

# Into the Dark

## Isaiah 50:10-11

### Pierre Cannings, Ph.D

Feeling your way in the dark... Touching the walls of his character

The character of God is clarity in darkness

The 'tailpieces' of the first two Servant Songs (42:5–9; 49:7–13) confirmed aspects of the Servant's task; the present and final 'tailpieces' (54:1–55:13) are appeals to respond to the Servant. The uniting idea of these verses is light

There are two sorts of people: the one sort (10) *has no light* but *obeys the word of* the Lord's Servant by facing the darkness with *trust* and reliance. The others (11) seek to conquer the darkness by fires of their own making. The outcome for the first is not specified; the others suffer an adverse divine reaction (11e) and *lie down in torment* (11f). The perfection of the One against whom no charge can be made (8) makes him our model (10); the fate of his accusers (9) is shared by those who refuse his way (11). Just as he lived in obedience (5), trust and reliance (7, 9), so do those who model themselves on him (10).

'those who revere Yhwh' to denote the community as a whole and asks who among them listens. Like the LXX this works against the parallelism, but it does draw our attention to the implication of the address for the community as a whole. Verse 10a need not imply an acceptance of the idea that the community is divided into a group that looks at things the prophet's way and another that does not. More likely it is an appeal to the whole community to identify itself as revering and obedient, even though walking in darkness. Only here in Isaiah 40–55 does *yārē'* have positive meaning

#### I. In the Dark

##### a. Fears the Lord

###### i. Fear - *awe reverence, honor*

1. *Fears the LORD* and *obeys ... his servant* are in parallel. The way to reverence the Lord is to obey the Servant.

##### b. Obeys the Voice of His Servant

- i. Obeys - to hear out, to sense what is good and what is bad, discerning good and evil; REB: decide between right and wrong; a looser rendering of *ܡܚܝܬ* here would be to decide
  - ii. His Servant
- c. Trust in Darkness
  - i. Walks in Darkness - The word appears twice in Isaiah. In 8:22 it is parallel to *ṣarâ* (distress), *mē'ûp ṣûqâ* (anguished gloom), and *'ăpêlâ mēddāh* (thick blackness). In 50:10, as in Ps 82:5, it is figurative for “ignorance,” “evil,” or “unbelief.”
    - 1. Isaiah the regenerate who are in the darkness of temporal suffering (Isa 50:10) will be visited by a king who will be the source of true/eternal light (Isa 9:2 [H 1]; Mal 3:20 [H 4:2]; Jn 1:9; 8:12; Lk 1:78–79). The nations will flock to him as he sits enthroned in the spiritual/eternal Jerusalem—in the church [or in the millennium or in heaven itself or all three! R.L.H.] (Isa 60:3; Heb 12:22; Rev 21:23; 22:5). God pledges himself to make the righteousness of the elect go forth as brightness (Isa 62:1; paralleled to *lappîd* “torch”).
    - 2. it is those to whom the message is addressed throughout these chapters who can be described as “walking in the dark.” The speaker therefore is distinguishing between those who revere Yahveh and heed the prophetic message, even though bewildered and confused, who are urged to trust that the predictions will be fulfilled, on the one hand; and those who choose to live by their own lights, on the other hand. This seems to be the point of the fire and firebrands: namely, to set up an ironic contrast between these enlightened ones, the *illuminati*, and those who remain faithful to the prophetic word, even though in the dark
  - ii. Trust - to feel secure, to **trust**:
    - 1. Name of the Lord
    - 2. Rely on his God
      - a. metaphorically to **support oneself on, depend on**
      - b. *Rely*: ‘lean’. It is not simply (11) that those who opt for a do-it-yourself approach to life’s darknesses have then no other resource to turn to

exhorted the Servant's followers—those who fear **the LORD** and obey His **Word**, but who are **in the dark** (i.e., living in difficult times when the Servant was rejected, v. 6)—to walk by faith, trusting **in the ... LORD**. If they insist on walking by their own **light** they will suffer the fate of those who reject Him. They **will lie down in torment** (cf. Luke 16:23, 28; also note Rev. 20:13–15; 21:8).

