

Shouting Gleanings And Singing Olives (Part One)

The Worldwide Welcome of the Victorious King
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Someone used the term “Isaiah’s apocalypse” as a shorthand description of the one, continuous prophecy appearing in Isaiah 24, 25, 26, and 27. The moniker has stuck, as many commentators make at least passing mention of “Isaiah’s apocalypse” in their remarks about these four chapters. Today, we shall take a look at Isaiah 24, the first chapter of “Isaiah’s apocalypse.” And, yes, in some ways it is similar to the book of Revelation, the Apocalypse.

As I read the first four verses, please notice the theme of ubiquity stressed beginning in verse 2: Everyone, everywhere, is affected.

Isaiah 24:1-4 Behold, the Lord makes the earth empty and makes it waste, distorts its surface and scatters abroad its inhabitants. And it shall be: As with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the creditor, so with the debtor. The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered, for the Lord has spoken this word. The earth mourns and fades away, the world languishes and fades away; the haughty people of the earth languish.

Isaiah’s apocalypse and the book of Revelation share a common focus: The Day of the Lord as it impacts the entire earth, not just a particular nation, like Egypt, Moab, or Israel. In fact, In the *New King James Version*, the nouns *earth*, *world*, or *land* appear in aggregate no less than 34 times in the four chapters of Isaiah’s apocalypse, which works out to be about once every other verse. Isaiah uses those nouns a total of 20 times in chapter 24 alone.

This focus on the entire earth is also characteristic of the book of Revelation. Revelation 1:10 tells us that the time-setting of Revelation is “on the Lord’s day”—that is, the Day of the Lord. That holds true for a good part of the book. In Isaiah, the terminology is much the same.

Isaiah 24:21 It shall come to pass in that day that the Lord will punish on high the host of exalted ones, and on the earth the kings of the earth.

Notice the emphasis on the entire earth, not just a section of it. The prophet makes a distinction between “on high,” that is heaven, and “on the earth.” The “exalted ones” must be fallen angels which God will punish in some heavenly venue, probably the atmosphere, since Satan is the “prince of the power of the air.” God says He will also punish kings (notice the plural) on earth. It seems clear that God is referring to the entire earth, during the Day of the Lord, when He will make all kings drink of the cup of His fury, as the prophet Jeremiah attests in Jeremiah 25.

Let Jeremiah weigh in. (The prophet here interduces the word *city*, which will become important to us later.) God addresses the Gentiles.

Jeremiah 25:29 “For behold, I begin to bring calamity on the city which is called by My name, and should be utterly unpunished? You shall not be unpunished, for I will call for a sword on all the inhabitants of the earth.”

The chapter lists the names of many nations to which Jeremiah went, carrying the cup of God's wrath. Verse 26 summarizes the matter: "[A]ll the kingdoms of the world which are on the face of the earth." Based on the scope of Jeremiah's journeys, it seems clear that Isaiah's apocalypse speaks to the whole face of the earth, all the inhabitants thereon.

This focus on the entire earth sets Isaiah's apocalypse apart from many of the other prophecies in the book of Isaiah. If you know your chapters in Isaiah, you know that many deal with specific nations:

- Assyria in chapters 8 and 10, among others
- Moab in chapters 15 and 16
- Ethiopia in chapters 18 and 20
- Egypt in chapters 19 and 20
- Tyre in chapter 23
- Babylon in chapters 21 and 47

"Isaiah's apocalypse," however, almost certainly deals with the world at large, and in extraordinarily graphic terms, in terms of the wrath of God.

Now, let us look at that word Jeremiah uses, *city*. Like the noun *earth*, it frequently appears in Isaiah's apocalypse. In fact, Isaiah uses the two Hebrew words for city, in aggregate, 54 times, nine of them in his "apocalypse." Isaiah makes an important connection between the inhabited earth and city. Let us look at that in a bit more detail.

Isaiah 24:10-12 The city of confusion is broken down; every house is shut up, so that none may go in. There is a cry for wine in the streets, all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone. In the city desolation is left, and the gate is stricken with destruction.

The topic is "the city of confusion." Pay attention to the parallelism here between the nouns *streets* and *land*. The noun *streets* is really a reference to a city through the rhetorical device called synecdoche, wherein a part stands for the whole: "All hands on deck" means "All sailors on deck," not just their hands. Hands are essential parts of a sailor and stand for the whole sailor. Likewise, streets are essential parts of cities and stand here for cities. The prophet is saying that mirth is gone from the land and joy is missing from the city streets. Isaiah thereby conceptually links the two—city and land.

