

# Isaiah 1:27-31 Commentary

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Isaiah 1:27 [Zion](#) will be [redeemed](#) with [justice](#) and her [repentant](#) ones with [righteousness](#). ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**English Translation of the Greek** (Septuagint): For her captives shall be saved with judgement, and with mercy.

**Amplified:** Zion shall be redeemed with justice, and her [returned] converts with righteousness (uprightness and right standing with God). ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV:** Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.

**NET:** Zion will be freed by justice, and her returnees by righteousness. ([NET Bible](#))

**NJB:** Zion will be redeemed by fair judgement, and those who return, by saving justice. ([NJB](#))

**NLT:** Because the LORD is just and righteous, the repentant people of Jerusalem will be redeemed. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Young's Literal:** Zion in judgment is redeemed, and her captivity in righteousness.

- Isa 5:16; 45:21, 22, 23, 24, 25; Romans 3:24, 25, 26; 11:26,27; 2Co 5:21; Eph 1:7,8; Titus 2:14; 1Pe 1:18,19) (1Co 1:30)

### Deliverance of Jerusalem

(Mark Chagall, Etching, 1939)

**Prophetic Passage** - This passage is clearly prophetic and has not yet been fulfilled. As I write these notes Jan 1, 2009, the United Nations has yet to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel (even though it was declared a sovereign nation in May, 1948!). In addition, the Palestinians continue to seek half of Jerusalem to be their capital. Finally, the [Temple Mount in Jerusalem](#) (just above and to the east of the **Wailing Wall**) is under Muslim control which clearly impedes any attempt to rebuild the **Jewish Temple** on the mount. In summary, we see that **Zion** (Jerusalem) is in need of redemption even today and will be in this state of need until the Redeemer returns and liberates Zion forever.

My translation of the **Septuagint** (LXX) is loosely that "the state of captivity (of Zion) will be saved with (or after) judgment and with mercy."

Notice that one verse (Isa 1:27) describes **salvation (redemption)** but four verses describe God's **judgment** (Isa 1:28, 29, 30, 31). Praise God that in the middle of wrath, He remembers mercy!

**Zion** ([reference](#)) ([06726](#)) (**siyyon/tsiyon**) ([see also another study on site](#)) is of uncertain meaning but many favor the idea of fortress or defense (see TWOT note below). Some sources say **Zion** means "parched place" so clearly there is no consensus. In any event, the name **Zion** is synonymous with **Jerusalem**, the city that Messiah will redeem and make righteous and faithful (Is 1:26-note). Although it is probably obvious, the redemption of **Zion** clearly includes the inhabitants of the city, specifically the Jewish inhabitants. The OT always uses **siyyon** without the definite article, indicating that the term is a proper name. The oldest localization of the name **Zion** occurs in 2Sa 5:7 (1Chr 11:5) where the old Jebusite city is described as the **'Fortress Zion.'**

**Easton's Bible Dictionary** - **Zion** is one of the eminences on which Jerusalem was built. It was surrounded on all sides, except the north, by deep valleys, that of the Tyropoeon (q.v.) separating it from **Moriah** (q.v.), which it surpasses in height by 105 feet. It was the south-eastern hill of Jerusalem. When David took it from the **Jebusites** (Josh. 15:63; 2Sa 5:7) he built on it a citadel and a palace, and it became "**City of David**" (1Ki 8:1; 2Kings 19:21, 31; 1Chr. 11:5). In the later books of the Old Testament this name was sometimes used (Ps. 87:2; 149:2; Isa. 33:14; Joel 2:1) to denote Jerusalem in general, and sometimes God's chosen Israel (Ps. 51:18; 87:5). In the New Testament it is used sometimes to denote the Church of God (Heb. 12:22), and sometimes the heavenly city (Rev. 14:1).

#### **Zion - City of David** [Nave's Topical] -

2Sa 5:7, 9; 6:10, 12, 16; 1 Kin. 2:10; 3:1; 8:1; 9:24; 14:31; 15:8; 2 Kin. 8:24; 9:28; 12:21; 14:20; 15:7, 38; 16:20; 1Chr. 11:5, 7; 13:13; 15:1, 29; 2Chr. 5:2; 8:11; 12:16; 14:1; 16:14; 21:1, 20; 24:16, 25; 27:9; 32:5, 30; 33:14; Neh. 3:15; 12:37; Isa. 22:9; Luke 2:4, 11; John 7:42

**Zion** is frequently used in the phrase "**daughter of Zion**" (28x, twice in NT -

2 Kgs 19:21; Ps 9:14; Isa 1:8; 10:32; 16:1; 37:22; 52:2; 62:11; Jer 4:31; 6:2, 23; Lam 1:6; 2:1, 4, 8, 10, 13, 18; 4:22; Mic 1:13; 4:8, 10, 13; Zeph 3:14; Zech 2:10; 9:9; Mt 21:5; John 12:15) or "**Mount Zion**" (21x, twice in NT - 2 Kgs 19:31; Ps 48:2, 11; 74:2; 78:68; 125:1; Isa 4:5; 8:18; 10:12; 18:7; 24:23; 29:8; 31:4; 37:32; Lam 5:18; Joel 2:32; Obad 1:17, 21; Mic 4:7; Heb 12:22; Rev 14:1)

See more detailed discussion of [Daughter of Zion](#).

**Baker** explains that Zion "refers to (1) the city of Jerusalem, the City of David (2Sa 5:7); (2) the Temple Mount or Temple (Ps. 9:11); or (3) to the area or cities of larger Judah (Ps. 69:35). It was God's chosen location for His people. It was recognized ideally to be none other than a reference on earth to "the city of our God, His holy mountain" (Ps. 48:2), the city and country that God would show to Abraham and his descendants (Ge 12:1)." (Baker, W. The Complete Word Study Dictionary : Old Testament. Page 948. Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers)

**John E Hartley** writes that **Zion**...

is possibly related to Arabic sâna from root s-w-n, meaning protect, defend; hence siyôn may have meant place of defence, fortress. Others suggest derivation from root sâhâ "be bald"; cf. Syriac spelling sehyôn for

this name.

**Zion** is the fortified mound between the Kidron and the Tyropean valleys that David captured from the Jebusites (2Sa 5:7). Subsequently, it became known as the **city of David**. With the building of the temple to the north, that hill later became known as **Mount Zion**. **Zion** may even refer specifically to the temple vicinity or more generally to Jerusalem itself; sometimes it includes the entire nation, the covenant community itself (Is 1:27; Ps 97:8). "**Zion**" appears frequently in Ps and Lam. It seldom refers to the political capital of Judah, but much more often stands for the city of God in the new age.

From the time Solomon built the temple, Zion became the center of Yahweh's activity. Yahweh identified himself as "the One who dwells on Mount Zion" (Isa 8:18). Here he initiates his work of salvation and here he begins his judgment against sin (Amos 1:2). ([Harris, R L, Archer, G L & Waltke, B K Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament. Moody Press](#))

**Zion** - 154x in the OT in the NAS (Note concentration of uses in Isaiah) -

2Sa 5:7; 1Ki. 8:1; 2Ki. 19:21, 31; 1Chr. 11:5; 2 Chr. 5:2; Ps. 2:6; 9:11, 14; 14:7; 20:2; 48:2, 11, 12; 50:2; 51:18; 53:6; 65:1; 69:35; 74:2; 76:2; 78:68; 84:7; 87:2, 5; 97:8; 99:2; 102:13, 16, 21; 110:2; 125:1; 126:1; 128:5; 129:5; 132:13; 133:3; 134:3; 135:21; 137:1, 3; 146:10; 147:12; 149:2; Song 3:11;

**Isa. 1:8, 27; 2:3; 3:16, 17; 4:3, 4, 5; 8:18; 10:12, 24, 32; 12:6; 14:32; 16:1; 18:7; 24:23; 28:16; 29:8; 30:19; 31:4, 9; 33:5, 14, 20; 34:8; 35:10; 37:22, 32; 40:9; 41:27; 46:13; 49:14; 51:3, 11, 16; 52:1, 2, 7, 8; 59:20; 60:14; 61:3; 62:1, 11; 64:10; 66:8;**

Jer. 3:14; 4:6, 31; 6:2, 23; 8:19; 9:19; 14:19; 26:18; 30:17; 31:6, 12; 50:5, 28; 51:10, 24, 35; Lam. 1:4, 6, 17; 2:1, 4, 6, 8, 10, 13, 18; 4:2, 11, 22; 5:11, 18; Joel 2:1, 15, 23, 32; 3:16, 17, 21; Amos 1:2; 6:1; Obad. 1:17, 21; Mic. 1:13; 3:10, 12; 4:2, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13; Zeph. 3:14, 16; Zech. 1:14, 17; 2:7, 10; 8:2, 3; 9:9, 13

**Uses of Zion in the Context of the [Millennial Kingdom of the Messiah](#)** - It is important to note that **Zion** is frequently mentioned in many eschatological passages, most of which describe **Zion** in the Millennial reign of Messiah. While you may not agree with all of these passages (but be sure to check the context before you disagree), all have some elements that are difficult to explain other than ascribing them to a future time when Messiah returns to save Israel (Ro 11:26-28) and establish His Kingdom on earth where He will reign as King of kings for 1000 years -