## II. In the Fire

- a. All You
  - i. The 'all of you' who are formally addressed are presumably now the Babylonian community which threatens the prophet, though the 'real' addressees are no doubt Judeans for whom such a warning to those trouble-makers would be an encouragement.
- b. Encircle with Firebrands
- c. Walk in Light of your Fire
- d. Set ablaze the Brands
- e. Lie Down in Torment
  - i. Hand
    - 1. (*walk in the light of your fires*); but, refusing the way of trust and reliance, they incur divine opposition. The *hand* of God goes out against them. *Torment* (*ma'āṣēbā*), is only found here but its verb (e.g. 63:10) guarantees its meaning of grief, pain and displeasure—even 'the place of pain'—specifically the pains of sin under the curse of God (Gen. 3:13–14; 5:29).
  - ii. Lie down' can refer to the sleep-like position of the dead (e.g. 14:18; Ps 88:6 [5]); *ma'āṣēbāh* is then a place of pain after death, like the later Gehenna. But it can also suggest the process of dying (cf. 43:17), and in the context of Isaiah, more likely the imagery of the previous lines continues
  - iii. The hearers will lie writhing as they are tormented by the fire they have kindled; cf 66:24
  - iv. The final verdict on the former anticipates the dark finale of the book (66:24). Lying down (*škb*) is a euphemism for death (e.g. 1 Kgs 2:10), as the bed (*miškāb*) is for the tomb (e.g. Isa 57:2), and there is also a hint that the fire that they themselves light is also the fire that will consume them.

# Word Studies

Fear - *fear, awe reverence, honour,*

Obeys - to hear out, to sense what is good and what is bad, so with Hertzberg ; NRSV: discerning good and evil; REB: decide between right and wrong; a looser rendering of נִחַשׁ here would be to decide

Voice

His Servant

Walks

Darkness The word appears twice in Isaiah. In 8:22 it is parallel to *ṣarâ* (distress), *mě'ûp ṣûqâ* (anguished gloom), and *'ăpēlâ mēnddāh* (thick blackness). In 50:10, as in Ps 82:5, it is figurative for “ignorance,” “evil,” or “unbelief.”<sup>1</sup>

No Light God’s judgment (Joel 2:10; Isa 13:10; cf. Job 18:5) and redemption (Joel 3:15 [H 4:15]) are figured by the darkening of the celestial bodies (Joel 2:31; Acts 2:20). God’s blessing is described as “light shining on your path” (Job 22:28). God, David’s lamp, will brighten his

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Alden, “[769 חֹשֶׁךְ](#).” in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 331.

darkness (Ps 18:28 [H 29]). A good king as an earthly representation of God also shines brightly (II Sam 23:4). Ezekiel uses the root *nāgah* to represent the glory of God (Ezk 1:4; 10:4). For Isaiah the regenerate who are in the darkness of temporal suffering (Isa 50:10) will be visited by a king who will be the source of true/eternal light (Isa 9:2 [H 1]; Mal 3:20 [H 4:2]; Jn 1:9; 8:12; Lk 1:78–79). The nations will flock to him as he sits enthroned in the spiritual/eternal Jerusalem—in the church [or in the millennium or in heaven itself or all three! R.L.H.] (Isa 60:3; Heb 12:22; Rev 21:23; 22:5). God pledges himself to make the righteousness of the elect go forth as brightness (Isa 62:1; paralleled to *lappîd* “torch”).<sup>2</sup>

Trust —to feel secure, to **trust**:<sup>3</sup>

Rely - metaphorically to **support oneself on, depend on**<sup>4</sup>

## Commentary Studies

**The Servant, exemplary and decisive (50:10–11).** The ‘tailpieces’ of the first two Servant Songs (42:5–9; 49:7–13) confirmed aspects of the Servant’s task; the present and final ‘tailpieces’

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<sup>2</sup> Leonard J. Coppes, “[1290 נָגַהּ](#),” in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 550–551.

<sup>3</sup> Ludwig Koehler et al., [The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament](#) (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994–2000), 120.

<sup>4</sup> Ludwig Koehler et al., [The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament](#) (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994–2000), 1612.

