

The Significance of תורה (Isa 2:3) within Isaiah 2:1-5: The Relationship of the First Overture (1:1-2:5) to the Book's Conclusion (Isa 65-66)

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ABSTRACT

One of the best known passages in the entire book of Isaiah is the magisterial vision in Isa 2 of the nations streaming to Zion in the days to come to receive Yahweh's תורה. How should we understand Torah in this text? Should the noun תורה be understood and simply translated as "prophetic teaching" or "instruction," or does it here refer to a written code of ethical and religious teaching? In this article the "vision of peace" in Isa 2:1-5 will be analysed according to the latter interpretation of Torah. The implications of this interpretation will be re-examined. It supports an understanding of Isaiah as a prophet like Moses; the prophetic figure is hereby transformed to actualise and update the Torah itself, as legislative instruction for Israel. Attention will also be paid to the immediate literary context, as well as its relationship with the conclusion of the Book of Isaiah (Isa 65-66).

A INTRODUCTION

One of the best known passages in the entire book of Isaiah is the magisterial vision in Isa 2 of the nations streaming to Zion in the days to come to receive Yahweh's תורה. This chapter begins with a majestic scene of Yahweh, the universal Judge, issuing effective decrees and exercising authority over all the earth from the top of Mount Zion. This oracle is one of the classic texts often cited as providing a biblical vision for world peace.¹ The nations recognise the supremacy of Yahweh and go up to Jerusalem for teaching, because Yahweh's *Torah* and rulings are issued from there. The prophet's prediction that the nations will one day beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning knives, that one nation will not take up its sword against another nation, and that they will cease to learn to make war, is often taken as an imperative injunction for how God's people ought to act right now.

This peaceful situation is not a tribute to the voluntary decision of humble nations; it is a testimony to the sovereignty of Yahweh, who can compel

¹ Jimmy J. M. Roberts, "The End of War in the Zion Tradition: The Imperialistic Background of an Old Testament Vision of World Wide Peace," *HBT* 26 (2004): 3.

nations by his word.² Yahweh exercises worldwide rule so that all the nations may live in peace and walk in his ways: his *word* and *Torah* are instructive: Israel learns to do good, all the nations stop learning warfare, and "judging" rightly leads to a society living in justice and a world at peace.

How should we understand *Torah* in this text? Should the noun תורה be understood and simply translated as "teaching" or "instruction," according to the preferred conclusion of several recent translations of this passage?³ Does it refer to an undefined range of prophetic instruction or is it to be interpreted as referring to תורה, understood in the Deuteronomic/post-Deuteronomic sense of a written code of ethical and religious teaching? What is the precise connotation of this noun to the current state of Isaiah studies?

Marvin Sweeney has placed the issue in the forefront of recent discussion. He has proposed that the term *Torah* does not refer to Mosaic legislation since Isa 2:1-5 is placed in the context of Isa 1-39, the literary unit which is labelled as First Isaiah. The reason is that these chapters present the words and actions of the eighth-century prophet Isaiah ben Amoz.⁴ Because Isaiah lived and proclaimed the Word of God during the eighth-century, it is unlikely that he knew the Mosaic *Torah* which did not come to prominence in Judah until much later, namely during the reforms of Ezra (fifth/fourth century).⁵ For

² Thomas L. Leclerc, *Yahweh is Exalted in Justice: Solidarity and Conflict in Isaiah* (Augsburg: Fortress, 2001), 49.

³ Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1-39* (WestBC; London: John Knox Press, 1998), 25; Norbert Lohfink, "Bund und Tora bei der Völkerwallfahrt (Jesajabuch und Psalm 25)," in *Der Gott Israels und die Völker: Untersuchungen zum Jesajabuch und zu den Psalmen* (ed. Norbert Lohfink and Erich Zenger, SBS 154; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1994), 40 and John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1-39* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 112.

⁴ Marvin A. Sweeney, "The Book of Isaiah as Prophetic Torah," in *New Visions of Isaiah* (ed. Roy F. Melugin and Marvin A. Sweeney; JSOTSup 214; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 51. See also Willem A. M. Beuken, *Jesaja 1-12* (HTKAT; Freiburg i.Br.: Herders, 2003), 92; and Baruch J. Schwartz, "Torah from Zion: Isaiah's Temple Vision (Isaiah 2:1-4)," in *Sanctity of Time and Space in Tradition and Modernity* (ed. Alberdina Houtman, Marcel J. H. M. Poorthuis and Joshua Schwartz; JCP 1; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 1998), 16-17.

⁵ See also Frank Crüsemann, *Die Tora: Theologie und Sozialgeschichte des alttestamentlichen Gesetzes* (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1992), 387-393 and Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Israel in der Perserzeit: 5. und 4. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* (BE 8; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2005) 82-85 and 129 for a discussion of the problematic nature of the dating of Ezra. Crüsemann, *Die Tora*, 385-386, dates the formation of the Pentateuch between the Exile (terminus post quem) and the Hellenistic period; in other words in the Persian period. In all probability the Pentateuch was finalised during the second half of the fourth century. The changes brought about by Alexander the Great to world

Sweeney the sixth-century context for the writing of this passage precludes a reference to Mosaic *Torah*.⁶ Such a conclusion is based on an assumption regarding the date of the section where it appears and therefore the noun תורה is understood only as a reference to a prophetic message, and not in the later (post-Deuteronomic) sense of a tradition of sacred written instruction.

Recently Ronald E. Clements has advocated a re-examination of the significance of תורה in Isa 1-39 and has argued that this term should be related to the preserved תורה of the Five Books of Moses, or, at least, to a Deuteronomic nucleus of the latter.⁷ Clements has suggested that important conclusions fall into place once this interpretation is established as a fundamental exegetical guideline for Isa 1-39. The important role which an authoritative and written תורה has for the post-587 B.C.E. and post-exilic Judean community sufficiently explains why the introduction of such a key concept in Isa 1 and 2 was particularly important. Although recent scholarship has emphasised the comprehensive תורה-revision in the book of Jeremiah,⁸ a similar revision took place in the book of Isaiah and needs to be worked out properly. The recognition of such a significant editorial revision in this book signals that the message of the prophet Isaiah, like that of the prophet Jeremiah, should be interpreted in the light of the Mosaic תורה. The more the texts of the Pentateuch became canonical, the more these discussions of issues relating to the *Torah* were introduced into the prophetic scriptures. However, the impact of this תורה-revision is all too easily discounted by a translation of the Hebrew תורה to mean simply "instruction" or "message."

politics, and the effects this had on Judah, propelled the final redactors to conclude their work.

⁶ Sweeney, "Book of Isaiah," 51. See also Marvin A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39: With an Introduction to Prophetic Literature* (FOTL 16; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 98.

⁷ Ronald E. Clements, "The Meaning of תורה in Isaiah 1-39," in *Reading the Law: Studies in Honour of Gordon J. Wenham* (ed. J. Gordon McConville and Karl Möller; LHBOTS 461; New York: T&T Clark, 2007), 60.