2 Kings 19:31 Psalm 2:6 Psalm 14:7 Psalm 20:2 Psalm 53:6 Psalm 69:35 Psalm 110:2 Isaiah 1:27 Isaiah 2:3 Isaiah 4:3-5 Isaiah 18:7 Isaiah 24:23 Isaiah 33:5 Isaiah 33:20 Isaiah 34:8 Isaiah 35:10 Isaiah 51:3 Isaiah 51:11 Isaiah 51:16 Isaiah 52:1 Isaiah 52:2, 7, 8 Isaiah 59:20 Isaiah 60:14 Isaiah 61:3 Isaiah 62:1 Isaiah 62:11 Isaiah 64:10 Isaiah 66:8 Jeremiah 30:17 Jeremiah 31:6 Jeremiah 31:12 Jeremiah 50:5 Joel 3:16 Joel 3:17 Joel 3:21 Obadiah 1:17 Obadiah 1:21 Micah 4:2, 7, 8 Zephaniah 3:14 Zephaniah 3:16 Zechariah 1:17 Zechariah 2:10 Zechariah 8:3

## When Will This Prophecy Be Fulfilled?

Refer to the diagram below

### [The Redemption of Zion](#)

As stated, Isaiah's prophecy (Is 1:27) has not yet been fulfilled and awaits a future fulfillment. This fulfillment will take place when the **Messiah** returns (at His **Second Coming**) as **King of kings and Lord of lords** (Re 19:16-[note](#)), which will specifically occur at the end of **Daniel's Seventieth Week**, the seven year period, which is divided into two 3.5 year segments, the last 3.5 years (42 months, 1260 days) known as the **Great Tribulation** (Mt 24:15, 21 [initiated "when you see the Abomination of desolation standing... in the holy place" = Antichrist will enter the rebuilt Jewish temple and declare himself "god" - 2Th 2:3, 4], Da 9:27-note, "He" = Antichrist, "one week" = 7 years, "middle of week" = after 3.5 years which then inaugurates the last 3.5 yr period, the Great Tribulation, which is terminated by the return of the Redeemer, cp Mt 24:22, 30). At the termination of the **Great Tribulation** the city of Jerusalem will be **redeemed** from Gentile dominion. In the introductory comments on this note, I have alluded to why **Zion** is in need of redemption even in our time, and **Jesus** helps us clarify this need in His prophecy that...

Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles **until** ("Until" = an expression of time which in context signifies Gentile dominion of Jerusalem will one day come to an end. Is 1:27 describes in part how that end will be accomplished = "Zion will be redeemed") the **times of the Gentiles** are fulfilled. (Lk 21:24b)

The **times of the Gentiles** will come to an end ("be fulfilled") when the **King of kings** returns to redeem Zion! What are the **times of the Gentiles**? The **times of the Gentiles** describes a continuous period of time which began when King **Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon** captured Jerusalem (Zion) in **586BC**. Since that time, Jerusalem (**Zion**) has continually been under Gentile dominion to

one degree or another. In the book of the Revelation we learn some additional facts about **the times of the Gentiles** in the time immediately preceding the return of the Messiah to redeem Zion. In Revelation 11:2 the apostle **John** is instructed to...

(Context = Re 11:1-[note](#)) Leave out the court which is outside the **temple** (the Jewish temple - which does not currently exist but which will be rebuilt in the future) and do not measure it, for **it has been given to the nations** (the Gentiles = this occurs during the last 3.5 years of **the times of the Gentiles**); and they (the Gentiles) will tread under foot the holy city (Jerusalem/Zion) for **forty-two months** (Re 11:2-[note](#)) (**See chart** for other synonymous time phrases)

Isaiah speaks of this great hope in the OT and Paul reiterates this truth in the NT...

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY

And a **Redeemer** (**Ga'al/Goel** = Kinsman-Redeemer [word study]; Septuagint= rhuomai = deliver, Deliverer) will come to Zion, and to those who **turn** (Hebrew = shub [\[7725\]](#) = turn back, repent, turn away from [see use Isa 1:27 = translated "repentant"]) from **transgression** (Hebrew = pesha = fundamental idea of root is breach of relationships, between parties;Lxx = asebeia = ungodliness) in Jacob," declares the LORD. **21** And as for Me, this is My covenant with them," says the LORD: "My Spirit which is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your offspring, nor from the mouth of your offspring's offspring," says the LORD, "from now and forever." (Isaiah 59:20, 21)

NEW TESTAMENT PROPHECY

For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery (musterion), lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening (porosis) has happened to Israel **until** (see expressions of time in inductive Bible study) the fulness of the Gentiles (this is not identical to the times of the Gentiles for it refers primarily to Gentile salvation, whereas "times of the Gentiles" refers to Gentile dominion over Jerusalem) has come in; and thus all Israel ("all" that believe in the Redeemer. Zec 13:8, 9 state 1/3 of the Jews will believe) will be saved (sozo); just as it is written (Paul quotes Isa 59:20), "THE DELIVERER (rhuomai - refers to the Redeemer, Christ Jesus) WILL COME FROM **ZION**, HE WILL REMOVE (apostrepho = turn away from) UNGODLINESS (asebeia) FROM JACOB (synonymous with Israel). (This next section is quoted from Jer 31:31, 32, 33, 34) AND THIS IS MY COVENANT (diatheke) WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY (aphaireo) THEIR SINS." (Ro 11:25, 26, 27-see in depth discussion of this important NT passage to help understand God's plan for the Jews)

THE REDEMPTION OF ZION				
		Saints Raptured V	Messiah Returns  Second Coming V	
After 69th Week		Daniel's 70th Week = 7 Years Da 9:27-note	Zion in the Millennium	
The Cross	This Present Evil Age Galatians 1:4-note	Last 3.5 yr = Great Tribulation Mt 24:21-note	Jehovah Shammah Messiah Reigns 1000 Years The City of Righteousness A Faithful City Ezekiel 48:25	
		3.5yr	3.5yr	1000 YEARS

At the end of Ezekiel's prophecy (Ezek 48:35), the Lord gives a promise that He will return to Jerusalem and gives the city a new name **Jehovah Shammah - The LORD is There**.

**Zion** was originally associated with the hill [Ophel](#), the fortified area just to the south of the field King David purchased from Ornan (eventual site of the Temple Mount), lying between the [Kidron Valley](#) on the East and the [Tyropoeon Valley](#) to the West. **Click** images below to enlarge...

## ZION

Ophel, Kidron & Tyropoeon Valleys

### Nave's Topical References on Zion

**ZION, called also Sion, stronghold of Jerusalem. Taken from the Jebusites by David** 2Sa 5:6, 7, 8, 9; 1Chr 11:5, 6, 7.

**Called thereafter "the city of David,"** 2Sa 5:7, 9; 6:12, 16; 1Ki 8:1; 1Chr 11:5, 7; 15:1, 29; 2Chr 5:2.

**Ark of the covenant placed in,** 2Sa 6:12, 16; 1Ki 8:1; 1Chr 15:1, 29; 2Chr 5:2;

**Ark of Covenant removed from, to Solomon's temple on Mount Moriah,** 1Ki 8:1; 2Chr 5:2, with 2Chr 3:1.

**Collectively, the place, the forms, and the assemblies of Israel's worship** 2Ki 19:21, 31; Ps 9:11; 48:2, 11, 12; 74:2; 132:13; 137:1; Is 35:10; 40:9; 49:14; 51:16; 52:1, 2, 7, 8; 60:14; 62:1, 11; Je 31:6; 50:5; La 1:4; Joel 2:1, 15; Mt. 21:5; Jn 12:15; Ro 9:33; 11:26; 1Pe 2:6.

**Name of, applied to Jerusalem,** Ps 87:2, 5; 149:2; Song 3:11; Is 33:14, 20; Je 9:19; 30:17; Zec 9:13.

**Called the city of God,** Ps 87:2, 3; Is 60:14.

**Restoration of, promised,** Is 51:3, 11, 16; 52:1, 2, 7, 8; 59:20; 60:14; Ob 17, 21; Zeph 3:14, 16; Zec 1:14, 17; 2:7, 10; 8:2, 3; 9:9, 13.

**Name of, applied to the city of the redeemed,** He 12:22; Re 14:1

**Redeemed** (06299) (**padah**) means to redeem, ransom, buy and so to cause the freedom or release of a person from bondage or ownership, often implying a delivering or rescue of a person in distress. **Padah** means to achieve transfer of ownership from one to another through payment of a price or an equivalent substitute.

**Vine** adds that **padah** "is used of the payments required for the redemption of the firstborn (Ex 13:13, 15; Lev 27:26, 27; Nu 3:46, 49; 18:15, 16, 17) or for the release of persons from slavery (Ex 21:8; Lev 25:47, 48, 49).

**HCSB Study Bible** on **padah** - Pre-biblical Semitic legal use of this root allowed connotations of religion and "setting free." **Padah** indicates change of ownership through payment or substitution. People redeemed slave girls to marry them (Lev 19:20). Israel's firstborn had to be redeemed (Ex 34:19-20) because God redeemed Israel from Egyptian slavery at the cost of Egypt's firstborn (Ex 13:15). God and Israel later recalled this redemption (Dt 15:15; 2Sa 7:23). God redeemed David from all trouble (2Sam 4:9), and David prayed God would do likewise for Israel (Ps 25:22). Psalmists sought redemption from threats like death (Ps 49:7-8, 15). **Padah** once describes redemption from sin (Ps 130:7-8). Especially when parallel with **ga'al** (also meaning redeem), **padah** is translated ransom (Hos 13:14). ([HCSB Study Bible note at Deut 21:8](#))

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **padah** in Isaiah 1:27 with the verb **sozo** which means to save, to bring out safely, to preserve or rescue from natural dangers and afflictions, to keep from harm, preserve, to save from disease (Hippocrates), to save from death (as in secular Greek of one who calls upon **Isis** in the hour of death), to make whole.

