

General Comments on Isaiah 5

Note: This chapter appears in 2 Ne. 15

This chapter uses many of the same symbols and concepts appearing in the book of Hosea, with the notable exception of the lecherous priest/whoring adulteress symbols associated with idolatrous activities. This chapter in Isaiah is completely devoid of any direct or even implied references to idolatry, whereas Hosea's references to idolatry are frequent and blatant.

As such, this chapter is an attack on secularized Israel. The wealthy elitists in Israel are too wise to believe in any such foolish notion of God. Instead, they are caught up in the things of the world, attend lavish social events, and ridicule the religious.

Isaiah uses the same set of symbols as Hosea, but entirely secularizes it so as to show the secularists are just as inwardly idolatrous, worshiping themselves and their wealth, as those who worship Asherah, Baal or Molech. The behavior of the two groups is the same despite their different belief systems. Thus, it is the behavior of the individual which is key, rather than the expressed beliefs.

KJV Isaiah 5

1 NOW will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: 2 And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. 3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. 4 What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? 5 And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will

JPS Isaiah 5

Let me sing for my beloved

A song of my lover about his vineyard.

My beloved had a vineyard
On a fruitful hill.

²He broke the ground, cleared it of stones,
And planted it with choice vines.

He built a watchtower inside it,
He even hewed a wine press in it;
For he hoped it would yield grapes.

Instead, it yielded wild grapes.

³“Now, then,
Dwellers of Jerusalem

And men of Judah,
You be the judges
Between Me and My vineyard:

⁴What more could have been done for My vineyard
That I failed to do in it?

Why, when I hoped it would yield grapes,
Did it yield wild grapes?

⁵“Now I am going to tell you
What I will do to My vineyard:
I will remove its hedge,

take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; [and] break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: 6 And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. 7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts [is] the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

8 Woe unto them that join house to house, [that] lay field to field, till [there be] no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth! 9 In mine ears [said] the LORD of hosts, Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, [even] great and fair, without inhabitant. 10 Yea, ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, and the seed of an homer shall yield an ephah. 11 Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, [that] they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, [till] wine inflame them! 12 And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands. 13 Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because [they have] no knowledge: and their honourable men [are] famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst. 14 Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory,

That it may be ravaged; I will break down its wall, That it may be trampled. ⁶And I will make it a desolation; It shall not be pruned or hoed, And it shall be overgrown with briers and thistles. And I will command the clouds To drop no rain on it.”

⁷For the vineyard of the LORD of Hosts Is the House of Israel, And the seedlings he lovingly tended Are the men of Judah. And He hoped for justice, But behold, injustice; For equity, But behold, iniquity!

⁸Ah, Those who add house to house And join field to field, Till there is room for none but you To dwell in the land! ⁹In my hearing [said] the LORD of Hosts: Surely, great houses Shall lie forlorn, Spacious and splendid ones Without occupants. ¹⁰For ten acres of vineyard Shall yield just one bath, And a field sown with an homer of seed Shall yield a mere ephah.

¹¹Ah, Those who chase liquor From early in the morning, And till late in the evening Are inflamed by wine! ¹²Who, at their banquets, Have lyre and lute, Timbrel, flute, and wine; But who never give a thought To the plan of the LORD, And take no note Of what He is designing.

¹³Assuredly, My people will suffer exile For not giving heed, Its multitude victims of hunger And its masses parched with thirst.

¹⁴Assuredly,

and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it. 15 And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled: 16 But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness. 17 Then shall the lambs feed after their manner, and the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat.

18 Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope: 19 That say, Let him make speed, [and] hasten his work, that we may see [it]: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know [it]! 20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! 21 Woe unto [them that are] wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! 22 Woe unto [them that are] mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: 23 Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him! 24 Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, [so] their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel. 25 Therefore is the anger of the LORD kindled against his people, and he hath

Sheol has opened wide its gullet
And parted its jaws in a measureless gape;
And down into it shall go,
That splendor and tumult,
That din and revelry.

¹⁵Yea, man is bowed,
And mortal brought low;
Brought low is the pride of the haughty.

¹⁶And the LORD of Hosts is exalted by judgment,
The Holy God proved holy by retribution.

