

FORMATION AND INTERTEXTUALITY  
IN ISAIAH 24-27

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Society of Biblical Literature



Ancient Israel and Its Literature

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Number 17

FORMATION AND INTERTEXTUALITY  
IN ISAIAH 24-27

*Edited by*

J. Todd Hibbard and Hyun Chul Paul Kim

Society of Biblical Literature  
Atlanta

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Formation and intertextuality in Isaiah 24–27 / edited by J. Todd Hibbard and Hyun Chul Paul Kim.

p. cm. — (Society of biblical literature ancient Israel and its literature ; no. 17)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Summary: The formation and interpretation of Isaiah 24-27, the “Isaiah Apocalypse,” are important for understanding Isaiah’s compositional history, emerging religious thought in the Persian Period, and scribal techniques for late biblical materials. The volume explores these and other issues and outlines new directions--Provided by publisher.

ISBN 978-1-58983-886-4 (paper binding : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-1-58983-887-1 (electronic format) — ISBN 978-1-58983-888-8 (hardcover binding : alk. paper)

1. Bible. Isaiah, XXIV–XXVII—Criticism, interpretation, etc. 2. Bible. Isaiah, XXIV–XXVII—Criticism, Textual. 3. Intertextuality in the Bible. I. Hibbard, James Todd, editor. II. Kim, Hyun Chul Paul, editor.

BS1515.52.F67 2013

224'.1066—dc23

2013027657

Printed on acid-free, recycled paper conforming to  
ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992 (R1997) and ISO 9706:1994  
standards for paper permanence.



Dedicated to the recently retired first-generation scholars of  
the Formation of the Book of Isaiah Group at SBL



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## ABBREVIATIONS

1QIsa <sup>a</sup>	Qumran Isaiah <sup>a</sup> Scroll
AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
ACEBTSup	Amsterdamse Cahiers voor Exegese en Bijbel zijn tradities Supplement Series
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ANET	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> . Edited by James B. Pritchard. 3rd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969.
AnOr	Analecta orientalia
AuOr	<i>Aula orientalis</i>
ArBib	The Aramaic Bible
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
AUM	Andrew University monographs
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BDB	Brown, Francis, Samuel R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Oxford: Clarendon, 1907.
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium
BGBE	Beiträge zur Geschichte der biblischen Exegese
BH	Biblical Hebrew
BHS	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i> . Edited by Karl Elliger and Wilhelm Rudolph. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983.
<i>b. Ḥul</i>	Babylonian Talmud, tractate <i>Ḥullin</i>
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament

BMes	Bibliotheca mesopotamica
BN	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BRGA	Beiträge zur Religionsgeschichte des Altertums
BWA(N)T	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten (und Neuen) Testament
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAT	<i>The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places</i> . Edited by Manfred Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquin Sanmartín. ALASPM 8. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1997.
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBH	Classical Biblical Hebrew
CBSC	Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges
CC	Continental Commentaries
CEB	Common English Bible
ConBOT	Conectanea Biblica Old Testament Series
CTA	<i>Corpus des tablettes en cunéiformes alphabétiques découvertes à Ras Shamra-Ugarit de 1929 à 1939</i> . Edited by Andrée Herdner. Mission de Ras Shamra 10. Paris: Geuthner, 1963.
CTH	<i>Catalogue des Textes Hittites</i> . Edited by Emmanuel Laroche. EeC 75. Paris: Klincksieck, 1971.
DDD	<i>Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible</i> . Edited by Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst. 2nd ed. Leiden: Brill, 1999.
EBC	Expositor's Bible Commentary
EBib	Etudes bibliques
EBH	Early Biblical Hebrew
ECC	Eerdmans Critical Commentary
EeC	Etudes et commentaires
ELB	Elberfelder 1905 (German) Bible
ESV	English Standard Version
ET	English Translation
ETL	<i>Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses</i>
ExpTim	<i>Expository Times</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature

GNB	Good News Bible
GNT	Good News Translation
HALOT	Koehler, Ludwig, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann J. Stamm. <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Translated and edited under the supervision of M. E. J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994–1999.
HBS	Herders Biblische Studien
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
HO	Handbuch der Orientalistik
HS	<i>Hebrew Studies</i>
HSAT	Die Heilige Schrift des Alten Testamentes
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HTKAT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual
ICC	International critical commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments
IH	Israelian Hebrew
IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
Int	<i>Interpretation</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JPOS	<i>Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society</i>
JNSL	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KBo	<i>Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi</i> . WVDOG 30, 36, 68–70, 72–73, 77–80, 82–86, 89–90. Edited by Hans Gustav Güterbock and Heinrich Otten. Berlin: Mann, 1916–1970.
KHC	Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament
KTU	<i>Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit</i> . Edited by Manfred Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín. AOAT 24.1. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1976.
KUB	<i>Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi</i>
LBH	Late Biblical Hebrew

