

TOWARDS A THEOLOGY OF MIGRATION: A SURVIVAL PERSPECTIVE FROM ISAIAH 1-12

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to turn the lens towards the pre-migration and resilience processes within the context of the imminent forced migration as found in Isaiah 1-12. The article addresses not only the matter of pre-migration and collective trauma but also the ensuing resilience and hope that is embedded in the text. Understanding the concepts that underpin pre-migration to trauma and hope, the authors have engaged Isaiah 1-12, which present substantial pre-migration trauma markers of collective trauma, resilience and hope in the text. This article offers original research in the field of pre-migration trauma studies in Isaiah 1-12, as very little research has been done on this topic. An attempt was made to start a new conversation and understanding about forced migration and trauma within the field of Isaiah 1-12 and biblical studies.

Keywords: pre-migration, forced migration, trauma, hope, resilience, Isaiah

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"From the sole of the foot even to the head ... bruises and sores and bleeding wounds" (Isa 1:6).

"Migrants didn't just escape a place. They had to escape a thousand memories until they'd put enough time and distance between them and their misery to wake to a better day." (from *When the Moon is Low* by Nadia Hashimi)

such as displacement, death, war and suffering, become the underlying trauma markers layered within the text. A certain type of trauma language of possible loss, helplessness in awaiting suffering and the hope of survival is embedded in the pre-exilic layers of Isaiah 1-12.

1. Introduction

Forced migration and trauma are two sides of the same coin. The resounded consequences of migration are interconnected to trauma, and it cannot be referred to without being cognisant of this context. The Biblical scholarly debate, up until recently, seems to have focused on forced migration and exile during the exilic Babylonian period, whereas significantly less is written on the pre-exilic period and the impact of the anticipated exile on the social construct of the people of Judah. There is much within the layers of the text of Isaiah 1-12 that is pertinent to the topic of migration and the trauma of awaiting the looming threat. The work of Halvorson-Taylor postulates that migration must be seen as much more than the geographical displacement. It becomes a metaphor encapsulating "the hub of a system of associations."¹ These associations of migration

2. Praxis on migration and trauma-discourse

Migration is not a monographic event but rather a broader occurrence that is much more than a mere incident encompassing a myriad sociological, anthropological and psychological dimension. These interdisciplinary perspectives according to Kelle² provides a cross-disciplinary approach featuring an "expanded range of vision that moves beyond a singular interest in politics, battles and tactics to social, cultural and human dimensions of the experience of deportation and displacement".

These insights do not only broaden the horizon about migration but provides the opportunity to look at forced migration from various times and settings. Even the modern era of displacement can help us to understand Judah's historical migration experiences. The recollected memories in the text and the imagined fear of dystopia in biblical and modern times



offers the biblical scholar according to Smith-Christopher³ a “wider lens” of interpretation. It is however cognisant to keep in mind that this “wider” interpretative view should not only focus on the correlation between ancient and modern-day migration, but that the migration experience should be seen as a similar phenomenon with unique trauma responses. Ahn⁴ rightly states that this wider lens would include the social, cultural, ethnic and a historical context which should be taken into consideration.

The concept of migration is usually categorized into two sections namely voluntary or involuntary. Lim⁵ explains the difference when he writes that voluntary migration is usually economically driven where the migrant seeks a better future and livelihood whereas forced migration is usually involuntary because of circumstances such as war or destruction due to the hand of an aggressor or enemy.

Most studies and literature on forced migration and exile in the Hebrew Bible are written from a post-exilic perspective and herein lies the conundrum because forced migration references are usually explained from after the fact or during the time of restoration. The text in Isaiah 1-12 holds images and metaphorical illusions of looming forced migration and destruction but it also holds small traces and specks of hope and resilience. Anticipated migration and the anguish that it holds are a result of previous knowledge of displacement and a historical context of struggle and trauma. A vivid picture of the past catapult the imminent danger into a reality sphere of dystopia where an imagined state of great suffering and injustice are experienced.