**Padah** is also used figuratively with the meaning of delivering, whether in the cases of individuals (Ps 34:22<sup>[note](#)</sup>) or of the deliverance granted to Israel as a nation (Dt 9:26; 2Sa 7:23; 1Chr 17:21; Isa 29:22). It is especially associated with the deliverance from Egypt (Dt 7:8; 13:5; 24:18; Mic 6:4). In one instance it is used of redemption from sin: "redeem Israel from all his iniquities" (Ps 130:8<sup>[note](#)</sup>).

In the next use of **padah** in Isaiah, Abraham is described as one who was redeemed by Jehovah (Isa 29:22, cp Ge 15:6).

**Padah** - 51x in the OT - Ex. 13:13, 15; 21:8; 34:20; Lev. 19:20; 27:27, 29; Num. 3:46, 49, 51; 18:15ff; Deut. 7:8; 9:26; 13:5; 15:15; 21:8; 24:18; 1 Sam. 14:45; 2 Sam. 4:9; 7:23; 1 Ki. 1:29; 1 Chr. 17:21; Neh. 1:10; Job 5:20; 6:23; 33:28; Ps. 25:22; 26:11; 31:5; 34:22; 44:26; 49:7, 15; 55:18; 69:18; 71:23; 78:42; 119:134; 130:8; Isa. 1:27; 29:22; 35:10; 51:11; Jer. 15:21; 31:11; Hos. 7:13; 13:14; Mic. 6:4; Zech. 10:8

**Ironside** comments that "Then, redeemed with judgment, Zion shall be called once more **The city of righteousness, The faithful city** (Isa 1:25, 26, 27). This will be their (Israel's) final blessing as other Scriptures show us, after the long years of their dispersion (cp scattering in Ezek 20:23, 22:15, 36:19, Jas 1:1-note; regathering from dispersion in Isa 11:12, 56:8, Zeph 3:10, 11, 12, 13 = referring to the **Millennial Kingdom**) and the bitterness of the last great tribulation have come to an end.

**Repentant** (07725) (**shub/sub**) is the 12th most frequent verb in the OT (over 1000x) and conveys the basic sense of movement back to the point of departure (eg Ge 3:19, 33:19, cp reversal of the sundial in 2Ki 20:10), and in a moral/ethical sense (as in this verse) refers to the restoration of one's soul or life. There are two components inherent to the concept of repentance pictured by shuwb/sub, the first being a turning away from evil followed by a turning to that which is good. Shuwb/sub carries the idea of a radical change in one's attitude toward sin. It implies a conscious moral separation and personal decision to forsake sin and enter fellowship with God (see striking example in Jonah 3:8). Mark it down - If one continues in sin, there is no fellowship with a holy God (1Jn1:6). Before anyone can be saved, they must see the need for salvation and of a Savior. It is one thing to know you need salvation and another to know you cannot save yourself. When you see your total inability to make yourself right before God, then you recognize your desperate need for a Savior. In this passage, the **repentant ones** have recognized their need for their Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the Messiah.

**Shuwb/sub** - The 50 uses in Isaiah - NASB renders these uses in Isaiah - turn, restore, repentant, spent (KJV - turned away), return (KJV - convert), again be, turn away (esp of God's anger not turned away), turn back, return, come back, repel, gone down (Is 38:8), reverse, recalls, draw back, recall, deluded, bring back, restorer, render

Isa 1:25, 26, 27; 5:25; 6:10, 13; 9:12, 13, 17, 21; 10:4, 21, 22; 12:1; 14:27; 19:22; 21:12; 23:17; 28:6; 29:17; 31:6; 35:10; 36:9; 37:7, 8, 29, 34, 37; 38:8; 41:28; 42:22; 43:13; 44:19, 22, 25; 45:23; 46:8; 47:10; 49:5, 6; 51:11; 52:8; 55:7, 10, 11; 58:12, 13; 59:20; 63:17; 66:15.

**Her repentant ones** - This describes those in Jerusalem at the time of the **Second Coming** of Christ who exhibit genuine repentance and thus are part of the **believing remnant** of Jews. Isaiah is speaking to Judah (cp Isa 1:1 "concerning Judah and Jerusalem") in this section of Scripture so the **repentant ones** refers to saved Jews, who will enter into the **Millennial Kingdom** of the Messiah. (Related resource: metanoia - word study of repentance)

**Motyer** writes that...

'returning ones' stresses the practical side of repentance: a change of mind resulting in a new (Godward) direction of life. (Motyer, J. A. The Prophecy of Isaiah)

**Righteousness** (06666) (**tsedaqah** - see related adjective - **tsaddiq**) means blameless conduct and integrity. Basically **tsedaqah** conveys the idea of conformity to an ethical or moral standard. Men have a standard but the Biblical standard is God's righteousness, His nature and will. "The Lord is righteous (**tsaddiq**) in all his ways and holy in all his works" (Ps 145:17-note). God's righteous standard demands and provides (in Christ = the Messiah - 1Co 1:30, 2Co 5:21) the power to carry out right attitudes and right actions.

**Tsedaqah** - 150x in the OT (**Note the first use!**) -

Ge 15:6; 18:19; 30:33; Deut. 6:25; 9:4ff; 24:13; 33:21; Jdg. 5:11; 1 Sam. 12:7; 26:23; 2 Sam. 8:15; 19:28; 22:21, 25; 1 Ki. 3:6; 8:32; 10:9; 1 Chr. 18:14; 2 Chr. 6:23; 9:8; Neh. 2:20; Job 27:6; 33:26; 35:8; 37:23; Ps. 5:8; 11:7; 22:31; 24:5; 31:1; 33:5; 36:6, 10; 40:10; 51:14; 69:27; 71:2, 15f, 19, 24; 72:1, 3; 88:12; 89:16; 98:2; 99:4; 103:6, 17; 106:3, 31; 111:3; 112:3, 9; 119:40, 142; 143:1, 11; 145:7; Prov. 8:18, 20; 10:2; 11:4ff, 18f; 12:28; 13:6; 14:34; 15:9; 16:8, 12, 31; 21:3, 21; **Isa. 1:27; 5:7, 16, 23; 9:7; 10:22; 28:17; 32:16f; 33:5, 15; 45:8, 23f; 46:12f; 48:1, 18; 51:6, 8; 54:14, 17; 56:1; 57:12; 58:2; 59:9, 14, 16f; 60:17; 61:10f; 63:1; 64:6; Jer. 4:2; 9:24; 22:3, 15; 23:5; 33:15; 51:10; Ezek. 3:20; 14:14, 20; 18:5, 19ff, 24, 26f; 33:12ff, 16, 18f; 45:9; Dan. 9:7, 16, 18; Hos. 10:12; Joel 2:23; Amos 5:7, 24; 6:12; Mic. 6:5; 7:9; Zech. 8:8; Mal. 3:3; 4:2**

## EZEKIEL 20

### SEPARATION OF THE JEWS: REDEEMED FROM UNREDEEMED

**Ezekiel 20** gives details of the separation of Jews (**the redeemed... repentant ones**), those who are righteous in Christ and thus who will be allowed to enter into Messiah's glorious **Millennial Kingdom** ...

"As I live," declares the Lord GOD, "surely with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out, I shall be king over you. 34 "And I shall bring you out from the peoples (Gentiles) and gather you from the lands where you are scattered, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm and with wrath poured out 35 and I shall bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I shall enter into judgment with you face to face. 36 "As I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into judgment with you," declares the Lord GOD. 37 "And I shall make you pass under the rod, and I shall bring you into the bond of the covenant; 38 and **I shall purge from you the rebels** (cp an analogous but



distinct "purging" of the **Gentiles** at the "**Sheep and Goat**" judgment in Mt 25:31-46) and those who transgress against Me; I shall bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they will not enter the land of Israel. Thus you will know that I am the LORD. (Ezekiel 20:33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38)

**Note:** For separation of the Gentiles prior to the read Matthew 25:31-46.

**John Walvoord** has the following comments on **Ezekiel 20** as it relates to the separation of the **repentant** Jews from the unrepentant Jews...

The Scriptures record many tremendous judgments of Israel which have been already historically fulfilled and predict a future purging during the time of the **Great Tribulation** when only one third of the living Jews in the land will survive (Zech 13:8, 9). The **remnant** of Israel, however, surviving the tribulation and who are on earth at the time of the return of Christ, are the specific objects of a judgment described in **Ezekiel 20:33-38**. This passage, given in a context of predictions of judgment upon Israel, is obviously the climactic judgment of God upon that nation.

Like the predictions of judgment upon the Gentiles, this future event has its special characteristics which distinguish it from all past judgments upon the nation.

It is described as a part of a work of God in declaring Himself to be king over you (Ezek 20:33).

The judgment itself follows the final regathering of Israel predicted in Ezekiel 20:34, 35.

The judgment will take place in the specific geographic location described as the wilderness of the peoples (Ezek 20:35). Though this is not clearly to be identified with any locality, the comparison with the dealings of God with Israel on the way from Egypt to the promised land seems to indicate that the judgment takes place just outside the area given to Israel for perpetual possession. Just as Israel because of failure at Kadesh-Barnea was condemned to wander in the wilderness until all the adults except the few faithful ones died, and only then the nation could enter the promised land, so the rebels will be purged out at that future time when the millennial kingdom is established. Only those who are not rebels, that is, those who are true believers in Christ as their Messiah and Savior, will be allowed to participate in the blessing of the millennial kingdom.

