

General Comments on Chapter 7

Note: This chapter appears in 2 Nephi 17.

Chapter 7 deals with Isaiah's ministry to Ahaz, king of Judah and Jerusalem at that time. The exchange between Isaiah and Ahaz can be seen as typical of the ruling elite among Israel and Judah as in v. 13 Isaiah references the "House of David". Thus, this chapter, while relating a specific historical event, is symbolic in that Ahaz's reply is typical for the leaders among Israel and Judah.

Historical background is helpful in establishing the context of this chapter. Excerpts from Smith's Bible Dictionary follow:

Rezin, a king of Damascus, contemporary with Pekah in Israel, and with Jotham and Ahaz in Judaea. He attacked Jotham during the latter part of his reign (2 Ki. 15:37); but his chief war was with Ahaz, whose territory he invaded, in company with Pekah (about B.C. 741). The combined army laid siege to Jerusalem, where Ahaz was, but "could not prevail against it" (Is. 7:1, 2 Ki 16:5). Soon after he was attacked, defeated and slain by Tiglath-pileser II, king of Assyria (2 Ki. 16:9; compare Tiglath-pileser's own inscriptions, where the defeat of Rezin and the destruction of Damascus are distinctly mentioned).

Pekah, son of Remaliah, originally a captain of Pekahiah king of Israel, murdered his master, seized the throne, and became the 18th sovereign of the northern kingdom. His native country was probably Gilead, as fifty Gileadites joined him in the conspiracy against Pekahiah. Under his predecessors, Israel had been much weakened through the payments of enormous tribute to the Assyrians (see especially 2 Ki. 15:20), and by internal wars and conspiracies. Pekah seems steadily to have applied himself to the restoration of its power. For this purpose, he sought for the support of a foreign alliance, and fixed his mind on the plunder of the sister kingdom of Judah. He must have made the treaty by which he proposed to share its spoil with Rezin king of Damascus when Jotham was still on the throne of Jerusalem (2 Ki. 15:37); but its execution was long delayed, probably in consequence of that prince's righteousness and vigorous administration (2 Chr. 27). When, however, his weak son Ahaz succeeded to the crown of David, the allies no longer

hesitated, and formed the siege of Jerusalem. The history of the war is found in 2 Ki. 16 and 2 Chr. 28. It is famous as the occasion of the great prophecies in Isaiah 7-9. Its chief result was the capture of the Jewish port of Elath on the Red Sea; but the unnatural alliance of Damascus and Samaria was punished through the final overthrow of the ferocious confederates by Tiglath-pileser. The kingdom of Damascus was finally suppressed, and Rezin put to death, while Pekah was deprived of at least half his kingdom, including all the northern portion, and the whole district of the east Jordan. Pekah himself, now fallen into the position of an Assyrian vassal, was of course compelled to abstain from further attacks on Judah. Whether his continued tyranny exhausted the patience of his subjects, or whether his weakness emboldened them to attack him, we do not know; but, from one or the other cause, Hoshea the son of Elah conspired against him, and put him to death. He must have begun war against Judah B.C. 740, and was killed B.C. 737.

Ahaz, eleventh king of Judah, son of Jotham, reigned B.C. 741-726. At the time of his ascension, Rezin king of Damascus and Pekah king of Israel had recently formed a league against Judah, and they proceeded to lay siege to Jerusalem. Upon this the great prophet hastened to give advice and encouragement to Ahaz, and it was probably owing to the spirit of energy and religious devotion which he poured into his counsels, that the allies failed in their attack on Jerusalem (Is. 7-9). But, the allies took a vast number of captives, who, however, were restored in virtue of the remonstrances of the prophet Oded (2 Chr. 28:9); and they also inflicted a most serious injury on Judah by the capture of Elath, a flourishing port on the Red Sea; while the Philistines invaded the west and south (2 Ki. 16; 2 Chr. 28). The weak minded and helpless Ahaz sought deliverance from these numerous troubles by appealing to Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, who freed him from his most formidable enemies by invading Syria, taking Damascus, killing Rezin, and depriving Israel of its Northern and trans-Jordanic districts. But Ahaz had to purchase this help at a costly price: he became tributary to Tiglath-pileser, sent him all the treasures of the Temple and his own palace, and even appeared before him in Damascus as a vassal. He also ventured to seek for safety in heathen ceremonies; making his son pass through the fire to Moloch,

consulting wizards and necromancers (Is. 8:19), sacrificing to the Syrian gods, introducing a foreign altar from Damascus, and probably the worship of heavenly bodies from Assyria and Babylon, as he would seem to have set up the horses of the sun mentioned in 2 Ki. 23:11; and "the altars on the top (or roof) of the upper chamber of Ahaz" (2 Ki. 23:12) were connected with the adoration of the stars. We see another and blameless result of this intercourse with an astronomical people in the "sun-dial of Ahaz" (Is. 38:8).

