

Isaiah 62, Promises to Zion

Overview

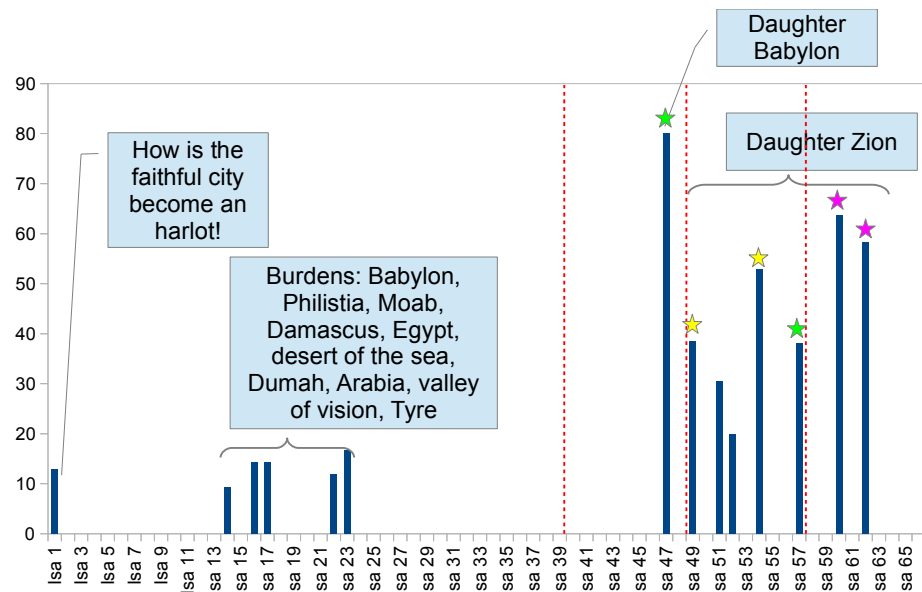
With the central section on the work of the Redeemer, we have turned the corner in the chiasm of 58-66, and are now working our way out (chart, Illustration 1). The chapter has strong links with the previous two.

In the first seven verses, the speaker is speaking to Zion, and mentions the Lord in the third person. The pairing of “righteousness” and “salvation” recalls 61:10-11, and we should probably hear here the continued voice of the Redeemer. But the break with 61 is clear, because he now speaks directly to Zion, rather than about her.

The direct address is consistently in the 2fs, and like the previous 2fs section (ch. 60), focuses on the restoration of Zion under the metaphor of a woman. This metaphor is pervasive throughout the entire book, and is applied initially and predominantly to Zion, but also to other nations (in the Burdens of ch. 13-23, and to Babylon in ch. 47) (chart, Illustration 2)

False vs. True Worship	58:1-14	66:1-24
Indictment & Confession	59:1-15a	63:7-65:25
The Redeemer	59:15b-21	63:1-7
Zion's Glory (2fs)	60:1-22	62:1-12
The Redeemer	61:1-11	

Illustration 1: Chapter 62 in 58-66



We will see another link *Illustration 2: 2fs forms in Isaiah (% of vv in each chapter)* with ch. 60 when we study vv. 1-2 in more detail.

In the overall structure of the chapter (chart, Illustration 3), the Redeemer speaks through v. 7. His last act is to charge two groups of people, watchmen and heralds, to implore the Lord to intervene and carry out his promises, and in vv. 8-12 these two groups respond to this petition.¹

¹ In the original exposition, I described these verses as the Lord’s response, which they certainly contain. But v. 10 is much better understood on the lips of the watchman (see notes), and the Lord’s responses are quoted, just as a herald would do.

1-7, The Redeemer Comforts Zion

The Redeemer’s promises to Zion are organized around four metaphors: a bright beacon that attracts others, the emperor and his subject king, the husband and his wife, and the civil institutions of a well-ordered city. The first three become increasingly personal. The fourth shifts from statements of blessing to instructions to bring it about.

1-2a, Metaphors of Light

62:1 For Zion's sake will I not hold my

peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.-- “Righteousness” and “salvation” are the two pieces of clothing that the Redeemer wears in 61:10. He will deliver Zion from her enemies, and lead her into behavior that is truly pleasing to him.

But note the change of metaphor. No longer are righteousness and salvation depicted as garments, but as sources of light. This takes us back to 60:1 (chart),

Isa 60:1 Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.

In fact, the next line continues the parallel with ch. 60. Corresponding to

60:1-3	62:1-2
Isa 60:1-3 Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. 2 For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee .	Isa 62:1-2 For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness , and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth .
3 And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.	2 And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory:

Illustration 4: Parallel between 60:1-3 and 62:1-2

Isa 60:3 And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

we now read:

2 And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory:--Isaiah 40-66 often mentions that the Gentiles will marvel at Zion’s restoration. In addition to 60:3, recall

Isa 49:6 I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

Isa 52:10 The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

Isa 61:9 And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the

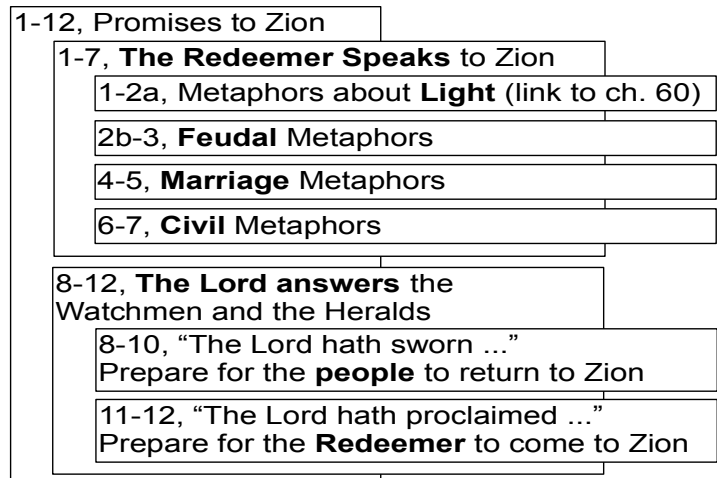


Illustration 3: Structure of Isaiah 62

people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the LORD hath blessed.