To see that more clearly, take a look at chapter 25, which is a poem of praise to God for the salvation He has brought—and will continue to bring—to His people.

Isaiah 25:1-3 O Lord, You are my God. I will exalt You, I will praise Your name, for You have done wonderful things; Your counsels of old are faithfulness and truth. For You have made a city a ruin, a fortified city a ruin, a palace of foreigners to be a city no more; it will never be rebuilt. Therefore the strong people will glorify You; the city of the terrible nations will fear You.

Here, city becomes more than just a community, more than a conglomeration of structures and streets connecting them—even more than a collection of compacts or of laws. The nations, described here as “terrible,” the nations of those who come against God, make up a city—“the city of the terrible nations.” Babylon is in fact a world-city, not just New York, not just London, not just Rome, or apostate Jerusalem—people commonly fancy those cities being Babylon. But, in fact the entire anti-God civilization—east and west—which man has constructed under the leadership of Satan is Babylon, the world-city which ultimately faces everlasting ruin at the hand of God.

God makes the link between earth and city even stronger, as with a Janney railcar connection, popularly called a knuckle coupler, where both ends enfold each other, forming a strong, interlocking link, as it were, almost a unit. City equates to land; Land equates to city. To see that, look back a page to:

Isaiah 24:20 The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall totter like a hut; its transgression shall be heavy upon it, and it will fall, and not rise again.

We just read in Isaiah 25:2 that the city will “never be rebuilt”; here, we read that the earth will “not rise again.” The two phraseologies are correspondent; city and world share the same destiny. God uses the concept of eternal destruction to link earth and city; the world-city of Babylon, once destroyed by God, will be gone forever.

Earlier in Isaiah, God refers to this same city using the terms of Daniel’s statue, specifically, its head.

Isaiah 14:4-7 “How the oppressor has ceased, the golden city ceased! The Lord has broken the staff of the wicked, the scepter of the rulers; He who struck the people in wrath with a continual stroke, He who ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted and no one hinders. The whole earth is at rest and quiet; they break forth into singing.”

Later, we shall talk about who the “they” are who break into song. But, for right now, what is important is that God connects the end of the “golden city” with the coming of “rest and quiet” on “the whole earth.”

Later in the “Isaiah apocalypse,” the prophet distinguishes between the world-city inspired by Satan and the city inspired by—and empowered by—God.

Isaiah 26:1-5 In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: “We have a strong city; God will appoint salvation for walls and bulwarks. Open the gates, that the righteous nation [not the nation of the terrible ones] which keeps the truth may enter in. You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. Trust in the Lord forever, for in Yah, the Lord, is everlasting strength [literally, “rock of ages”]. For He brings down those who dwell on high, the lofty city; He lays it low, He lays it low to the ground. . . .

The world-city of Babylon is doomed.

Isaiah’s reference to singing deserves extended comment. The reference in Isaiah 26:1 to a “song [which] will be sung in the land” provides a good segue. Earlier, I pointed out that Isaiah writes of the whole earth singing:

Isaiah 14:7 “The whole earth is at rest and quiet; they break forth into singing.”

Let us approach this matter of singing by asking this question: That plural pronoun *they*—“they break forth into singing”—refers to whom? Well, I for one cannot agree with many syrupy commentators who aver that *they* refers to the people of the world at large, that is, the godless who have waged a long war against God—and lost big. These people, what relatively few of them remain, are up to the necks with blood, having suffered the trumpet plagues and the bowls. The environment, the infrastructure, the agriculture, the industry are all in tatters.

What is the mindset of the people in the world at this point? Repentance? Revelation 9:20-21 informs us that “the rest of mankind, who were not killed by [the trumpet plagues], did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.” Revelation 16:21 adds that, after seventh bowl, “Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.” Isaiah 66:19 mentions that the people living in the far quarters of the earth “have not heard of [Christ’s] fame nor seen [His] glory” *at the time of His return*. That changes later, of course, but at this point they know virtually nothing about the mercies of the Great King who has just taken up residence at Jerusalem.

It makes no sense to me that these people, who have no knowledge of the true God at all, and are certainly not repentant at this time, would start singing His praises upon His return to Jerusalem. They view themselves as defeated—which they are, their idolatrous lifestyle profoundly threatened—which is it. Everything is crashing down around their heads.