Clearly, the political and social climate at this time was less than hospitable to a prophet of the Lord. A summary of the history is given by Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown in their Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible (1871), as follows:

In the Assyrian inscriptions the name of Rezin, king of Damascus, is found among the tributaries of Tiglath-pileser, of whose reign the annals of seventeen years have been deciphered. For the historical facts in this chapter, compare 2Ki 15:37-16:9. Rezin of Syria and Pekah of Israel, as confederates, advanced against Jerusalem. In the first campaign they "smote Ahaz with a great slaughter" (2Ch 28:5). Their object was probably to unite the three kingdoms against Assyria. Egypt seems to have favored the plan, so as to interpose these confederate kingdoms between her own frontier and Assyria (compare Isa 7:18, "Egypt"; and 2Ki 17:4, Hoshea's league with Egypt). Rezin and Pekah may have perceived Ahaz' inclination towards Assyria rather than towards their own confederacy; this and the old feud between Israel and Judah (1Ki 12:16) occasioned their invasion of Judah. Ahaz, at the second inroad of his enemies (compare 2Ch 28:1-26 and 2Ki 15:37, with Isa 16:5), smarting under his former defeat, applied to Tiglath-pileser, in spite of Isaiah's warning in this chapter, that he should rather rely on God; that king accordingly attacked Damascus, and slew Rezin (2Ki 16:9); and probably it was at the same time that he carried away part of Israel captive (2Ki 15:29), unless there were two assaults on Pekah--that in 2Ki 15:29, the earlier, and that in which Tiglath helped Ahaz subsequently. Ahaz was saved at the sacrifice of Judah's independence and the payment of a large tribute, which continued till the overthrow of Sennacherib under Hezekiah (Isa 37:37; 2Ki

16:8, 17, 18; 2Ch 28:20). Ahaz' reign began about 741 B.C., and Pekah was slain in 738.

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1 AND it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, [that] Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it. 2 And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind. 3 Then said the LORD unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shearjashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field; 4 And say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah. 5 Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying, 6 Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, [even] the son of Tabeal: 7 Thus saith the Lord GOD, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass. 8 For the head of Syria [is] Damascus, and the head of Damascus [is] Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people. 9 And the head of Ephraim [is] Samaria, and the head of Samaria [is] Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.

10 Moreover the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying, 11 Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. 12 But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD. 13 And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; [Is it] a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? 14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. 15 Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. 16 For before the child shall know to refuse the evil,

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In the reign of Ahaz son of Jotham son of Uzziah, king of Judah, King Rezin of Aram and King Pekah son of Remaliah of Israel marched upon Jerusalem to attack it; but they were not able to attack it.

²Now, when it was reported to the House of David that Aram had allied itself with Ephraim, their hearts and the hearts of their people trembled as trees of the forest sway before a wind. ³But the LORD said to Isaiah, "Go out with your son Shearjashub to meet Ahaz at the end of the conduit of the Upper Pool, by the road of the Fuller's Field. ⁴And say to him: Be firm and be calm. Do not be afraid and do not lose heart on account of those two smoking stubs of firebrands, on account of the raging of Rezin and his Arameans and the son of Remaliah. ⁵Because the Arameans—with Ephraim and the son of Remaliah—have plotted against you, saying, ⁶'We will march against Judah and invade and conquer it, and we will set up as king in it the son of Tabeel,' ⁷thus said my Lord GOD:

It shall not succeed,

It shall not come to pass.

⁸For the chief city of Aram is Damascus, And the chief of Damascus is Rezin;

⁹The chief city of Ephraim is Samaria,

And the chief of Samaria is the son of Remaliah.

And in another sixty-five years,

Ephraim shall be shattered as a people.

If you will not believe, for you cannot be trusted..."