LDBT	Young, Ian, and Robert Rezetko. <i>Linguistic Dating of Biblical Texts</i> . Bible World. 2 vols. London: Equinox, 2008.
LEI	Leidse Vertaling
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible Old Testament Series
LUÅ	Lunds universitets årsskrift
LXX	Septuagint
MH	Mishnaic Hebrew
MT	Masoretic Text
NAB	New American Bible
NABre	New American Bible, revised edition
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NJPS	<i>Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures: The New JPS Translation according to the Traditional Hebrew Text</i>
NCB	New Century Bible
NET	New English Translation
NETS	<i>A New English Translation of the Septuagint and Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included under that Title</i> . Edited by Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
NIV	New International Version
NLT	New Living Translation
NVBS	New Voices in Biblical Studies
OAN	oracles against the nations
OAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
Or	<i>Orientalia</i>
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTM	Old Testament Message Series
OTWSA	<i>Ou-Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap in Suid-Afrika</i> .
OtSt	<i>Oudtestamentische Studiën</i>
PredOT	De Prediking van het Oude Testament
QD	Quaestiones disputatae
QH	Qumranic Hebrew
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i>
RBL	<i>Review of Biblical Literature</i>
RevExp	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
RHPR	<i>Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses</i>
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilizations

SB	Sources bibliques
SBH	Standard Biblical Hebrew
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLAIL	Society of Biblical Literature Ancient Israel and Its Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLRBS	Society of Biblical Literature Resources for Biblical Study
SBSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBLWAW	Society of Biblical Literature Writings from the Ancient World
SEÅ	<i>Svensk exegetisk årsbok</i>
SEL	<i>Studi epigrafici e linguistici</i>
SHR	Studies in the History of Religions (supplement to Numen)
SHCANE	Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East
TA	<i>Tel Aviv</i>
<i>Tg. Ps.-J.</i>	<i>Targum Pseudo-Jonathon</i>
<i>Tg. Isa.</i>	<i>Targum Isaiah</i>
T-I	Trito-Isaiah, Isaiah 56–66
TZ	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
UBL	Ugaritisch-biblische Literatur
UCOP	University of Cambridge Oriental Publications
UF	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
VIHA	<i>Veröffentlichungen des "Instituts für Historische Anthropologie"</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WBC	Word Bible Commentary
WVDOG	Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft: Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZUR	Zürcher Bibel



## INTRODUCTION

J. Todd Hibbard and Hyun Chul Paul Kim

The book of Isaiah provides readers with a colorful tapestry of images, rich poetic language, and a deep well of theological insights. Among the prophetic books, it offers the widest window into the social and political world of Israel and Judah during many of the turbulent times of the first millennium B.C.E. Its compositional arc is, in the view of critical scholarship, a long one, stretching from the eighth century B.C.E. to fifth or fourth centuries B.C.E. (or beyond). Though the longstanding division of the book into three major sections—Proto-, Deutero-, and Trito-Isaiah—has proved useful for understanding much about the contexts of the book's composition and development, scholars have also insisted that this division does not correspond neatly to the chronology of the book's development in every respect. Moreover, in recent years, studies that approach the book synchronically or canonically have arisen, complementing the previous diachronic orientations to the book, as well as scholarship devoted to the book's reception and interpretation. The result is that the present state of Isaiah scholarship is extremely diverse in the questions it pursues and the methods used to pursue them.

The large size of the book of Isaiah prompts scholars frequently to focus attention on smaller units within the book. Isaiah 24–27, sometimes (mis-)labeled as the “Isaiah Apocalypse,” is one such unit that has attracted attention, at least since the early twentieth century. These chapters are preceded by a collection of oracles focused on foreign entities (Isa 13–23) and followed by a section whose nucleus is thought to be related to the crises of the late eighth century B.C.E. during the reign of Hezekiah (Isa 28–33). Accounting for their position in the book is only one of the issues confronting exegetes. Indeed, these four short chapters present the reader with many questions. To what do the several references to an anonymous city refer (24:10, 12; 25:2; 26:1, 5; 27:10)? Do these chapters offer the first

reference to resurrection in the Hebrew Bible (26:19)? How do these chapters anticipate apocalyptic? To what does the broken “everlasting covenant” refer (24:5)? How should the imagery of YHWH swallowing death (25:8) be interpreted? What is the relationship between these chapters and Canaanite myth? What are the circumstances of their composition? Who wrote them? What is their relationship to the surrounding material? Are the chapters a unified composition? Is there evidence of redaction in the section? Do the chapters present a unified message? These and many other questions have been addressed through the years but, owing to their unresolved status, remain open.