The prophet, in Isaiah 35, tell us who the singers are.

Isaiah 35:10 And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The singers are those knowing God, those waiting, looking, and hoping for Him. We shall flesh this out at bit.

Isaiah is unique among the Prophets in his stress on songs and singing. He uses the various Hebrew verbs meaning “sing” some 24 times, the Hebrew words for the noun “song” 11 times, a total of 35 times. All the other prophets—I mean Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and all the minor prophets—combined use these words a total of only 20 times. So, the presence of singing in Isaiah’s oracles is not an unimportant detail, one reason being that singing at Christ’s return demonstrates how God’s punishment of sinners—their wailing and moaning—stands in stark contrast with the joy of His people, expressed at least in part by their singing, their shouting, at His return—and all that amid the rubble. This contrast is another manifestation of the goodness of God to His children and His severity to His enemies (Romans 11:22).

Returning to Isaiah 24, we have already noticed how dire things are in the first twelve verses or so. The “city of confusion” is broken down: mirth and joy is lacking; the earth staggering to and fro. But, the tone quickly changes.

Isaiah 24:13 When it shall be thus in the midst of the land among the people, it shall be like the shaking of an olive tree, like the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done.

We have some really poetic language here. The first clause is fairly straightforward: The word *thus* refers to the descriptions in the previous verses—all those dreaded situations. The shaking of the tree and the gleanings in the vintage take place during the time when all these dire events are occurring. In a literal sense, the shaking might be earthquakes and other tribulations. So, just what are the olives and the gleanings? Two entities, and I strongly suspect they do not represent the same thing.

Both metaphors, the one about grape gleanings and the one about olives, are specific subjects of:

Deuteronomy 24:20-21 “When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean it afterward; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.”

Now, think of the gleanings left in the field and the olives left on the trees as remnants. Plural. Another reference to them appears at Isaiah 17, a prophecy about the fall of the northern kingdom, Israel. The prophet speaks of common harvest practices:

Isaiah 17:4-6 In that day it shall come to pass that the glory of Jacob will wane, and the fatness of his flesh grow lean. It shall be as when the harvester gathers the grain, and reaps the heads with his arm; it shall be as he who gathers heads of grain in the Valley of Rephaim. Yet gleaning grapes will be left in it, like the shaking of an olive tree, two or three olives at the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in its most fruitful branches. .

..

The prophet likens Israel’s fall to a harvest, where crops are taken. Harvests involve a fall, a cutting down. In modern agriculture, we refer to “mowing down.” Anciently, farmers used sickles. Harvests are destructive; a lot of plants lose their lives. But ultimately, good comes out of the destruction, as food is produced, like bread, which wheat, after it is milled into flour, yields. Destruction comes first, then construction; that is an important physical and spiritual principle. (For another example of God judgment as a harvest, see Revelation 14:14-20. It deals with God’s judgement in terms of reaping grapes of wrath.)

But, in the harvest process of cutting down crops, something—some people—will be left, as when people harvest according to God’s law, as listed there in Deuteronomy 24. God will spare some people, as He apparently spared the ancestors of Anna, of the tribe of Asher, living at the time of Christ’s birth. She was there in Judea, not over in Germany somewhere. She is mentioned in Luke 2: 36-38, and she represents a historic fact, a testimony to God’s commitment, and His ability, to leave some gleanings—a remnant.

In the metaphor presented in Isaiah 17, a prophecy, the grape gleanings represent a remnant of Israel, left intact by God when she falls in the future. I personally think the leftover grapes refer to God’s people, branches which tenaciously cling to the Vine, as Christ instructs them to do in John 15:1-8, a passage you know well. They are productive because they remain attached to the Vine, which, of course, is Christ. They are not burned. They are saved.

What about the metaphor of the shaking of the olive tree? Referenced here is that same harvest practice alluded to in Deuteronomy 24:20: Workers shook the tree, or beat its branches with a rod, to loosen and separate the olives from the tree. Afterwards, they collected the fallen olives for processing. A very few remained in the tree, a remnant, as it were. Notice how careful God is to

explain that the olives are few. Further, they not clustered, but distributed widely over the tree, some on the top, a few on the various branches. Perhaps, this scripture at least in part informs Paul's use of the olive tree in his analogy of Romans 11. The remaining olives probably are national Israelites—not members of God's church *per se*, but people with whom He is beginning to work, the result of an end-time work in the nations of Israel.