⁸ See for example Georg Fischer, *Der Prophet wie Mose: Studien zum Jeremiabuch* (BZAR 15; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011); Christl Maier, *Jeremia als Lehrer der Tora: Soziale Gebote des Deuteronomiums in Fortschreibungen des Jeremiabuches* (FRLANT 196; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002); Eckart Otto, "Old and New Covenant: A Post-exilic Discourse between the Pentateuch and the Book of Jeremiah: Also a Study of Quotations and Allusions in the Hebrew Bible," *OTE* 19/3 (2006): 939-949; Eckart Otto, "Der Pentateuch im Jeremiabuch: Überlegungen zur Pentateuchrezeption im Jeremiabuch anhand neuerer Jeremia-Literatur," *ZAR* 12 (2006): 245-306; Eckart Otto, "Jeremia und die Tora: Ein nachexilischer Diskurs," in *Tora in der Hebräischen Bibel: Studien zur Redaktionsgeschichte und synchronen Logik diachroner Transformationen* (ed. Reinhard Achenbach, Martin Arneith and Eckart Otto; BZAR 7; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), 134-182.

In this article the “vision of peace” in Isa 2:1-5 will be analysed according to this interpretation of *Torah* and the implications of this interpretation will be re-examined. It supports an understanding of Isaiah as a prophet like Moses; the prophetic figure is hereby transformed to actualise and update the *Torah* itself, as legislative instruction for Israel. The fate of the people of Judah depends upon their hearing and obeying the word. They can be saved from ruin only by doing justice and righteousness. If they refuse to listen to the תורה of Moses as actualised and updated by the prophet Isaiah, salvation will only be possible after the bitter experience of the catastrophe. Attention will also be paid to the immediate literary context, as well as to the relationship with the conclusion of the Book of Isaiah (Isa 65-66).

B TORAH (תורה) IN ISAIAH 2:1-5

1 Isaiah 2:1

This unit (2:1-5) commences with the superscription which stands apart from the material it introduces and which identifies the subsequent material as “the word that Isaiah ben Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.” It uses a common form and basic vocabulary and corresponds to the superscription at the beginning of a collection of prophetic words (see Isa 1:1). Although the superscription in 2:1 demarcates ch. 2 from the preceding chapter, there are theological connections existing between 2:1-5 and ch. 1; therefore it is regarded as part of the first overture of the book of Isaiah (1:1-2:5).⁹ The motif which links the two parts of this overture (restoration of Zion and pilgrimage of the nations) is defined as follows: “the word of Yahweh” / “the *Torah* of our God” (1:10) and “*Torah*” / “the word of Yahweh” (2:3).¹⁰

For the redactors who formulated the introductory superscriptions to the book of Isaiah (1:1 and 2:1), Isaiah was a seer or a visionary whose first task was to tell Israel about the imminent decline and warn them to repent and return to Yahweh.¹¹ This word, according to Isa 2:1, is the word Isaiah ben Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. Within the context of the book of Isaiah this superscription claims that the vision of Zion’s future, without any nationalistic goals, belongs to the prophet Isaiah of the eighth-century Jerusa-

⁹ Ulrich Berges, *Das Buch Jesaja: Komposition und Endgestalt* (HBS 16; Freiburg i.Br.: Herder, 1998), 72.

¹⁰ Beuken, *Jesaja 1-12*, 89.

¹¹ Reinhard Achenbach, “‘A Prophet like Moses’ (Deut 18:15) – ‘No Prophet like Moses’ (Deut 34:10): Some Observations on the Relation between the Pentateuch and the Latter Prophets,” in *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research* (eds. Thomas B. Dozeman, Konrad Schmid and Baruch J. Schwartz; FAT 78; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 443.

lem.¹² The Isaiah of that historic period stands behind the message. This superscription, however, says nothing about writing: Isaiah son of Amoz is nowhere pictured as a writing prophet. He is less a prophet presenting himself to us, than a prophet who has been presented to us.¹³ The prophet of doom and exhortation (1:2-31) is also presented as a prophet of salvation. Hence, in 2:2 the time frame is qualified as "in the sequel of days / in the last days," which probably refers to Judah and Jerusalem of ch. 40 onwards; this vision thus contains words appropriate to the post-exilic period.

2 Isaiah 2:2-5

2a Introduction

These verses (2:2-5) express a picture of the future exaltation of Jerusalem and Mount Zion. It is a future promise of a role which it would fulfil in the days to come ("sequel of days"): It may presuppose Deutero-Isaiah's surprising offer of salvation to the nations (42:1-4; 45:22-25; 49:1-6) linked to the pictures of the pilgrimage of the nations to Jerusalem which we also find in Isa 45:14-21; 60:1-18 and 61:5-7.¹⁴

In general terms we also have this movement in Deutero-Isaiah from a universalistic vision to an exhortation to the house of Jacob to set an example of holy living.¹⁵ Throughout these chapters the authors¹⁶ present a dream for

¹² Peter R. Ackroyd, "Isaiah 1-12: Presentation of a Prophet," in *Studies in the Religious Tradition of the Old Testament* (ed. Peter R. Ackroyd; London: SCM, 1987), 102; John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1-33* (WBC 24; Rev. ed.; Dallas: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 41-42.

¹³ Christopher R. Seitz, *Isaiah 1-39* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox, 1993), 22. Ackroyd, *Isaiah 1-12*, 102, summarises: "as the prophet is presented in these chapters, there is no clear evidence of the chiaroscuro by which the prospect of the future is set out against the background of the recognition of failure and doom. Whether the prophet himself or his exegetes were responsible, the prophet appears to us as a man of judgment and salvation."

¹⁴ Beuken, *Jesaja 1-12*, 89; Ronald E. Clements, *Isaiah 1-39* (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 40.

¹⁵ Hugh G. M. Williamson, *The Book Called Isaiah: Deutero-Isaiah's Role in Composition and Redaction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 146.

¹⁶ Ulrich Berges, *Jesaja 40-48* (HTKAT; Freiburg i.Br.: Herder, 2008), 38-43, identifies the authors of Deutero-Isaiah as a collective group of exilic temple-singers who had composed this "oratorio of hope" in the years following Cyrus' triumphal marches (550 B.C.E. onwards). As these temple-singers joined the first major movement of immigration back to Judah, taking place after Darius' suppression of the Babylonian revolts (522/521 B.C.E.), they took this composition with them to Judah. Since their "drama of salvation" ("Heilsdrama") needed to be endorsed by prophetic authority, it was linked to the Isaiah tradition in Jerusalem (with its Zion theology). This also became a matter of urgency as the Jeremiah and Ezekiel tradents related

the future which includes an important position for the nations. However, this way is repeatedly hampered by the faithlessness of Jacob/Israel. In consequence, Jacob/Israel has to devote a good deal of attention to the corrections of the faults, such as lack of faith. In such a context, the addition of v. 5 to 2:2-4 makes good sense.