Our Lord may have these passages in mind when he exhorts us,

Mat 5:14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Application: Our relation to the Lord should change us in ways that those around us can see, and that will attract them to the Lord. Never forget that we are walking advertisements for the Lord Jesus.

What is this glory that she shows ? The Redeemer develops it with successively personal metaphors.

2b-3, Feudal Metaphors: Naming and Crowning

The second set of metaphors present Zion, not as something impersonal (light and brightness), but as a person in relation to her king.

The ancient world was feudal. Lower authorities held their power from a higher lord, who in turn owed his power to an even higher one (chart, Illustration 5). We think of “King” as top of the ladder, but sometimes kings owed tribute to even higher lords. Early Israel was remarkable in not following such a structure, but they soon desired a king “like as all the nations that are about” (Deut 17:14; cf. 1 Sam 8:5, 20). We see an example of this in Adonibezek, one of the Canaanite kings conquered by Joshua:

Jdg 1:7 And Adonibezek said, **Threescore and ten kings**, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered *their meat* under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died.

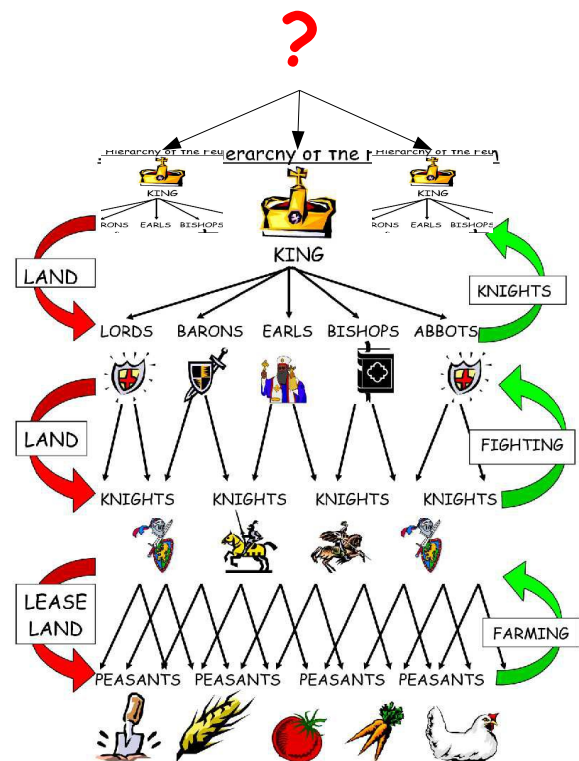
Nebuchadnezzar, who ruled over many lands, was described this way:

Eze 26:7 Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, **a king of kings**, from the north,

But the true King of Kings is our Lord:

Rev 17:14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is **Lord of lords**, and **King of kings**:

The images in these verses present the Lord as the high king, the emperor, to whom Zion is subject.



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Illustration 5: Feudal organization

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God does two things to show that he is her feudal lord.

and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name.--Naming something is a sign of the authority of the namer over the thing named. We see this in the earliest chapters of the Bible (chart): Adam was given

Gen 1:26 **dominion** over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

And in the next chapter

Gen 2:20 And Adam **gave names** to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field;

We recall how the Lord gives new names to the patriarchs at crucial points in their lives.

- Abram becomes Abraham when God establishes his covenant with him (Gen 17:5)
- Sarai becomes Sarah when God predicts that she will be the mother of Isaac (Gen 17:15)
- Jacob becomes Israel when he wrestles with God on the way back from Haran to reconcile with his brother Esau (Gen 32:28)

These are points when they come under the Lord's authority in a special way. They cease to be their own people, and now owe their allegiance to him.

Shortly after Isaiah's time, we see renaming used to establish imperial relations. Late in Israel's history (608 BC), Pharaoh Necho intervenes in Judah's politics to establish a king of his choosing, and marks that authority by giving a new name:

2Ki 23:34 And Pharaohnechoh made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah his father, and **turned his name** to Jehoiakim

So does Nebuchadnezzar after the revolt of Jehoiachin in 597 BC

2Ki 24:17 And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead, and **changed his name** to Zedekiah.

It was always God's purpose that Israel should be a kingdom subject his imperial rule, but they rebelled against him, as surely as the Judaeans rebelled against their Egyptian and Mesopotamian overlords. The day will come when they will truly be subject to his authority, representing him in the world, and he will mark that with a new name. We will see the actual name in v. 4,² but for now, the point is that he has the authority to name them.

Application: Parents give names to a new baby that captures their aspirations for the child. God's right to name us means that his aspirations, his purposes, are the ones that stick. What defines your life, your purposes, your aspirations? Are you seeking to fulfill your parents' ambitions? Or your own set of goals? Or do you acknowledge that the Lord has the right to name you, to define your purpose, and are you committed to finding and fulfilling his purpose for you? The Lord's renaming reminds us that submission to his lordship is not just obeying God's commandments. It is submitting to his purpose, his complete plan for our lives.

² Earlier references to Israel's renaming are 1:26 and 60:14, but it's not clear those are the "new name" contemplated here.

3 Thou shalt also be a crown of glory עטרת תשארתי in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem צנייה in the hand of thy God.--It is curious that the crown is not on the Lord's head, but in his hand. What's going on here?