The description given does not mention any resurrection from the dead and it may be assumed in view of the fact that regathering is a prerequisite to the judgment that this applies only to the living Israelites in the world at the time of the second coming. Those who are resurrected have a different judgment entirely. Like other judgments at the second coming of Christ, the judgment of works will be prominent, but as in the case of the Gentiles it will be what the works indicate rather than their intrinsic moral character. In the prophecies of Malachi a refining of the sons of Levi is predicted at the time of His coming and their particular sins are dealt with at that judgment (cf. Mal. 3:2, 3, 4,5). This conclusion is confirmed by the statements and parables of Matthew 24 and Matthew 25 which seem, with the exception of Matthew 25:31-46, to deal primarily with Gods judgments upon Israel. In each case, the works brought into view demonstrate whether the person is saved or not.

The result of the Ezekiel judgment is that the rebels are cut off and therefore do not enter the land. This is to be interpreted as a judgment of physical death, and they will be raised from the dead at the judgment of the great white throne after the millennium to participate in the destiny of all the wicked. Those who remain alive, however, are counted righteous and enter into the millennial blessing provided for them. In the words of Ezekiel, God says to them:

I will bring you into the bond of the covenant (Ezek. 20:37).

The covenant herein mentioned is no doubt the same as that revealed in Jer 31:31, 32, 33, 34. (cf Dt 30:6, Jer 32:39, 40, Ezek 11:19, 20, 16:60,61, 62-63, 36:26, 27)

The blessings of that entrance into that promised land are summarized in Jer 31:10, 11, 12, 13 as follows:

Taking in view all the divine judgments that pertain to this sequence of events, it may be concluded that as the millennium begins all the righteous are judged in one way or another and that the wicked are put to death and declared unworthy to enter the millennial kingdom. The church has previously been judged and rewarded in heaven. Living Gentiles and living Jews are judged in their respective judgments and those who are righteous are permitted to enter the millennial kingdom. The Old Testament saints and resurrected Israel are also raised from the dead and given their places of honor and privilege and are associated with Christ in His millennial government. ([The Prophetic Context of the Millennium — Part IV- The Resurrection at the Second Advent](#))

Isaiah 1:28 But **transgressors** and **sinner**s will be **crushed together**, and those who **forsake** the **LORD** will **come** to an **end**.  
(NASB: Lockman)

**English Translation of the Greek** (Septuagint): And the transgressors and the sinners shall be crushed together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be utterly consumed.

**Amplified**: But the crushing and destruction of rebels and sinners shall be together, and they who forsake the Lord shall be consumed. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV**: And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the LORD shall be consumed.

**Motyer** Literal Hebrew): But shattering for those rebelling [participle] and sinful—all at once! Those forsaking the Lord will come to an end.

**NET**: All rebellious sinners will be shattered, those who abandon the LORD will perish. ([NET Bible](#))

**NJB**: Rebels and sinners alike will be destroyed, and those who abandon Yahweh will perish. ([NJB](#))

**NLT**: But all sinners will be completely destroyed, for they refuse to come to the LORD. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Young's Literal**: And the destruction of transgressors and sinners is together, And those forsaking Jehovah are consumed.

#### But transgressors and sinners will be crushed together:

- Job 31:3; Psalms 1:6; 5:6; 37:38; 73:27; 92:9; 104:35; 125:5; Proverbs 29:1; Luke 12:45,46; 1Thessalonians 5:3; 2Th 1:8,9; 2Peter 3:7; Revelation 21:8)

Notice that there is one verse dealing with redemption (Isa 1:27) and the next four with judgment.

**NAS** note on **crushed** = Lit crushing of transgressors and sinners shall be together

**But** - Always be on the alert for the "code word" **but** which signifies a change in direction (See also **term of contrast**), in this case literally descriptive of a different destiny (**repentant ones** contrasted with **transgressors... crushed**) . **When will this be accomplished?** At the **Second Coming** of Christ both Jews and Gentiles will be judged, but in the present context Isaiah is referring to those Jews who refuse to repent (contrast "her repentant one" in Isa 1:27) before the Messiah returns to redeem captive Zion and the believing Jewish **remnant**.

**Vine** - In contrast to these converts who will enjoy the **Millennial Kingdom**, those who have followed the Antichrist will be destroyed together and consumed (Isa 1:28).

The word **transgressor** implies they see the line in the sand so to speak (marking the law) but they simply (willfully) choose to walk over the line! Oh, how we are seeing this same evil seed being spread throughout the United States of America in the year of our Lord 2016! And just as Jehovah was forced to judge Israel for her lawlessness and rebellion, so too God (if he is just and fair and true - which He is!) will be forced to judge our country. Indeed, we can see many aspects of His hand of judgment beginning to fall on our country. Oh, that God's children (not professors but His true regenerate, redeemed children) would see the signs of the times and weep and repent and cry out for Spirit wrought revival before it is too late as it was finally too late for Judah...

And the LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them **again and again** by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place but they continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, **until there was no remedy**. (2 Chronicles 36:15, 16)

**Transgressors** (06586) (**pasha** - [cognate](#) verb = **pesha'** = to transgress) is a verb conveys the fundamental idea of a breach of relationships (civil or religious) between two parties. This word describes those who break away from authority and thus trespass, apostatize, rebel, revolt, transgress.

The first use is in Solomon's prayer asking God to forgive His people who had transgressed against Him! (1Ki 8:50, cp 1Ki 12:19, 2Chr 10:19) Psalm 37:38 says "**transgressors** will be altogether destroyed; The posterity of the wicked will be cut off." After David



repented he declared "Then I will teach **transgressors** Thy ways, And sinners will be converted to Thee." (Psalm 51:13) In one of the more graphic uses of **pasha** Isaiah records "Then they shall go forth and look On the corpses of the men Who have **transgressed** against Me. For their worm shall not die, And their fire shall not be quenched; And they shall be an abhorrence to all mankind." (Isaiah 66:24). "Woe to them, for they have strayed from Me! Destruction is theirs, for they have **rebelled** against Me! I would redeem them, but they speak lies against Me." (Hosea 7:13) "Put the trumpet to your lips! Like an eagle the enemy comes against the house of the LORD, Because they have transgressed My covenant And rebelled against My law." (Hosea 8:1) In Ezekiel **pasha** is used in the description of God's judgment of the Jews who survive the **Great Tribulation** to determine who enters into the joy of **Messiah's Millennial Kingdom** and who is cast into the eternal fire where "their worm shall not die and their fire shall not be quenched!" - "And I shall purge from you the rebels and **those who transgress** against Me; I shall bring them out of the land where they sojourn, but they will not enter the land of Israel. Thus you will know that I am the LORD." (Ezekiel 20:38) Zephaniah 3:11 also alludes to this coming day of purging and separation - "In that day you will feel no shame Because of all your deeds By which **you have rebelled** (**pasha**; Lxx = asebeo = living without regard for God) against Me; For then I will remove from your midst Your proud, exulting ones, And you will never again be haughty On My holy mountain." For those Jews who repent and return to Messiah, all is not lost, for God makes them a promise (to be fulfilled at the return of the Messiah) - "And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, and I will pardon all their iniquities by which they have sinned against Me, and by which **they have transgressed** against Me." (Jeremiah 33:8-note, cp Paul's parallel phrase = "All Israel will be saved." Romans 11:26-note). May all (Jew and Gentile) who have not yet heeded the call to believe in Yeshua and be saved hear and heed the poignant plea in Hosea 14:9 "Whoever is wise, let him understand these things; Whoever is discerning, let him know them. For the ways of the LORD are right, And the righteous will walk in them, But **transgressors** (**pasha**; Lxx = [asebes](#) = godless, violating the norms for a proper relationship with God) will stumble in them.

**Lxx** translates **pasha** with the adjective **anomos** = literally "without law." Having no law, not subject to law, not obeying the moral and civil law, lawless, wicked, godless. **Lawless** = Not subject to law; unrestrained by law, disobedient to the law, contrary to or heedless of the law, uncontrolled; unbridled. **Synonyms of lawless** = anarchic, chaotic, disorderly, insubordinate, insurgent, mutinous, rebellious, reckless, riotous, seditious, ungoverned, unrestrained, unruly, wild

**Pasha** - 37 verses - Usage: been in rebellion(1), committed(1), offended(1), rebel(1), rebelled(6), rebellion(1), revolted(7), transgress(3), transgressed(10), transgressing(1), transgression(1), transgressors(8).