(54:1–55:13) are appeals to respond to the Servant. The uniting idea of these verses is light (10d, 11c). There are two sorts of people: the one sort (10) *has no light* but *obeys the word of the Lord's* Servant by facing the darkness with *trust* and reliance. The others (11) seek to conquer the darkness by fires of their own making. The outcome for the first is not specified; the others suffer an adverse divine reaction (11e) and *lie down in torment* (11f). The perfection of the One against whom no charge can be made (8) makes him our model (10); the fate of his accusers (9) is shared by those who refuse his way (11). Just as he lived in obedience (5), trust and reliance (7, 9), so do those who model themselves on him (10).

**10–11.** *Fears the LORD* and *obeys ... his servant* are in parallel. The way to reverence the Lord is to obey the Servant. *Dark ... no light*: as for him, the way of obedience (5–6) brings days of darkness. Just as he is the model, so his experiences are the norm. *Rely*: ‘lean’. It is not simply (11) that those who opt for a do-it-yourself approach to life’s darknesses have then no other resource to turn to (*walk in the light of your fires*); but, refusing the way of trust and reliance, they incur divine opposition. The *hand* of God goes out against them. *Torment* (*ma’āṣēbā*), is only found here but its verb *ʾāṣēb* (e.g. 63:10) guarantees its meaning of grief, pain and displeasure—even ‘the place of pain’—specifically the pains of sin under the curse of God (Gen. 3:13–14; 5:29).<sup>5</sup>

The concluding verses are crucial for interpreting the passage as a whole and perhaps also for the interpretation of Isa 40–55 as a whole. Unfortunately, the syntax leaves the meaning of v 10 ambiguous. One reading would be: “Whoever among you reveres Yahveh and heeds the voice of his servant, who walks in the dark and has no glimmer of light, will trust in Yahveh’s name ...,” with the relative clause referring to the servant. The syntax permits this reading, but 50:4–9 does not conjure up the image of a person walking in the dark, that is, in a state of spiritual disorientation (cf. Ps 82:5; Isa 8:22), and we have seen that it does not refer to imprisonment either.

Rather, it is those to whom the message is addressed throughout these chapters who can be described as “walking in the dark.” The speaker therefore is distinguishing between those who revere Yahveh and heed the prophetic message, even though bewildered and confused, who are urged to trust that the predictions will be fulfilled, on the one hand; and those who choose to live by their own lights, on the other hand. This seems to be the point of the fire and firebrands: namely, to set up an ironic contrast between these enlightened ones, the *illuminati*, and those who remain faithful to the prophetic word, even though in the dark. The final verdict on the former anticipates the dark finale of the book (66:24). Lying down (*škb*) is a euphemism for death (e.g. 1 Kgs 2:10), as the bed (*miškāb*) is for the tomb (e.g. Isa 57:2), and there is also a hint that the fire that they themselves light is also the fire that will consume them.

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√ ‘square root’

<sup>5</sup> J. Alec Motyer, [\*Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary\*](#), vol. 20, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 359–360.

Who, then, is the speaker in vv 10–11? Torrey (1928, 392–93) attributes the entire passage to the one poet, none other than the author of chs. 40–66 (actually, 34–66 with the exception of 36–39). While I do not exclude the possibility that a speaker might refer to himself in the third person, the manner in which the public is addressed makes it unlikely in this instance. It makes no essential difference to attribute v 10 to the prophetic servant and v 11 to Yahveh as a pronouncement of judgment, since this too would be spoken by a prophetic representative (Whybray 1975, 153).

The alternative would be to read vv 10–11 as a comment on the servant’s statement by one who is qualified not only to speak for him but to pronounce a judgment on those who oppose him. This betokens commentary by a disciple who shares in the charisma of the master and has internalized his message. Whether the entire passage is from the hand of this commentator we do not know, but it is significant that it opens by using the language of discipleship: the prophetic servant is the disciple (*lîmmûd*) of Yahveh, as the commentator is of the servant. This issue of prophetic discipleship will come up again in the commentary below, on 52:13–53:12.<sup>6</sup>

**10–11** The tone changes, and apparently the speaker also changes. The verse speaks of YHWH’s עַבְד, “servant.” Which servant is this? At this point YHWH, Darius, and Zerubbabel are all in position to call for loyalty and action of the same kind. They are practically interchangeable as speakers here, but identifying the servant as Darius gives the speech particular meaning. He speaks to support the Jewish teacher/leader who has just spoken. He is also asking for Judah’s loyalty to his cause by claiming YHWH’s choice of himself to be YHWH’s servant. Then, in the manner of emperors, he threatens retribution on all rebels.<sup>7</sup>

50:10–11. Isaiah exhorted the Servant’s followers—those who fear **the LORD** and obey His **Word**, but who are **in the dark** (i.e., living in difficult times when the Servant was rejected, v. 6)—to

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<sup>6</sup> Joseph Blenkinsopp, [\*Isaiah 40–55: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary\*](#), vol. 19A, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 322–323.