The word עטרה appears in Isaiah only here and three times in ch. 28. Twice, it describes the drunkards of Ephraim as a crown at the head of a valley (chart, Illustration 6).

Isa 28:1 Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty *is* a fading flower, which *are* on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!

Isa 28:3 The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet:

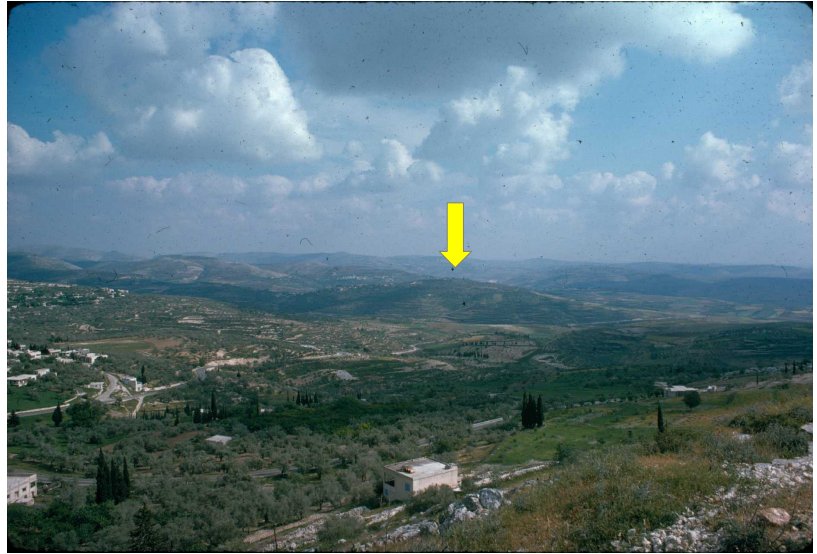


Illustration 6: Samaria in its fat valley

The mount of Samaria was crowned with drunken rulers. What will Jerusalem crown? The parallel suggests that Jerusalem is pictured as a crown in the Lord's hands because he is in the process of placing it on upon Mount Zion.³ This would again be an imperial image: the high king bestowing royal honor on a subordinate kingdom.

There is one more use of this word in Isaiah 28 (chart):

Isa 28:5 In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory עטרת צבי, and for a diadem צפירה of beauty, unto the residue of his people,

The parallel isn't quite as close as it appears in English, but it is still striking that the Lord calls himself the crown in ch. 28, but gives this role to Jerusalem in ch. 62. Perhaps we are meant to recall God's original purpose for man in Genesis 1:

Gen 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:

When we studied Genesis 1, we saw that the "image" likely refers to the pervasive custom of placing images of the monarch throughout his realm, whether as statues or stamped on coins, to remind people of his authority. Jerusalem is the crown on Mount Zion to remind the world that the Lord is the ultimate crown.

Application: In naming us, God reminds us that he expects us to seek his purpose in our lives. In placing us as a crown, he reminds us that we are responsible not just to follow him ourselves, but to represent him before others. The crown on the hill in these verses corresponds to the bright light in vv. 1-2. We are intended to be a public expression of God's will and authority to those around us.

³ Zech 9:16, perhaps with this text in mind, also envisions the people crowning the land (Anita)

4-5, Marriage Metaphors: A Husband and his Wife

The third metaphor is the most personal of all, the relation of a husband and wife.

4 Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.--Now we come to the name that the Lord gives Zion, promised in v. 2. The three pairs here and the two statements in the next verse are aligned with each other, and also aligned with the two descriptions of desolate Zion in chapters 49-50 and 54 (chart, Illustration 7). The alignment here is AB AB AB BA, with the last panel of the alternation reversed to close off the section.

Isa 49:14 But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken עָזַב me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.	Isa 54:1 Sing, O barren, thou <i>that</i> didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou <i>that</i> didst not travail with child: for more <i>are</i> the children of the desolate יָסוּם than the children of the married wife בְּעוּלָה, saith the LORD.
Isa 62:4 Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken עָזַב;	neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate יָסוּם:
but thou shalt be called Hephzibah הֶפְצִיבָה,	and thy land Beulah בְּעוּלָה:
for the LORD delighteth חָפַצ in thee,	and thy land shall be married בְּעוּלָה.
and as the bridegroom rejoiceth שׂוֹשׁ over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.	5 For as a young man marrieth בָּעַל a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee:

Illustration 7: Reversing wifely tragedies

In chapters 49-50, Zion is depicted as forsaken by her husband and bereft of her children.

Isa 49:14 But Zion said, The LORD hath **forsaken** me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.

The Lord promises, “Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken.” On the contrary, the Lord who once abandoned her now delights in her. The Hebrew root for delight is חָפַצ, and occurs not only in the clause “the Lord delighteth in thee,” but also in the proper name, Hephzibah.

In chapter 54, the picture is not the widow who has lost her children, as in the earlier passage, but the barren woman, like Sarah or Ruth. That chapter opened with her being described as desolate:

Isa 54:1 Sing, O barren, thou *that* didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou *that* didst not travail with child: for more *are* the children of the **desolate** than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.

Now the Lord promises, “neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate.” On the contrary (as in 54:1), the land will be married, a passive participle that appears as her other name, בְּעוּלָה.

Application: This verse captures as succinctly as any the complete reversal that the Lord offers those who repent of their sin. Recall the principle of double restoration:
 Isa 40:2 she hath received of the LORD'S hand **double** for all her sins.
 Isa 61:7 For your shame *ye shall have double*; ... in their land they shall possess the **double**:
 God's instruction to us will be effective—as severe as necessary to ensure that we get the lesson. But when we finally learn the lesson, the blessing of restoration will far exceed the displeasure.