¹⁰The LORD spoke further to Ahaz: ¹¹"Ask for a sign from the LORD your God, anywhere down to Sheol or up to the sky." ¹²But Ahaz replied, "I will not ask, and I will not test the LORD." ¹³"Listen, House of David," [Isaiah] retorted, "is it not enough for you to treat men as helpless that you also treat my God as helpless? ¹⁴Assuredly, my Lord will give you a sign of His own accord! Look, the young woman is with child and about to give birth to a son. Let her name him Immanuel. ¹⁵(By the time he learns to reject the bad and choose the good, people will be feeding on curds and honey.) ¹⁶For before the lad knows to reject

and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

17 The LORD shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; [even] the king of Assyria. 18 And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] the LORD shall hiss for the fly that [is] in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that [is] in the land of Assyria. 19 And they shall come, and shall rest all of them in the desolate valleys, and in the holes of the rocks, and upon all thorns, and upon all bushes. 20 In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired, [namely], by them beyond the river, by the king of Assyria, the head, and the hair of the feet: and it shall also consume the beard. 21 And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] a man shall nourish a young cow, and two sheep; 22 And it shall come to pass, for the abundance of milk [that] they shall give he shall eat butter: for butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the land. 23 And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] every place shall be, where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings, it shall [even] be for briers and thorns. 24 With arrows and with bows shall [men] come thither; because all the land shall become briers and thorns. 25 And [on] all hills that shall be digged with the mattock, there shall not come thither the fear of briers and thorns: but it shall be for the sending forth of oxen, and for the treading of lesser cattle.

Specific Comments on Isaiah 7

1 AND it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, [that] Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it. 2 And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.

v1-3 The historical context is established. The Northern kingdom of Israel has confederated with Syria to combine against The southern kingdom of Judah (v. 1). This causes them at Jerusalem no small worries (v. 2).

the bad and choose the good, the ground whose two kings you dread shall be abandoned. ¹⁷The LORD will cause to come upon you and your people and your ancestral house such days as never have come since Ephraim turned away from Judah—that selfsame king of Assyria!

¹⁸"In that day, the LORD will whistle to the flies at the ends of the water channels of Egypt and to the bees in the land of Assyria; ¹⁹and they shall all come and alight in the rugged wadis, and in the clefts of the rocks, and in all the thornbrakes, and in all the watering places.

²⁰"In that day, my Lord will cut away with the razor that is hired beyond the Euphrates—with the king of Assyria—the hair of the head and the hair of the legs, and it shall clip off the beard as well. ²¹And in that day, each man shall save alive a heifer of the herd and two animals of the flock. ²²(And he shall obtain so much milk that he shall eat curds.) Thus everyone who is left in the land shall feed on curds and honey.

²³"For in that day, every spot where there could stand a thousand vines worth a thousand shekels of silver shall become a wilderness of thornbush and thistle. ²⁴One will have to go there with bow and arrows, for the country shall be all thornbushes and thistles. ²⁵But the perils of thornbush and thistle shall not spread to any of the hills that could only be tilled with a hoe; and here cattle shall be let loose, and sheep and goats shall tramp about."

v1 "as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind", they are shaken in unison, they all sway at the news.

v2 "house of David", this term is used to identify the ruling house in Judah. David was considered an exceptional king as he united all of Israel.

"Ephraim", This term refers to the 10 northern tribes of Israel. They are called Ephraim as that was the leading tribe.

3 Then said the LORD unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shearjashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field; 4 And say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah. 5 Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying, 6 Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, [even] the son of Tabeal: 7 Thus saith the Lord GOD, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass. 8 For the head of Syria [is] Damascus, and the head of Damascus [is] Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people. 9 And the head of Ephraim [is] Samaria, and the head of Samaria [is] Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.

10 Moreover the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying, 11 Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. 12 But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD. 13 And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; [Is it] a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? 14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. 15 Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. 16 For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

v3-16 At the news of Israel's confederation against Judah, Isaiah receives a revelation. The first portion of the revelation is received before Isaiah is with Ahaz (v. 3-9) and the second portion is received in Ahaz' presence (v. 10-16). The second portion presumably occurs after Isaiah relates the content v. 3-9 and Ahaz ignores or rejects it.

Ahaz is told not to worry about Israel's confederation with Syria because it will amount to nothing (v. 3-9). The Lord then offers a sign indicating that in just a few years both kings of Israel and Syria will fall out of power (v. 10-15).

The two signs given make the most sense if the reader assumes Ahaz rejected the first sign in v. 8 as being too far off

and vague, so the Lord gave him a more immediate sign in v. 14 the evidence of which would begin to be manifest in just a few months once the it was plain the young woman was pregnant.

v3 "Shearjashub", interpreted a number of ways into English, it means "only a remnant will repent". Compare 8:18 where Isaiah states he and his children are signs and symbols of what is to happen in Israel. The name foreshadows Ahaz's rejection of Isaiah's message.