That seems to be the thrust of the prophecy in Isaiah 24 as well, where God again leverages the metaphors about the grape-gleanings and the olives. He will cultivate two remnants, one of national Israelites, the other of members of His church, protecting both groups in the midst of virtually ubiquitous devastation. Given the explicit roots of the gleanings and olives metaphors in the Pentateuch, I do not think I am allegorizing prophecy, as some are prone to do.

Incidentally, it intrigues me that the Hebrew verb rendered *beat* in Deuteronomy 24:20-21 is a harvest term, often rendered *thresh* in other places, as near the end of Isaiah's apocalypse, in Isaiah 27:12. But, it is not the same word underlying the verbals which are rendered *shaken* or *shaking* in the prophecies at Isaiah 17:6 and in Isaiah 24:13. As if to distinguish these two prophecies from the literal harvest law reviewed in Deuteronomy 24, Isaiah uses another Hebrew word. And, that word appears only twice in the Old Testament, right there in Isaiah 17 and Isaiah 24—nowhere else.

Why does God create this two-pronged remnant? By that, I mean in a practical sense, what function or work will He have for them?

Isaiah 24:14 They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing; for the majesty of the LORD they shall cry aloud from the trees.

We shall return to the idea of the sea later. The point for now is that the remnant sings and cries aloud, or shouts. Let us look more deeply into this singing and shouting.

Isaiah 42:1 “Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.

Here, the Father is speaking of His Son. Skipping down to verse 10:

Isaiah 42:10-13 Sing to the Lord a new song, and His praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you coastlands and you inhabitants of them! Let the wilderness and its cities lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar inhabits. Let the inhabitants of Sela sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory to the Lord, and declare His praise in the coastlands. The Lord shall go forth like a mighty man; He shall stir up His zeal like a man of war. He shall cry out, yes, shout aloud; He shall prevail against His enemies.

In verse 15, He says He will “lay waste the mountains and hills, and dry up all their vegetation.” So, the setting is clearly the Day of the Lord. During this time, two remnants sing His praise from the ends of the earth. Those remnants glorify Him in song. The word *sing* in Isaiah 42:11 is the same Hebrew verb as in Isaiah 24:14. Its first appearance is really interesting: Leviticus 9:24, which deals with the consecration of the Aaronic priesthood.

Leviticus 9:22-24 Then Aaron lifted his hand toward the people, blessed them, and came down from offering the sin offering, the burnt offering, and peace offerings. And

Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of meeting, and came out and blessed the people. Then the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people, and fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. When all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces.

This Hebrew verb, sometimes rendered *shout*, sometimes *sing*, first appears in reference to the peoples' response to God's display of His glory, to His appearance in glory. I reiterate: Singing is what God's people do, not the terror-stricken dwellers in the world-city of Babylon, those against God, those who are "outside the camp."

The prophet Zephaniah also speaks to this matter of singing in a passage where he repeats the phrase "in your midst," indicating that Christ is on earth when this prophecy is fulfilled, taking over the reins of government. The same Hebrew verb for *sing* appears here. Notice the designation of the groups who are doing the singing:

Zephaniah 3:14-17 Sing, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away your judgments, He has cast out your enemy. the King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst.

Please, hold on to that term, "the King of Israel." It will become important later.

Zephaniah 3:16 In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: "Do not fear; Zion, let not your hands be weak. The Lord your God in your midst, the Mighty One, will save. . . ."

The singing takes place when Christ is in the midst of His people. They recognize Him for who He is, and respond joyfully—actually, the Hebrew words indicate that they respond ecstatically. Notice as well:

Zechariah 2:10 Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I will dwell in your midst," says the Lord.

There is that same Hebrew verb for *sing*, and, again, it is in the context of God's people singing in His presence, just as in its first use, Leviticus 9, where the children of Israel sang, or shouted, when they saw His glory at the Tabernacle. At Malachi 3:1 the prophet describes this same event which Zechariah narrates by saying, "[T]he Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight." The world, at this juncture, does not delight in God. God's people will do the singing.

There is an interesting point about the Zechariah 2 passage; I mention it here in passing—almost as a sidebar, though an extended one.

Zechariah 2:11-13 Many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then you will know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you. And the Lord will take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land, and will again choose Jerusalem. Be silent, all flesh, before the Lord, for He is aroused from His holy habitation!