What does it mean to describe a city as the Lord's delight, and its land as married? The next verse unpacks the metaphor, reversing the order of the alternation to mark the end of the paragraph. The

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“married land” has to do with the relation of the people to their land, while the “delight” has to do with the Lord’s relation to Zion. Both encourage us concerning the Lord’s faithfulness to his promises, and both also remind us of our responsibilities in our home relationships.

5 For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee:--The simile here is confusing to us, because our verb “married” refers to a very specific relationship, and the idea of sons marrying their mother recalls the Oedipus story, which was a story of tragedy, not of blessing. Even within the scope of biblical thought, a marriage between a son and his mother is an abomination (Lev 18:7-8).

The solution is to recognize that the Hebrew root⁴ used here, בעל, is much more general than just “marry” (chart). Its basic meaning is “own, have authority over.”

Here we have the verb, which occurs 16x in the OT. In most cases it refers to marriage, but in two cases we see the underlying, non-marital meaning:

1Ch 4:22 And Jokim, and the men of Chozeba, and Joash, and Saraph, who **had the dominion** in Moab, and Jashubilehem. And *these are* ancient things.

Isa 26:13 O LORD our God, *other* lords beside thee have **had dominion** over us: *but* by thee only will we make mention of thy name.

The noun is much more common (164x), and only 15x does it mean “husband.” It is the name of the Canaanite deity Baal, meaning “Lord, master.” We also saw it in ch. 1 in a non-marital sense:

Isa 1:3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his **master's** crib: *but* Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

The simile urges us to assign the same meaning to the two uses of the verb in the same way, but it doesn’t tell us *which* meaning. The verb is very rare, and most of the uses of the noun refer to ownership and authority, not to marriage. So it makes sense to see that, rather than any sexual overtones, as the emphasis here.

- A young man takes possession of a virgin. He assumes authority over her, and cares for her.
- In the past, Zion has fallen under the dominion of other lords (Isa 26:13), but one day “Jerusalem” will no more be “trodden down of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24), and Zion’s sons will once more have authority over their own land.

Application: We can learn from this simile at two levels.

The fact that the Redeemer uses this comparison reminds us of God’s purpose for marriage, that the husband should protect, care for, and guide the wife, and the wife should accept that protection, provision, and leadership.

As it is applied here, the comparison emphasizes once more the very physical restoration that is in view here, the city of Zion coming under the political control of her own people. We should look forward to this physical restoration, and not spiritualize away these promises.

and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.--The second simile does not have the ambiguity of the first. It brings our attention unambiguously to the joy that

⁴ The noun appears 164x in the Tanach. The verb occurs only 16x, and may well be denominative. The AV translates the noun only 15x as “husband(s).”

specifically belongs to the marriage relation. God is ecstatic in his union with his restored people.

Application: Again, the simile instructs us at two levels.

In our families, it is right and good that the wife desires to be pleasing to her husband, and that the husband should take pleasure in her. These responses are not to be condemned as “original sin,” but are part of the full relation that God intends in physical marriage.

Metaphorically, our greatest desire should be to be pleasing to the Lord. It should be a matter of great encouragement to us that he rejoices over us. If ever we are tempted to think that he doesn’t care for us, or that our salvation is some grudging transaction that he reluctantly conducts, let our minds be encouraged by this beautiful idiom.

6-7, *The Watchmen and the Heralds*

The third set of metaphors are drawn from civil life (chart). To ensure the blessings of the previous verses, the Redeemer invokes two classes of people who had special responsibilities in ancient society: the night watchman, and the court herald. See notes for more detail.

6 I have set watchmen שומרים upon thy walls, O Jerusalem,--We have already seen a reference to the “watchmen” of Jerusalem:

Isa 52:8 Thy watchmen צופים shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.

The Hebrew words are different. Is it legitimate for to connect the two references?

The term in 52:8 is a very specialized term, the watchman on the wall who looks off into the distance to see what may be coming. The semantics are captured by our term “lookout,” one who looks outward from the city. The word in 62:6 is the more generic term, “one who guards.” It includes the צופה, but also the night watchman, who looks out for fire and burglary.

Ref	Root	Context	Count
62:6	שמר to guard, protect	“night and day”	107x
52:8	צפה to peer, gaze intently	external events	24x

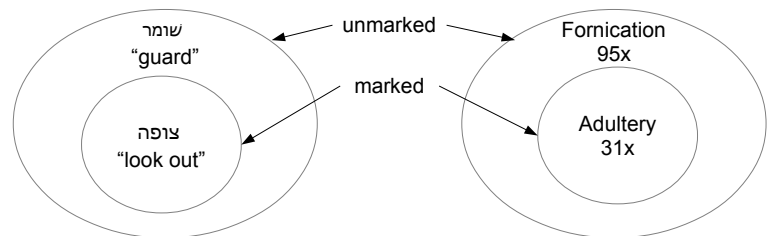


Illustration 8: Hebrew words for “watch, guard”

There is an important linguistic principle here (chart, Illustration 8): we are tempted to explain semantically related terms as though they must divide up the space of meaning in a mutually exclusive way. This sometimes happens (as with “cat” and “dog”), but sometimes one term may include the other (as with “pet” and “dog”). It is often the case that the more general term is also the more common one (as here), but the real criterion is how the terms are used. A linguist would say that the more specialized form is “marked” for some additional feature of meaning, compared with the more general term, which is “unmarked.” Another example of this relationship that is important in the Bible is the relation between “fornication” and “adultery.” Some people insist that fornication can only happen between unmarried people, but as I show in an appendix to the divorce book, fornication includes adultery as a special case.

