV, NEB, REB and EU follow the Syriac and translate it as "lighters of firebrands." While scholars like Westermann and Whybray accept this emendation, others like Oswalt, North and Watts consider MT a better reading.⁴⁶

The address "who among you" in v. 10 is now continued by "all of you." The subsequent plural forms describe the actions and fate of the majority.⁴⁷ While MT and LXX seem to take v. 11b as a self-contained sentence, Vulgate takes it as a sequence of noun expressions in opposition, like the first part of v. 10, forming the subject of the verbs in v. 11b.⁴⁸ MT reads רָזָא *b'e'ûr* "in the flame" or "in the glow." This is also supported by Targums. In contrast, the LXX (τῷ φωτί) and Vulgate (*in lumine*) render it "in the light of."⁴⁹ On the basis of the LXX and Vulgate and also by comparing it with Ps 78:14, some exegetes suggest vocalizing רָזָא *'ôr* instead of רָזָא *'ûr* "by the light of your fire." The phrase may also reflect a deliberate play on words, based in part on Isa 2:5: "Come let us walk by the light of the Lord."⁵⁰ Hence those who reject the Servant will experience *'ûr* 'fire' (50:11) as a punishment, rather than

⁴⁴ de Waard, *A Handbook on Isaiah*, 186.

⁴⁵ Koole, *Isaiah 49–55*, 130. He maintains that MT may be a writing error and thus favors the emendation.

⁴⁶ Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 40–66*, 328.

⁴⁷ Koole, *Isaiah 49–55*, 128.

⁴⁸ Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 218. Also see W. A. M. Beuken, "Jes 50:10-11: eine kultische Paränese zur dritten Ebed-prophetie," *ZAW* 85 (1973): 175.

⁴⁹ The LXX τῷ φωτί and Vulgate's *in lumine* and Syriac's *bzhr'* assimilate to the more familiar *'ôr* and to 2:5. This phrase functions in contrast with 'walk in darkness' in 10b.

⁵⁰ Paul, *Isaiah 40–66*, 356.

'ôr 'light' (cf. 9:1). Thus many English translations (RSV, REB, NAB, NJB, NIV, GB, KJ) have "walk by the light of your own fire." However, recent scholars like Jan de Waard, seem to prefer the MT which contains an announcement of doom: "those who have started the fire will be caught by it."⁵¹

The last part of v. 11 describes the destiny of those who refuse to listen to the warnings of the prophet and foolishly continue to follow their own light. They will receive from God's hand precisely what they deserve. The phrase "from my hand this has happened" is a perfect of certainty. The LXX has 'through me' possibly to avoid the anthropomorphism.⁵² "You shall lie down/die in pain": The word *לְמַאֲשָׁבָה* *l'ma^ašēbāh* "torment" is found only here in OT. This noun form comes from the root *בָּצַע* 'šb "to grieve, distress, pain." If the verb *שָׁכַב* *shkb* is a euphemism here for "to die" (Isa 14:18, Job 7:21, Isa 43:17), then as Shalom Paul observes, the phrase can be understood as: "you shall die in misery."⁵³ Unlike the righteous who rest in peace, the wicked lie down in sorrow (57:2). They will end up lying down (possibly implying death) in a situation or place of 'torment'. This is consistent with the picture of 66:24 where the dead bodies of the wicked will be in a place of torment where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.⁵⁴

⁵¹ de Waard, *A Handbook on Isaiah*, 187. Also see Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66*, 154 and English translations like NRSV, NEB, and EU.

⁵² The Targum renders 'from my word', often YHWH's agent of punishment in the Targum (cf. 8:14, 40:24, 41:16). In the MT YHWH is more directly involved. Cf. Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 218.

⁵³ Paul, *Isaiah 40–66*, 356. In order to substantiate his claim, Paul cites that this euphemism is also manifest in the Tel Dan stele (from the eighth century BCE), line 3: "Then my father lay down and went to his fathers." The Akkadian equivalent, *sakāpu* "to lie down, to die" (CAD S:67-70).