¹⁷Then lambs shall graze
As in their meadows,
And strangers shall feed
On the ruins of the stout.

¹⁸Ah,
Those who haul sin with cords of falsehood
And iniquity as with cart ropes!
¹⁹Who say,
“Let Him speed, let Him hasten His purpose,
If we are to give thought;
Let the plans of the Holy One of Israel
Be quickly fulfilled,
If we are to give heed.”

²⁰Ah,
Those who call evil good
And good evil;
Who present darkness as light
And light as darkness;
Who present bitter as sweet
And sweet as bitter!

²¹Ah,
Those who are so wise—
In their own opinion;
So clever—
In their own judgment!

²²Ah,
Those who are so doughty—
As drinkers of wine,
And so valiant—
As mixers of drink!

²³Who vindicate him who is in the wrong
In return for a bribe,
And withhold vindication
From him who is in the right.

²⁴Assuredly,
As straw is consumed by a tongue of fire
And hay shrivels as it burns,
Their stock shall become like rot,
And their buds shall blow away like dust.

stretched forth his hand
 against them, and hath
 smitten them: and the
 hills did tremble, and
 their carcasses [were] torn
 in the midst of the
 streets. For all this his
 anger is not turned away,
 but his hand [is]
 stretched out still. 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: 27 None shall be
 weary nor stumble among
 them; none shall slumber
 nor sleep; neither shall
 the girdle of their loins
 be loosed, nor the latchet
 of their shoes be broken:
 28 Whose arrows [are]
 sharp, and all their bows
 bent, their horses' hoofs
 shall be counted like
 flint, and their wheels
 like a whirlwind: 29 Their
 roaring [shall be] like a
 lion, they shall roar like
 young lions: yea, they
 shall roar, and lay hold
 of the prey, and shall
 carry [it] away safe, and
 none shall deliver [it].
 30 And in that day they
 shall roar against them
 like the roaring of the
 sea: and if [one] look
 unto the land, behold
 darkness [and] sorrow, and
 the light is darkened in
 the heavens thereof.

For they have rejected the instruction of the LORD of Hosts,
 Spurned the word of the Holy One of Israel.

²⁵That is why
 The LORD's anger was roused
 Against His people,
 Why He stretched out His arm against it
 And struck it,
 So that the mountains quaked,
 And its corpses lay
 Like refuse in the streets.
 Yet his anger has not turned back,
 And His arm is outstretched still.
²⁶He will raise an ensign to a nation afar,
 Whistle to one at the end of the earth.
 There it comes with lightning speed!
²⁷In its ranks, none is weary or stumbles,
 They never sleep or slumber;
 The belts on their waists do not come loose,
 Nor do the thongs of their sandals break.
²⁸Their arrows are sharpened,
 And all their bows are drawn.
 Their horses' hoofs are like flint,
 Their chariot wheels like the whirlwind.
²⁹Their roaring is like a lion's,
 They roar like the great beasts;
 When they growl and seize a prey,
 They carry it off and none can recover it.

³⁰But in that day, a roaring shall resound over him like that of the
 sea; and then he shall look below and, behold,
 Distressing darkness, with light;
 Darkness, in its lowering clouds.

Specific Comments on Isaiah 5

The chapter can be arranged as follows:

- A - (v. 1) The vineyard and the beloved
 - B - (v. 2) He lovingly cared for it
 - C - (v. 3) Judge between me and my vineyard
 - C - (v. 4) What more could have been done for the vineyard
 - B - (v. 5-6) He cursed it with drought and invasion
- A - (v. 7) Israel and the Lord
- A - (v. 8) Opulence and Greed
 - B - (v. 9-10) Desolation and Famine

- A - (v. 11-12) Wine, song, disregarding the Lord
- B - (v. 13-14) Exile, famine and hell
- A - (v. 15) Proud humbled
- B - (v. 16-17) Lord exalted, sheep graze

- A - (v. 18-23) Woe upon the wicked among Israel
- B - (v. 24a-e) Figurative fire (i.e. the Lord's anger)
- C - (v. 24f) Rejected the Lord
- C - (v. 24g) Spurned the Holy One's word
- B - (v. 25) The Lord's anger
- A - (v. 26-30) The invading army come upon wicked Israel

1 NOW will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard.

My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: 2 And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.