1 Ki. 8:50; 12:19; 2 Ki. 1:1; 3:5, 7; 8:20, 22; 2 Chr. 10:19; 21:8, 10; Ezr. 10:13; Ps. 37:38; 51:13; Prov. 18:19; 28:21; Isa. 1:2, 28; 43:27; 46:8; 48:8; 53:12; 59:13; 66:24; Jer. 2:8, 29; 3:13; 33:8; Lam. 3:42; Ezek. 2:3; 18:31; 20:38; Dan. 8:23; Hos. 7:13; 8:1; 14:9; Amos 4:4; Zeph. 3:11

**Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary - Pasha** - Found forty-one times in the OT, **pāshaʿ** always occurs in the Qal stem with the exception of Prov. 18:19, "an offended brother" (Niphal stem). There are no occurrences in the Pentateuch. This root is attested in Aramaic and Middle Hebrew. A Syriac cognate means "to be rigid," "to be terrified." The main thrust of the root is that of relationships and their being broken. These may be in the civil or religious arena, between individuals or parties, and may involve the breaking of alliances between nations. A man will break an agreement over a small thing, even "a piece of bread" (Prov. 28:21). An offended brother can be more unyielding than a fortified city (Prov. 18:19). While the rebellious will falter, this particular trait does not belong to God whose ways are right (Hos. 14:9). The secular concept is found in 1 and 2 Kings and the parallel accounts in 2 Chronicles. Ten times **pāshaʿ** is used with reference to peoples (the civil context) and nations rebelling against an overlord. Displeased with Rehoboam's leaders, the northern tribes broke away (1 Ki. 12:19; 2 Chr. 10:19). Moab revolted against Israel (2 Ki. 1:1; 3:5, 7). During the days of Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, both Edom and Libnah rebelled, freeing themselves of Judah's rule (2 Ki. 8:20, 22; 2 Chr. 21:8, 10). With the expression "from under the dominion of" a state of open-ended rebellion is deemed to exist (2 Chr. 21:8, 10). Three times **pāshaʿ** is followed by the preposition of motion *be*, "in," "against" (2 Ki. 1:1; 3:5, 7). Most frequently, **pāshaʿ** is directed against Yahweh and his law (twenty-eight times). In its first occurrence, it carries the meaning of rebellion in Solomon's dedicatory prayer upon completion of the Temple, "And forgive... all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against you" (1 Ki. 8:50). In four instances, **pāshaʿ** is used similarly to specify transgressing against Yahweh (Isa. 1:28; Jer. 2:29; 3:13; Hos. 7:13). Additional verses refer to **pāshaʿ** as being directed against God (Isa. 46:8; Amos 4:4). God's response ultimately is judgment, "The transgressors shall be destroyed together" (Ps. 37:38). While such is the case for the unrepentant, God's desire is that all be saved (Jer. 33:8). Through his Servant and his being reckoned among the transgressors, a means of reconciliation has been made available (Isa. 53:12). For those who respond in faith, He will bear their sins and intercede for them.

**Crushed** ([07667](#)) (**sheber**) literally means breaking into shivers. In this passage it does not mean to be crushed literally (although see Rev 16:21-note in the time of **Jacob's distress or trouble**), but is used as a figure of speech to depict the utter destruction (not annihilation) of the unrepentant Jew. Many of the uses of **sheber** in the prophets refer to the ruin or destruction of either the northern 10 tribes (Judah) or the southern 2 tribes (Judah). In Jdg 7:15 **sheber** refers to the interpretation of a dream (i.e., its breaking, or decoding).

Sheber is translated in the Septuagint with the verb *suntribo* meaning literally to rub together and hence to smash , crush, break to pieces (eg Mk 14:3) and is used to describe the fate of Satan (Ro 16:20-note ) which makes it a fitting description of his "children" here labeled "transgressors and sinners!" Dear reader, have you truly believed the Gospel, that you might be saved from the "guttermost" (*suntribo*) to the uttermost (cf Heb 7:25-note)? If not, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved! (Acts 16:31)

**Sheber** - 38v in the OT -

Lv 21:19; 24:20; Jdg. 7:15; Job 41:25; Ps. 60:2; Pr 15:4; 16:18; 17:19; 18:12; **Isa. 1:28; 15:5; 30:13, 14, 26; 51:19; 59:7; 60:18**; Jer. 4:6, 20; 6:1, 14; 8:11, 21; 10:19; 30:15; 48:3, 5; 50:22; 51:54; Lam. 2:11, 13; 3:47f; 4:10; Ezek 32:9; Amos 6:6; Nah. 3:19; Zeph. 1:10

The **NAS** renders **sheber** as breaches(1), breakdown(1), broken(2), brokenness(3), collapse(1), crash(1), crashing(1), crushed(1), crushes(1), destruction(17), disaster(2), fracture(3), injury(m)(2), interpretation(1), ruin(3), smashing(1)

#### and those who forsake the LORD will come to an end

- Isa 30:13; 50:11; 65:11; 1Samuel 12:25; 1Kings 9:6, 7, 8, 9; 1Chr 28:9; Zeph 1:4, 5, 6)

**Forsake** (leave) ([05800](#)) ('**azab**) basically means depart from something or leave. For example in Ge2:24 "man**shall leave** his father and his mother" and in Ps 22:1 "My God, my God, why hast Thou **forsaken** me?"

**Motyer** writes that the words **transgressors, sinners, forsake** "in turn speak of an unruly will, a life short of the ideal and an abandoned relationship. The verse denotes an act from outside (be broken) terminating the sinner's course and, at the same time, a petering out (perish/'come to an end') of internal resources.

Through **Joshua** near the end of his life and ministry God gave Judah ample advanced warning that...

If you **forsake** the LORD and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you after He has done good to you. (Joshua 24:20).

**Moses** had uttered a clear prophecy that Judah would break God's covenant and forsake Him.

And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers; and this people will arise and play the harlot with the strange gods of the land, into the midst of which they are going, and will **forsake** Me and break My covenant which I have made with them.<sup>17</sup> "Then My anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will **forsake** them and hide My face from them, and they shall be consumed, and many evils and troubles shall come upon them; so that they will say in that day, 'Is it not because our God is not among us that these evils have come upon us?' (Dt 31:16, 17)

The prophets during the time of the kings also used '**azab** to describe Judah breaking God's covenant and turning to idols...

"And many nations will pass by this city; and they will say to one another, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this great city? (Jerusalem) 9 "Then they will answer, 'Because they **forsook** the covenant of the LORD their God and bowed down to other gods and served them.'" (Jer 22:8, 9)

"But they rebelled against Me and were not willing to listen to Me; they did not cast away the detestable things of their eyes, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I resolved to pour out My wrath on them, to accomplish My anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt. (Ezek 20:8)

In **Judges** we see previews of "coming attractions" describing what (and why) God would do to Judah if she**forsook** Him writing that...

they **forsook** the LORD, the God of their fathers, Who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them; thus they provoked the LORD to anger. 13 So they **forsook** the LORD and served Baal and the Ashtaroath. 14 And the anger of the LORD burned against Judah, and He gave them into the hands of plunderers who plundered them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies around them, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. 15 Wherever they went, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had spoken and as the LORD had sworn to them, so that they were severely distressed. (Judges 2:12, 13, 14, 15)

**Come to an end** - They will perish or be consumed. This is not annihilation of their souls but everlasting torment first in Hades (Sheol) which will then be cast into the Lake of Fire.

The Septuagint translates the Hebrew verb **kalah** with the verb **sunteleo** which pictures bringing something to a complete end or fulfillment. The idea of sunteleo is to carry out, to finish, to execute, to put an end to something, in this case the physical existence of the **transgressors and sinners**.

Isaiah 1:29 **Surely** you will be **ashamed** of the **oaks which** you have **desired**, and you will be **embarrassed** at the **gardens which** you have **chosen**. (NASB: Lockman)

**English Translation of the Greek** (Septuagint): For they shall be ashamed of their idols, which they delighted in, and they are made ashamed of the gardens which they coveted.

**Amplified**: For you will be ashamed [of the folly and degradation] of the oak or terebinth trees in which you found [idolatrous] pleasure, and you will blush with shame for the [idolatrous worship which you practice in the passion-inflaming] gardens which you have chosen. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV**: For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen.

**NET**: Indeed, they will be ashamed of the sacred trees you find so desirable; you will be embarrassed because of the sacred orchards where you choose to worship. ([NET Bible](#))

**NJB**: How ashamed you will be of the terebinths which gave you such delight; and how you will blush for the gardens which you chose! ([NJB](#))

**NLT**: Shame will cover you when you think of the times you offered sacrifices to idols in your groves of sacred oaks. You will blush when you think of all the sins you committed in your sacred gardens. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Young's Literal**: For men are ashamed because of the oaks That ye have desired, And ye are confounded because of the gardens That ye have chosen.

#### Surely you will be ashamed of the oaks which you have desired

- Isa 30:22; 31:7; 45:16; Ezekiel 16:63; 36:31; Hosea 14:3,8; Romans 6:21
- Oaks - Isa 57:5; Ezekiel 6:13; Hosea 4:13)

**Surely** (**kiy**) means because or for (so rendered by Amplified, KJV, Young's Literal) and introduces the reason they **will come to an end** (Is 1:28)

**Motyer** writes that...

those who live in the days of the shattering (28) will reap what their forebears have sown. The fundamental cause of disaster is false, inadequate religion. Oaks and gardens are the symbols of the life of 'nature' and of the fertility gods.

**Ashamed** ([0954](#)) (**bosh**) means to be put to shame and describes both an external and an internal or subjective experience which includes a feeling shame (painful emotion caused by consciousness of guilt, shortcoming, or impropriety), guilt, or disgrace.

**Oaks** ([0352](#)) (**ayil**) in this context refers to an oak or [terebinth tree](#) (or [Terebinth](#)), which was used in the sensuous, licentious, abominable, sexually charged atmosphere associated with pagan idol worship (cp Hos 4:13, Ezek 6:13-note, Ezek 16:16-note; Ezek 16:25-note; referred to as "high place" or Bamah = Ezek 20:28, 29, Jer 2:20, 3:6, 13, etc), especially the so called fertility cults. We shall avoid speaking of the abominable acts they performed as "acts of worship" to their so-called (demonic) gods (cp Lv 17:7, Dt 32:17, Ps 106:37, 1Co 10:20, 21).