⁵⁴ Smith, *Isaiah 40–66*, 387. Scholars like North understand it as "'a place of (fiery) torment,' very nearly 'Gehenna.'" But on the contrary, arguing that the conception of 'Gehenna' is late, Muilenburg claims that "there is no reference to a place here." Cf. North, *Second Isaiah*, 206.

Analysis of Metaphors in Isa 50:10-11

In this short literary unit, different metaphors are used to distinguish between those who revere and trust in the Lord, despite their hardships, and those who despise God by rejecting the message of his Servant. The precise implication of the punishment is unclear due to the use of the ambiguous terminology, complex metaphors, and our difficulty in establishing the referents. However, a clear separation between the two categories of people is very plain.

Verse 10 uses the metaphor “to walk in darkness and without any light.” The noun מְשֶׁכֶּתִים *h^ashēkîm* is an intensive plural meaning “deep darkness.”⁵⁵ The patristic tradition generally interpreted this as denoting ignorance (cf. 42:16).⁵⁶ However, the early Jewish exegetes and the recent scholarship connect it with a situation of hardship and extremity. In general ‘darkness’ can be a symbol of all kinds of misery (see Isa 9:1, 58:10, 59:9, Ps 82:5, Lam 3:2). Some scholars understand darkness as referring to God’s anger, especially in the background of Lam 3:1ff. YHWH’s judgment brings darkness, *yôm ḥoshek* ‘day of darkness’ (Joel 1:2, Zeph 1:15).⁵⁷ There will be darkness and no ‘light’ on YHWH’s day of judgment (Am 5:20). The frightening nature of this darkness is also brought out in the second part of v. 10b “and there is no brightness.” The noun נֹגַח *nogah* is a parallel word of אֹרֶךְ *’ôr* (Isa 4:5, 60:3,19).⁵⁸ This noun נֹגַח *nogah* ‘brightness, or radiance’

⁵⁵ Though חֹשֶׁךְ, *ḥoshek* is a common word in Isaiah, it is interesting to note that it is only here that Deutero-Isaiah uses an intensive plural form. It also has a parallel in Gen 15:12 where it refers to the terrifying encounter with God. The feminine singular noun appears five times and its cognate masculine noun is very common.

⁵⁶ Rosario P. Merendino, “Allein und einzig Gottes prophetisches Wort: Israels Erbe und Auftrag für alle Zukunft (Jesaja 50,4-9a.10),” *ZAW* 97 (1985): 360f.

⁵⁷ Koole, *Isaiah 49–55*, 127.

⁵⁸ R. Eising, “nogah,” *TDOT*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977), 201ff. While Michaelis gives to *nogah* the specific sense of dawn, break of day or morning light like שָׁהָר *shahar* in 8:20 and 47:11, Vitrina understands it to mean splendour or a great degree of light. For a further discussion on the opinion of various earlier exegetes, see Alexander, *Isaiah*, 255.

(Isa 4:5, 60:3, 62:1) and its cognate verb נָגַח *nāgah* ‘to shine’ (Isa 9:1) are usually used in the context of a theophany or in reference to God’s illumination for his people. Thus, in this context, it can refer to a person who has no such divine light.⁵⁹

However, we would consider the darkness in this context as symbolizing the people’s rejection of the Servant.⁶⁰ The Servant has been appointed ‘as a light’ (42:6, 49:6) and anyone who refuses to listen to his voice walks in darkness. It is interesting to note that the Servant is equated with the Lord in this context. The voice (words) of the Servant is the word of God; he who obeys the voice of the Servant finds himself leaning upon God. Those who revere YHWH necessarily listen to his Servant. On the contrary, anyone who rejects the word of the Servant thereby rejects YHWH himself.⁶¹ Hence the Servant enables those who walk in darkness and have no light of their own to find their way to God who is the light himself (cf. Isa 9:2).⁶² Those who fear God and obey the voice of the Servant suppose to have an abundance of light. Nevertheless, they who heed the Servant’s voice seem to walk with him into the darkness of frustration, injustice, humiliation and abuse.⁶³ In spite of walking in external darkness (difficult situations), they can continue to trust in YHWH and lean on him as they possess internal light (given by the voice of the Servant, cf. Ps 119:105).