"upper pool", Monte Nyman, in his book Great are the Words of Isaiah states, "Their meeting at the 'upper pool' may not have been coincidental either. Many biblical scholars have suggested that Ahaz was there inspecting the water supply and deciding how to protect it from the two invading forces. If this was the case, Ahaz's thinking on these matters would also prepare him to receive the prophecy Isaiah had been sent to deliver." Ahaz was inspecting the water supply, but his intentions show he is more concerned about making physical preparation than spiritual preparation.

v4 "two tails of these smoking firebrands", v. 2 indicates those at Jerusalem feared the apparently immanent invasion. Isaiah informs Ahaz that Jerusalem has nothing to fear and compares Rezin and Pekah to two torches that are burned out and smoldering, they are no threat.

v6 "the son of Tabeal", to not mention a person by name, but only by the title "the son of" is pejorative. It is to account them of little importance.

v8 "threescore and five years", this has variously been translated "six or five", but most scholars favor "sixty-five" given the historical evidence.

v12 "I will not...tempt the Lord", Ahaz feigns piety (cf. Deut. 6:16) in order to dismiss Isaiah. Ahaz is not the slightest bit interested in what Isaiah has to say and neither is he even interested in any sign that would prove the Lord's power.

This reveals Ahaz's gross state of apostasy in that it shows his familiarity with the Law. Ahaz's father was a righteous man, and clearly had Ahaz taught the Law. Thus, Ahaz is deliberately rejecting the Lord, the Lord's prophet, and any indication of the Lord's power by feigning piety.

v13 Isaiah's retort to Ahaz is one that penetrates Ahaz's false front and attacks him directly. The translation on this verse as rendered by the JPS varies somewhat from other common scholarly

interpretations based on the writings of Saadia, a famous head of a Babylonian talmudic academy. The more common interpretation follows the New American Standard (NAS), "Is it too slight a thing for you to try the patience of men, that you will try the patience of my God as well?" Thus, Isaiah is saying that not only is Ahaz rejecting him, he is rejecting the Lord. The Interpreter's Bible (IB) offers the following paraphrase, "No, you will not test Him, but you will flaunt Him and weary Him and deny Him even until His divine patience is at an end. To that point you have come. Therefore you will have a sign..."

v14-17 Compare 8:1-4, which is a restatement of the same prophecy. The "virgin" being referenced here is Isaiah's wife.

v14 The primary contextual reading on this passage is the virgin who conceives is Isaiah's wife(cf. 8:3) and the child is a sign (cf. 8:18) that God is watching over them (cf. 8:8)

This verse is quoted in Matthew 1:23 as being a messianic reference, and Jesus' birth being a fulfillment of that prophecy. While this interpretation delivered by Matthew is not in context, it has obvious typological applications which are within the general context of the text (see the general comments on ch. 6-8). It is also contextual to the book of Isaiah in general as there are a number of locations in the book where the incarnation of the Lord is necessarily implied, cp. comments on 9:7-20, 42:1, 43:24.

It is interesting to note it was, and still is, a common practice among Jews to interpret passages both in context and out of context so as to present an interpretation which has the verse or strophe standing independently. However, this raises the question of when you can and cannot use scriptures out of context. As there is a considerable amount of other very specific prophetic literature pointing to the incarnation of the Lord it isn't such a stretch to use this verse out of context given additional supporting references. See the append to comments on ch. 29 for a lengthy discussion on the acontextual application of scriptures.

It should be noted that Jesus was not named "Immanuel", but was named "Yeshua", a contraction of "Yehoshua", which means "Help of Yah" not "With us is God". Isaiah's reference to the name "Immanuel" invokes the repeated use of the phrase "I will be with you", a statement by the Lord informing those listening that they have His divine support in their endeavors, cp. Num. 14:9, Josh. 1:9, Isa. 43:5, Jer. 15:20, Matt.28:20, John 15:16, Acts 18:10, D&C 34:11, Moses 1:26. Thus, when Isaiah states the child, his child, should be named Immanuel it is because God is going to smash Rezin and Pekah thereby protecting Jerusalem.

Note in 8:3 the child is explicitly named Maher-shalal-hash-baz to symbolize the Lord's hastening the destruction of Damascus and Samaria, and referred to as Immanuel in 8:9 and 8:10.

v15 This verse states that in a relatively short period of time, or the amount of time it takes a child to grow up, all of them will be feeding on curds and honey. The "curds and honey" implications are discussed in v. 22. The rejection of evil and the choosing of good is derivative of Deut. 1:39.

While it would take some years for the child to grow up and for the prophecy to be fulfilled, it would only take mere months for the evidence of the fulfilment to come to pass.