This volume explores several of these issues with the hope that some light will be shed on the critical interpretive issues. The present collection of essays continues the long tradition of published volumes emanating from the Society of Biblical Literature’s Formation of the Book of Isaiah Group (now Section). Three earlier collections have established this group as a home for productive and creative scholarship on Isaiah, and it is our hope that this volume continues in that vein. The most recent contribution, *The Desert Will Bloom: Poetic Visions in Isaiah*,<sup>1</sup> focused on Isaiah’s poetic dimensions, explicitly keying on the book’s use of language and poetry. Prior to that publication, the collective dialogues of the group resulted in “*As Those Who are Taught*”: *The Interpretation of Isaiah from the LXX to the SBL*.<sup>2</sup> This volume was oriented toward the theme of the reading process, the interactions between text and reader. It explored concrete examples of ways in which the book has been interpreted from the ancient to the modern period. The first volume offered by the group, *New Visions of Isaiah*,<sup>3</sup> was also driven by questions about how the reading process influenced interpretation. The volume’s essays variously considered the location of meaning—did such reside in the text, the author, or the reader? Additionally, the volume was deeply interested in the differences between synchronic and diachronic readings. Though each of these volumes was

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1. A. Joseph Everson and Hyun Chul Paul Kim, eds., *The Desert Will Bloom: Poetic Visions of Isaiah* (AIL 4; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009).

2. Claire Mathews McGinnis and Patricia K. Tull, eds., “*As Those Who are Taught*”: *The Interpretation of Isaiah from the LXX to the SBL* (SBLSymS 27; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006).

3. Roy F. Melugin and Marvin A. Sweeney, *New Visions of Isaiah* (JSOTSup 214; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996; repr., Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006).



driven by questions rooted in a different time than we now inhabit, the volumes retain their importance for helping set the agenda in Isaiah studies even today.

The present volume builds on these earlier contributions, but differs in one important respect. Unlike these earlier collections which contained essays that ranged over the whole of Isaiah, this volume is restricted to issues arising in one relatively small section of the book. In this sense, this volume charts a different course than these earlier publications. Whereas the earlier volumes were more methodologically homogeneous—at least in the questions they addressed—in exploring a range of texts in Isaiah, this volume poses assorted questions using diverse methodologies to the same section of Isaiah. That does not mean, however, that the issues addressed in these essays do not have importance for reading other portions of the book or the book as a whole (whether synchronically or diachronically). To the contrary, it is hoped that these collected essays demonstrate specifically how reading a small section can be enriching and illuminating in understanding the whole of the book of Isaiah in light of its rich literary complexity, ancient traditions, and thematic messages. The following essays, composed by scholars with diverse methodological expertise (a team of seasoned and up-and-coming scholars across the two continents), are examples of a concerted effort for such an interpretive endeavor.

Several of the articles in this volume had their origin in a 2011 Formation of the Book of Isaiah Group meeting in San Francisco devoted to the study of Isa 24–27. Others were commissioned specifically for this project. Taken together, they demonstrate the exciting and creative research that is being conducted on this small unit in Isaiah at the present moment.

Christopher Hays takes up the challenge of dating Isa 24–27, no small task since these four chapters have generated the greatest range of compositional dates in the entire book (ranging from the eighth century B.C.E. to the second century B.C.E.). Several difficulties confront the exegete in assigning dates to these chapters, not least the lack of historical referents in Isa 24–27. Hays's approach to the question is based on a diachronic approach to Hebrew linguistics. He asks where the language of Isa 24–27 should be situated within the broader development of Hebrew in first millennium B.C.E. His cautious conclusions are provisional but offer the promise of reframing the question of Isa 24–27's date in a helpful and constructive manner.

In an essay that examines important themes and their function in Isa 24–27 as a whole, Hyun Chul Paul Kim identifies three key elements of

these chapters. First, he notes the presence of the older ancient Near Eastern *Chaoskampf* and examines how this theme is used in these chapters as a polemic against tyrants and empires. Second, he notes how the anti-empire theme is combined with a distinction between the righteous and the wicked in these chapters. These two elements are part of Isa 24–27's role as a literary hinge between Isa 13–23 and 28–35 in his view. Finally, he notes that the anonymous city may have both Zion and Babylon in view in a way that allows the reader to draw open-ended conclusions about the future.

Micaël Bürki offers a new angle into the old problem of the identity or identities of the anonymous city or cities repeatedly mentioned in Isa 24–27. This has proven to be one of the issues generating the most interest among scholars, as they attempt to identify the nameless city. This scholarly detective work has frequently been carried out in service of attempting to date the material in this section. Bürki's essay notes the contrasting images of the cities in the section and identifies it as a key structural feature of this material. Additionally, he argues that the images of the city in Isa 24–27 should be read in light of the preceding oracles against the nations (Isa 13–23), which might help shed light at least on the identity and meaning of the Moabite city in Isa 25.