2.1. Pre-migration Collective trauma complexity

Reference should be made to pre-migration adversity and the significant trauma stressors. These pre-migration stressors according to Cissé et. al.⁶ (2020:50) includes persecution, prolonged exposure to political unrest, hunger, war and possible death. These stressors can be defined as migration-specific stressors. Pre-migration trauma impacts the individual as well as the community. This imagined and almost relived experience forms part of intergenerational trauma that can be passed down from one generation to the other, encapsulate the burden and fear of past traumatic events. The sharing and storytelling of forced migration becomes a relived space of what a possible outcome could be, as it is bestowed on the new audience. Mucci⁷ explains that intergenerational trauma creates a dissociation between history and memory that leads to a painful narrative. These transmitted memories through generations are memories without experience but the trauma is vividly imagined, and the trauma-specific stressors become the stereotype images and history of a social group. The migration passages in Isaiah 1-12 sets the perfect imaginative scene for transmission of loss and fear and the forthcoming trauma of exile.

A physical traumatic threat such as war and destruction create a metaphorical illusion of trauma that are experienced differently by the individuals but also by the collective. Wilson⁸ postulates it should not be assumed that individuals and communities have had the same experiences and perspectives on forced migration. He further states that these different

experience “could well have caused tension in the community, and we should not be surprised if these tensions are expressed in biblical texts from this period.”⁹ Halvorson-Taylor¹⁰ also makes a compelling argument that could also be applicable to the looming forced migration texts of Isaiah 1-12, “comparing ancient Near Eastern treaty curses that deal with exile and Deut 28 and Lev 26 suggest that ancient Israel inherited a concept of exile that already had extended meaning before Judah’s first-hand experience of deportation.”¹¹ The imagined outcome of invasion and forced migration is vivid in the mind’s eye of the people of Judah in Isaiah 1-12 and the metaphorical destruction on the social fibre of the nation leaves nothing to the imagination of the coming trauma that is on the way.

Pre-migration trauma impacts the individual as well as the community. Collective trauma is also a crisis of meaning. Hirschberger¹² explains that the construction of meaning commences with a group experiencing collective trauma, it then develops into a collective memory. This collective memory then leads to either an existential threat or survival and resilience. He further alludes that collective trauma affects an entire group or community and that it is then “represented in the collective memory of the group.”¹³ Collective memory of trauma surpasses a historical construct but is rather remembered as traumatic events in remembrance without time and space.

The Sociologist Kai Erikson¹⁴ gives a well-defined description of the similarities and differences between individual and collective trauma:

“by individual trauma I mean a blow to the psyche that breaks through one’s defences so suddenly and with such brutal force that one cannot react to it effectively...by collective trauma, on the other hand, I mean a blow to the basic tissues of social life that damages the bonds attaching people together and impairs the prevailing sense of communality. The collective trauma works its way slowly and even insidiously into the awareness of those who suffer from it, so it...[is] a gradual realization that the community no longer exists as an effective source of support and that an important part of the self has disappeared... ‘We’ no longer exist as a connected pair or as linked cells in a larger communal body”.

Collective trauma also has a flip-side in the meaning making process and that is the concept of resilience despite the multitude of trauma stressors. The collective group according to Papadopoulos,¹⁵ even become stronger due to their trauma and adversity. Hope forms an intricate part of resilience as it is the ability to imagine a better outcome and a belief in a better future. Theisen-Womersley¹⁶ writes that hope is “related to the ways in which we either position ourselves in the world or are being positioned by others”. Resilience is an active ongoing process where not only the individual but the community as a whole have to adapt in some form or another to adverse circumstances and this would entail certain interlinking connections which forms part of the ongoing process.

To conclude, Lepore and Revenson¹⁷ refer to three distinct dimensions as recovery, resistance and configuration. The authors also write that resilience can also be understood as part

of memory making over a generational space that is influenced by the three concepts mentioned above. Recovery refers to how rapid the individual and or the collective can return to “normal” after a traumatic event. The dimension of resistance means that the trauma specific stressor is confronted and not suppressed. Lastly, with configuration, the individual and the community rebounds and is strengthened and hope is ignited.

2.2. It is time for a conversation

It is time to have a dialogue about the looming pre-migration and the imagined traumatic outcome it had on the people of Judah. Having said that, it is also time to draw on a “wider lens” to see how the text in Isaiah 1-12 can help us understand our own confounding times and as Hiebel¹⁸ writes that even if the circumstances differ so vastly, future threat and trauma depends for “us and them” on how these possible traumatic circumstances are handled.

When the Moon is Low by Nadia Hashimi¹⁹ tells the unforgettable true story of an Afghan family’s life under the constant threat of the Taliban and the forced migration to save their lives. The story focuses on one family that becomes the story of the faceless community. The scene is set in Kabul where life is deeply traditional and where the citizens are acutely aware of the might and power of the Taliban who could at any moment topple the government.