It is interesting to note that the **Septuagint** (**LXX**) translates the Hebrew noun **ayil** or **oaks** with the Greek noun **eidolon** (word study), which is defined as a cultic image or representation of an alleged transcendent being (i.e., an idol). The idea behind eidolon in secular use (as by Homer) was that of form, image, shadow or phantom and in the Septuagint is used to express the merging of

two ideas, (1) that the deities of the nations have no reality, and (2) consequently they are truly the products of fantasy; and are manufactured by human hands. So clearly the Jewish translators saw a clear association between the **oaks** and **idolatry**. (cp use of **eidolon** for "household idols" in Ge 31:19 and for "idol" in Ex 20:4, Lv 19:4) (**Here are all the uses of eidolon in Isaiah** - Isa. 1:29; 10:11; 27:9; 30:22; 37:19; 41:28; 48:5; 57:5;)

**TDNT** adds this comment on **eidolon** - The **LXX** uses the term in a derogatory sense for images of the gods, or idols. In this regard it is referring polemically to the deities themselves, which are empty, and which thus express the unreality of pagan belief. The main point is not that another god is worshipped but that this is an unreal god. The Greeks do not follow this usage, so that the **LXX** here coins a new expression out of a familiar term. ([Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Eerdmans](#))

**Isaiah** used **oaks** in a similar indictment later asking...

Who (speaking to Israel who were "children of rebellion, offspring of deceit" Is 57:4) **inflame** (chamam/hamam = become heated, figuratively in this context it speaks of arousing their sexual desires!) yourselves among the **oaks** (Lxx = **eidolon**), under every luxuriant (racanan = green, flourishing, healthy looking, "full of life", places where sensual pagan, idolatrous fertility rites were practiced) tree, who slaughter the children in the ravines (alluding to Israel's practice of child sacrifice, which occurred even toward the end of "wise" King Solomon's reign, and which in part led God to judge him and Israel and divide the nation in 931BC - see 1Ki 11:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13), under the clefts (the fissures in the rocks and cliffs did not hid the abominable practice of child sacrifice! cp Pr 5:21-note, 15:3) of the crags? (Isaiah 57:5, cp Is 57:6,7)

**NET rendering of Is 57:5** - you who practice ritual sex under the oaks and every green tree, who slaughter children near the streams under the rocky overhangs.

I love what God declares even in the face of man's perversion of His beautiful creation (**the oaks**), Isaiah using **the same Hebrew word for oak** writing...

To grant those who mourn in Zion, giving them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness (oil symbolizing joy) instead of mourning, the mantle of praise (a garment symbolizing praise) instead of a spirit of fainting (discouragement). So they will be called **oaks (ayil) of righteousness**, the planting of the LORD (trees planted by Jehovah), that He may be glorified (that might reveal His splendor, cp Mt 5:16-note). (Isaiah 61:3, context = Messiah [see other Messianic Prophecies] is speaking in Isa 61:1, 2, 4, 5 - observe that the ministry of Messiah's first coming is described in Is 61:1,2a and His **Second Coming** in the Is 61:2b beginning with "the day of vengeance" - so we see in this verse two juxtaposed Messianic prophecies separated by >2000 years!)

**Ashamed of the oaks** - **McGee** notes that "This has to do with idolatry because the idols were placed under the oak trees, and a garden was planted around them."

The discerning reader must be aware that many writers take a non-literal approach to interpretation of Isaiah, and this includes authors who are generally literal such as **W E Vine**. For example on Isaiah 1:29, **Vine** states that...

the **oaks** which they have desired represent the mighty ones of earth, the Man of Sin (he is referring to the Antichrist) and the leaders under him.

Vine is interpreting the literal oaks symbolically and when one begins to take that approach, there are few rules to limit one's imagination. Such an "imaginative" approach is not only dangerously inaccurate but can lead to inappropriate application and thus must be assiduously avoided.

In regard to **oaks** and **gardens**, Jamieson (I think correctly) writes that

Others translate the "**terebinth**" or "**turpentine tree**." Groves were dedicated to idols. Our Druids took their name from the Greek for "oaks." A sacred tree is often found in Assyrian sculpture; symbol of the starry hosts, Saba. **Gardens** -- planted enclosures for idolatry; the counterpart of the garden of Eden

**The discerning reader must be aware that many writers take a non-literal approach to interpretation of Isaiah**, and this can even include authors who otherwise generally espouse a literal view of Scripture interpretation such as the well known lexicographer ([definition](#)) **W E Vine**. For example on Isaiah 1:29, **Vine** states that...

the **oaks** which they have desired represent the mighty ones of earth, the Man of Sin (he is referring to the Antichrist) and the leaders under him.

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imagination. Such an "imaginative" approach is not only dangerously inaccurate but can lead to inappropriate application and thus must be assiduously avoided.

**Desired** (02530) (**chamad/hamad**) means to take pleasure in something, and even to lust for it or covet it. This verb focuses not on an external act but on an internal mental activity behind the act, the motivation for it.

The idea is that Judah passionately desired these oaks and so we might say they were some of the first "tree huggers"! Clearly their intense desire was not purely horticultural but was in fact related to pursuit of the forbidden (by God, cp Dt 7:25, 26, 12:2, 3, 4, 5, 18:9, 12, Lv 18:24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, Josh 23:12, 13, finally note how Solomon was "snared" - 1Ki 11:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13) illicit practices associated sexual fertility rites that were well known among the pagan idol worshippers. **Chamad/hamad** is used again in Isaiah 44:9 All who form idols are nothing; the things in which they delight are worthless. Their witnesses cannot see; they recognize nothing, so they are put to shame. (NET Bible)

David tells us what we should truly desire - "They (Ps 19:9 "judgments of the LORD") are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb." (Psalm 19:10+) The psalmist speaks of God's desire "Why do you look with envy, O mountains with many peaks, At the mountain which God has **desired (chamad)** for His abode? Surely, the LORD will dwell there forever. (referring to Jerusalem) (Psalm 68:16)

**Lxx** translates **chamad** in this verse with the verb **boulomai** which is used to describe a person desiring something and can include the nuance of deliberating and deciding something. It seems in the present passage they deliberated over whether to obey the living and true God and to their detriment determined to follow dead idols! Does this not sound like Paul's description of the godless pagans in Romans 1?

For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them. (Romans 1:21-24-note)

The first use of **chamad** is positive while the second is negative - Genesis 2:9 And out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is **pleasing** to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Genesis 3:6+ When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was **desirable (chamad)** to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

**Chamad/hamad**- 20v in the OT (Observe especially uses in **bold font**) - attracted(m)(1), covet(6), coveted(1), delight(1), desirable(2), desire(1), desired(2), desires(2), pleasing(1), precious(2), precious things(1), took delight(1). Gen. 2:9; **Ge 3:6; Ex 20:17**; Ex 34:24; **Deut. 5:21; Dt 7:25; Jos. 7:21**; Job 20:20; **What should we "covet"? Ps. 19:10**; Ps 39:11; 68:16; Prov. 1:22; Pr 6:25; Pr 12:12; 21:20; Song 2:3; Isa. 1:29; 44:9; 53:2; Mic. 2:2

**Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary - Chāmadh** has a variety of nuances. Stemming from the notion of desire and physical beauty the verb has the basic meanings of "to desire" and "to take pleasure in." Desire is driven by physical attraction (hence the plethora of derived nouns which are connected with beauty). The objects of desire can be either inherently evil (e.g., idols, Isa. 44:9; women outside of legally sanctioned relationships, Prov. 6:25), or they can be morally neutral (e.g., food, Dan. 10:3). The motives of the subject often determine whether desires are pleasing in the eyes of Yahweh. Naturally, the desires of the wicked (Prov. 12:12) or the godless (Job 20:5, 20) are not in accord with the desires of Yahweh. Desires can cause sinful acts, such as Achan's violation of the cherem (sacred ban) concerning the booty of Jericho (Josh. 7:21). The first sin of humanity entered because Eve "desired" the fruit which was "pleasant" to look at (Gen. 3) but was forbidden. Desires which are in accord with the desires of Yahweh stand in contrast with the normal sense of physical attractiveness. Right desire is deeper than mere sensory data. Indeed, the suffering Servant is not physically desirable (Isa. 53:2).

**and you will be embarrassed at the gardens which you have chosen**

- Isa 65:3; 66:17; Jer 2:20; 3:6

**Embarrassed** (02659 - תפר - **abashed, ashamed, confounded, disgraced, disgraceful**) (**haper/chapher**) describes a state of disgrace, humiliation or of self-conscious distress. These men and women Isaiah describes looked away from God and unto idols



rather than away from idols and unto God (cp 1Co 10:6, 11) as in the following psalm...

Psalms 34:5 They looked to Him and were radiant, and their faces shall never be **ashamed** (haper).

**Spurgeon:** The psalmist avows that his case was not at all peculiar, it was matched in the lives of all the faithful; they too, each one of them on looking to their Lord were brightened up, their faces began to shine, their spirits were uplifted. What a means of blessing one look at the Lord may be! (cp Isa 45:22KJV, Isa 45:22, cp Heb 12:2-note, Col 3:1-note, Col 3:2-note) There is life, light, liberty, love, everything in fact, in a look at the crucified One. Never did a sore heart look in vain to the good Physician; never a dying soul turned its darkening eye to the brazen serpent to find its virtue gone (cp Nu 21:5, 6, 7, 8, 9, Jn 3:14, 15). **And their faces were not ashamed.** Their faces were covered with joy but not with blushes. He who trusts in God has no need to be ashamed of his confidence, time and eternity will both justify his reliance.

The more we can think upon our Lord, and the less upon ourselves, the better. Looking to him, as he is seated upon the right hand of the throne of God, will keep our heads, and especially our hearts, steady when going through the deep waters of affliction. Often have I thought of this when crossing the water opposite the old place of Langholm. I found, when I looked down on the water, I got dizzy; I therefore fixed my eyes upon a steady object on the other side, and got comfortably through. David Smith, 1792-1867.

**Haper/chapter** - 15v in the OT - Job 6:20; Ps. 34:5; 35:26; 70:2; 71:24; 83:17; Prov. 13:5; 19:26; Isa. 1:29; 24:23; 33:9; 54:4; Jer. 15:9; 50:12; Mic. 3:7. **NAS** renders it as abashed(1), ashamed(1), confounded(1), disgraced(1), disgraceful(1), embarrassed(2), humiliated(6), shamed(1), shamefully(1).