2b Verse 2

Isa 2:2-4 pictures the situation of the mountain of Yahweh’s house (Zion’s Temple Mount) “in the sequel of days” / “in future days” (בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים), that is, hereafter. Although the phrase בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים, which occurs thirteen times in the Hebrew Bible,¹⁷ was understood by earlier interpreters (for example the LXX)¹⁸ to have an eschatological meaning, it was probably due to the influence of apocalyptic literature, as the texts in Daniel indicate.¹⁹ Presently it is generally agreed that this is not the case in the majority of the occurrences in the Hebrew Bible. In the combination found in this phrase, it may simply refer to the following time (the sequel of days), the future; that is a time different from the one in which this text is written. The emphasis is on the end of the days as they are currently experienced, namely characterised by hostility and war, and in particular on the transition to a new era or phase of history.²⁰ The prophets

their scriptural tradition to prophetic authority. See also Ulrich Berges, “The Book of Isaiah as Isaiah’s Book: The Latest Developments in the Research of the Prophets,” *OTE* 23/3 (2010): 549-573, esp. 560-567, for a summary of the most important arguments.

¹⁷ Gen 49:1; Num 24:14; Deut 4:30; 31:29; Isa 2:2; Jer 23:20; 30:24; 48:47; 49:39; Ezek 38:16; Hos 3:5; Mic 4:1; Dan 10:14. Dan 2:28 has the Aramaic equivalent.

¹⁸ Following the translation in the Greek Bible (Septuagint) and the Latin translation by Jerome (the Vulgate) the Hebrew has usually been rendered “in the last days.” See Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12: A Commentary* (OTL; 2nd ed.; London: SCM, 1983), 53. Francis Landy, “Torah and Anti-Torah: Isaiah 2:2-4 and 1:10-26,” *BibInt* 11 (2003): 317, links to this interpretation and is of the opinion it has an eschatological dimension.

¹⁹ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39*, 99 and Hugh G. M. Williamson, *Isaiah 1-5* (ICC; London/New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 179. Beuken, *Isaiah 1-12*, 90, comments as follows: “Die Zeitbestimmung »in zukünftigen Tagen« verweist nicht auf die eschatologische Vollendung der Geschichte, sondern auf eine noch entfernte Zukunft, die aber einem Heute entspringt, was sich in diesem Fall konkret auf die Rückkehr Zions zu Recht und Gerechtigkeit bezieht ... Inhaltlich gesehen stellt sie die jede Erfahrung übersteigende Vision vom Zion als dem geistlichen Zentrum der Welt in den Erwartungshorizont des Lesers und koppelt diese an den moralischen Wiederaufbau der Stadt, den JHWH herbeiführen wird (s. zu 1.18).”

²⁰ Williamson, *Isaiah 1-5*, 180. See also Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39* (AB 19; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 190 and Irmtraud Fischer, *Tora für Israel – Tora für die Völker: Das Konzept des Jesajabuches* (SBS 164; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1995), 25.

indeed speak about a better future time, but not of the *eschaton*; it becomes a term for the end of days when that concept develops. Although the perspective of an eschatological future is not central in this text at all, the text's perspective at least is linked to an understanding of the tradition(s) according to which salvation is expected from the distant past.

"The mountain of the house of Yahweh" (הַר בֵּית־יְהוָה) refers to Zion and the temple.²¹ It draws upon traditions concerning the myth of the cosmic mountain which stood at the centre of the world, and from which the divine order and truth were given to the world. There was a widespread belief in the ancient world that mountains are linked to, or even a depiction of, the abode of the gods.²² Older mythology was undoubtedly taken over by Israel in her temple worship, as may be clearly seen in Pss 46 and 48. The author makes creative use of such language in order to assert that the time is coming when the superiority of Zion's God and his truth will be seen and recognised universally. The appearance of Yahweh's earthly abode, which now failed to correspond with what was believed to be its true nature, will be changed to reflect that hidden reality. Zion, as a microcosm of the created world, was already believed to be "established" (נִבְּוֶן), as is clear from for example Ps 48:9 (Eng 48:8), and therefore it could never be moved (Ps 46:6[5]) when facing an attack.

A motif that runs through most of the book of Isaiah (excluding chs. 38-55) is introduced in Isa 2:2. The mountain will be established (נִבְּוֶן) as the most important and respected pilgrimage destination for "all the nations" (כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם). "Established" (נִבְּוֶן) is therefore a key term: the established order of nature and of political and social forms is being turned upside down.²³ The first move to re-establish confidence and order will be to firmly fix the temple in its place on Zion. Its position is to be at the very top of the mountains and all things that mountains stand for.

Therefore, according to the book of Isaiah it is a terrible sin to forget Yahweh's mount of holiness (Isa 65:11; cf. 17:10; 49:14; 51:13). Zion will be the cult centre for a huge number of international believers in an era of peace for everyone. It is described as the temple city, the greatest and most popular

²¹ The expression "the mountain of the house of Yahweh" (הַר בֵּית־יְהוָה) occurs only in Isa 2:2; Mic 4:1 and in 2 Chr 33:15. With regard to the Chronicles text Fischer (*Tora für Israel*, 26) comments as follows: "Beim הַר בֵּית־יְהוָה handelt es sich hier jedenfalls um den von Fremdkulten gereinigten Tempelberg."

²² Beuken, *Jesaja 1-12*, 91; Wilhelm J. Wessels, "Zion, Beautiful City of God – Zion Theology in the Book of Jeremiah," *VetE* 27/2 (2006): 730-733; Hugh G. M. Williamson, "Swords into Plowshares: The Development and Implementation of a Vision," in *Isaiah's Vision of Peace in Biblical and Modern International Relations: Swords into Plowshares* (ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 140-141.

²³ Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, 47.

pilgrimage city in the world. Zion holds this distinction because it is the place of Yahweh’s dwelling and governance (24:23). Isaiah 25:6-8 places the turning point for human history on the mountain of God:

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken (NRSV).

The reason why Zion will surpass everything else is that it will become the most important – or even the only – locus of oracles in the world.²⁴ In this instance we need to regard the lower hills as analogous to the temples and oracle *loci* of other gods and arrogant people (2:10-22) throughout the world. Ultimately it is Yahweh and the gods who will be in view. The gods of these other oracle loci will become powerless at the envisaged point of history as no oracles offering help will go forth from there any longer. The starting point for the word about the pilgrimage of the nations is the impending disappearance of the gods outside Israel. As is known, that is an important theme from Isa 40 onwards.