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In both cases, the role of the watchman is to recognize when something is happening that requires public attention, and then raise the alarm. The Redeemer, having promised God's coming blessing, now enjoins the watchmen to look for it.

which shall never hold their peace day nor night--Human watchmen may miss something, or fall asleep. These watchmen are constantly alert, constantly reporting what they see.

It is common under a covenant interpretation to identify these watchmen with human prophets and teachers, warning the church of danger. If we understand Zion in the normal sense as the city, we will not find faithful human prophets on the walls of Jerusalem today. But it is natural to might identify them with angels charged to watch over Israel, led by Michael, "the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people" (Dan 12:1). Invisible to our eyes, God's angels patrol the walls of Jerusalem in preparation for the day when Zion is restored and the lawful king returns.

ye that make mention of the LORD המזכירים את־יהוה, keep not silence--The מזכיר was a prominent office in the Judaeon court. In fact every time different court officials are mentioned, various positions may be included or omitted, but this position is always there (chart):

2Sa 8:15 And David reigned over all Israel; ... 16 And Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the host; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was **recorder**; 17 And Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, were the priests; and Seraiah was the scribe; 18 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over both the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were chief rulers.

2Sa 20:23 Now Joab was over all the host of Israel: and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and over the Pelethites: 24 And Adoram was over the tribute: and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was **recorder**: 25 And Sheva was scribe: and Zadok and Abiathar were the priests: 26 And Ira also the Jairite was a chief ruler about David.

1Ki 4:1 So king Solomon was king over all Israel. 2 And these were the princes which he had; Azariah the son of Zadok the priest, 3 Elihoreph and Ahiah, the sons of Shisha, scribes; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the **recorder**. 4 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the host: and Zadok and Abiathar were the priests: 5 And Azariah the son of Nathan was over the officers: and Zabud the son of Nathan was principal officer, and the king's friend: 6 And Ahishar was over the household: and Adoniram the son of Abda was over the tribute.

2Ki 18:37 Then came Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the **recorder**, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and told him the words of Rabshakeh.

2Ch 34:8 Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when [Josiah] had purged the land, and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the **recorder**, to repair the house of the LORD his God.

The term translated "recorder," or (in our verse) "ye that make mention of the Lord," is literally "the one who causes to remember." It's distinct from the scribe, so "recorder" probably isn't the best translation. His role is more than just keeping the history books straight. He is the announcer, the "herald." His appearance in every one of the lists of court officials shows how important his role is—this is the only position that is so common. He is the voice of the king to announce his decisions to the

people.

The OT often describes God’s heavenly court in terms reminiscent of an earthly king. Recall the vision reported by Micaiah ben Imlah in 1 Kings 22 (chart),

1Ki 22:19 And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. 20 And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner.

Like the watchmen, the heralds here are probably angels, members of the heavenly court.

7 And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.--

The primary responsibility of the herald would be to report the king’s decisions to the people. Here, the Redeemer exhorts them to urge the Lord to carry out the decrees that they have issued in his name.

Note the inclusion between v. 1 and vv. 6-7 (chart, Illustration 9), in the references to “holding peace” השה (“Rest” is also repeated in English,

though the Hebrew expressions are slightly different: שקט "be quiet" in v. 1, דמי "silence" in v. 7.)⁵ The Redeemer enlists the Watchmen and Heralds in the heavenly court to help him in his mission of intercession for the fulfillment of the Lord’s promises.

v. 1, The Redeemer Leads	vv. 6-7, The Angels Follow
Isa 62:1 For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace השה ,	Isa 62:6 I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace השה day nor night:
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest שקט [be silent],	Isa 62:6-7 ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence דמי , 7 And give him no rest דמי ,
until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.	till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

Illustration 9: Inclusio in 62:1-7

Application: We are not alone as we progress through our earthly pilgrimage. The writer to the Hebrews (1:14) tells us that angels are “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.” We know that the Redeemer himself makes intercession for us, and here he enjoins the host of heaven to join with him in watching after the interests of his people.

8-12, The Response of the Watchmen and Heralds

vv. 6-7 introduce the watchmen and the heralds, and describe their incessant speech. This section contains three short paragraphs: two statements assigned to the Lord, and between them (v. 10), an urgent charge to the public marked by double imperatives.

Isaiah uses many double imperatives. Most of them are in 51:9-52:11, where they appear to be spoken by the watchmen of 52:8.⁶ Since we have a similar role active here in v. 6, I suggest that we understand v. 10 as the voice of the watchmen. Then the announcements about the Lord’s intention in 8-9 and 11-12 would be naturally understood as coming from the heralds. Thus in vv. 8-12 those charged by the

⁵ I am indebted to Anita for pointing out this inclusio.

⁶ See notes.

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Redeemer in vv. 6-7 do what they have been told.

The section is a chiasm, ABba, with heralds on the outside and the two double commands of the watchmen at the center (chart, ...). As often in four-membered chiasms (cf. Rom 2:7-10), the second two members have something in common that contrasts with the first two. In this case, the first two concern the Israelites, while the second two concern the Gentiles.

	Isa 62:8-12	Rom 2:6-11
		6 [God] will render to every man according to his deeds :
A	8 The LORD hath sworn ..., Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies; ...	7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:
B	10 Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people ;	8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth , but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,
b	cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the peoples .	9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile ;
a	11 Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world , Say ye to the daughter of Zion, ...	10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile :
		11 For there is no respect of persons with God.

Illustration 10: ABba Chiasm (linear in people vs. peoples, chiasmic in heralds vs. watchmen)

8-9, First Cry of the Heralds

The heralds first announce a message of the Lord to his people.