3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. 4 What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?

5 And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; [and] break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: 6 And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts [is] the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

v1-7 A parable of a vineyard (v. 1-6) with an interpretation provided (v. 7). This parable is similar to comments made by other OT prophets, cp. Hosea 10:1-4, Deut. 32:32, Ps. 80.

The text of these verses is neatly composed of introduction (v. 1), parable (v. 1-2), rhetorical prosecution (v. 3-4), judgement (v. 5-6), and conclusion (v. 7).

The parable provides a situation where the decision making is plain. A farmer has a vineyard which doesn't produce, so what does he do with it? He doesn't waste any more time on it. In his anger over his wasted effort he goes out of his way to make sure the vineyard is destroyed. In the case of a literal vineyard, it is plain why the steward would be so harsh. Comparing it to Israel becomes problematic, hence the more detailed and drawn out parable appearing in Jacob 5. But, that is not Isaiah's intention. His intention is to ask the reader what is just, hence the rhetorical questions in v. 3-4. Is it

just for steward to wreck the unproductive vineyard, for the Lord to punish Judah outright? Isaiah is not concerned about explaining Israel's covenant theology as was Zenos, he wants to drive home that they deserve to be punished, and they will be.

Gileadi (The Literary Message of Isaiah) suggests a number of interpretations for various terms in this section, most of which are well known from their usage elsewhere:

hill	nation
cleared it of stones	freedom
choice vines	His people (Israel)
watchtower	prophets
wild grapes	grapes that rot before ripening
not be pruned or hoed	no missionary work
briers and thistles	wickedness

v2 "a tower", compare 2:15, Ezek. 33.

v3 By means of a parable, Israel ironically judges themselves. This is similar to the situation with Nathan and David in the matter over Bathsheba, where Nathan uses the hypothetical stealing of a lamb, cf. 2 Sam. 12:1-7.

v5-6 Compare Amos 5:17.

v5 "hedge...wall", cp. 2:15.

v6 "not be pruned, nor digged", consider the symbolism provided in Zenos' allegory of the olive trees when the trees are pruned and dunged, cf. Jacob 5.

"briers and thorns", cp. 7:23-25, Micah 7:1-4, Hosea 10:4.

"no rain upon it", a typical covenant curse, compare Lev. 26:20.

v7 Clever wordplay identified in the JPS translation footnotes provided, suggests that Israel took what the Lord gave them and twisted it around to suit themselves, the footnote states:

This sentence contains two word plays: "And He hoped for *mishpat*, and there is *mispah*; For *se`aqah*, But there is *se`aqah*."

The Hebrew "*se`aqah*", translated "iniquity" (literally "outcry") is the identical descriptor applied to Sodom in Gen. 18:21 and 19:13. Sodom and Gomorrah are never accused of

idolatry, which follows the line of argumentation that this chapter is an attack on secularism and not idolatry. See also Exod. 22:21-23 for an appearance of the same Hebrew term.

8 Woe unto them that join house to house, [that] lay field to field, till [there be] no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!

9 In mine ears [said] the LORD of hosts, Of a truth many houses shall be desolate, [even] great and fair, without inhabitant. 10 Yea, ten acres of vineyard shall yield one bath, and the seed of an homer shall yield an ephah.

11 Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, [that] they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, [till] wine inflame them! 12 And the harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands.

13 Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because [they have] no knowledge: and their honourable men [are] famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst. 14 Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it. 15 And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled: 16 But the LORD of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness. 17 Then shall the lambs feed after their manner, and the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat.

18 Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope: 19 That say, Let him make speed, [and] hasten his work, that we may see [it]: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know [it]! 20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! 21 Woe unto [them that are] wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! 22 Woe unto [them that are] mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: 23 Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!