The concept of "in your midst" is here, but in verse 13 there is also the injunction that "all flesh" is to "be silent." This seems contradictory to verse 10, where God tells the daughter of Zion to "sing and

rejoice.” I think the best explanation lies in the audience. The audience of verse 10 is the “daughter of Zion,” while the audience of verse 13 is broader, “all flesh.”

In this regard, notice Genesis 6. The term “all flesh” appears 41 times in the *King James Version*. Importantly, the first twelve appearances of the term are in the Flood narrative, when God destroyed an entire civilization—a type of the Day of the Lord.

Genesis 6:11-13 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. And God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. . . .”

Who is entailed in the term *them*? The corrupt people of the earth. But, quite obviously, the *them* does not include Noah and his family. God did not destroy them. They are an exception; they are in another group, a totally different category, distinguished from “all flesh.”

Genesis 6:17-18 And behold, I Myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die. But I will establish My covenant with you [Noah]; and you shall go into the ark—you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you.

As used in this particular passage, “all flesh” is distinguished from Noah and his family. “All flesh” refers to the godless, who failed to find grace in God’s sight, while Noah, as Genesis 6:8 points out, “found grace in the eyes of the Lord.” He and his family become an emblem for God’s people, which God saved from a worldwide cataclysm.

Now, I understand that the term “all flesh” can and indeed does have other meanings in the Scriptures. Well, even in verse 19, which I did not read, “all flesh” refers to animals. Yet, this “first appearance” is telling. “All flesh” can refer specifically to what we might call “the world” as distinct from God’s people, and this is especially the case in contexts regarding God’s judgment.

With that background in mind, we shall return to Zechariah 2:13, about “all flesh” being silent. The last clause of that verse provides at least a hint as to the meaning of the term “all flesh” as it is used there. All flesh is to be silent because God “is aroused from His holy habitation.” Now, go back to Isaiah 42. Earlier, we stopped in verse 13, where Christ says He “shall prevail against His enemies.”

Isaiah 42:14-16 “I have held My peace a long time, I have been still and restrained Myself. Now I will cry like a woman in labor, I will pant and gasp at once. I will lay waste the mountains and hills, and dry up all their vegetation; I will make the rivers coastlands, and I will dry up the pools. I will bring the blind by a way they did not know; I will lead them in paths they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, and crooked places straight. These things I will do for them, and not forsake them.”

Christ first tells of His fury against His enemies, and then He tells of the kindness He will display to repentant Israelites as He regathers them to the Land of Promise. He says there was a time, *before* the Day of the Lord, before He started wasting “the mountains and hills,” that He was quiet. During that time, He says He restrained Himself. I think this is the situation today, and has been the situation for “a long time,” basically since the day of His ascension in 31 AD. Christ is in heaven, in control,

sovereign, ruling. But, He is quiet, restraining Himself in spite of all the evil He witnesses on the face of the earth—even the murdering of “the apple of His eye,” His people.

If “all flesh” had any sense at all, if the godless peoples of the nations had any understanding at all (which they do not), they would remain silent, daring not so much as to whisper, rather than prate against God as they do, the sort of arrogant, confused babble we recognize in the press and read on the Internet today. They would remain silent, as a hunter is silent lest he arouse a lion.

Yes, if “all flesh” had any understanding of His severity, they would not dare rage against the Holy God, lest the Lion of the Tribe of Judah rouses Himself and leaves His holy habitation. When He eventually does do that, as He will relatively soon, when He comes to earth for that year of His wrath, things will be vastly, vastly different than they are today, as we in His church recognize. We understand that. How much better it would be today if “all flesh” remained silent!

Well, that little digression over, we shall return to the concept of singing. In saying that the remnant sings and shouts at Christ’s return, we still have not reached the core of the question, “What work does God have for them to do?” Well, consider the commonplace, “Everyone loves a parade!” Parades, military and otherwise, are festive occasions, attracting large crowds. How popular is Russia’s May Day Parade or America’s Rose Parade or Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade! Well, people come out in the dead of winter to watch a parade pass by! The ancients undoubtedly had their parades as well, most commonly on pagan religious holidays.

But ancient parades were not always religious. The Romans had what they called Triumphs, a parade led by an Emperor or a general, returning to Rome after a military victory. Following the Emperor were his officers, some of his troops, cartloads of booty and hundreds or even thousands of slaves, all chained and ready for auction. The spectators might boo the conquered king or his hapless generals, captives who would soon be led to a dark island prison on the Tiber River, awaiting a slow and painful death by torture. It was thought appropriate to celebrate the return of a victorious leader with a parade.