8 The LORD hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength,--One swears by that on which one relies as witness and guarantor of the oath (chart). People swear by the Lord, as Abimelech asked Abraham to do:

Gen 21:23 Now therefore swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son:

But there is no higher authority by which God can swear:

Heb 6:13 because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself,

Hebrews explains his motive:

Heb 6:17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath:

Here he identifies his power as the guarantor of his promise.

Application: God bends over backwards to assure us of his promises. He appoints angelic heralds to carry the message, and then accompanies it with a solemn oath. We must never doubt his promises—or his warnings of judgment.

Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies; and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured:--He is reversing the Deuteronomistic curse that Moses commanded to be memorialized on Mt Ebal (chart),

Deu 28:30 Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her: thou shalt build an house, and thou shalt not dwell therein:

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thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not gather the grapes thereof.

31 Thine ox *shall be* slain before thine eyes, and thou shalt not eat thereof:

thine ass *shall be* violently taken away from before thy face, and shall not be restored to thee: thy sheep *shall be* given unto thine enemies, and thou shalt have none to rescue *them*.

32 Thy sons and thy daughters *shall be* given unto another people, and thine eyes shall look, and fail *with longing* for them all the day long: and *there shall be* no might in thine hand.

33 The fruit of thy land, and all thy labours, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed away:

9 But they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the LORD; and they that have brought it together shall drink it in the courts of my holiness.--Note the connection between enjoying the blessings and giving God glory for them. He does not intend us to be miserable, nor is he pleased when we enjoy his bounty without acknowledging him.

This praise is to be public, “in the courts of my holiness.” God wants his people to celebrate his goodness together, encouraging one another of his faithfulness.⁷

Application: Let us be careful to be aware of God’s blessings, and always give thanks for them, *to him and in the presence* of his people.

10, Cry of the Watchmen

10 Go through, go through the gates; ... cast up, cast up the highway;--The double imperative is common in Isaiah 40-66 (eight pairs, of which the last two are in this verse). The greatest cluster includes the three double calls to awake in ch. 51-52, associated with the watchmen in 52:8 (charts).

Isa 51:9 **Awake, awake**, put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old.

Isa 51:17 **Awake, awake**, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the LORD the cup of his fury;

Isa 52:1 **Awake, awake**; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city:

So it makes sense to hear these commands as coming from the watchmen of v. 6.

There are two double commands. The first concerns the people (singular), that is, Israel. The second refers to the peoples (plural), the Gentiles (a distinction that our version unfortunately obscures).

10 Go through, go through the gates;--Imagine the watchmen standing on the city wall. The massive city gates have been swung wide open, and now they command the people to pass through them. עבר is usually used of going out of a gate (Exod 32:27; Mic 2:13), so the command is for those who are in the city to go out and make the preparations described in the next clause.

prepare ye the way of the people [singular];--“Prepare the way” פנה דרך appears only 4x in the Bible, 3 of them in Isaiah: 40:3; 57:14; and here (the three “prepare the way” passages); the fourth is Mal 3:1, which no doubt depends on them. The basic idea can be seen in Laban’s invitation,

⁷ Compare Ps 116:12-19.

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Gen 24:31 And he said, Come in, thou blessed of the LORD; wherefore standest thou without? for I have **prepared the house**, and room for the camels.

The idiom thus means “straighten out, pick up, prepare for visitors.” Those who go out of the city are to get the highway ready for the returning Israelites. The next two clauses tell how to do this:

cast up, cast up the highway;--Where there are low places, fill them in so that the travelers won't have to climb up and down. The same function was reflected in the earlier command to “prepare the way,” “Every valley shall be exalted” (40:4).

gather out the stones;--Remove obstacles out of the way, just as we all had to remove tree branches from our sidewalks after the heavy snow storm last month.

lift up a standard for the peoples.--The watchmen are responsible not only for controlling the traffic through the gates, but also for erecting signal flags on the ramparts. The “standard for the peoples” **נס עמים** appears only two other places in the OT, both in Isaiah (chart):

Isa 11:10 And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an **ensign of the peoples**; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

Isa 49:22 Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and **set up my standard to the peoples**: and they shall bring thy sons in *their* arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon *their* shoulders.

The similar **נס גוים** “standard of the nations” is more common, appearing also in Jer 50:2; 51:27, but again Isaiah originates it:

Isa 5:26 And he will lift up an **ensign to the nations** from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly: [coming to bring judgment]

Isa 11:12 And he shall set up an **ensign for the nations**, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. [link to v. 10]

The purpose of this ensign, or banner, is to call the nations to come to Zion as promised in 2:2-3,

Isa 2:2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. 3 And many **peoples** shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

As we saw in 49:22, the Gentiles bring the Israelites with them, along the road that has been prepared.

Application: In my research work, I have learned to value a good project manager, somebody who can watch for the details, make sure we satisfy the requirements of the contract, and otherwise keep everything on track. God's projects do not lack good management. He assigns his angels to be sure that the road is ready for the Jews to return, and to raise the signal to attract the Gentiles. No detail is left unattended.

11-12, Second Cry of the Heralds

Once again the heralds report the Lord’s decrees.

11 Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world,--This time, the decrees are addressed to the Gentiles.

Say ye to the daughter of Zion,--Now the nations are charged to inform Israel of her change in status. As we saw in our study of 60:9, in Isaiah’s vision, it is the Gentiles who bring the Jews back to their city and their land, an insight that Paul develops in his metaphor of the olive trees in Rom 11:11-27.

Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.--

Compare the promise at the beginning of ch. 40-66 (chart, Illustration 11),

62:11	40:10
Behold, thy salvation cometh;	Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong <i>hand</i> , and his arm shall rule for him:
behold, his reward <i>is</i> with him,	behold, his reward <i>is</i> with him,
and his work [wage] before him.	and his work [wage] before him.