<sup>7</sup> John D. W. Watts, [\*Isaiah 34–66\*](#), Revised Edition, vol. 25, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc, 2005), 761–762.

walk by faith, trusting **in the ... LORD**. If they insist on walking by their own **light** they will suffer the fate of those who reject Him. They **will lie down in torment** (cf. Luke 16:23, 28; also note Rev. 20:13–15; 21:8). This admonition was directed to those living in Isaiah's day. But all who refuse to **trust** the Lord will suffer eternal damnation.<sup>8</sup>

**50:10a. Who among you reveres Yhwh, listens to his servant's voice?** The 'Who/There' interweaving of vv. 8–9 continues in vv. 10–11, though this third pair of occurrences of the words works in a different way. The 'Who' directly addresses those to whom it refers, who are friends rather than foes. The 'There' likewise directly addresses those to whom it draws attention and thus discomforts rather than comforts its dramatic audience. The LXX closes the question after the first colon and renders the second verb ἀκουσάτω ('he must listen'), which might imply a jussive verb, but both phenomena may simply reflect the difficulty of construing v. 10 as a whole. In association with the LXX's supposed reading, GK 137c takes the 'who' as indefinite, while

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<sup>8</sup> John A. Martin, "[Isaiah](#)," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1105.

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GK W. Gesenius, *Hebräische Grammatik*, ed. and enlarged by E. Kautzsch, Leipzig, 20<sup>th</sup> ed., 1909. ET Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar*, Oxford/New York, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1910



†Duhm takes it as relative. But these are rare uses of *mî*, if they exist (on the former, see †Alexander; cf on v. 8). In the absence of other pointers from the context, the presupposition must be that *mî* is grammatically interrogative, though rhetorically the reference is doubtless indefinite. The question invites people to identify with this category (\*Beuken, pp. 170–74). The question ‘Who among you’ recurs from 42:23, where it had the same significance.

In accordance with later usage the Tg takes ‘those who revere Yhwh’ to denote the community as a whole and asks who among them listens. Like the LXX this works against the parallelism, but it does draw our attention to the implication of the address for the community as a whole. Verse 10a need not imply an acceptance of the idea that the community is divided into a group that looks at things the prophet’s way and another that does not. More likely it is an appeal to the whole community to identify itself as revering and obedient, even though walking in darkness. Only here in Isaiah 40–55 does *yārē* have positive meaning (‘revere’ rather than ‘fear’), and Elliger takes that as an indication that this line is an addition from Third Isaiah (*Verhältnis*, pp. 31, 37; he notes many other verbal links with Third Isaiah in v. 10).

For ‘his servant’ the Tg characteristically has ‘his servants the prophets’. 1QIs<sup>a</sup> offers a striking interpretation. Its participle is plural, requiring the rendering ‘Who among you revere Yhwh, who listens to his servant’s voice?’ God heeds the voice of his Messianic Servant’ (†Chamberlain, p. 372). In this asyndetic line, syntactically the MT itself might be understood thus, but we do not otherwise hear it suggested that listening is Yhwh’s business between 1:15; 30:19; 37:4, 17; 38:5 and 59:1–2; 65:24.