**Guzik** comments...

It is good to be ashamed and embarrassed over sin. There is something wrong with us when we are shameless or beyond embarrassment. God promised He would give Judah the gift of shame and embarrassment over sin again.

**Gardens** - These were not place authorized by God for sacrifices.

Later in Isaiah God again refers to the gardens, describing His rebellious people as...

**Isa 65:3, 4** A people who continually provoke (kacas = to provoke to anger as does idolatry - 1Ki 14:9, Ps 106:29, Ezek 8:17) Me to My face, **offering sacrifices in gardens** and burning incense on bricks, who sit among graves (commune with the dead) and spend the night in secret places; who eat swine's flesh, and the broth of unclean meat is in their pots ... **Isa 66:17** Those who sanctify and purify themselves **to go to the gardens**, following one in the center, who eat swine's flesh, detestable things, and mice, Shall come to an end altogether," declares the LORD.

Clearly the **gardens** (the creation) were places which Judah had examined carefully (see word study on bahar/bachar below) and chosen over their Creator as places in which they would commit gross, vulgar, obscene idolatry.

## LOOKING... ... CHOOSING

**Chosen** (0977 - בָּחַר - [choice](#), [choicest](#), [choose](#), [chooses](#), [choosing](#), [chose](#)) (**bahar/bachar**) is an interesting verb for it links looking with choosing. In other words, the picture conveyed by **bahar** is that the inhabitants of Judah examined the situation (in context they took a keen look at idolatry and the associated debauched, sensual idolatrous lifestyle!) and made their choice for the lifeless, licentious idols instead of the majestic, infinite, living God of all Creation. In other words their rejection of the Creator and choice for the creation (idols - cp Ro 1:25-note) was not simply an arbitrary whim but involved a thorough examination! **Bahar/bachar** also conveys the sense that what they chose is what they desired or delighted in, and the Greek verb **epithumeo** (see word study) used in the Septuagint to translate **bahar/bachar** substantiates this interpretation. **Epithumeo** (**epi** = upon + **thumos** = passion, "covet" in Ro 7:7-note, Ro 13:9-note) and pictures a strong impulse **toward** something. Judah after looking carefully at idolatry developed a strong desire for the unholy over the holy!

Be careful what you look at beloved! NT believers dare not miss this warning (1Cor 10:6,11) - - When we begin to examine closely (gazing rather than glancing!) what the world has to offer and delight in and desire for it more than what Jehovah has to offer (forgetting truths like Gal 6:14, 1Jn 2:15, 16, 17, Jas 4:4!), we are on fast track to coveting evil and will reap what we sow (Gal 6:7, 8)! Let us all seek diligently to set a guard over our eyes (Ps 101:3-note) and heart (Pr 4:23-note) when we see what happened to Judah, lest we think we stand. Instead we must continually take heed that we do not fall into the same deadly temptation and trap!



## A BRIEF EXCURSUS ON... IDOLATRY & IMMORALITY

In Paul's divinely inspired "pattern of moral devolution" in Romans 1 (see below), notice how suppression (which implies they know the truth about God but choose to hold it down!) and rejection of the knowledge of the true God naturally "devolves" into worship of false gods and how this false worship in turn is intimately associated with the practice of sexual immorality in all forms!

Paul's analysis below makes it quite clear that **idolatry** is almost always associated with **immorality** ...

Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures (idolatry). 24 Therefore God gave them over (paradidomi [word study] = a judicial term in Greek, used for handing over a prisoner to his deserved sentence. When men consistently abandon God, He abandons them to their own desires! Woe!) in the lusts of their hearts to impurity (a general term describing decaying matter, like the contents of a grave and in context speaks of sexual immorality), that their bodies might be dishonored among them. 25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie (an idol is a lie, a false representation of God), and worshiped and served the creature (idolatry) rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. 26 For this reason God gave them over (God's judicial sentence because of their idolatry was to deliverer them over to the power of) to degrading (dishonoring, disgracing, shameful) passions (which resulted in erotic activity with members of their own sex); for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, 27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error." (Romans 1:22-27)(see **notes** beginning with Ro 1:22)

**Comment:** When men suppress the truth about God and fail to give thanks to Him and honor Him (Ro 1:18, 19-note, Ro 1:20, 21-note), they jettison one of their greatest "protectants" against sexual immorality -**knowing God**. Notice the same spiritual dynamic in 1Thessalonians 4:5 (note) where the Gentiles are "defined" as those who **do not know God** and this failure to know God (cp Jn 17:3) is linked by Paul with their practice of **lustful passions**. It follows that the way to defeat **lustful passions** is to **know God**. In 2Cor 11:3 the deception by the devil is to draw men's thoughts (the battle is in our mind, to lead astray our minds where **mind** = noema [word study], cp Ep 6:16-note, Ep 6:17-note, 2Cor 10:3, 4, 5-note) away from the simplicity (single-mindedness) and purity of devotion to Christ. Again it follows that the best defense against being led astray (by the devil or by the lust of our flesh, James 1:14, 15-note) is to maintain a single hearted (sincere), pure devotion to Christ (i.e., **know God**!) Sheep are always safest when they remain close to the Chief Shepherd.

In summary, the best defense in our life-long fight (cp 1Pe 2:11-see note -- Note also that "wage war" = present tense = continually; 1Ti 1:18, 6:12, 2Ti 2:22-note, Paul's life shows victory is possible! = 2Ti 4:7-note) against the pull of our fallen flesh to gratify ourselves through illicit sexual activity (of whatever variety), is to actively seek to cultivate our relationship with the Chief Shepherd (Mt 6:33-note, Ps 37:4-note, Col 3:1-note, Col 3:2-note, Ps 43:4-note; Isa 58:14). This same "pattern" is summarized in Galatians 5:16 [note] where we first choose to continually obey Paul's command, moment by moment surrendering our self will (deny self Mk 8:34, Lk 9:23) to the control and empowerment by the Spirit of Christ (Php 2:13-note, Ezek 36:27 = note God's provision of power, and our necessary, now possible response), Who then enables us to not gratify the lusts of the flesh. This description is nothing short of the "victorious Christian life."

So let me get practical. How is your quiet time? That is, are you sitting at the feet of the Shepherd (Lk 10:39, 40)? Remember as our Lord said, really only one thing is necessary (Lk 10:41, 42). When we are doing the "good part" (Lk 10:42), daily seated at our Lord's feet, we will be filled with His Word, which the Spirit of Christ uses to renew our mind, control our thoughts and empower our walk. Compare the effects of continually letting the Word dwell richly within us Col 3:16, 17-note with the manifestations associated with letting the Spirit control us in Eph 5:18, 19, 20-note - Upshot? Let the living Word live in you (eating it, obeying it) and you will be empowered to live in the Spirit!

Are you daily taking in the living word of God (cp Mt 4:4, 1Pe 2:2-note, Acts 20:32) and obeying the word (James 1:22-note; James 1:25-note), so that you are growing in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2Pe 3:18-note)? If you are, then the things of this world, including the lusts of the passing pleasures (Heb 11:25-note, 1Jn 2:17) of this world will be increasingly growing "strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace" ([Play this great old hymn](#))."

**Let's Review...** Knowledge of the one true and living God (Jn 17:3) and growing intimacy with the Lord Jesus Christ (2Cor 11:3) and His Spirit (Gal 5:16-notes) in daily quiet times of worshipful fellowship are the BEST preventative measures (and cure) for those bound with the cords of the sin (Pr 5:22-note) of (in bondage to) sexual immorality and better than any of the Christian books or programs that are flooding the marketplace! Let us return to the "ancient paths" (Je 6:16, 18:15, 2:13, cp Pr 28:13, 1Jn 1:9, Acts 3:19, 20), the "highway of holiness" (Is 35:8) and as Christian men begin to experience a freedom in this area that heretofore we

never even thought was possible in light of the pervasive permeation of American culture by idolatry and immorality! Hallelujah. Amen!

**Isaiah 1:30** For you will be like an [oak](#) whose [leaf fades away](#) or as a [garden](#) that [has no water](#). (NASB: Lockman)

**English Translation of the Greek** (Septuagint): For they shall be as a turpentine tree that has cast its leaves, and as a garden that has no water.

**Amplified:** For you shall be like an oak or terebinth whose leaf withers, and like a garden that has no water. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV:** For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water.

**NET:** For you will be like a tree whose leaves wither, like an orchard that is unwatered. ([NET Bible](#))

**NJB:** For you will be like a terebinth with faded leaves, like a garden without water; ([NJB](#))

**NLT:** You will wither away like an oak or garden without water. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Young's Literal:** For ye are as an oak whose leaf is fading, And as a garden that hath no water.

**For you will be like an oak whose leaf fades away or as a garden that has no water.**

- Isa 5:6; Jeremiah 17:5,6; Ezekiel 17:9,10,24; Matthew 21:19)
- Isa 58:11; Jer 31:12; Ezekiel 31:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17,18

**An oak** (or [Terebinth](#)) **whose leaf fades away** - The Hebrew word for **oak** here is different than oak in Is 1:30, but I cannot determine any specific significance for use of different Hebrew words. Contrast the case of the godly, whose "leaf shall not wither" (Psalm 1:3-note), for here the picture is that of a leaf that once alive is now dying.