2c Verse 3

The goal of the journey is the “mountain of Yahweh” (הַר־יְהוָה – as in v. 2) which is now explicitly defined as the “house of the God of Jacob” (בֵּית אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב). This divine title does not occur elsewhere in the prophets (apart from the parallel in Mic 4:1-3),²⁵ but occurs frequently in the Psalms of Zion and others from the same milieu²⁶ and refers to Yahweh as God of all Israel, based in the Jerusalem temple.²⁷ It occurs in contexts which speak of divine protection against enemies, so that its appearance here emphasises the reversal of the motif of the enemies coming to attack Jerusalem. The nations want to come to Jerusalem, because Yahweh is there and he is the source of life. Moreover, the

²⁴ Lohfink, “Bund und Tora,” 41.

²⁵ Ludger Schwienhorst-Schönberger, “Zion – Ort der Tora: Überlegungen zu Mi 4,1-3,” in *Zion – Ort der Begegnung: Festschrift für Laurentius Klein zur Vollendung des 65. Lebensjahres* (ed. Ferdinand Hahn, Frank-Lothar Hossfeld, Hans Jorissen and Angelika Neuwirth; BBB 90; Bodenheim: Philo, 1993), 107-125.

²⁶ Pss 20:2; 24:6 [emended]; 46:8, 12 [7, 11]; 75:10 [9]; 76:7 [6]; 81:2, 5 [1, 4]; 84:9 [8]; 94:7; 146:5.

²⁷ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39*, 88; Williamson, *Isaiah 1-5*, 183.

Torah (תורה) of Yahweh is in Jerusalem and it will make the secret for peace available to the nations.²⁸

The occurrence of the noun תורה in Isa 2:3 takes on a distinctly wider significance if it is here considered as a reference to a recognised body of legal and instructional tradition existing in a written documentary form. Clements²⁹ provides an overview of several meanings of the term תורה. He observes that Deut 4:44 represents a landmark in "the beginning of a change of focus in Israel's religion from cultic religious observance to a comprehensive written book of polity and conduct. It was the beginning of 'the religion of a book.'" This noun was no longer understood as broad and occasional instruction, but instead it became identified with a specific body of tradition which is preserved in a written document and eventually extended to include all Five Books of Moses. This text probably originated sometime between the late seventh and mid-sixth centuries B.C.E.: the earliest possible date 623-622 B.C.E., but some time up to a century later is more likely.³⁰

The close proximity of the noun תורה in ch. 1 (1:10) and in the vision of peace (2:3) indicate a relationship between Isa 1 and Isa 2:1-5. It should also be noted that these are the only two passages in Isaiah where תורה occurs parallel with the דְּבַר־יְהוָה ("the word of Yahweh").³¹ The well-being of the city, as well as world peace, can only be realised through obedience to divine תורה. The fate of the nations is decided by their hearing and obeying the word. They can be saved from destruction only if they practice justice and righteousness (1:16-17; 27-28). If they do not listen to the *Torah* of Moses as updated and actualised by the prophets, deliverance will be possible only after the bitter experience of disaster (1:24-28).

It is usually accepted that ch. 1, with its appeal for repentance and a return to Yahweh, is one of the later parts added to the book. The chapter has clearly been composed as an introduction to the whole of the book.³² Both occurrences of the noun תורה in chs. 1 and 2 seem to have been introduced with the express purpose of linking the message of the main core of the book, which focuses on national and international concerns, with the central authority of

²⁸ Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1-39*, 25.

²⁹ Clements, "The Meaning," 60-62. See also Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1-39*, 30; Barnabas Lindars, "Torah in Deuteronomy," in *Words and Meanings: Essays Presented to David Winton Thomas* (ed. Peter R. Ackroyd and Barnabas Lindars; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 117-136, esp. 128-132; Eckart Otto, "Die Tora als Buch: Ein Schlüssel zum Schriftverständnis der Hebräischen Bibel," *ZAR* 13 (2007): 284-303, esp. 296-297 and Eckart Otto, *Das Gesetz des Mose* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2007), 85-97.

³⁰ Clements, "The Meaning," 62.

³¹ Fischer, *Tora für Israel*, 23.

³² Clements, "The Meaning," 64.

תורה. Accordingly, the occurrences of the noun תורה in 1:10 and 2:3 reflect post-exilic interest within the book of Isaiah. In this instance, the argument for understanding these references to תורה in the later sense of a reference to a written body of instruction, rules and regulations mediated by Mosaic, is overwhelmingly strong.

When this prophetic message is read in the context of the canonical text, Isaiah is depicted as a prophet like Moses.³³ The prophetic message is understood as an updating of the תורה itself, as legislative instructions for Israel. The authors present Isaiah as a man actualising the Mosaic *Torah*. In the late redactional layers of the book of Isaiah, the prophet is generally depicted as a teacher of Yahweh’s תורה (cf. Isa 1:10).³⁴ He is not considered as a direct mediator of the *Torah*, but he is someone whose words are meant to guide the people to follow the ways of the written *Torah*, which is the *Torah* of Yahweh and which was given by the mediation of Moses, who was the giver of the law at Sinai and the prophet par excellence (Deut 18:15-18). In a similar manner as Israel received God’s instruction at Sinai, the nations will be taught and instructed at Mount Zion through the book of Isaiah.³⁵

Transmission of תורה to the nations takes place through Israel as a prophetic servant of God on Mount Zion (Isa 2:1-5), because it has the תורה in its heart (51:1-8). In Deutero-Isaiah the task of teaching the תורה is handed over to the *Ebed* (“servant”) of Yahweh.³⁶ Note, for example, Isa 42:4: “He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice on earth and the coastlands wait for his תורה!” (cf. also Isa 42:19, 21, 24; 51:4, 7).

Once Zion is restored, *Torah* will go forth from her to the nations.³⁷ Here, for the first time, she plays a role regarding the nations. The expression

³³ Reinhard Achenbach, “The Pentateuch, the Prophets, and the Torah in the Fifth and the Fourth Centuries B.C.E.,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.* (ed. Oded Lipschitz, Gary N. Knoppers and Rainer Albertz; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 253-285, esp. 268-274 and Lohfink, “Bund und Tora,” esp. 46. Cf. also Alphonso Groenewald, “Isaiah 1:2-3, Ethics and Wisdom: Isaiah 1:2-3 and the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32): Is Isaiah a prophet like Moses?,” *HvTSt* 67/1, Art. #954 (2011) 6 pages, here 3-4 (DOI: 10.4102/hts.v67i1.954).

³⁴ The complicated matters of the redactional development of the text cannot be discussed here extensively. It is sufficient to note that there are certain redactional characteristics in the book of Isaiah in the texts from the fifth century and beyond that refer to the prophet as a teacher of *Torah* in line with the Mosaic teaching.

³⁵ Fischer, *Tora für Israel*, 121. See also Irmtraud Fischer, *Gotteskinderinnen: Zu einer geschlechterfairen Deutung des Phänomens der Prophetie und der Prophetinnen in der Hebräischen Bibel* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2002), 39-62.

³⁶ Achenbach, “The Pentateuch,” 269.