Constant fear of suffering and memories of previous destruction and angst becomes a reality based on past lived experiences. As the story develops, the reader is confronted with hardships and the trauma that is suffered by the family and the community where they live. Historical trauma becomes the language of description when the author writes about shock, denial, disbelief anxiety, sadness and hopelessness. The people of Kabul are forced to flee, they become the hunted and their existence are at the peril. Even though their lives are shattered and broken, their faith and their hope for survival makes them endure and push through even if they don’t know if they will ever be able to return to Kabul.

The text of Isaiah 1-12 shows comparative traumatic migration markers, the same as the markers found in the true story of Hashimi. The text, however, embodies remnants of hope and survival and in a sense creating a future memory of hope. Isaiah 1-12 according to Stromberg²⁰ deals “primarily with judgement and salvation for Israel and Judah, with Jerusalem and Judah accorded a special place”. The first chapter recollect the suffering at the hands of foreigners and the divine judgement. Isaiah 1:7-9 foretells desolation and abandonment and the invasion of foreigners. The metaphorical trauma markers conjure up images of the possible invasion of the land and the looming threat of forced migration. The text in Isaiah 5:13-15 depicts images of exile, hunger and thirst indicating the outcome of a looming migration. A promise of hope and restoration can be found in Isaiah 11:16 where reference is made to a remnant that shall return. In both the modern forced migration and biblical migration, the impact of the looming pre-migration reverberated through the individual and the collective even though the historical context differ.

3. An expositional perspective on some pre-migration trauma texts in Isaiah 1-12

The book of Isaiah (BI) is like a closed door and when you open it, you are confronted with a plethora of challenges and uncertainties. The main themes of the book are despair, judgement and hope. Esterhuizen²¹ explains that these challenges and uncertainties “in a way form the equilibrium between the ever-conflicting feelings of despair and hope”. The text of Isaiah 1-12 (in the different layers of the text)²² accounts the ever-present looming threat of war and mayhem that became a recurrent feature in the lives of the people of Judah.

A glimpse into the historical setting of First Isaiah (Isa 1-39) is important, but is not the aim of this undertaking. It is, however, crucial to be cognisant of the historical backdrop and the subsequent events of the Syro-Ephraimite war (735-734/2 BCE), as well as the Assyrian threat, which was responsible for the pre-migration traumatic setting for the people of Judah during this historical time frame. The Assyrians were not only responsible for the end of the Northern Kingdom and the destruction of its capital Samaria (722/1), but also for the destruction of numerous cities during the reign of Hezekiah.²³ During the campaign of the Assyrian king Sennacherib (701 BCE) the consequences were disastrous for the Judean kingdom. A number of cities had been taken in and plundered, people and animals were taken as booty. The city of Lachish was destroyed, and Jerusalem was probably besieged. Judah, however, survived as a vassal state, king Hezekiah could remain on the throne but was forced to pay heavy tribute to the Assyrians. The reference in the first chapter to daughter Zion who is left “like a booth in a vineyard, like a shelter in a cucumber field, like a besieged city” (1:8) could refer to this event (:148).

The looming threat of imminent forced migration and its consequences for the land and the people are a fundamental characteristic of prophetic warnings. Although Landy²⁴ states that “Isaiah is all about exile²⁵ – but in a way it is not about exile at all”, one can assert that the same statement applies to the concept of migration in the BI, and specifically also in Isaiah 1-12, which constitutes the focus of this article. Although the above statement implies that this theme is not always definitely stated, it is sometimes only present as an absence, but still it pervades the BI in all its different layers. We agree with Rom-Shiloni²⁶ when she infers that the BI only contains fragmented information “about the effects on Israel and Judah of one of the most influential facets of imperial policy in the entire ancient Near East of the first millennium BCE. For reasons that will become clear, I tend to understand allusions to exile in Isaiah as reflecting historical circumstances in both the eighth and the sixth centuries BCE”. The BI reflects theologically and confronts the realities, or the cultural memories, of the scribes of the book through the Assyrian, Babylonian and Persian periods time and again.²⁷

The above point of departure links to the work of Cathy Caruth, who in her own studies of trauma and literature, looks at the language that is used to depict and retell the traumatic experiences. She infers that



"[I]f Freud turns to literature to describe traumatic experience, it is because literature, like psychoanalysis, is interested in the complex relation between knowing and not knowing. And it is at the specific point at which knowing and not knowing intersect that the language of literature and the psychoanalytic theory of traumatic experience precisely meet."²⁸

It can indeed be postulated that the Isaianic corpus oscillates between "knowing" and "not knowing" in the explicit versus implicit pronouncements with regard to forced migration and exile. In this article we are thus specifically interested in this complex relationship as well as intersection between the "knowing and not knowing" in the BI.