All the Gospels include an account of Christ’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem in 31 AD. All the narratives mention singing and shouting or crying out. Luke alone adds this point of interest.

Luke 19:37-40 Then, as He [Christ] was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, saying: “‘Blessed is the King [I asked you to hold one to that word, King, earlier.] who comes in the name of the Lord!’ Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, “Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.” But He answered and said to them, “I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.”

God deemed it appropriate that Christ be welcomed to Jerusalem as a King, so much so that He took steps to ensure that a crowd, here called a crowd of disciples—not outsiders, but believers—was present to sing. It was so fitting that, had that crowd been absent, God would have made use of nearby stones. Years later, Paul writes of the work of the conquering King:

Colossians 1:15 (Common English Bible) When He [Christ] disarmed the rulers and authorities [demonic beings], He exposed them to public disgrace by leading them in a triumphal parade.

Now, of course, Christ's victory came *after* His entry into Jerusalem, not before it. Victory came with His death and resurrection. We understand that difference in timing. Yet, so assured was the Father of His Son's victory that He took steps to make sure His followers acknowledged Him, glorified Him with signing, as a conquering King.

And, the Father deems it just as appropriate that, upon His Son's return to Jerusalem "in power and great glory," after some 2,000 years of remaining quiet and restraining Himself, holding His peace, having finally roused Himself and claimed rulership of the kingdoms of this world, Christ should have a believing "welcoming committee," as it were, to glorify Him as "King of kings and Lord of lords." The remnants of which Isaiah speaks—of which so many prophets speak—will have a number of functions, but chief among them will be to glorify the victorious King of Israel with song and shout, the God of heaven and earth who has mercifully saved them.

As more than an incidental aside, I mention that the title of my comments today is "Shouting Gleanings and Singing Olives: The Worldwide Welcome of the Victorious King." We, as God's people, should never discount the value of singing before our God, both in anticipation of His return and in offering general praise. Revelation 5, and many other scriptures, indicate that singing God's praises is commonplace in heaven, where God's will is perfectly accomplished. At Matthew 6:10, in outlining the model prayer, Christ instructs us to pray that God's will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. It is His will that we sing. Let us never forget how important it is.

Returning to the remnant's singing: what will be its scope? That singing-shouting remnant will be scattered worldwide, not just centered in Jerusalem. God makes it clear that these remaining grape gleanings, these few olives still clinging onto the shaken tree, some here, some there, are distributed around the world, even in places far from Jerusalem.

Isaiah 24:15-16 Therefore glorify the Lord in the dawning light, the name of the Lord God of Israel in the coastlands of the sea. From the ends of the earth we have heard songs: "Glory to the righteous!"

The word *righteous* is a singular adjective here, probably a reference to the "Righteous One," that is, God. I counted about 32 modern translations which render the adjective as "Righteous One."

The phrase "the coastlands of the sea" in verse 15 indicates that God will situate some members of the remnant—some grapes, some olives—outside the Holy Land, to the end that they will glorify God from far away, as a witness to the Gentiles and to other Israelites. I will quickly mention a few relevant scriptures concerning the noun *coastlands*.

1. Isaiah 60:9 connects the noun coastlands with ships coming from afar.
2. Isaiah 66:19 refers to the gentile nations of Tarshish, Put, Lud, Tubal and Javan [probably Japan] as "the coastlands afar off who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory."
3. Jeremiah 25:22-23 refers to Jeremiah's carrying the cup of God's wrath worldwide. The Prophet took the cup to "all the kings of Tyre, all the kings of Sidon, and the kings of the coastlands which are across the sea; Dedan, Tema, Buz, and all who are in the farthest corners... ."
4. Ezekiel 26:18, regarding the fall of Tyre, refers to the "the coastlands by the sea."

In terms of modern geography, the coastlands would include the areas of southern Africa, Asia, the Indian sub-continent, Oceania, North and South America, probably Greenland, and so on.

As an aside, the phrase “crying aloud from the sea” (Isaiah 24:14) probably also refers to the shouting of godly remnants from faraway places. The first appearance of the Hebrew verb underlying the term “crying aloud” in this verse is interesting:

Esther 8:15-17 So Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, with a great crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple; and the city of Shushan rejoiced [there is the first use of the word translated “cry out” in Isaiah 24:14] and was glad. The Jews had light and gladness, joy and honor. And in every province and city, wherever the king’s command and decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a holiday. Then many of the people of the land became Jews, because fear of the Jews fell upon them.