⁵⁹ R. Reed Lessing, *Isaiah 40–55* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2011), 517. The combination of darkness and no light is found in Am 5:18 and Isa 59:9. The same expression appears in the Balaam inscription discovered in Tell *Deir ‘Alla* located in the Valley of Sukkoth east of the Jordan Valley, dating back to the second quarter of the eighth century BCE. “Darkness (*ḥoshēk*) exists there, not brilliance.” Cf. Paul, *Isaiah 40–66*, 355. A similar expression is also found in the Sumerian Epic of Gilgamesh IX: 163, 167: “The darkness is dense, there is no light.”

⁶⁰ Koole would also interpret darkness along similar lines. See Koole, *Isaiah 49–55*, 126-127.

⁶¹ Lessing, *Isaiah 40–55*, 516-517.

⁶² George A. F. Knight, *Deutero-Isaiah* (New York, NY: Abingdon, 1965), 205.

⁶³ Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66*, 329.

It is YHWH's exhortation to the righteous to do what his Servant has done, i.e. to be his faithful disciples.⁶⁴

Verse 10b is, therefore, an exhortation to those in the audience who were walking in dark times similar to the oppression suffered by the Servant of the Lord. The people addressed are those who 'walk in darkness' because they do not yet know the light of salvation.⁶⁵ Even though there is presently no light (hope), yet "he should trust" in the name of the Lord and "should rely, lean, depend" on his God. People are urged "to walk in the light" earlier in Isa 2:5 which declares God's eschatological promises of Zion being established as a place where all nations will gather to learn the divine law. In 8:23–9:2, the 'darkness' which symbolizes the political and spiritual gloom is described in contrast to the 'great light' which will bring great joy and peace to his people and their land. While those who do not trust in God and consult mediums and spirits will have no light (8:19-20), those who trust in YHWH will have (see) light, even though they seem to walk in darkness (9:1, 50:10b). Later 60:1-3 describes eschatological times when the light of God's glory will descend on a world covered with 'darkness'. Thus Isaiah repeatedly declares that the only hope for humanity is the divine light of God.⁶⁶

Metaphors in Verse 11a: But all of you are kindlers of fire, lighters of firebrands. Walk in the flame of your fire, and among the brands that you have kindled!

In contrast to the promise made to those who fear YHWH and obey his Servant's voice, the transgressors have judgment proclaimed to them. Verse 11a links up with v. 10b in the contrast between darkness and light. Moreover, these two lines have the same function in the sentence structure as well, because both are

⁶⁴ Lindsey, "The commitment of the Servant in Isaiah 50:4-11," 226. North states that this "verse is an admirable summary, and application, of vv. 4-9." Cf. North, *Second Isaiah*, 205.

⁶⁵ Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, trans. David M. G. Stalker (London: SCM Press, 1969), 235.

⁶⁶ Smith, *Isaiah 40–66*, 386.