**Jamieson** writes that...

Ye shall be like the "oaks," the object of your "desire" (Isa 1:29). People become like the gods they worship; they never rise above their level (Ps 135:18). So men's sins become their own scourges (Jer 2:9). The leaf of the idol oak fades by a law of necessary consequence, having no living sap or "water" from God. So "garden" answers to "gardens" (Isa 1:29).

Judah's shameful practices of idol worship amongst the oaks will wither away like a fading oak leaf or like a dry unwatered garden.

**Motyer** writes that Isaiah's

insistence in Isa 1:10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 that religion must have moral commitment is amplified here by the implication that true religion is more than human preference and satisfaction (Isa 1:29) and reaches a source of life not subject to earth's withering and waning (Isa 1:30)... (idolatrous, false) religion cannot keep its promises; it is 'a tree with fading leaves'. False religion has no inherent life. With a garden without water the picture turns to one of dependence upon an outside source of life—water. False religion has no external reality to nourish it. It is not a real contact with the divine. (Motyer, J. A.. The Prophecy of Isaiah : An introduction & Commentary. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press. 1993)

**Isaiah 1:31** The [strong man](#) will [become tinder](#), His [work](#) also a [spark](#). Thus they shall [both burn together](#) and [there](#) will be [none](#) to [quench](#) them (NASB: Lockman)

**English Translation of the Greek** (Septuagint): And their strength shall be as a thread of tow, and their works as sparks, and the transgressors and the sinners shall be burnt up together, and there shall be none to quench them.

**Amplified:** And the strong shall become like tow and become tinder, and his work like a spark, and they shall both burn together, with none to quench them. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV:** And the strong shall be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them.

**NET:** The powerful will be like a thread of yarn, their deeds like a spark; both will burn together, and no one will put out the fire. ([NET Bible](#))

**NJB:** the strong will become like tinder, his work like the spark; both will go up in flames together, with no one to put them out. ([NJB](#))

**NLT:** The strongest among you will disappear like burning straw. Your evil deeds are the spark that will set the straw on fire, and no one will be able to put it out. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Young's Literal:** And the strong hath been for tow, And his work for a spark, And burned have both of them together, And there is none quenching!

**The strong man will become tinder, his work also a spark. Thus they shall both burn together and there will be none to quench them:**

- Strong - Ezekiel 32:21
- Tinder - Isa 27:4; 43:17; 50:11; Judges 15:14; Revelation 6:14, 15, 16, 17
- His work - Isa 34:9,10; 66:24; Ezekiel 20:47,48; Malachi 4:1; Matthew 3:10; Mark 9:43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49; Revelation 14:10,11; 19:20; 20:10

**The strong man will become tinder** - In the context he is speaking of Jews who shun Jehovah and yet still consider themselves "strong". By way of application, this verse emphasizes a prophetic principle and promise of the future expectation (certainty) for all men and women who rebel against God and His Christ.

**Strong** ([02634](#) - [jbn](#) - [strong, strong man](#)) (**hason/chacon**; Lxx = ischus = speaks of ability or capability to function effectively) describes one who is mighty and is used only one other time in the OT in the context of God destroying godless, pagan, idol worshipers, Amos recording God's declaration...

Yet it was I Who destroyed (Hebrew word depicts usually a rather sudden catastrophe such as warfare or a mass killing) the Amorite before them, though his height was like the height of cedars and he was **strong** (hason/chacon; Lxx = ischuros = mighty, robust) as the oaks; I even destroyed his fruit above and his root below. (**Root to fruit** speaks of utter, complete destruction, even the Amorite's "accomplishments" were destroyed, as will be all the "accomplishment" of godless, proud men and women!) (Amos 2:9 - note that even in the midst of wrath God remembers mercy - Amos 5:6, 7!)

**Man... his work** - This speaks of complete obliteration of the pride of rebellious men (who may appear strong in their own eyes or the eyes of others) and their "proud" **work**! Proud men always seek to make a name for themselves by their **work**, but God says those very works would be a spark (that sets aflame).

**Will become tinder** (05296) (**necoret**) is string or **tow** (KJV), which was a weak rope made of flax or hemp, and thus describes a material that was easy to burn when ignited. In context Isaiah is speaking metaphorically of those who considered themselves and their human works to be **strong**. Isaiah prophesies that both would go up in a proverbial puff of smoke. The fire in context metaphorically pictures God's wrath, although in ancient times defeated cities were also literally burned. The point is that these godless ones would be both the fuel and the cause of the fire!

**Motyer** comments that "tinder and spark, (is) a deadly, combustible combination which illustrates the self-destructiveness of false theology and religion (Motyer, J. A.. The Prophecy of Isaiah : An introduction & Commentary. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press. 1993)

It is notable that God's holy, just and righteous judgment is often compared with **fire** - Ps 79:5; 89:46; Je 21:12; 23:29; La 2:4; Nah 1:6; Jas 5:3. Note how God's **wrath** is frequently compared to **fire** (a simile or term of comparison) for fire destroys, purifies, and brings about lasting sequelae.

Notice that Jeremiah records that even in the midst of predicted **destruction**, God remembers and graciously offers **mercy** to guilty sinners (cp Is 1:16, 17, 18)

**Circumcise** (a command - the idea is that one must surrender their will to God and allow his or her stubborn, godless, rebellious, prideful heart to be spiritually circumcised by God's Spirit - this verse is clearly referring to

salvation - which from other passages such as Ge 15:6 is entered into by personal saving faith in Messiah, just as in the New Testament) yourselves to the LORD and remove the foreskins of your heart (outward ritual must be replaced inward change, a change only God can bring), Men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, **lest My wrath go forth like fire** and burn with none to quench it, because of the evil of your deeds. (Jeremiah 4:4)

**Comment:** Jeremiah is calling for his hearers open their spiritual ears and to repent and return to Jehovah, for circumcision of one's heart is a supernatural work of God as explained in Romans 2:28, 29 (notes, compare Col 2:11, 12 - note). This prophetic warning was partially fulfilled in Babylon's destruction and burning of Jerusalem, but those fires eventually were extinguished, so the more complete fulfillment must speak of a future pouring out of the wrath of God, as seen in the Great Tribulation and finally in the Lake of fire.

See Excursus on Circumcision of the Heart

**Fire** even presents the picture of God's judgement of believer's works (not their sins which were judged once for all on the Cross) at the Judgment seat of Christ (bema seat)...

**1Cor 3:15** If any man's work is burned up (cp 1Co 13:11, 12, 13, 14 - note the only "foundation" that endures God's purifying fires), he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire. (Compare 2Co 5:9, 10, even our motives will be judged! - 1Cor 4:5)

**McGee** notes that...

God has been misrepresented in the sense that He has been pictured as losing His temper and breaking forth in judgment. That is never a true picture of God. The fact is that our sin is like a wick, and when we play with the spark of sin, the fire will follow. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap" (Gal 6:7, cp Gal 6:8, 9, 10). ([Isaiah Commentary Mp3's](#))

Although these warning passages (warning of judgment to come) literally speak primarily to Judah, there is also a broader application, as **Ironside** explains...

Nor have the words of this section a voice for the Jew alone. They are also written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages have arrived (cp 1Cor 10:6, 11). The failure of the professing Church has been even greater than that of Jerusalem, because of the greater light against which we have sinned (Lk 12:48, cp Jas 3:1). Soon must the Holy and the True, disgusted with such corruption, vomit out of His mouth all that is unreal and opposed to His Word (cp Rev 3:16-note). But He stands knocking at the door, and whenever there is reality and a heart for Himself, He will come in and sup there in hallowed, blest communion, though the doom of guilty Christendom is so near.

**None to quench** - Absolutely no one or nothing can extinguish the wrath of God once it has been decreed for it is justly deserved.

**John Martin** writes that "This unquenchable burning probably refers to the destruction by the Babylonian army as well as eternal judgment. ([Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., et al: The Bible Knowledge Commentary. 1985. Victor](#))

**Quench** ([03518](#)) (**kabah**) means to extinguish or to put out and all is used in the OT the context of putting out fires, sometimes a literal fire, but other times being used in a figurative sense ("extinguishing" lives2Sa 14:7, 2Sa 21:17, Song 8:7).

**Kabah** -24x in the OT - Lev. 6:12, 13; 1 Sam. 3:3; 2 Sam. 14:7; 21:17; 2 Ki. 22:17; 2 Chr. 29:7; 34:25; Prov. 26:20; 31:18; Song 8:7; Isa. 1:31; 34:10; 42:3; 43:17; 66:24; Jer. 4:4; 7:20; 17:27; 21:12; Ezek. 20:47f; 32:7; Amos 5:6.

**Alexander Maclaren**... in his sermon [What Sin Does to Men](#) (Isaiah 1:30, 31)...

**Sin withers.** We see the picture of a blasted tree in the woods, while all around are in full leaf, with tiny leaves half developed and all brown at the edges. The prophet draws another picture, that of a garden not irrigated, and therefore, in the burning East, given over to barrenness. Sin makes men fruitless and withered. It involves separation from God, the source of all fruitfulness (Ps. 1).

Think of how many pure desires and innocent susceptibilities die out of a sinful soul. Think of how many capacities for good disappear. Think of how dry and seared the heart becomes.

Think of how conscience is stifled. All sin, any sin, does this.

Not only gross, open transgressions, but any piece of godless living will do it.

Whatever a man does against his conscience—neglect of duty, habitual untruthfulness, idleness—in a word, his

besetting sin withers him up.

And all the while the evil thing that is drawing his life-blood is growing like a poisonous, blotched fungus in a wine-cask. (**Read full sermon - [Isaiah 1:30, 31 What Sin Does to Men](#)**)

**See Related Topic: Discussion of the Deceitfulness of Sin**