Whereas First Isaiah (Isa 1-39) – and this applies specifically to Isaiah 1-12 as well – only contains a few elusive references to forced migration, the key theme in this section of the BI is the subjugation to a foreign power (Assyria, Babylon), with the underlying threat of destruction and deportation. The pre-migration adversity, which is the cause of immense trauma, is graphically articulated through references to the aftermath of forced migration, namely a destroyed and depopulated land.²⁹ Exile and migration, as regarded in its broadest sense here, are thus referring to trauma, distress, death, grief, and catastrophe.³⁰

The prospect of hegemonic invasion and reign by foreign enemies made stability and peace uncertain and dismal. In Isaiah 1-12 the critique of imperial policy does not only relate to the Assyrian Empire, but is equally applied to the Babylonians who filled the power space left void after the collapse of the Assyrian Empire. The Babylonians brought the Kingdom of Judah to a fall and therefore it is not surprising that in several textual references in Isaiah 1-12 we also find strong allusions to the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem during the Babylonian campaign of 589-586 BCE. It is thus not surprising to the reader of the BI that chapters 1-12 are directly followed by the first of many anti-Babylonian poems and sayings in the book.³¹ These allusions are indicative of pre-migration adversity, fear and terror, which caused numerous trauma stressors on the side of the Judean population.

Many Biblical scholars who grappled with the BI, see it as an intricate unit compiled of various complicated portions within the bigger BI.³² The reason for this supposition is because Isaiah 1-12 on a synchronic level deals with the situation in Judah during this historical time, where the focus is on judgement and despair, but also on future hope. On the unity of Isaiah 1-12, Brueggemann³³ writes that there is no doubt of the historicity of the events and it is evident that the BI occupies a theological memory, hope and imagination for the Judean scribes.

Everson³⁴ aligns himself with the above when he depicts the BI as "memories". Most of these memories which were preserved by subsequent generations of scribes, were shaped in order to address people in later historical times – even up till the post-exilic era. As some of these memories are frightening and indeed very sad, they can be described as "bitter memories". These bitter memories indeed tell the story of people's fear of

looming pre-migration threats which subsequently caused traumatic migration feelings of despair and hopelessness. But we have to stress the fact that in their broader literary context these bitter memories (e.g. the memories of looming threat, war, destruction) are often framed by words giving hope and encouragement.

If chapters 1-12 are read synchronically, the first notion of looming migration and its ensuing effects on the people and the land are found in chapter 1 (Isa 1:5-9). These verses depict a beaten nation and a ruined county where only a "few survivors" will remain.³⁵ Verses 5-6 and verses 7-9 predict a pre-migration trauma situation of despair and judgement, and the future hope can be found in verse 9 where reference is made of a small remnant that will survive amidst the devastation. A realistic description is given in verse 7 of a land which is devastated by invasion, war and destruction. The text in verse 7 refers to a foreign invasion – possibly – by the Assyrians.³⁶ It is possible to translate the Hebrew word *zar* (זר) as "foreigner" or "stranger", as it refers to a person who come from outside the ethnic boundaries, thus from a clearly defined group e.g. a member of the surrounding nations.³⁷ The foreigner/complete stranger (*zār*) in Isaiah 1:7 can be seen as a threat and enemy who comes to destroy the people of Judah and to desolate the land.