Isa 40:10 Behold, the Lord *Illustration 11: Salvation is a Person*

GOD will come with strong

hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward *is* with him, and his work before him.

“Salvation” here is parallel to “the Lord GOD” there. Salvation is not just an abstract state that we experience. It is a divine Person who comes to deliver us. With good reason, in our third hymn today (493), James Montgomery exhorts us, “Call Jehovah thy salvation.”

So the OT itself tells us to expect a deliverer who is at once the Lord, and the servant of the Lord. This deep mystery is finally unveiled with the advent of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus.

In our study of 40:10, we considered the second half of the verse in great detail. Let’s recall two results from that study.

First, “work” in both of these passages should be understood in the sense of “pay, recompense,” that which one receives for one’s labor.

Second, the genitive describes the recipient of the reward or recompense. As the Lord comes, he brings with him the reward that he himself will receive for his work.

Recall the promise concerning the Servant:

Isa 53:10-11 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. 11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

This reward is his people, whether we look at the intermediate fulfillment at the end of the Babylonian captivity, or the ultimate fulfillment when the Lord Jesus returns in Rev 19.

Application: Here is a novel encouragement concerning our salvation. We are the reward that the Lord Jesus receives for his work. We may be unworthy, but he is worthy, and the Father has promised to

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give us to him. If any of us were to be missing, he would lose out on his reward. But the promise is that he will receive the payment for his labor.

The chapter concludes with two pairs of names. The first two belong to the people of God, while the second two belong to the city. Note how the prophet distinguishes these two. We can readily appropriate the titles of the people of God, for we have been made part of that company, but the restoration of the city awaits God's time.

12 And they shall call them,--The third person is probably impersonal: they will be called, universally known, by these two titles. Together, these capture a complete picture of our salvation.

The holy people,--God will have us holy, set apart to him. Holiness implies that we are separate from the world and its pollutions, our lives conformed to his standards.

The redeemed of the LORD:--Yet this holy standing is not something that we earn. We are enslaved, and must be redeemed by the Lord.

Together, these two titles capture the two halves of salvation developed more fully in the NT (chart):

Isa 62:12	Eph 2:8-10	Tit 3:5-8
The Redeemed of the Lord	8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: <i>it is</i> the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.	8 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.
The Holy People	10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.	8 <i>This is</i> a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.

and thou shalt be called,--Now attention turns to Zion (the 2fs addressee).

Sought out, A city not forsaken.--These are the positive and negative sides of the same coin. In her time of chastisement, she felt forsaken of the Lord (49:14), but he has not taken his eye off of her. Now he seeks her out and draws her back to himself.

Notes

2fs in Isaiah

Here's a plot of 2fs verbs (impf and pf), independent pronouns, and genitive suffixes, % of verses in each chapter with a hit, omitting singletons. Discuss each of the peaks:

1: the faithful city that has become a harlot

13-35 Woes and Burdens (17 deals with alliance of Damascus and Samaria)

47 doom on the virgin daughter Babylon (near end of first 9-chapter section)

The next three are arranged symmetrically in ch 49-57, and ch. 57 closes it off:

- 49 Zion as forsaken widow
- 51, 52 call to Jerusalem to awaken
- 54 Zion as barren wife
- 57 Israel reproached for her idolatry (compare ch. 47 on Babylon)

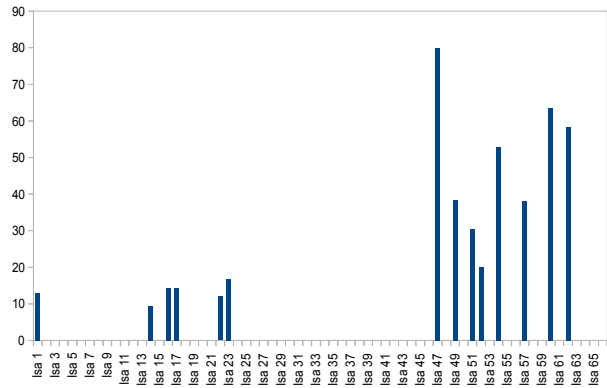
Finally, the cluster we have seen in ch. 58=66

- 60, restoration of Zion
- 62, ditto

v. 6 Watchmen

This is not the same word used in 52:8 and 56:10 (or Ezek 3 and 33). There, we have the Qal ptc of צופה; here, the Qal ptc of שומר. What is the distinction? Some observations:

- שומר is by far the more common term (107x in the OT, vs. 24 for צופה). This is consistent with its being unmarked, the more generic term.
- The semantics of the roots suggest that the שומר has general responsibility for guarding and protecting, while the צופה is prized for sharp eye-sight, looking out into the distance. This is borne out by usage: repeatedly we see the צופה on the wall or on a tower, reporting what is happening outside of the city. 1 Sam 14:16; 2 Sam 13:34; 18:24, 25, 26, 27; 2 Ki 9:17-20.
- שומר is the term used of the Levites in “keeping the charge of the sanctuary” (e.g., Num 3:28, 32, 38), which would suggest an internal focus. But שומר is sometimes used for external vigilance as well: Gen 3:24.
- שומר frequently has the sense of somebody who stays up at night:



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Sol 3:1-3 **By night** on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not. 2 I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not. 3 The watchmen that go about the city found me: *to whom I said*, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?

Psa 127:1 except the LORD keep the city, the watchman **waketh** *but* in vain.

Isa 21:11 The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the **night**? Watchman, what of the **night**?

- Sol 3:3 also shows that שומרים are found in the streets of the city, not just on the walls
- שומר is used of people watching a city from without:

Jdg 1:23-24 And the house of Joseph sent to descry Bethel. (Now the name of the city before *was* Luz.) 24 And the **spies** saw a man come forth out of the city, and they said unto him, Shew us, we pray thee, the entrance into the city, and we will shew thee mercy.