Who speaks in vv. 10–11? In chapters 40–55 as a whole, the main speakers are Yhwh and the prophet, though their words are set in the context of the voices of an author or narrator or editor

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† some works on Isaiah are referred to by the author’s name

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cf compare

\* Works on particular sections or texts in Isaiah are referred to by an author’s name

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Tg Targum

LXX Septuagint

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Tg Targum

† some works on Isaiah are referred to by the author’s name

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or glossators. In v. 10a both Yhwh and the prophet are referred to in the third person, which might imply that the speaker is one of that latter company. Thus Elliger (*Verhältnis*, pp. 33–38) sees v. 10 as from Third Isaiah and v. 11 as a later gloss on v. 9b, while \*Merendino (*ZAW* 97; *BZ* 29) sees v. 10 as belonging with vv. 4–9a but v. 11 as part of a later oracle continuing vv. 1aα, 2–3, 9b. But if something like this is so, whom do such speakers address—who are the ‘you’ of v. 10 and the ‘you’ of v. 11? Editors and glossators do not usually address the audience on the stage but the audience in the house, the book’s audience rather than the prophet’s audience. Thus Elliger assumes that in v. 10 Third Isaiah addresses the Second Temple community (*Verhältnis*, p. 37). But there is no indication that the referent of ‘you’ has changed from a sixth-century audience to a later one. Further, in v. 11 it is Yhwh who speaks, even if via an editor or glossator.

So do vv. 9–11 involve three speakers, prophet, editor, and God? It is simpler to assume that Yhwh speaks throughout vv. 10–11. References to Yhwh in the third person on Yhwh’s own lips are common enough, and a transition to direct address and to Yhwh’s speech, particularly as it is unannounced, adds to the intrinsic power of vv. 10–11. The prophet would also be capable of third-person self-reference, but this would make for a less plausibly complex jerkiness about vv. 9–11. Either way, the audience is the implicit audience of the prophet’s testimony, Second Isaiah’s own community in Babylon. This ‘you’ is different from the ‘them’ of v. 9b (against †Ibn Ezra).

שָׁמַעַי LXX might imply juss. יִשְׁמַע; cf Syr *nšm*’.

1 כֻּלָּם QIs<sup>a</sup> has כֻּלָּם (‘all of them’).

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\* Works on particular sections or texts in Isaiah are referred to by an author’s name

*ZAW Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

*BZ Biblische Zeitschrift*

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juss. jussive

cf compare

Syr Syriac (text)

**50:10bα. One who has walked in deep darkness and had no brightness ...** The Vg and Tg take the whole of v. 10 as one sentence. In the Vg v. 10bα then refers to the servant ('... who has walked ..., he must hope ...'), while the Tg's pluralizing the servant (see above) makes this singular relative clause refer back to the reverer. Either way, this long question is then a rhetorical one, though it is not clear whether as such it comprises an open challenge to people who might say 'I am', or an indirect declaration that there are no people in this category. In the latter case, v. 11 would then take up this declaration. But we will note that v. 11 would be an unparalleled negative statement to the prophet's own community. The verses also seem to exclude the idea that the answer to the question is 'No-one'. The question would be an open challenge.

The Vg's might be a more plausible understanding if the words were prose, but long complex sentences of this kind are unusual in Hebrew poetry, and 'āšer ('[one] who') understood as a pure relative is also a prose usage, especially relating to the immediately preceding word. Deuteronomy 20:5–7; Judges 10:18, and Hag 2:3 offer close prose parallels to the present sentences; contrast the usage in, for example, 41:8, 9; 43:10. We thus follow the LXX, which takes this middle line as an independent relative clause (cf GK 138; *IBHS* 19.1d, 3c; *DCH*, Vol. 1, pp. 428b–29b). It does not continue to describe the servant but introduces the subject of the main verb in v. 10bβ, who is by implication the reverer of Yhwh in v. 10a. If the relative directly refers back to this person, it

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Vg Vulgate

Tg Targum

Vg Vulgate

Tg Targum

Vg Vulgate

LXX Septuagint

cf compare

GK W. Gesenius, *Hebräische Grammatik*, ed. and enlarged by E. Kautzsch, Leipzig, 20<sup>th</sup> ed., 1909. ET Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar*, Oxford/New York, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1910

*IBHS* B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, Winona Lake, IN, 1990

*DCH* D. J. A. Clines and others (ed.), *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, 8 vols., Sheffield, 1993–

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makes little difference. The LXX signals this change by a move from third person singular and jussive in v. 10a to second person plural imperative in v. 10b, οἱ πορευόμενοι ... πεποίθατε ... ('[You] who walk ..., trust ...').