"Daughter Zion" – who is in the centre of this text – is pictured as a garden hut which was left deserted in the fields (1:8). The metaphor of the nation as a beaten und untended person in verses 5-6 is explicated in frightening language in verses 7-8.³⁸ The desolation of the land includes both the land and the Judean cities, the countryside and its settlements have been devastated, and Jerusalem is left isolated. The people's failure to avert the destruction of their land and cities by the foreigners occurs parallel to the untreated sickness as described in verses 5-6. This text recognises and puts to words the terrible effects of the wars of the imperial powers as can be seen in the whole of the Ancient Near East. The book of Isaiah as a memory is therefore an interpretation of the effect of the imperial policy and also an exhortation to the people who survived to recognise God's intervention in the restoration that will take place.³⁹

Isaiah 5:13-15 elaborates on the impending threat of migration and exile, as well as the threat against the wealthy and the elite of Jerusalem who will slide down into Sheol.⁴⁰ The text expounds on the possible migration and the possible journey that lies ahead if the people of Judah do not heed to the judgement call of Yahweh. A vivid description is given of hunger and thirst and Rom-Shiloni⁴¹ explains that "this sequence strengthens the possibility that the hunger and thirst in 5:13 describes the horrors of the journey into exile". Tull⁴² further adds that although it may be "difficult to reconcile the two destinations of exile and Sheol, each offers it own just recompense, one on a literal and the other on a figurative level". The trauma markers of fear and forced migration in the text reflects illusions of past experiences and future suffering.

The notion of a foreign invasion and possible migration, is continued in the text of Isaiah 5:26-30. The threat clearly falls within the domain of the larger geopolitical vista which is characteristic the BI. This threat is political and military, it is

violent, it is invasion by a massive foreign army.⁴³ Stromberg⁴⁴ writes Assyria is the nation that will be whistled at to come and invade the land. He writes that there is a “transition from oppression into renewal in a clear reversal of the prophecy in 5:26–30”. What is meant with this reversal is that in Isaiah 5:30, a promise of darkness and distress is given by Yahweh. Images of despair are envisioned. The dark days will change into light with the promise of hope found in the text of Isaiah 8:22–9:2 when light will overcome darkness. Isaiah 5:26–30 foretells the possible pre-migration trauma if there is an impending Assyrian invasion.

“How long, O Lord?” (Isa 6:11), will the nation still endure despair and hopelessness, the prophetic figure asks God. This question reminds the reader of the language of the Psalter and it heightens the tension which is continuously building up in our reading of the chapters 1–12: “Surely there must be a limit to the divine judgment.”⁴⁵ However, the answer in the text is clear and frightening: until termination and nullification, that is to say, when the nation ceases to exist in the world. The oracle makes it clear that God has lost patience with the nation. But although no hope exists until utter desolation has been completed, that desolation is not the end of the text. There is still the small possibility of hope in the last line of verse 13 (“The holy seed is its stump”)⁴⁶

Isaiah 7:18–25 describes an incident causing extreme fear and trauma to the people of Judah.⁴⁷ Verse 18 tells about the arrival of the mighty imperial Assyrian army. These invaders are innumerable and therefore this text compares the speedy warriors of the Assyrian king to the countless flies in the rivers of Egypt and to the bees in Assyria. The text calls terrifying images to mind as it tells of the land being swarmed by flies and bees who are “in the steep ravines, and in the clefts of the rocks, and on all the thornbushes, and on all the pastures” (Isa 7:19). In this metaphor the plague of “flies” represents the large numbers of the Assyrian warriors, while the “bees” represent the terrifying and aggressive behaviour of the Assyrian army. This metaphor creates an overwhelming picture of millions of swarming

insects which make life unbearable for the inhabitants of the land. Inherent in this metaphor are the nuances of judgment and despair.⁴⁸

A promise of hope and restoration can be found in Isaiah 11:16 where reference is made to a remnant that is left and shall return as Yahweh will make possible a road from Assyria. Conspicuously this text calls to mind the motif of the Exodus from Egypt.⁴⁹ There will once again be liberation from the oppressors, the ones who became a symbol of the trauma many people were undergoing as a result of the forced migration the Assyrians imposed on different nations of the Ancient Near East. Finally, the motif of Exodus is not only an important theme at the end of chapter 11, but also occurs in the final chapter of this section (Isa 12:2) which quotes from Exodus 15:2 (“The Lord is my strength and my might, and he has become my salvation”). The noun *יְשׁוּעָה* (‘salvation’) occurs thrice in Isaiah 12 (12:2a.2b.3a). This repetition stresses the point made in these verses, namely that ‘in that day’ (1a) Yahweh’s comprehensive salvation will cause the trauma to come to an end.⁵⁰ (Groenewald 2017:2–3).