24 Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, [so] their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel. 25 Therefore is the anger of the LORD kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them: and the hills did tremble, and their carcasses [were] torn in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand [is] stretched out still.

v8-25 A prophetic Woe Oracle. The oracle is arranged in an A-B-

A-B-A-B fashion with the A's being the indictment and the B's the judgement:

- A - (v. 8) Woe to those who exploit their neighbors
- B - (v. 9-10) Desolation, famine
- A - (v. 11-12) Woe to the opulent, ostentatious, revelrous
- B - (v. 13-17) Captivity, humiliation, exile
- A - (v. 18-23) Woe to those who spurn and undermine the Law
- B - (v. 24-25) Death, lineage cut off

All judgements cast out here are described in Lev. 26 and Deut. 28 as punishments laid out on Israel for rebellion.

v8-10 The BofM rendering of these three verses differs slightly from the KJV, but the differences do not alter the reading.

v8 Isaiah pronounces woe upon greedy landowners who encroach on each other as well as those who are living in these populated centers. Implicit in this is the usurping of other's land by debt-induced foreclosure and the like means, which the Law prohibits in Lev. 25:23-55.

v9 Cities and towns will lie abandoned, cp. 6:12, 24:10, 25:2, 32:19. Also cp. Lev. 26:31, Deut 28:16, Amos 3:15.

v10-14 An interpretation given by some of the Qumran writings indicates the details in v. 10 are a result of both war and famine. Also provided is the interpretation v. 11-14 is specifically referring to those in Jerusalem, or that those in Jerusalem at that time were fulfilling Isaiah's words (see Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, page 268).

v10 Famine as a result of drought (v. 6) is a covenant curse, compare Deut. 32:24.

v11-12 Compare Amos 6:4-7.

v12 Isaiah portrays the wealthy elite as throwing extravagant parties with many instrument players while entirely ignoring the things of the Lord. This dichotomy pushes for the interpretation that these people are spending their time arranging and throwing social events and parties rather than studying the Torah. These are people who deliberately ignore the Lord and his doings in favor of worldly notoriety. When godliness is unpopular, they would rather be popular than godly.

Compare Gen. 4:21 where Jubal is described pejoratively as the father of all those who play the lyre and flute (Gen. 4:17-26 contains the lineage of Cain and presents them as a typical

example of the generations of mankind before the Noachide flood, and the wickedness that necessitated that flood. See Everett Fox's The Five Books of Moses, Schocken Bible comments on Gen. 4). See also Amos 6:3-7.

v13 Aside from the obvious reading of famine as a result of covenant curse, this verse presents an interesting phrase with a double interpretation. The multitudes who are dying of hunger and thirst could be the literal poor who are physically starving while the rich elite dine at festive banquets (v. 11-12), or this could be referring to the elite themselves who are dying spiritually because they refuse the word of the Lord and are thus figuratively starving, compare Deut. 8:3, Amos 8:1-11.

"no knowledge", the knowledge they lack is that of v. 12e-g.

v14-17 Can be arranged as an inverted antithetical parallelism:

A - (v. 14) The worldly condemned to Sheol
B - (v. 15) Prideful men will be humbled
B - (v. 16) The Lord of Hosts is exalted
A - (v. 17) The lambs shall graze in meadows

v15 The opposite case of that described in 2:9.

v17 Compare Micah 3:1-5 and Amos 6:4 where the rulers are taking advantage of the "lambs" of Israel for their own gain. Also see Micah 7:14, Zeph. 3:12-13 where the lamb symbolism is used and discussed in greater detail.

v18-19 Referring to those described in v. 11-12. The statement in v. 19 is by way of retort to v. 12. They are skeptical of the Lord and His doings and want to see His works before they will take note. They are sign-seekers who mock those who have faith, cp. 66:5.

v20-21 The Lord's response to those speaking in v. 19.

v24 The final lines of the verse indicate Israel is deliberately disobeying, and not just innocently ignorant.

Nephi uses similar language to that appearing here and explains in more literal terms what the implications are in 2 Ne. 26:4-6. In Nephi's case it is referring largely to natural disasters. In this case, it is referring to the substance of v. 26-29.

v25 Explains very plainly that the Lord is punishing His people because they have rejected and spurned His words (v. 24). The

Lord does not capriciously afflict His people. He does it with purpose, do get them to repent when they violate their covenant with Him.

"hand", is used to refer to the one who is coming to punish Israel. Frequently, the term "arm" is used to describe one who is the Lord's prophet, but in this case it is used more generally to refer to one who does the Lord's will.