The righteous Mordecai is a type of Christ, receiving a kingdom, the servant of God who brings deliverance to His people, oppressed by malignant Gentiles. God’s people rejoice in his elevation. Further, many of the Gentiles in the land convert, a type of those Gentiles who come to “join themselves” with God in the Millennium (as we read at Zechariah 2:11). The parallels are there.

There is still more evidence that the remnant is highly dispersed.

Isaiah 24:16 From the ends of the earth we have heard songs: “Glory to the righteous!” But I said, “I am ruined, ruined! Woe to me! The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously, indeed, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.”

Wow! What a change in tone, in mood! From songs praising God to a somber “Woe to me!” We shall look at the bright side first.

The King James Version renders “ends of the earth” as “the uttermost part of the earth.” Other translations use “most distant parts [of the earth],” “all over the world,” and even the highly literal term “edge of the earth.” The Hebrew noun for “uttermost part” or “end” literally means “wing.” What does an eagle do? It spreads its wings such that one tip can be as much as 7 ½ feet from the other tip. So, the noun carries the idea of extremity, as the wing tips of a large bird. A common usage applies to the extremities of a garment. Consider:

Numbers 15:38 Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners.

Many translations use the noun *borders* or *edges* or *fringes* instead of *corners*. A few, like *The Amplified Bible*, actually use the noun *hem*. The idea, again, is the extremity of the garment, its edges. God, in Isaiah 24:16 is speaking of the areas of the earth farthest away from the center of activity, Jerusalem.

At this point, let us shift away from the topic of the coastlands and take a look at the second part of Isaiah 24:16, the gloomy part.

Isaiah 24:16 But I said, “I am ruined, ruined! Woe to me! The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously, indeed, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.”

The commentators are all over the place with verse 16. Those of a preterist bent aver that the treachery is that of the Jews who killed Christ, or the treachery of the Romans in destroying Jerusalem. Such notions are quite off base in an obvious context of a prophecy about the worldwide Day of the Lord.

As we look at this difficult passage, consider the change of pronouns in verses 14 to 16. The plural pronoun *they* of verse 14, “They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing. . . .,” certainly refers to the grape gleanings and the olives of verse 13. The grammar makes it clear that the pronoun *they* refers to the two-part remnant—grape gleanings and olives—collectively. In verse 16, there is a shift from third person plural to first person plural, from *they* to *we*. The plural pronoun *we* at the beginning of verse 16, “We have heard songs. . . .,” carries what in Hebrew is called common gender. Such a pronoun refers to a person or thing which grammatically can be either masculine or feminine—but in the context, it really is irrelevant what the gender is. That is much of what common gender is all about: Grammatically, gender is not a relevant matter in that particular sentence. In Hebrew, *olive* is a masculine noun, *grape* a feminine one. The common-gendered *we* of verse 16 refers to both the grapes and the olives. Both parts of the remnants—olives and grapes—hear the singing. With the use of the first person *we*, the verse becomes much more intimate—harder hitting.

Then, in the second part of verse 16 there is another shift. This one from first person plural (*we*) to first person singular—that is, *I* and *me*. The *me* in this verse also carries the common gender, referring to an antecedent which can be either masculine or feminine. I think what the prophet is saying is that the *I*, the *me*, is a subset, a part, of the larger remnant, but a subset which is made up of both components of the remnant. That is, the *me* subset of the remnant includes some grapes, some olives (that is, some members of the church as well as some members of national Israel whom God has ordained to do a work for Him when Christ returns). This subset experiences treachery on a vast scale—indicated by the repetition of the adjective *treacherous* in the verse.

What is this treachery? Do we know, or does it remain unrevealed at this time? Well, at this point, I am left only to speculate.

The stress on treachery in verse 16 may point to the systemic—the innate, deeply built in—treachery of the Babylonian system, where there is no honesty, where truth is relative, only what is expedient. Guile is everywhere. You may want to reference Isaiah 21, a prophecy about the fall of Babylon. In verse 2, the same Hebrew word for *treacherous* appears as in Isaiah 24:16.

Isaiah 21:2 (The Message) A hard vision is given me: The betrayer betrayed [there is that word for *treachery*, meaning that Babylon, the betrayer, is herself betrayed], the plunderer plundered [that is, Babylon, the plunderer, is herself plundered]. Attack, Elam! Lay siege, Media! Persians, attack! Attack, Babylon! I’ll put an end to all the moaning and groaning [Babylon has caused].