³⁷ Otto Kaiser, “Von Ortsfremden, Ausländern und Proselyten – Vom Umgang mit den Fremden im Alten Testament,” in *Gott, Mensch und Geschichte: Studien zum*

אצ"ח ("to go forth") reminds of the temple vision in Ezek 47 where אצ"ח is constantly used to describe the flowing, life assuring waters from the altar of the temple.³⁸ As a result Isa 2:3 could be translated as follows: "For out of Zion flows forth *Torah*" as a life-giving force. Here at the water of the *Torah* the just can plant his/her roots and yield fruits in its season (Ps 1; Jer 17:8). Perhaps it is no coincidence that the song of thanksgiving in Isa 12, at the end of the first main section of the book, also refers to water (Isa 12:3) in relation to the nations and Zion (Isa 12:4, 6). This invitation to draw water from the wells of salvation also reminds us of Ps 87:7 where pilgrims from all over the world dance and sing: "All my springs are in you," referring to Zion.³⁹

Furthermore, the expression "out of Zion flows forth *Torah*" (Isa 2:3) should be seen in connection with the mission of the *Ebed* ("servant") to bring forth (אצ"ח) justice to the nations (Isa 42:1).⁴⁰ Not only in their suffering, but also in their commission to the nations Zion and the *Ebed* fulfil a similar task. The difference is, however, that the *Ebed* brings forth justice to the peoples, while Zion receives the nations who are coming to her. But Yahweh is the only one who is the source of *Torah*: "Listen to me, my people, give heed to me, my nation; for *Torah* goes out (אצ"ח) from me and my justice – for a light to the peoples. I let rest it" (Isa 51:4).⁴¹ Two main perspectives in the book of Isaiah, namely "*Torah* for Israel" and "*Torah* for the nations," merge at this point.⁴²

Verständnis des Menschen und seiner Geschichte in der klassischen, biblischen und nachbiblischen Literatur (ed. Otto Kaiser; BZAW 413; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 60, observes that "blicken wir auf die Juden, so haben sie anders als die griechisch-hellenistische Welt in der biblischen Zeiten keinen Begriff wie den der Barbaren als Bezeichnung aller Fremden entwickelt; denn für sie waren nicht Bildung und zivilisatorische Güter, sondern die Kenntnis und Befolgung der Thora als Ausdruck des angemessenen Verhaltens zu dem einzigen wahren Gott das entscheidende Kriterium für die Beurteilung von Menschen und Völkern."

³⁸ Ulrich Berges, "Personifications and Prophetic Voices of Zion in Isaiah and Beyond," in *The Elusive Prophet: The Prophet as a Historical Person, Literary Character and Anonymous Artist* (ed. Johannes C. de Moor; OTS 45; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2001), 59.

³⁹ Erich Zenger, "Zion als Mutter der Völker in Psalm 87," in *Die Gott Israels und die Völker: Untersuchungen zum Jesajabuch und zu den Psalmen* (ed. Norbert Lohfink and Erich Zenger; SBS 154; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1994), 135-136, comments as follows: "Nun geht es nicht mehr um die Rettung Zions, sondern um die Rettung der Völker durch Zion/vom Zion aus: »alle Quellen« des Lebens sind in Zion zu finden."

⁴⁰ Berges, "Personifications," 59-60. Cf. also Williamson, *Book Called Isaiah*, 152.

⁴¹ Irmtraud Fischer, "Israel und das Heil der Völker im Jesajabuch," in *Das Heil der Anderen: Problemfeld »Judenmission«* (ed. Hubert Frankemölle and Josef Wohlmuth; QD 238; Freiburg i.Br.: Herder, 2010), 195.

⁴² Fischer, *Tora für Israel*, 110.

The function of the new temple centers on *Torah* (תורה).⁴³ Jerusalem will be known primarily for the temple where Yahweh abides and this temple is to serve as a gathering place for learning Yahweh’s ways and paths. Parallel to the *Torah* of the pilgrimage of the nations is the “word of Yahweh” (דְּבַר־יְהוָה) which now goes forth from Jerusalem.

The word about the pilgrimage of the nations begins with the symbolic picturing of mountains and hills (v. 2). Next to Zion there are only hills that do not attain its height, but the world landscape changes as Zion becomes the highest of the mountains.⁴⁴ If the word *Torah* is so clearly emphasised in this context it suggests that the *Torah* which is directed to the nations from Jerusalem is connected with the peace-establishing *Torah* possessed by Israel living on Zion.

2d Verse 4

With this verse we reach the specific goal of the nations’ quest at last, namely that Yahweh will “judge between” (וְשָׁפֵט בֵּין) them and “arbitrate/settle quarrels” (וְהוֹכִיחַ) for them, and he will decide the issues concerning the peoples.⁴⁵ The background of this oracle is in the legal tradition and it takes as an example the process of the High Court of Arbitration as described in the Deuteronomic Law.⁴⁶ It offers conspicuous parallels to Deut 17:8-11; in particular with regard to the word pair “*Torah*”/“word” which occurs in Deut 17:11. The scene described here is in essence the same, but in the prophetic oracle it has moved from the private realm to the dimension of international relationships.⁴⁷ Everyday legal practice and custom, as envisioned and legislated by the Deuterono-

⁴³ Beuken, *Jesaja 1-12*, 92, regards the function of Zion and the temple here as follows: “Die Völkerwallfahrt soll dazu führen, dass sie ihre durch Gott festgelegte Rolle auch tatsächlich einnimmt. Von ihr aus soll eine Bewegung zu den Völkern in Gang kommen: Sie ist dazu bestimmt, Ausgangspunkt für JHWHs Tora zu sein.” See Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, 48 and Lohfink, “Bund und Tora,” 40.

⁴⁴ With regard to election of Zion as the mountain of Yahweh, Beuken (*Jesaja 1-12*, 91) infers as follows: “Zions heilsgeschichtliche Erwählung als Berg des Hauses JHWHs zieht eine geographische Verwandlung nach sich: Der Berg wird nicht nur hoch, sondern er wird der höchste der Berge sein. Das Thema spielt im Verlauf des Jesajabuches eine Rolle, wo »Berge/Hügel« den Widerstand gegen die göttliche Autorität symbolisieren, letztlich aber sein befreiendes Wirken an Israel anerkennen.” Cf. also Lohfink, “Bund und Tora,” 42.

⁴⁵ Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, 48 and Williamson, *Isaiah 1-5*, 185.

⁴⁶ Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 251-253; Patrick D. Miller, *Deuteronomy* (IBC; Louisville: John Knox, 1990), 144-145; Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy* (JPSTC; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 163-165.

⁴⁷ Udo Rütterswörden, *Das Buch Deuteronomium* (NSKAT; AltTes 4; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2006), 119.

mic code, is reflected and magnified to produce the prophetic picture of the future of international relationships.⁴⁸ The nations will thus also experience the benefits of the *Torah* in a manner similar to Israel. Was it not prophesied by Moses that the nations will envy Israel because of the *Torah* (Deut 4:5-8)? However, this can only happen under the pre-condition that they protect the *Torah* in their hearts.