17 The LORD shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; [even] the king of Assyria.

18 And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] the LORD shall hiss for the fly that [is] in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that [is] in the land of Assyria. 19 And they shall come, and shall rest all of them in the desolate valleys, and in the holes of the rocks, and upon all thorns, and upon all bushes.

20 In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired, [namely], by them beyond the river, by the king of Assyria, the head, and the hair of the feet: and it shall also consume the beard.

21 And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] a man shall nourish a young cow, and two sheep; 22 And it shall come to pass, for the abundance of milk [that] they shall give he shall eat butter: for butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the land.

23 And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] every place shall be, where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings, it shall [even] be for briers and thorns. 24 With arrows and with bows shall [men] come thither; because all the land shall become briers and thorns. 25 And [on] all hills that shall be digged with the mattock, there shall not come thither the fear of briers and thorns: but it shall be for the sending forth of oxen, and for the treading of lesser cattle.

v17-25 Ahaz's continuing rejection of the Lord results in a series of curses on him and all of Judah. The Lord warns of days of affliction to be poured out on Judah (v. 17), and then lists four days of affliction (v. 18-23): plague/invasion (v. 18-19), humiliation and mourning (v. 20), depopulation and poverty (v. 21-22), famine and drought (v. 23-25).

There are two readings for these verses, the historical reading and the eschatological reading. The historical reading is that Judah will suffer for its political posturing between

Assyria and Egypt (v. 18-19, 36:6-9, cp. 2 Ki. 17:4, 2 Ki. 18:13). The result is humiliation (v. 20), depopulation (v. 21), and famine (v. 23-25). All of which things happened with Ahaz and Hezekiah.

The eschatological reading is largely based on the fact that Egypt never invaded Jerusalem, as apparently suggested in v. 18, only Assyria did. As such, the assumption is the fulfilment is yet to come to pass. The Qumran interpretation on v. 17 is it will be a day of great trials yet to be fulfilled (see Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English, page 98), which lends credence to eschatological interpretations as they did not see it as historically fulfilled. Additionally, the gathering of Assyria and Egypt to Jerusalem is a relatively common reference with eschatological implications. In the "Day of the Lord" as depicted by Joel, all of the nations of the earth are brought up to Jerusalem for a day of judgement and retribution (Joel 3:9-17). Assyria and Egypt are specifically referenced as two of the nations to be drawn to Jerusalem in Zech. 10:8-12 (it should be noted that Zech 10:12 is referring to Judah after Assyria's and Egypt's fall in the previous verse). Micah 7:12 also references trampling hordes from Assyria and Egypt come to punish wicked Israel.

v18 "fly...bee", assuming a historical reading, the biting and stinging insects which cover the land are the results of Judah's political alliances with Egypt and Assyria. They are being stung for relying on diplomacy rather than the Lord. None in Judah will be able to escape the negative consequences.

Assuming an eschatological reading, these figures follow the symbolism of other OT prophets where swarms of insects represent Assyrian invasion of Israel, cf. Joel 1:4-6, Nahum 3:15-17, Amos 7:1, Judges 6:4-5, Judges 7:12, Rev. 9:3.

v20 The footnotes in the JPS translation suggest an interpretation that the hair of the body being shorn is symbolic of the invading armies destroying the fertile fields, as in v. 23-25, also cp. Micah 7:10-13.

Additional meaning can be provided by cross referencing similar passages. In Micah 1:6, Jer. 7:29, and Jer. 48:37 scenes of lamentation over complete destruction are depicted where shaving of the head and beard are part of ritual lamentation. Using these images, it can be said that the destruction wreaked by the invading King of Assyria is resulting in the surviving remnant taking up mourning and lamentation for the dead. Thus, he is the razor bringing about the shaving off of the hair. Isaiah also refers to the King of Assyria as an "axe" and as a "saw", describing him as little more than a tool in the Lord's hand, see 10:15. Perhaps here Egypt and Assyria are simply a

"razor" in the Lord's hand.

Still more meaning can come by cross referencing with Num. 6:9 and Num. 8:7. There, the shaving of the body is part of a purification ritual. Thus, the Lord is purifying Judah and purging her of filth, cp. 4:2-6, 61:6.

v21-22 These verses make reference to the surviving remnant which is more righteous. The heifer producing a lot of milk is a typical covenant blessing, but the food here is that of common herders and not the well-to-do. The implication is the wealthy elite are annihilated and only the humble among Judah will survive.

v23-25 Once productive fields becoming unproductive is a common covenant curse, cf. Lev. 26:19-20.

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