It seems that the שומר, while capable of referring to any guardian, is primarily the night watchman, looking out for fires while the city sleeps, while the צופה scans the horizon for distant threats (a function that would be of little use at night).

Role of the מזכיר

See de Vaux I, ch. 7. To estimate the importance, I've listed three quantities

- number of lists on which the rank appears
- average raw rank across each list
- scaled each rank to 0-1 (after the name), then averaged the value across those lists where that office appears. This is a bit misleading, since somebody who is 3/3 on one list but 3/9 would get a higher rank on the first than the second, when in fact the second may just be more complete.
- Could imagine another metric that measures how many times each rank dominates each other one.

*On the role of David's sons, Ira, Zabud, and perhaps Azariah as "priests," see R. Payne Smith in the Pulpit Commentary. The parallel passage in 1 Chr 18:17 uses instead the term "the first at the king's hand," and 1 Kings 4:5 glosses the term, רעה המלך "the king's friend."

It is noteworthy that the "recorder" is the only office in all of the lists. This was an extremely important position in the court.

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Role	2 Sam 8:15-18 1 Ch 18:14-17	2 Sam 20:23-26	1 Ki 4:1-6	2 Ki 18:18, 37	2 Chr 34:8	# Lists	Avg Raw Rank	Avg norm rank
King מלך	David	David	Solomon	Hezekiah	Josiah			
?					1. Shaphan ben Azaliah, 0	1	1	0
High Priest, הכוהן			1. *Azariah ben Zadok, 0			1	1	0
Commander of the Army על הצבא	1. Joab, 0	1. Joab, 0	4. Benaiah ben Jehoiada, .38			2	2	0.12
Governor of the City שר העיר					2. Maaseiah, .5	1	2	0.5
Herald ("Recorder") מזכיר	2. Jehoshaphat ben Ahilud, .2	4. Jehoshaphat ben Ahilud, .5	3. Jehoshaphat ben Ahilud, .25	3. Joah ben Asaph, 1	3. Joah ben Joahaz, 1	5	3	0.59
Scribe סופר	4. Seraiah (1 Ch Shavsha), .6	5. Sheva, .67	2. Elihoreh, Ahiah, .12	2. Shebna, .5		4	3.2	0.47
Commander of the Guard	5. Benaiah ben Jehoiada, .8	2. Benaiah ben Jehoiada, .17				2	3.5	0.48
Over the House על הבית			8. Ahishar, .88	1. Eliakim ben Hilkiah, 0		2	4.5	0.44
Priest כוהן	3. Zadok, Abimelech, .4	6. Zadok, Abiathar, .83	5. Zadok, Abiathar, .5			3	4.7	0.58
Over the tribute על המס		3. Adoram, .33	9. Adoniram ben Abda, 1				6	0.66
Over the officers על הנצבים			6. Azariah ben Nathan, .62			1	6	0.62
Priest, king's friend, chief ruler	6. *David's sons, 1	7. *Ira the Jairite, 1	7. *Zabud ben Nathan, .75			3	6.7	0.92

Double Imperatives

The double imperative, as in v. 10, is a distinctive feature of the second half of Isaiah (8 pairs, two of which are in this verse: 40:1; 51:9, 17; 52:1, 11; 57:14). It doesn't appear in the first half of the book, and rarely earlier in the Bible: Judg 5:12 (which probably lies behind the instances in Isa 51:9, 17; 51:2); 2 Sam 16:7; 20:16; Job 19:21; Ps 47:6 (but divided by accentuation); 137:7; Pro 30:15; Sol 7:1.

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	Speaker	Action
Isa 40:1 Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.	God	
Isa 51:9 Awake, awake , put on strength, O arm of the LORD; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old.		Summon arm of the Lord
Isa 51:17 Awake, awake , stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the LORD the cup of his fury;	Watchman? 52:8	Arouse Zion
Isa 52:1 Awake, awake ; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city:		
Isa 52:11 Depart ye, depart ye , go ye out from thence, touch no unclean <i>thing</i> ; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.	The watchmen who issued the three cries to “awake”?	Leave Babylon and return to Zion
Isa 57:14 And shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up , prepare the way, take up the stumblingblock out of the way of my people.	“My people” suggests translating as past, “And he said,” with God as subject	Prepare the way for the Jews to return to Zion
Isa 62:10 Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people.		

Who is speaking in 62:10? The parallel with 57:14 might suggest the Lord. However, two considerations suggest otherwise.

1. The one who most commonly utters double commands throughout Isaiah is the watchman of 52:8, and we have someone in a similar role recently mentioned in ch. 62:6.
2. Along with 57:14 and 62:10, 40:3 is the third reference to road-building, and it is clearly not spoken by the Lord:

Isa 40:3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

It seems most natural to hear 62:10 as the voice of the watchmen. In that case, is the Lord’s reported speech in 8-9 and 11-12 on the lips of the herald?

נִשְׁבַּע בַּיָּהוָה

HALOT claims that the prepositional complement in this case identifies “a treasured item which is put at risk if there is a failure to fulfil the oath that is made” (*Nifal* 2). But all the examples given are of God swearing, and another use of the same preposition (*Nifal* 3), used only with human subjects, is to swear “by God,” which surely means not to put him at risk, but to indicate him as the source of one’s confidence.

Gen 21:23 Now therefore swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son:

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It seems simpler to understand the instances with God as subject as using the same idiom: he is not putting his right hand at risk, but presenting it as an emblem of the power that he will discharge in support of his vow. TWOT takes it as I do as well; check Clines.