Conclusion

This paper has examined the concept of pre-migration and collective communal trauma within the setting of Isaiah 1–12. While migration has ancient relevance in Biblical history, the concepts of pre-migration and the subsequent trauma outcomes of specific trauma markers, were hardly ever addressed until recently. Understanding the markers within the text of Isaiah 1–12 is key to learning how to approach the ambiguous text as a modern-day Biblical scholar and exegete. When interpreting the impact of the looming migration in the different layers within the text of Isaiah 1–12, one should be cognisant of the historical setting as well as the collective trauma that is inflicted on the people of Judah. Pre-migration is imbedded in intergenerational memories that draws the historical collective trauma into the imagined looming threat of reality.

Notes:

1. Martien Halvorson-Taylor, *Enduring Exile: The Metaphorization of Exile in the Hebrew Bible*. VTS 141 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), 21. At pages 22–24, Halvorson-Taylor provides a detailed analogy on Deut 28 and Lev 26.
2. Kelle, Brad E. “An Interdisciplinary Approach to the Exile.” In *Interpreting Exile: Displacement and Deportation in Biblical and Modern Contexts* (Ancient Israel and its Literature 10), edited by Brad E. Kelle, Frank R. Ames & Jacob Wright, 20–21, (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 19.
3. Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002), 29.
4. John J. Ahn, *Exile as Forced Migrations. A Sociological, Literary, and Theological Approach on the Displacement and Resettlement of the Southern Kingdom of Judah*. BZAW 147 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2011). (BZAW 147), 40 ff.
5. Bo H Lim, “Exile and migration: Toward a Biblical theology of immigration and displacement,” *The Covenant Quarterly* 74, no. 2 (2016): 3–15; 7.
6. Aïcha Cissé, Lucia De Haene, Eva Keatley, and Andrew Rasmussen, “Pre- and Post-Migration Trauma and Adversity: Sources of Resilience and Family Coping among West African Refugee Families,” in *Working with Refugee Families: Trauma and Exile in Family Relationships*, eds. Lucia De Haene and Cécile Rousseau (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 50.
7. Mucci, Clara. *Beyond individual and collective trauma: Intergenerational transmission, psychoanalytic treatment, and the dynamics of forgiveness*. (London: Karnac Book, 2013), 131–143.
8. Robert R. Wilson, “Forced Migration and the Formation of the Prophetic Literature,” in *By the Irrigation Canals of Babylon: Approaches to the*