This verse assumes the sovereignty of Yahweh over the nations and the peoples; a point that will be developed further in ch. 40 onwards. As this text continues it clearly presses forward to questions of human conflict. The consequences of the nations' implementation of God's decisions are spelt out in terms of a utopian vision of peace. It is presented as the natural consequence of the nations seeking, receiving and acting upon God's instruction and arbitration.⁴⁹ At least as one reads further, the surpassing height of Zion must have something to do with the peace that the nations are unable to find among themselves, but which they seek and then obtain from Zion.

The functions that Yahweh has carried out in his relationship to Israel will now be applied universally. Armaments and wars will be unnecessary as his decisions will settle all disputes between peoples and nations. Wars will no longer occur. When the population of the countryside is called to arms, as evidenced in Joel 4:9-10 [Eng 3:9-10], they are told to "beat your ploughshares into swords, and your pruning knives into spears." In Isaiah's vision, the belligerent peoples will reverse this process and turn their implements of warfare back into implements of agriculture, which is what they were originally.⁵⁰ Nations will no longer lift up a sword against each other, and they will not learn to fight anymore. This is a striking reversal of customary practices in equipping the army for war and would have been heard as such at the time. This vision of peace will come into effect when the causes of war are removed as a result of the voluntary submission to God's settling of differences. It is however unrealistic to expect the one in the absence of the other. But there is more to it yet: before the nations accept arbitration, they first come to be instructed in God's way with the aim of walking in his paths. The voluntary disarmament can only take place when a complete change of mind has taken place. The encounter with the God of Jacob can activate a complete and lasting change of mind-set. Without arms and trained soldiers the nations cannot wage

⁴⁸ Schwartz, "Torah from Zion," 19-21. Cf. also Beuken, *Jesaja 1-12*, 93 and Williamson, *Isaiah 1-5*, 185.

⁴⁹ Beuken (*Jesaja 1-12*, 93) formulates this assumption as follows: "Die Initiative zum Frieden geht als Frucht von JHWHs Tora bei den Völkern von diesen selbst aus." Cf. also Lohfink, "Bund und Tora," 42.

⁵⁰ Schwartz, "Torah from Zion," 17; Williamson, "Swords into Plowshares," 144-145.

wars anymore. “Learning war” will be replaced by “learning *Torah*” (compare for example Deut 5:1; 6:1).

Yahweh’s conduct toward the nations sets the standards for their relationships among themselves: just as Yahweh settles disputes without resorting to warfare, henceforth the nations, who are subject to him, will no longer use warfare to settle their disputes.⁵¹ There will be a cessation of political and economic oppression and threat. Moreover, there will be an end to hateful, divisive ideology. The nations will learn peace, and will practice it.

2e Verse 5

Verse 5 was formed with v. 3 as a model: The summons “come, and let us walk” (לָכֹוּ וְנִלְכֶה) is certainly modeled on the expression “come, let us go up” (לָכֹוּ וְנִעְלֶה) in v. 3.⁵² This summons makes it clear that the prophet is on the side of his people and his aim is to encourage them to live as worthy examples of the principles which are introduced in vv. 2-4. Verse 5 discloses the purpose of the redactional insertion of these verses in the book of Isaiah: They want to inspire the community to be obedient to Yahweh’s will in the face of the coming judgment, by holding forth a perspective of the future glorification of the city of Yahweh.⁵³

The address “house of Jacob,”⁵⁴ which is used for the whole of Israel, stresses the religious and moral connections existing between the patriarch and his descendants.⁵⁵ The venture of the covenant which Yahweh made with Jacob is still continuing. However, Jacob/Israel is far from being the good example that will draw others to imitate her, as we have seen in Isa 1. The sharp difference from the present reality is recognised, and the editor hereby calls on his readers to start to put right all the abuses mentioned in ch. 1, as 2:6 onwards indicate.

This oracle at the beginning of ch. 2 anticipates Yahweh’s initiative with his servant in Deutero-Isaiah and hereby adds a new chapter of Jacob’s history

⁵¹ Leclerc, *Yahweh is Exalted*, 49.

⁵² Marvin A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-4 and the Post-Exilic Understanding of the Isaianic Tradition* (BZAW 171; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1988), 135.

⁵³ Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12*, 50.

⁵⁴ Noteworthy is that this name occurs some twenty times in Isa 40-55 to refer to the exiled Israelites (Williamson, *Isaiah 1-5*, 188).

⁵⁵ See for example Gen 46:27; Exod 19:3; Ps 114:1. According to Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, 191, it is hardly coincidental that the story of the patriarch Jacob’s exile in Mesopotamia and return (Gen 25-35) mirrors the experience of deported and repatriated Judeans beginning in the sixth century B.C.E.. See also Beuken, *Jesaja 1-12*, 94 and Kaiser, *Isaiah 1-12*, 56.

to the book of Isaiah.⁵⁶ Although the patriarch Jacob was only born as the second son of an elected generation (Gen 25:19-26), he used a bit of cunning to get hold of his brother's birthright (Gen 25:29-34; 27:1-40). In Isa 2:1-5 Jacob's descendants also holds the second position after the nations in accepting Yahweh's *Torah*, but subsequently they will become the elected servant and are employed to be "a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (Isa 49:6; cf also 42:6).

The last verse of this passage stresses that in future days Zion will arise above all other mountains because *Torah* reigns there. The mountain, with the house of Yahweh, which towers above the other hills, is dependent on the fate of the *Torah* in Israel. Only when it begins to give light, then *Zion-Torah* can go forth from Israel into the world of the nations. Thereby, at least in Isaiah, the conclusion of this passage makes it clear that the *Torah* of 2:3 also has an inner connection with the *Torah* given to Israel by its God. The house of Jacob must become a just society. This demand is made right now and it is made in view of the promise for the days to come (v. 2). The logic is as follows: it should become a just society right now, in order that God's action in days to come can begin right away.⁵⁷

The expression "the light of Yahweh" seems to be the editor's way of contemplating or characterizing the "ways," "paths," "*Torah*" and "word" of v. 3.⁵⁸ Light is a prominent image for salvation (broadly spoken) in all parts of the book of Isaiah.⁵⁹ Isaiah 9:1 [Eng 9:2] is an exceptionally significant example in the earlier material. The use of "light" occurs, though, most frequently and creatively in Deutero-Isaiah (for example 42:16; 45:7; 49:9), while the examples in Trito-Isaiah seem to draw on the earlier examples in the book. It is significant that it occurs as a major theme of the redactional joins here in 2:5, at 5:30 and at 8:23 [Eng. 9:1]; all of which simply can be associated with the later post-exilic redaction of the first part of the book.

⁵⁶ Beuken, *Jesaja 1-12*, 94.

⁵⁷ Berges, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 73, formulates this summons as follows: "Mit Jes 2,5 machen die Redaktoren die Verpflichtung deutlich, die für die nachexilische Gemeinde in Jerusalem aus der Verheißung einer Völkerwallfahrt zum Zion erwächst: Die Gabe wird als Aufgabe anerkannt und angenommen."