followed by a call: an imperative in 11a and a jussive in 10b.⁶⁷ The phrase “walk in darkness” in v. 10b has a counterpart in “to walk in the flame of fire” in v. 11b. Even though the precise meaning of the metaphors used in this verse and the addressee to whom they are directed are not very clear, the judgment pronounced in the final section of the verse, makes it clear that the wicked who refuse to rely on God are addressed.⁶⁸ Those addressed here are called “who kindle a fire” (64:1, cf. Deut 32:22, Jer 15:14, 17:4). The verb קדח *qdh* refers to kindling brushwood in 64:1 in a metaphorical depiction of the ignition of YHWH’s adversaries. The symbolic meaning of fire is explained in many different ways. Some relate it to the sacrificial fire on the altar of the gods (Rignell), while others relate it with the Persian worship of fire.⁶⁹ Some others would connect it with worship of idols (cf. Isa 57:6, Jer 44:25). However, we need to be reminded that Deutero-Isaiah very categorically denounces it in 44:9, 45:16. Another interpretation sees the fire as an image of God’s anger (Deut 32:22, Isa 42:25, Jer 17:4).⁷⁰ But, as Koole rightly argues, it is not suitable to explain ‘your fire’ in 50:11b. Hence most of the recent commentators connect it with human anger in which people become ‘scorching beings’ to one another (Ps 57:5) and destroy each other (Isa 9:18, Prov 26:20). This anger is now turned against the Servant. In order to substantiate this point, Koole states that v. 11 forms a counterpart of v. 10: the acceptance of the Servant is now contrasted with his rejection.

Thus scholars generally interpret this metaphor in two different ways. Firstly, it may refer to the self-righteous schemes of the ungodly who seek to provide their own light for the path of life

⁶⁷ Koole, *Isaiah 49–55*, 130.

⁶⁸ David F. Payne, “Isaiah,” in *The New Layman’s Bible Commentary*, eds. G. C. D. Howley, F. F. Bruce, and H. L. Ellison (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979), 806.

⁶⁹ Knight considers that this verse is addressed to the pagan world, the Babylonians and others including the Persians. He refers to the interest of Persians in fire worship. How stupid it is to worship a fire which you yourselves have kindled (cf. 44:16)! YHWH is the true light and so he is the source of all fire, not *Ahura Mazda* nor any other. Cf. Knight, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 205.

⁷⁰ Koole, *Isaiah 49–55*, 129. Many of the Church Fathers and medieval scholars like Torrey and Rashi consider fire as metaphorically referring to God’s anger.

rather than trusting YHWH to provide light in the darkness (cf. v. 10). The fire, thus, means a form of self-protection against the darkness. Scholars like Roodenburg, Young and Beuken consider it in terms of an “attempt to help oneself in difficulties.” Scholars like Calvin, Hahn, Birks and Weir take it to be a domestic fire (47:14) symbolizing merely all human comforts and supports corresponding the figure of darkness for distress and perplexity in v. 10.⁷¹ Calvin distinguishes between the light of human community ‘*propriam lucem*’ and the light of YHWH ‘*lucem dei*’ which is the light of salvation and rescue. In such a contrasting scenario, human light will surely fail, the community shall ‘miserably perish’.⁷² In Motyer’s words, “the picture here is of people seeking to equip themselves, out of earthly resources, to deal with earth’s dark experiences.”⁷³ Those who refuse to revere the Lord and listen to the word of his Servant attempt to create their own light and to find their own way out of darkness. Such people will be devoured by the light that they have tried to create. As Oswalt states, “there is only one light in the darkness of human sin: the one kindled by God in and through his Servant. To refuse that light and to embrace some other is to open to a devouring flame.”⁷⁴ By creating their own light (fire), people try to avoid the darkness in which they are walking. But then they will not be able to escape the flames of this self-kindled fire.⁷⁵

On the other hand, this metaphor can also refer to the wicked who somehow fall into the trap which they have set for the righteous. In other words, the destruction they intended for the

⁷¹ Thomas K. Cheyne, *The Prophecies of Isaiah*, vol. 2 (London: Kegan, 1889), 27-28.

⁷² Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 124, considers Calvin’s interpretation as useful and meritorious.

⁷³ Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 401. Barnes also interprets along similar lines: “The idea probably is, that all human devices for salvation bear the same resemblance to the true plan proposed by God, which a momentary spark in the dark does to the clear shining of a bright light like that of the sun. If this is the sense, it is a most graphic and striking description of the nature of all the schemes by which the sinner hopes to save himself.” Cf. Albert Barnes, *The Prophet Isaiah*, vol. 2 (Glasgow: Blackie, 1845), 225.

⁷⁴ Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah. Chapters 40–66*, 329.