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: 27 None shall be weary nor stumble among them; none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken: 28 Whose arrows [are] sharp, and all their bows bent, their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind: 29 Their roaring [shall be] like a lion, they shall roar like young lions: yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey, and shall carry [it] away safe, and none shall deliver [it]. 30 And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea: and if [one] look unto the land, behold darkness [and] sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof.

v26-30 Verses 24-25 poetically describe the Lord's anger. Here, the metaphor is made literal with His anger being manifested as an invading army.

The invading army come to punish Israel is described in ways that make them appear to be invincible and unstoppable, cp. 13:1-5. The statements used to describe the invading army are the same statements promised to Israel had they been righteous or the opposite of a covenant curse imposed on Israel, compare Isa. 5:27a with Lev. 26:37 and Isa. 5:27d with Deut. 29:5. Also see Joel 2:1-11, Zeph. 1, Hab. 1:5-11 for additional descriptions of this invincible invading army.

It should be noted that Israel miraculously routed the Canaanites and others from the Jordan valley, not because of their righteousness but because of the wickedness of those currently living there (cf. Lev. 20:23, Deut. 9:3-5). Now, Israel is living there and they are as wicked as those they routed, so another army is come to punish Israel because they failed to repent. Thus, the invading army is described as being miraculously powerful in its attack on Israel just as Israel was miraculously powerful in its attack on the Canaanites. The Lord is showing Israel that the He doesn't play favorites with Israel when they are as wicked as the Gentiles.

v26 Distant nations are summoned to punish Israel. In an

eschatological context, the Lord has something else in mind as well, cf. Joel 3:9-12.

v26a "nation afar", cp. Deut 28:49.

v27-28 Orson Pratt (Journal of Discourses, 16:84), Joseph Fielding Smith (Doctrines of Salvation, 1:146) and LeGrand Richards (A Marvelous Work and a Wonder, p. 236) interpreted these verses to be referring modern means of transportation (i.e., trains, steamships, airplanes) being made available so as to allow missionaries to travel all over the world as well as the gathering of Israel. This reading is acontextual as the passage is referring to Assyria being gathered by the Lord to attack Israel.

However, while it is plain this passage is referring primarily to Gentile nations amassing against Judah, other passages in Isaiah do tangentially support the general idea forwarded by Pratt, Smith, and Richards. There are passages which indicate the Lord will gather the remnants of Israel out from the nations they were scattered to, cf. 11:11-16, 43:3-6, 49:17-26, 66:19. All of these nations are characterized as being part of the eschatological gathering against Jerusalem at the Day of the Lord. Presumably, after the great destruction of the wicked at that time, the more righteous will survive out of them will be gathered the remnants of Israel.

v28d "wheels like a whirlwind", referring to chariots, cp. Nahum 3:2, Jer. 47:3, Ezek. 23:24. Unlike ancient Egypt which had its chariot wheels bound up because the Lord protected them (cf. Exod. 14:25), this nation has chariots whose wheels are especially fleet because the Lord is sending them against Israel.

At that time chariots in warfare were the modern equivalents of the contemporary tank. Thus, the invading army is well armed and very mighty.

v29 "lion", sometimes the lion is used as a symbol of Judah or the righteous remnant (Micah 5:8), but in this case it is a symbol of the military might of the invading army, cp. Nahum 2:11-13, Hosea 5:14, Hosea 13:7-8, Joel 1:6, Amos 3:8-12. The lion is in itself a symbol of military might that is context specific with regard to nationality.

v30 Interpretation of this verse is somewhat problematic as it is ambiguous as to who is being referenced. The contextual reading, given the subject of the immediately preceding v. 26-28, is the army the Lord has amassed is roaring and Judah is the one looking for hope and seeing none.

"sea", a number of references to flooding images appear in Isaiah and have their root in the Noah's flood story where the earth is purged of wickedness by an overflowing flood, cp. 8:8, 28:2, Gen. 6:17, Hosea 5:10, Amos 9:6, Psalm 32:6. The usage of the imagery in 8:8 is in the context of the Assyrian invasion of Israel, supporting the reading that this verse is referring to the invading army.

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