Wilson de A. Cunha explores the royal dimensions of Isa 24:21–23 and 27:12–13. His essay argues that these two passages should be read as thematically linked. Isaiah 24:21–23 depicts judgment on those entities that challenge YHWH's reign while asserting the fact of YHWH's reign. Isaiah 27:12–13 completes the idea by suggesting that gathered exiles who come to worship YHWH as part of the restoration offer a demonstration of that rule. The latter completes the thought of the former in his view.

Using the insights of communication analysis, Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen examines Isa 24:21–25:12. In his view, this text unit is the first part of two elaborations on 24:1–20. His essay notes the presence of different speakers in the text, the interaction of which propels the unit forward. He also draws attention to what he calls the “text-internal” reader and analyzes her/his experience of reading the text.

The festive banquet scene of Isa 25:6–8 is the focus of two essays in the volume. Beth Steiner argues that this scene is the climactic image of Isa 24–27 and owes much to the mythological portraits of gardens and banquets in the cultures surrounding Israel. Of particular importance is her insistence that the meal is associated with YHWH's enthronement. Paul Kang-Kul Cho and Janling Fu's contribution also examines this passage, but from a slightly different angle. They are intrigued by the image of

YHWH swallowing up death, not least because in the Canaanite materials of Ugaritic origin, Mot (Death) is the great “swallower.” Their essay looks at textual and thematic issues that clarify these actions in Isa 25.

Two essays in the volume explore the related themes of death and resurrection. Three passages from Isa 24–27 that deal with living and dying—25:8, 26:14, and 26:19—are of interest to Annemarieke van der Woude. Also using the insights of communication analysis, she highlights how each passage presents death, which includes for her what is not contrary to death in these passages. It is her contention that the meaning of death is clarified through an analysis that includes noting what it stands in opposition to. Finally, she attends to the spatial dimension of death in these passages as well. In a related but methodologically very different piece, Stephen Cook argues that Isa 26:19 espouses the idea of individual resurrection, an argument that challenges the more widespread view that the verse speaks of the dead living and corpses rising as a metaphor of national restoration. His interpretation sees the verse as integral to the entire lament (26:11–19), but contrasting especially to verse 14’s insistence that Judah’s foreign overlords will not rise.

Building on the hypothesis that Isa 24–27 is a Persian period text, J. Todd Hibbard’s essay explores possible connections between Isa 24–27 and Isa 56–66, much of which is also thought to have been composed in the Persian period. He examines elements of Isa 24 and 26 in particular and places them in relationship with passages in Trito-Isaiah that use similar language or express similar ideas. His provisional conclusion is that certain texts in Isa 24–27 counter or respond to texts in Isa 56–66, primarily because of disappointment over the lackluster restoration effort.

John Willis examines the complicated chapter of Isa 27 and seeks to unravel some of its interpretive difficulties. He offers a close reading of the text that highlights the chapter’s structure, imagery, and language. Key for his interpretation of the passage is the vineyard of 27:2–5.

Finally, in an essay that covers all of Isa 24–27, Carol Dempsey examines the literary and poetic features of these chapters. She argues that these chapters possess an internal unity whose poetry “tells a story” about destruction *and* salvation. The chapters’ themes fit well with what precedes (Isa 13–23) and what follows (Isa 28–33) in her view. Her essay concludes with some interesting hermeneutical considerations about the text’s portrayal of God with which modern readers of the text must wrestle.

In sum, the essays of this volume reveal the richness and diversity of this short section of Isaiah. Indeed, though these essays are methodologi-

cally diverse and entertain a variety of critical questions, exegetes of these chapters will undoubtedly identify issues that were left unexplored by this modest volume. Perhaps this may call for another volume on Isa 24–27!

We dedicate this volume to the (somewhat) recently retired professors and scholars of the first generation of the Formation of the Book of Isaiah Group: Willem A. M. Beuken, Edgar W. Conrad, A. Joseph Everson, Chris Franke, Rolf Rendtorff, Patricia K. Tull, Gary Stansell, †John D. W. Watts, and Roy D. Wells. Their high-quality scholarship and mutual open-mindedness have set a model example of how scholarship can be both profound and fun. We are grateful for their academic excellence in vigorously paving the way of Isaiah scholarship in the last decades. We are equally grateful for their humility and gentle encouragement to junior scholars. Their love for this great prophet Isaiah has indeed become manifest as an exegetical feast provided by our God (Isa 25:6). The next generation of Isaiah scholarship is indebted to their legacy and hopeful of following in their path.