⁷⁵ Koole, *Isaiah 49–55*, 129.

Servant and his disciples is being turned back on them by YHWH.⁷⁶ Usually, the verb אָרַךְ 'zr appears in context of battle and has meanings such as “to gird, strap on a belt, arm with weapon,” (Isa 8:9, 45:5, cf. 1 Sam 2:4, 2 Sam 22:40, Pss 18:40, 93:1). The phrase “girding/arming themselves with firebrands” means they are preparing for battle against the Servant by equipping themselves with fiery weapons, perhaps spears or arrows that can be set ablaze before their launch.⁷⁷ As the Psalms show us, these are metaphors to describe the action of the transgressors against the righteous (cf. Ps 57:6: “they dug a pit and have fallen into it”). Similarly here “walk into the glow of your fire and into the brands which you set alight.”⁷⁸ Oswalt interprets this imagery as referring to the enemies who attack the people of God like those enemies who are attacking a besieged city and trying to set it on fire with fiery arrows. Then, as Isaiah predicts, they will be devoured by their own aggression and subside into the ashes. Their devices for the injury of the pious will eventually lead to their own destruction (cf. Ps 7:15-16). Therefore the device of attackers is an inherently dangerous one, and they will pay the price for it. They are to perish “by their own weapons, those they used against the righteous.”⁷⁹ The just judgment of God is that the Servant’s enemies will be burned by the same fire they kindled.

Verse 11b: “This is what you shall have from my hand:
you shall lie down in torment.”

The power and strength of YHWH’s hand can be seen not only in his mastery of nature but also in his saving acts manifested in history. Deutero-Isaiah often uses the words ‘arm’ (cf. 40:10-11, 51:9, 52:10, 53:1) and ‘hand’ of YHWH metaphorically to refer to both his powerful saving acts (cf. 49:2,22, 50:2, 51:16,22, 53:10)

⁷⁶ Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66*, 154; Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary of the Prophecies of Isaiah*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: Clark, 1875), 280-281.

⁷⁷ Lessing, *Isaiah 40–55*, 518.

⁷⁸ The expression “those who light their own fire and kindle their own firebrands” appears in the Damascus Document to describe opponents of the sectarian group (CD 5:13). Cf. Lessing, *Isaiah 40–55*, 518.

⁷⁹ Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 124.

as well as his judgment and punishment (40:2, 51:17,23). Just as fire (light) can either be saving or punishing (v. 11a), so also the hand of YHWH can either save (50:2) or judge/punish (50:11b). In this context, the hand of the Lord will not allow those who oppose him to rest in peace; but rather it will cause them to lie down in pain.⁸⁰ This verse takes up the beginning of the chapter: God's hand is powerful enough both to save (2a) and to punish the guilty (v. 1) with his judgment (2b-3).⁸¹

While 50:10 speaks about those who live in darkness and yet continue to trust in the name of YHWH being promised salvation, the transgressors are threatened with destruction not only by their own weapons, which they had planned to use against the righteous (v. 11a), but most importantly, they will receive lasting punishment from the Lord himself (v. 11b).⁸² In 50:9b the opponents of the Servant are compared to the wearing out of a piece of clothing. It is a common metaphor for "a gradual but inevitable destruction."⁸³ In 50:11b, Deutero-Isaiah uses a similar metaphor to describe the impending punishment of YHWH upon those who rely on themselves.

The phrase "you shall lie down in torment" continues the metaphor of fire: unable to escape from it, the wicked will writhe in agony on the ground.⁸⁴ 'Lie down' can refer to the sleep-like position of the dead (cf. 14:18, Ps 88:6). The noun מַעְבָּהּ *ma*^a*šēbāh* is a place of pain after death, but it can also denote the process of dying (cf. 43:17). The judgment is brief but clear enough. To lie down is the condition of those who resist God and face his wrath and incur final defeat (cf. 51:20). For Koole, the lit fire, which seemed to offer a way of escaping the terrifying darkness, produces blazing flames which burn horribly.⁸⁵ The hearers will lie writhing as they

⁸⁰ Lessing, *Isaiah 40–55*, 518.