So, Isaiah 24:16 may refer to the trait of treachery so profoundly built into the Babylonian system, so characteristic of it.

Personally, I am inclined to believe that the Moabites perpetrate the treacheries mentioned in Isaiah 24:16. Remember, I mentioned earlier that Isaiah devoted whole chapters to the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Edomites, and the Moabites, among others. But, in this end-time prophecy about the whole earth, this prophecy contained in Isaiah 24-27, Isaiah mentions no other nation, except Moab. That brief reference is in chapter 25:

Isaiah 25:10-12 For on this mountain [Mount Zion] the hand of the Lord will rest, and Moab shall be trampled down under Him, as straw is trampled down for the refuse heap. And He will spread out His hands in their midst as a swimmer reaches out to swim, and He will bring down their pride together with the trickery of their hands. The fortress of the high fort of your walls He will bring down, lay low, and bring to the ground, down to the dust.

The Hebrew word, which appears only here, behind the English noun *trickery* is much stronger than that—and possibly much more sinister. It means “artifice,” or, more literally, “tricks with his hands.” It may find semantic parallels in the French *legerdemain*, or in *prestidigitation*, or “sleight of hand.” Magic. Illusion. *Strong’s Concordance* defines it as “ambuscades,” that is, ambushes. It is related to two seldom-used Hebrew nouns meaning “lying in wait,” “ambush,” and “treachery.”

I think it is important to consider that the noun appearing at Isaiah 25:11 is plural, tricks, ambushes. That may explain the repeated use of treacherous in Isaiah 24:16.

In focusing on the faults of Moab, especially her excessive pride, both Jeremiah and Isaiah speak of Moab’s penchant for lying. We shall start with Isaiah, citing a passage the old church frequently used in “place of safety” sermons:

Isaiah 16:3-4 “Take counsel, execute judgment; make your shadow like the night in the middle of the day; hide the outcasts, do not betray him who escapes. Let My outcasts dwell with you, O Moab; be a shelter to them from the face of the spoiler.”

Isaiah 16:6-7 We have heard of the pride of Moab—He is very proud—of his haughtiness and his pride and his wrath; but his lies shall not be so. Therefore Moab shall wail for Moab; everyone shall wail.

Now, notice the second witness, a slightly expanded one penned by Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 48:29-30 “We have heard the pride of Moab (He is exceedingly proud), of his loftiness and arrogance and pride, and of the haughtiness of his heart.” “I know his wrath,” says the Lord, “but it is not right; his lies have made nothing right. . . .”

Jeremiah here uses exactly the same word for *lies*—and indeed the same form of the word—as Isaiah used in Isaiah 16:6.

God, in Zephaniah 2:8-11, says that He will destroy Moab because she “reproached and made arrogant threats against the people of the Lord of hosts.” Does the ruinous treachery of which a subset of the remnants speaks in Isaiah 24:16—where someone deals “very treacherously”—does that treachery refer to Moab’s refusal to obey God’s command to hide the outcasts, the remnants, or at least a part thereof? Is it reasonable to conclude that people so deceitful, so arrogant, so proud, so tricky, so given to prevarication, would obey God’s counsel to hide His outcasts?

Does Moab betray some part of the grape gleanings, the olives on the tree, thereby incurring God's wrath? "Therefore, Moab will wail for Moab" (Isaiah 16:7). While the remnants sing and shout of the "majesty of the Lord" (Isaiah 24:14), in Moab there is only howling and wailing—everywhere.

Isaiah 24:23 Then the moon will be disgraced and the sun ashamed; for the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before His elders, gloriously.

This makes a really good close to chapter 24, as it ends on the upbeat note, leaving Christ reigning. He will be victorious over His enemies, ruling in the sight of His elders. The Hebrew word underlying *elders* is an adjective meaning "old" and is often rendered as the noun "ancients." For reasons that are not clear to me, some commentators identify these elders as the seventy elders of Exodus 24:9-10. Others say they are the twenty-four elders of Revelation 4 and 5. That notion appears more plausible.

It also seems plausible to me that they could be the saints in general, or maybe more specifically the resurrected disciples. Remember, Christ mentions in Matthew 19:28 that they will sit on thrones judging the tribes of Israel. Well, that remains to be seen. What is clear is that Christ will reign, gloriously!