1QIs<sup>a</sup> also implicitly takes this line as a new start. It has another plural verb (*hlkw* for *hālak*), perhaps suggesting 'Who [among you] walk in darkness ...' (†Chamberlain, p. 372). The MT similarly divides the verse so as to link this bicolon with the one that follows. The question at the beginning of the verse thus ends after the first bicolon not after the first colon (LXX) nor after v. 10bα (†S. Smith, p. 71) nor at the end of v. 10 (Vg). The asyndetic move from qatal to yiqtol without change of subject is paralleled in 52:8 (†Saydon, p. 293).

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† some works on Isaiah are referred to by the author's name

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MT Masoretic Text

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† some works on Isaiah are referred to by the author's name

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Vg Vulgate

qatal Hebrew verb aspect (traditionally 'perfect')

yiqtol Hebrew verb form (traditionally 'imperfect')

† some works on Isaiah are referred to by the author's name

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הָלַךְ there is hardly need or warrant for Elliger's repointing of the qatal to ptpl, הָלַךְ though this conforms the text more closely to 9:1 [2] (*Verhältnis*, p. 29). In the MT the n. cl. complements the qatal cl. as s. נָגַד complements pl. חֲשִׁכִּים.

**50:10bβ ... must trust in Yhwh's name and lean on his God.** The LXX's πεποιθήατε ... ἀντιστηρίσασθε and the Vg's *speret* ... *innitatur* rightly assume that the verbs are jussive rather than yiqtol. The latter seems to require a 'Yet' to open the line (cf RSV), and there is no such adversative in the text. The Vg's *speret* turns trust into hope, which fits Second Isaiah's general emphasis (the verb *bāṭaḥ* comes only here in Second Isaiah). But it is hardly justified by the usual usage of *bāṭaḥ*, or supported by the parallelism with *šā'an* (ni, 'lean'), which is linked to *bāṭaḥ* by co-ordinating w. 'Yhwh's name' is equivalent to 'Yhwh in person', a usage that reappears in Third Isaiah (see 56:6; Elliger, *Verhältnis*, p. 31).

*Genesis Rabbah* 60.1 applies the verse to Abraham as one who indeed revered Yhwh, listened to the voice addressing him as servant, and walked from Mesopotamia to Canaan without any light except Yhwh's guidance, trusting and leaning on Yhwh.

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qatal Hebrew verb aspect (traditionally 'perfect')

ptpl participle

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MT Masoretic Text

n. noun

cl. clause

qatal Hebrew verb aspect (traditionally 'perfect')

cl. clause

s. singular

pl. plural

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Vg Vulgate

yiqtol Hebrew verb form (traditionally 'imperfect')

cf compare

Vg Vulgate

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**50:11a. There, all of you who kindle fire, who gird firebrands ...** The MT's verse division perhaps implicitly understands v. 11a as a self-contained sentence, as the LXX does, but the Vg more plausibly takes this line, like the first of v. 10, as a sequence of noun expressions in apposition, forming the subject of the verbs in v. 11b. The 'all of you' who are formally addressed are presumably now the Babylonian community which threatens the prophet, though the 'real' addressees are no doubt Judeans for whom such a warning to those trouble-makers would be an encouragement.

מֵאֲזֵרִי: the pi vb governs זִיקוֹת as its direct obj. (cf Ps 18:33 [32], 40 [39] = 2 Sam 22:40; Ps 30:12; cf \*Beuken, p. 175), rather than being reflexive ('gird themselves with'). This is the meaning of the hit (8:9; Ps 93:1) to which †Volz assimilates it, emending to מֵתֵאֲזֵרִי. Syr *mgwzly* might imply מֵאֲזֵרִי (T. Seeker, as quoted in †Lowth), a simpler and surely less original reading (\*Holter). Syr may merely be assimilating to v. 11b where it uses *gzl* for בָּעַר ('light'). From LXX's ἀτασθαλίᾳ ('overpower') †Oort infers מֵעֲזָרִי ('helping'), but

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MT Masoretic Text

LXX Septuagint

Vg Vulgate

pi piel

vb verb

obj. object

cf compare

cf compare

\* Works on particular sections or texts in Isaiah are referred to by an author's name

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hit hitpael

† some works on Isaiah are referred to by the author's name

Syr Syriac (text)

† some works on Isaiah are referred to by the author's name

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Syr Syriac (text)

LXX Septuagint

† some works on Isaiah are referred to by the author's name

girding and strength are closely connected (Pss 18:33, 40 [32, 39]; 93:1) and more likely the LXX is paraphrasing (†Ottley); cf Guillaume's comments on the link between אָזר and אָדָר (see on 42:21). \*Joüon ('Notes philologiques', p. 196) rather emends to מוֹרִי ('shooters'), as Prov 26:18.