⁵⁸ Ronald E. Clements, "A Light to the Nations: A Central Theme of the Book of Isaiah," in *Forming Prophetic Literature: Essays on Isaiah and the Twelve in Honor of John D. W. Watts* (ed. James W. Watts and Paul R. House; JSOTSup 235; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 68; Williamson, *Isaiah 1-5*, 187.

⁵⁹ Regarding the metaphorical usage of "light," Beuken, *Jesaja 1-12*, 94, comments as follows: "»Licht« ist im Jesajabuch eine Metapher für das durch Gott bewirkte Heil, während die Abwesenheit von Licht das Gericht umschreibt; dies gilt sowohl für Israel (5,30; 9,1; 30,26; 42,16; 45,7; 58,8.10; 59,9) als auch für die Völker (13,10; 51,4; 60,3). JHWH selbst kann als Licht Israels auftreten (10,17; 60,1.19f.). Kurzum: Der Prophet setzt Gottes Tora mit Gottes Heil gleich."

C ISAAH 2:1-5 AS PART OF THE FIRST OVERTURE (1:1-2:5): ITS RELATION WITH THE CLOSURE OF THE BOOK OF ISAAH (ISA 65-66)

The book of Isaiah opens with two parallel overtures in 1:2-2:5 and 2:6-4:6 which extend from Zion, the sinful city, to Zion, the mountain of Yahweh, where *Torah* is taught to the nations and Israel's remnant receives purification and shelter.⁶⁰ The recognition that the first overture (Isa 1:1-2:5) of the book of Isaiah and the concluding chapters (Isa 65-66) of the book have many terms in common has also led exegetes to the insight that the opening of the book (1:1-2:5) builds a programmatic introduction to the whole book. In this overture the redactors combined complex, diverse and multiple materials from the entire book.⁶¹ Isaiah 2:1-5 is an integral part of this overture as it offers the reader an overview of the whole book: the concluding theme of the book, namely the pilgrimage of the nations to Yahweh's house on top of his mountain in Jerusalem (66:15-24, esp. 20), connects the conclusion with the first overture (2:1-4, esp. 3). At the end of the first overture the motto of the whole literary opus is revealed to the reader: "let us walk in the light of Yahweh" (2:5).

In this first overture (1:1-2:5) the passage 2:1-5 has a prominent position. It is significant that this passage follows the first chapter.⁶² Its placement reflects a distinctive tendency of the final form of the text of Isaiah: the Isaiah tradition characteristically moves to hope in spite of all its harshness. Here on a much smaller scale, the Jerusalem tradition looks beyond the coming fire (1:31) to the "sequel of days"/"latter days" (2:2). After the linking superscription of 2:1, Isa 2:2-4(5) presents a different picture of Zion (Jerusalem), a glorious picture, in which the past situation of rebellion, as is described in Isa 1, has been corrected. If the superscription of 1:1 is read together with its echo in 2:1 it indicates that while the vision concerns Judah and Jerusalem in particular and is situated in the context of the reigns of certain kings in the eighth century B.C.E., it includes all nations within its scope.⁶³ Temporally, the vision moves between the twin poles of the "days of Uzziah ..." (1:1) and "sequel of days" / "the latter days" (2:1).

⁶⁰ Willem A. M. Beuken, "The Literary Emergence of Zion as a City in the First Opening of the Book of Isaiah (1,1-2,5)," in *Gott und Mensch im Dialog: Festschrift für Otto Kaiser zum 80. Geburtstag* (ed. Markus Witte; BZAW 345/I; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 457. See Berges, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 58-87, and Beuken, *Jesaja 1-12*, 60-129, for a detailed discussion of the two overtures.

⁶¹ Beuken, *Jesaja 1-12*, 60.

⁶² Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1-39*, 24.

⁶³ Barry G. Webb, "Zion in Transformation: A Literary Approach to Isaiah," in *The Bible in Three Dimensions: Essays in Celebration of Forty Years of Biblical Studies in the University of Sheffield* (ed. David J.A. Clines, Stephen E. Fowl and Stanley E. Porter; JSOTSup 87; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 68.

This passage follows the picture of Jerusalem that has rebelled against Yahweh and therefore it has to be purified and transformed (Isa 1). Israel is indicted by Yahweh for it has failed to be his people.⁶⁴ This indictment goes together with the rejection of Jerusalem as political and cultic centre. The nation's physical (1:5-9) and moral (1:10-17) damage, although presented as an accomplished fact, is to be reversed (1:9: "we would have been like Sodom"). An appeal to Israel to listen to Yahweh's word is indeed not lacking, but it seems necessary that Yahweh himself carries out a program of restoration.⁶⁵ The key to the transformation of Zion is purifying judgment (1:21-26) that leads to a purified group becoming the core of the new Zion and points to the judgment that will meet those who do not heed the call to repentance.⁶⁶ This act of cleansing causes a radical separation between "those in her who repent" (1:27) and the "rebels and sinners"/"those who forsake Yahweh" (1:28). The former group, together with Zion, will be redeemed and Yahweh will restore Zion to her glory (1:26). The sinners, the latter group, will be completely destroyed (1:27-28, 29-31). This concluding picture builds directly on the oracle of 1:21-26, depicting the contrast in fates between those who repent and the sinners, which will result from the purging of Jerusalem as described in 1:21-26. The separation of the "sinners" and the "servants" is an important theme of chs. 65-66.

Verses 29-31 also prepare the way for the vision of 2:1-5 in so far as they raise the question of the place where Yahweh is to be venerated.⁶⁷ After the worship of Yahweh inside the city, that is in the temple, has been rejected (1:11-15) the final verses proclaim the end of all journeys to sinful places outside of the city. As a consequence the closing part of the chapter leaves an emptiness regarding the place where Yahweh is to be encountered. If Zion is restored to its original purity, what form will the veneration of Yahweh take? Will there be a temple and if so, how will it function after the degenerate cult that legitimized social oppression has been wiped out? This spatial emptiness invites a new definition of the place in which the people are to meet with Yahweh. The term "house of Yahweh" is significantly absent in Isa 1. This may be an indication that the circumstances under which the inhabitants of Jerusalem "come to appear before Yahweh" (1:12) deprive the place of that honorary title. When the term "house of Yahweh" (2:3) finally appears in the discourse it is distinguished from the meeting place by its superior geographical position: "the

⁶⁴ Emmanuel U. Dim, *The Eschatological Implications of Isa 65 and 66 as the Conclusion of the Book of Isaiah* (BH 4; Bern: Peter Lang, 2004), 340 and Webb, *Zion in Transformation*, 72.

⁶⁵ Beuken, "Literary Emergence," 469.

⁶⁶ See David M. Carr, "Reading Isaiah from Beginning (Isaiah 1) to End (Isaiah 65-66): Multiple Modern Possibilities," in *New Visions of Isaiah* (ed. Roy F. Melugin and Marvin A. Sweeney; JSOTSup 214; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 201.