⁸¹ Koole, *Isaiah 49–55*, 132.

⁸² Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66*, 235.

⁸³ John Skinner, *The Book of Prophet Isaiah: Chapters XL–LXVI* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1902), 115.

⁸⁴ Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66*, 154. The Targum paraphrases 'lie down' as 'to your stumbling you will return'. Cf. Goldingay and Payne, *Isaiah 40–55*, 219.

⁸⁵ Koole, *Isaiah 49–55*, 131.

are tormented by the fire they have kindled (66:24). These verses describe a contrasting situation between the obedient devout walking in darkness and their despisers who momentarily live in the light of their own smart diatribe. The ultimate divine justice, however, makes sure that those who rely on God in spite of being in darkness will eventually reach the brightness of day, while those who take pride in their self-kindled brightness are finally consumed by it.⁸⁶ The God-fearing walk patiently through the darkness until God provides a light for them. But on the contrary, the ungodly kindle their own fire. This fire that is supposed to provide light and warmth unfortunately consumes them.⁸⁷ Evil has the inherent power to consume those who succumb to its enticement.⁸⁸ Therefore, the phrase “those who light their own fires,” is a metaphorical picture of those who create their own hope. They have rejected the light from God and have chosen to substitute their own hope (their light) for God’s salvation.

Conclusion

These verses have to be understood and interpreted metaphorically. The people who are addressed are those who, rejecting the fear of the Lord and the word of his Servant, attempt to create their own light and to find their own way out of darkness. Such people will be devoured by the light that they have tried to create.⁸⁹ By creating their own light (fire), people try to avoid the darkness in which they are walking. But then they will not be able to escape the flames of this fire.⁹⁰ In other words, the self-created light (fire) will eventually consume them. As Whybray puts it,

⁸⁶ Muilenburg, “Isaiah Chapters 40–66,” 5:588.

⁸⁷ Ernst W. Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament: And a Commentary on the Messianic Predictions*, vol. 2, trans. Theodore Meyer (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2009), 256.

⁸⁸ Lessing, *Isaiah 40–55*, 523. He refers to some holy war texts (cf. Judg 7:22, 2 Chron 20:23) wherein Israel’s enemies turn against themselves and thereby destroy themselves.

⁸⁹ Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 40–66*, 329.

⁹⁰ Koole, *Isaiah 49–55*, 129.

“They will in some way themselves fall into the trap which they have laid. Those who have started the fire will be caught by it and will find themselves unable to escape its flames.”⁹¹

The light metaphors in these two verses mainly refer to the conceptual domains of guidance and moral life. Those who hear the voice of the Servant and walk in the way of the Lord will eventually find light on their way. On the contrary, they will end up in utter darkness if they despise his instruction and guidance and continue to walk according to their own designs. Deutero-Isaiah thus connects the concept of the true light available to those who trust in YHWH (v. 10) with a terrible reality also connected with light and fire: fire destroys just as it gives light (v. 11). Just like his predecessor (Isa 30:33, 31:9), Deutero-Isaiah knows that it is God who is the real furnace, so that to enter the fire is to meet with God (Isa 42:25, 47:14, cf. 66:24). The God whom Deutero-Isaiah came to know and trust in the days of the Babylonian exile is both light and fire at once.⁹² The godly person may not be spared from walking (or sitting, Mic 7:8) in darkness, but eventually they are destined to experience in the light (Isa 9:1, 50:10, 53:11 in LXX).⁹³ The guiding and protecting light of God and the fire of his wrath cannot be separated one from the other, for they are the two facets of the one and the same reality (Isa 10:17). It is because there is one God, and it is he who creates both light and darkness, both good and evil (45:7).⁹⁴

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⁹¹ Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66*, 154.

⁹² Knight, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 205.

⁹³ Sverre Alan, “‘ôr,” *TDOT*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977), 161.

⁹⁴ Knight, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 205.