**50:11bα. Walk into your fiery flame, walk among the firebrands you lit.** The attackers' tactic is an inherently dangerous one, and they will pay the price for it. The LXX's τῷ φωτὶ, Vg's *in lumine*, and Syr's *bzhr* assimilate to the more familiar 'ôr and to 2:5. The LXX and Vg also assume that the preposition *b* means 'in' rather than 'into', but the latter is the more common meaning after 'walk' (*hālak*; cf 45:16; 46:2) and here the phrase contrasts with v. 10bα, where the phrase 'walk in darkness' has no preposition. We have repeated the verb as a way of representing explicative *waw*.

**50:11bβ. This is coming from my hand for you. You will lie down in pain.** For 'from my hand', the LXX has 'through me', avoiding the anthropomorphism (†Fritsch, p. 159). The Tg renders

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LXX Septuagint

† some works on Isaiah are referred to by the author's name

cf compare

\* Works on particular sections or texts in Isaiah are referred to by an author's name

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**lit** literally

LXX Septuagint

Vg Vulgate

Syr Syriac (text)

LXX Septuagint

Vg Vulgate

cf compare

LXX Septuagint

† some works on Isaiah are referred to by the author's name

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Tg Targum

‘from my word’, often Yhwh’s agent of punishment in the Tg: cf 8:14; 33:11; 40:24; 41:16 (†Chilton, pp. 58–60). In the MT Yhwh is more directly involved.

‘Lie down’ can refer to the sleep-like position of the dead (e.g. 14:18; Ps 88:6 [5]); *ma’āšēbāh* is then a place of pain after death, like the later Gehenna. Thus *Midrash Ecclesiastes* on Qoh 3:9 pictures God declaring v. 11 to people complaining to find themselves there. But it can also suggest the process of dying (cf 43:17), and in the context of Isaiah, more likely the imagery of the previous lines continues. The word *ma’āšēbāh* comes only here. While the *m* preformative on the root ‘šb could suggest location (cf BDB), it could equally denote abstraction (thus simply ‘pain’) or instrument (thus perhaps ‘torment’) (see *IBHS* 5.6b; JM 881). Either of the latter fits here. The hearers will lie writhing as they are tormented by the fire they have kindled; cf 66:24, where again the reference is hardly to Gehenna, though it might be to the geographical Gehinnom, or at least to some place outside Jerusalem where dead bodies lay rotting and burning. †Rignell rather links the word with ‘āšab it and takes it to mean ‘[a place of] idolatry’, but this is hardly suggested by the context. The preposition is actually *l*, thus literally ‘lie down into

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Tg Targum

cf compare

† some works on Isaiah are referred to by the author’s name

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MT Masoretic Text

cf compare

cf compare

BDB F. Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Oxford, 1907. Reprinted with corrections, 1953

*IBHS* B. K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, Winona Lake, IN, 1990

JM P. Joüon, *Grammaire de l’Hébreu biblique*, Rome, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1947. ET *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, translated and revised by T. Muraoka, Rome, 1991

cf compare

† some works on Isaiah are referred to by the author’s name



torment'; cf 47:1a. The usage is the familiar pregnant one rather than an indication that / has the same meaning as *b* (contrast †Ruiz, p. 95). The Tg paraphrases 'to your stumbling you will return'. תשבבון with paragogic ך, omitted by 1QIs<sup>a</sup>, closes the line and the chapter.<sup>9</sup>

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cf compare

† some works on Isaiah are referred to by the author's name

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Tg Targum

<sup>9</sup> John Goldingay and David Payne, [\*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 40–55\*](#), ed. G. I. Davies and G. N. Stanton, vol. 2, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 215–219.