- Study of the Exile*, eds. John J. Ahn and Jill Middlemas (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2012), 132.
9. *Ibid.*, 135.
 10. A. Martien, *Enduring Exile: The Metaphorization*, 22–24. At pages 22–24, Halvorson–Taylor provides a detailed analogy on Deut 28 and Lev 26.
 11. *Ibid.*, 24.
 12. Gilad Hirschberger, “Collective Trauma and the Social Construction of Meaning,” *Frontiers in Psychology* 9, a1441 (2018): 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01441>.
 13. *Ibid.*, 11.
 14. Kai T. Erikson, *Everything in its Path*. New York (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976), 153–154.
 15. Renos K. Papadopoulos, “Refugees, trauma and adversity-activated development,” *European Journal of Psychotherapy and Counselling* 9, no. 3 (2007): 301–312, 306.
 16. Gail Theisen–Womersley, *Trauma and Resilience Among Displaced Populations. A sociocultural Exploration*. Springer Verlag: Cham, 2021.
 17. Stephen Lepore and Tracey Revenson, “Relationship between Posttraumatic Growth and Resilience: Recovery, Resistance, and Reconfiguration,” in *Handbook of Posttraumatic Growth. Research and Practice*, eds. Lawrence G. Calhoun and Richard G. Tedeschi (New York, NY: Psychology Press, 2014), 38–60.
 18. Janina M. Hiebel, “Hope in Exile: In Conversation with Ezekiel,” *Religions* 10, no. 8 (2019): 14. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel10080476>.
 19. Nadia Hashimi, *When the Moon Is Low: A Novel* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 2016).
 20. Jacob Stromberg, “The Book of Isaiah: Its Final Structure,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Isaiah*, ed. Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 23.
 21. Elizabeth Esterhuizen, *A study of the tension between despair and hope in Isaiah 7 and 8 from a perspective of trauma and posttraumatic growth*. PhD-diss. (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 2016), 67.
 22. We are aware of the complexity of textual growth of the book of Isaiah, and acknowledge the fact that Isaiah 1–12 contains some of the oldest texts, as well as some of the youngest texts, in the different layers of this subsection of the book of Isaiah.
 23. Hezekiah’s reign covered the years 715–687 BCE. Carly L. Crouch and Christopher B. Hays, “The Neo-Assyrian Context of First Isaiah,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Isaiah*, ed. Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 148.
 24. Francis Landy, “Exile in the Book of Isaiah,” in *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and its Historical Contexts* (BZAW 404), eds. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2010), 241.
 25. It’s important to remember that “exile” as used here in this article does not only refer to the Babylonian Exile, but should be seen as a broader term within a broader context. It can also include the forced migration of the Northern Kingdom by the Assyrians (8th century BCE – 722–721), as well as the constant looming threat by both the Assyrian and the Babylonian Empires
 26. Dalit Rom–Shiloni, “Exile in the Book of Isaiah,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Isaiah*, ed. Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 294.
 27. *Ibid.*
 28. Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience. Trauma, Narrative, and History (20th Anniversary edition)* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2016), 3.
 29. Rom–Shiloni, *Exile in the Book of Isaiah*, 293–294.
 30. *Ibid.*, 312.
 31. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*. (AncB 19) (New York: Doubleday, 2000); Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah*, vol. 1 (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 172; See also Alphonso Groenewald, “Some notes on writing a commentary: Isaiah 1–12,” *Verbum et Ecclesia* 30, no. 1 (2009): 65–90, 80.
 32. See the Appendixes for an outline of the interplay between a synchronic and a diachronic structure of the BI in Berges, *Book of Isaiah*.
 33. Brueggemann, *Isaiah*, 8.
 34. Joseph Everson, *The Vision of the Prophet Isaiah. Hope in a War–Weary World – A Commentary* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2019), XII.
 35. Alphonso Groenewald, “Isaiah 1:4–9 as a post–exilic reflection,” *Journal for Semitics* 20, no. 1 (2011): 87–108; 98–102.
 36. In the received form of the book, this could even be applied to the invasion by the Babylonians, thus giving the text a multi-layered meaning.
 37. Safwat Marzouk, “Different kinds of foreignness: The Hebrew Bible’s Terminology for Foreigners,” in *Christianity and the Law of Migration*, eds. Silas W. Allard, Kristin E. Heyer, and Raj Nadella (London and New York: Routledge, 2022), 147. According to Jenei, “Immigrant,” 83, the range of Hebrew terminology which existed in ancient Israelite thought indicating people who come from outside the ethnic and covenantal boundaries of Israel, include the following: *nokri* / *nekār*; *zār*. They were understood as complete strangers and are regarded as hostile by the Israelites.
 38. Marvin A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–4 and the post–exilic understanding of the Isaianic tradition* (BZAW 171) (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1988), 105; Hugh G.M. Williamson, *Isaiah 1–5* (ICC) (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 63.
 39. John D.W. Watts, *Isaiah 1–33 (revised edition)* (WBC 24) (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 29; Alphonso Groenewald, “Isaiah 1:4–9 as a post–exilic,” 99–100.
 40. Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah* (OTL) (London: John Knox Press, 2001), 47.
 41. Rom–Shiloni, *Exile in the Book of Isaiah*, 300.
 42. Patricia K. Tull, *Isaiah 1–39* (Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary) (Macon, GA.: Smyth & Helwys, 2010), 126.
 43. Brueggemann, *Isaiah*, 56.

44. Stromberg, "The Book of Isaiah: Its Final Structure," 24.
45. Childs, *Isaiah*, 57.
46. Brueggemann, *Isaiah...*, 61; Joseph Everson, *The Vision of the Prophet Isaiah*, 31; John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1-39* (NICOT) (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 191.
47. Elizabeth Esterhuizen and Groenewald Alphonso, "And it shall come to pass on that day, the Lord will whistle for the fly which is at the end of the water channels of Egypt, and for the bee which is in the land of Assyria' (Is 7:18): Traumatic impact of the Covid-19 virus as a lens to read Isaiah 7:18-25," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 77, no. 3 (2021): 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v77i3.6333>.
48. *Ibid.*, 4-5.
49. Brueggemann, *Isaiah*, 106.
50. Alphonso Groenewald, "For great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel' (Is 12:6b): Trauma and resilience in the Isaianic Psalm," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 73, no. 4 (2017): 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i4.4820>.

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