JERUSALEM, ZION AND THE UNIQUE SERVANT OF YHWH IN THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH
A STUDY ON RECOVERING IDENTITY VERSUS LAMENTING FADED GLORY (ISAIAH 1-5 AND 65-66)

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1. Shared Problem and Particular Question

The specialist literature on the book and the prophecy of Isaiah presents an abundance of approaches, insights, viewpoints or scopes. The present volume is concerned with the problem of whether or not ‘the city’ creates unity within the book of Isaiah with respect to composition, content, and literary structure. The particular question of this contribution to this volume is as to which light the psychodynamics of the personality might shed on the general problem, or whether these dynamics, being an essential element of the speech of literature i.e. the personification, might even be the key to a better understanding of the book of Isaiah.

2. Inclusio: Isaiah 1-5 and 65-66

The chapters 1-5 and 65-66 are taken as an inclusio. They shortly explain the religious-political issue and the ideological message of the whole book: ‘the city’ (i.e. Jerusalem and Zion) will continue as a concrete reality and, as such, be the centre of the new heaven and the new earth. The explanation runs as follows. The first five chapters are concerned with the identity crisis as implicitly phrased in passages like Isa. 1:8-9. The dark future for the people of Yhwh (i.e. Jacob and Israel) and his unique servants (i.e. Jerusalem and Zion) gave rise to this crisis.

1 The present writer makes his own way through the book of Isaiah; with all respect for the learned experts, it should be said. The professional standpoint of the exegesis of the book of Isaiah is largely present in the other contributions and the specialist literature referred to.
2 See the Introduction for a further explanation of the problem of the present volume.
3 The present author is gratefully indebted to J. Holman. Earlier on in our meetings, he suggested taking the first and the last chapter of the book of Isaiah as an inclusion.
4 More evidence in: Isa. 1:18; 2:6; 3:1-7; 3:16-14:1; 5:12-13, 19-20; 66:5. This evidence is clearly concerned with the problem ‘Who am I?’, or ‘Who are we?’ and
The explanation opens with a statement on the seriously disturbed relationship between Yhwh and his people (Isa. 1:2-3). Even in the first chapter Jerusalem is portrayed as a distasteful place that is in material, moral and religious decline. It speaks volumes that Zion is compared with Sodom and Gomorrah (Isa. 1:10-15; i.e. *simile* of concrete cities). Heaven and earth testify that the cult in the temple area does not meet the demands of Yhwh. Similarly, as Sodom and Gomorrah, Jerusalem is implicitly portrayed as a wicked and villainous city, in which crime thrives and lawlessness is rampant (Isa. 1:21-23). The metaphor of Jerusalem and Zion as a hut in a vineyard or cucumber field and its being portrayed as a city in fear, indicate the limited degree of protection at the most ungodly hours (Isa. 1:8). The chapters in question explain the devastation of Jerusalem as experienced as a disaster which still evokes violent emotions. This event was inevitable, since Yhwh felt urged to turn away from his people (Isa. 2:6). The adversaries of Yhwh had to bite the dust and be humiliated (Isa. 1:28). They could not receive any forgiveness (Isa. 2:9), while mankind could earn no further attention (2:22). Woe is brought down on the heads of the evil-doers who are responsible for the disaster (Isa. 3:9, 11; 5:8-30). In short, the whole future of all adversaries of Yhwh is at issue. The text clearly presents the people of Yhwh as mourning and being shameful and suffering stress and frustration (Isa. 1:7-18; 2:10-21; 3:2-7, 13-14).

It is likely that the very disaster was the immediate cause of the identity crisis of the people of Yhwh. The grounds for this, however, was their perception that Yhwh himself had deprived Jerusalem and Zion of his personal protection. The decline in political and religious authority of Jerusalem and Zion are the immediate result of the personal intervention of Yhwh in their fortunes (Isa. 1:24; 2:6; 3:1). The purpose of his inter-

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5 A *simile* is a simple comparison of one thing with another. It does not imply any deeper or figurative meaning. The latter phenomenon is present in the book of Isaiah in cases of: *pars pro toto* (e.g., the sanctuary represents a location, an area, or its people), *totum pro parte* (e.g., a location can represent its power elite or a specific class or professional group), *metonymia* (i.e., the literary phenomenon that transfers the original meaning of some object to another; the essence of this transferral is the assumed similarity and/or causal relationship in space and time between the objects of comparison) and *metaphor* (i.e., the use of a word or phrase to indicate something different from, though related in some way to, the literal meaning; the combination of at least two metaphors, the so-called mixed metaphor, may result in an absurdity).