⁶⁷ Beuken, "Literary Emergence," 467.

highest of the mountains" (2:2). The "old house" was associated with the wicked city (1:21-23) and the surrounding land, now struck by God's judgment because of its trees of apostasy in gardens of sinful pleasure (1:29-31).

It is here, as a sequel to this cleansing transformation in Isa 1 that the glorious vision of Zion in 2:1-5 appears. Verse 2 picks up the theme of the faithful city which was introduced in 1:21-28 and sketches Zion being transformed into the highest of all mountains.⁶⁸ Therefore Jerusalem, as the seat of the house of Yahweh, now exercises an irresistible appeal to the nations, which stream to it. The purpose is to learn from Yahweh and the form of instruction is Yahweh's *Torah* and his word, which issue from Jerusalem.

The structural arrangement of Isa 1:1-2:5 is also analogous to that of the concluding unit of Isa 65-66.⁶⁹ Both text complexes contain the same prophetic literary genres: accusation, admonition, announcement of judgment and salvation oracle. Within these genres the same themes occur, such as Israel's sinning (1:4, 11, 13, 16, 19; 65:2, 7, 11-12; 66:4); cultic abuses (1:11-15, 29; 65:3-4; 66:3, 17); God's listening to his people (1:15; 65:24) and Israel's listening to him (1:10; 66:5); the separation of the just and the wicked (1:24-28; 65:11-15; 66:5-6, 23-24) and a new name (1:26; 65:15). One has to take note here that Isa 6 has an important position between chs. 1 and 65-66: the cleansing starts with the prophet himself.

The alternation between inter alia oracles of judgment and salvation recapitulates Israel's rebellion in Isa 1 in the face of a loving Yahweh: in ch. 65 Yahweh complains against the syncretism within Israel (Isa 65:1-7) and separates the just ("servants") from the wicked (65:8-16a). The chapter ends with the vision of the new Jerusalem (65:16b-25).⁷⁰ The same sequence continues in Isa 66: the first part (Isa 66:1-6) dwells on Yahweh's sovereignty, his choice of the just and rejection of the wicked; Isa 66:7-14, Mother Zion, her incredible delivery and the destiny of the servants of Yahweh; Isa 66:15-24, universal judgment and the concluding scenario centered on the new Jerusalem involving all the nations.⁷¹ Verses 15-24 is labeled as a theophany,⁷² in which God's

⁶⁸ Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1-39*, 29-30.

⁶⁹ Dim, *Eschatological Implications*, 294. See also Willem A. M. Beuken, "Isaiah Chapters LXV-LXVI: Trito-Isaiah and the Closure of the Book of Isaiah," in *Congress Volume Leuven 1989* (ed. John A. Emerton; VTSup 43; Leiden/New York: Brill, 1991), 219-220.

⁷⁰ Berges, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 497.

⁷¹ Berges, *Das Buch Jesaja*, 516. See a different division in Carr, "Reading Isaiah," 211-212; Odil H. Steck, "Beobachtungen zur Anlage von Jes 65-66," *BN* 38/39 (1987), 103-116, esp. 103-107; Odil H. Steck, "Zu jüngsten Untersuchungen von Jes 56,1-8; 63,7-66,24," in *Studien zu Tritojesaja* (ed. Odil H. Steck; BZAW 203; Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1991), 229-265, esp. 248-262.

⁷² Beuken, "Isaiah Chapters LXV-LXVI," 208.

coming in judgment, announced by the prophet (vv. 15-16[17]), is connected with the pilgrimage of the nations to Jerusalem and the worldwide recognitions of Yahweh, announced by God himself (vv. 18-24).⁷³

This structural pattern achieves an inclusion in the entire Isaiah scroll. The conclusion was composed in such a manner that there is a deliberate bid to make Isa 1:1-2:5 and the unit Isa 65-66 to end on a similar structural note, namely in the scenario of Yahweh's blessings which centres on Jerusalem and involves all the nations.

D CONCLUSION

Zion's ultimate goal and purpose have nothing to do with either Israel's or Judah's nationalistic dreams.⁷⁴ Their wish to be "nations like other nations" (1 Sam 8:5) has caused many centuries of warfare and bloodshed. Nothing resembling righteousness and justice has come forth from this wish. Different parties in the post-exilic Jerusalem were prepared to claim God's promises and blessings for new forms of nationalistic efforts.

The purpose of the book of Isaiah, as is clearly formulated here at the onset of the book, is to deny any of these claims (cf. also Isa 65:1-16) and to put forward an entirely different view of Zion's destiny. The city will be redeemed and equipped to be God's instrument. Zion's appeal will thus be religious and universal. Here Yahweh will meet all the nations and peoples and teach them his *Torah*, which has gained a universal status among all the peoples of the world. In this late redaction phase the *Torah*, which comes from Zion, is connected with priestly teaching which integrates prophetic impulses. In this redactional layer we encounter the idea of *Torah* teaching on Mount Zion, which is priestly teaching that is even available to foreign peoples. It seems that in the redaction history of the book of Isaiah there was a stage in

⁷³ It should be noted that although the structural arrangement coincides with one another, there are differences in rhetorical stance between these chapters (Carr, "Reading Isaiah," 212-214). Although the division in Yahweh's people in Isa 1:2-31 is only anticipated in the process of encouraging repentance, this division has already taken place in Isa 65-66. The whole of Isa 65-66 reassures the outsider "servants" of their insider status with Yahweh and urges them to persevere in their faithfulness and even include a place for righteous foreigners in their vision of the restored Zion which they will inherit and enjoy as their reward. This division has even been extended into the world beyond the community: the wicked and unfaithful within the community are given the same destiny as the evil nations surrounding Judah, while righteous foreigners take part in the restoration of Zion following the destruction of Yahweh's enemies. Nevertheless, Isa 65-66 – like Isa 1 – contain a strategic, selective presentation of central themes from the Isaiah tradition. This presentation is placed at the end of the book, so that it can fulfil its purpose as the final word on the Isaiah tradition.

⁷⁴ Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, 49-50.

which redactors attempted to correlate Isaiah with the Deuteronomistic historical traditions, and they understood Isaiah as the prophetic reminder of the *Torah*. The prophet could only take up themes in accordance with the Mosaic *Torah*, and it was seen as his task to call the people to follow the *Torah* only. There cannot be a *Torah* beyond the teachings of Moses, but according to the late authors there must be one *Torah* for all the nations (2:2-3).

What will be the role of God's people in this city? The rest of the book of Isaiah will address this question. God's people will include only those who are dedicated to Yahweh, "servants of Yahweh," from the remnants of Israel, Jerusalem and the nations. Justice and righteousness have already been shown to be non-negotiable requirements. Willingness and obedience have been named as qualities needed; faith, patience and humility will be among the virtues taught to the servants of the King of Zion, Yahweh, the God of Israel.

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