

Study Guide to Isaiah 40-66

(A Demonstration and Explanation of its Rhetorical Forms)

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This study was prepared to provide additional background evidence for:

Kenneth E. Bailey, ***Paul through Mediterranean Eyes: Cultural Studies in 1 Corinthians***
(Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2011) 560 pages.

[For a discussion of "The Prophetic Homily Style and its Interpretation,"
see the above volume, pages 29-49.]

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Part I Isaiah 40-49**ISAIAH 40:1-11**

- | | | |
|-------|--|--|
| 1. | ^{40:1} Comfort, comfort my people,
says your God.
² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her | JERUSALEM
Comforted |
| 2. | that her warfare is ended,
that her iniquity is pardoned,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins. | JERUSALEM
Forgiven |
| ----- | | |
| | ³ A voice cried: | |
| 3. | "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God." | THE ROAD
For God |
| 4. | ⁴ Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain. | THE ROAD
Prepared |
| 5. | ⁵ And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." | GOD'S GLORY
Revealed |
| ----- | | |
| 6. | ⁶ A voice says, "Cry!"
And I said, "What shall I cry?"
All flesh is grass,
and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. | ALL IS
Hopeless
People - Grass |
| 7. | -----
⁷ The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;
surely the people is grass. | -----
GRASS/ FLOWER
Breath of the Lord
People - Grass |
| 8. | ⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand for ever. | GRASS/ FLOWER
Word of God |
| ----- | | |
| 9. | ⁹ Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good tidings;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, | CRY OUT
Good News |
| 10. | lift it up, fear not;
say to the cities of Judah,
"Behold your God!" | SPEAK, FEAR NOT
Say
"God is Here!" |
| 11. | -----
¹⁰ Behold, the Lord God comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
behold, his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him, | -----
GOD COMES
Rules/Rewards |
| 12. | ¹¹ He will feed his flock like a shepherd,
he will gather the lambs in his arms,
he will carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead those that are with young. | PARABLE OF THE
Good Shepherd |

Notes on Isaiah 40:1-11

On first reading this section seems disjointed. But on careful examination and reflection, interrelationships are evident.

The first eight lines divide into sections of four lines each. Jerusalem is comforted and forgiven. This is remarkable verbiage to be addressed to returning refugees who generally think that their oppressors have sinned but not themselves. Such refugees often see their suffering as demonstrating their righteousness.

In cameos 3-5 there is a simple progression. In 3 the call for a straight road for God is made. In 4 there is a promise of "road repairs." In 5 we are told of a revelation of the great traveler who will come down this road. The scene is the traditional preparation for the visit of any famous ruler to any of his provinces. It is the sequence of "The King is coming," "fix the roads!" "Here comes the King!"

But in this case the King (God) is not seen, but only the *Glory* of the Lord. A refugee people is usually crushed in spirit. Their brokenness and sense of hopelessness makes any call for renewal or action impossible. They are too exhausted. This feeling and attitude is reflected in cameos 6-8.

The "herald of good tidings" that appeared in cameo 1 is summoned again in cameo 9, not to be dismayed or afraid, but to announce the good news of the appearance of God (11). God finally comes, like any oriental monarch, passing out rewards (11). But to the reader/listener's amazement, his appearance and manner is that of a gentle shepherd. The parable is the climax (in this case at the end of the sequence of linguistic cameos.)

Isaiah 40:12-20

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 1. | ^{40:12} Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand
and marked off the heavens with a span, | GOD IS GREAT
Over Nature |
| 2. | enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure
and weighed the mountains in scales
and the hills in a balance? | MOUNTAINS-SCALED
Hills-Balance |
| 3. | ¹³ Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord,
or as his counselor has instructed him?
¹⁴ Whom did he consult for his enlightenment,
and who taught him the path of justice,
and taught him knowledge,
and showed him the way of understanding? | GOD HAS NO
Teachers |
| 4. | ¹⁵ Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket,
and are accounted as the dust on the scales;
behold, he takes up the isles like fine dust. | NATIONS-SCALES
Isled-Dust |
| 5. | ¹⁶ Lebanon would not suffice for fuel,
nor are its beasts enough for a burnt offering
¹⁷ All the nations are as nothing before him,
they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness. | GOD IS GREAT
Over Nations |
| | ----- | ----- |
| 6. | ¹⁸ To whom then will you liken God,
or what likeness compare with him?
----- | NO ONE IS
Like God
----- |
| 7. | ¹⁹ The idol!
A workman casts it,
and a goldsmith overlays it with gold,
and casts for it silver chains. | THE IDOL IS MAN-MADE
Of Metal |
| 8. | ²⁰ He who is impoverished chooses for an offering
wood that will not rot;
he seeks out a skillful craftsman
to set up an image that will not move. | IT IS MAN-MADE
Of Wood
(it is lifeless) |

Notes on Isaiah 40:12-20

This prophetic homily is composed of two sections with a "fulcrum" or hinge in the center that links the two. The first section (1-5) tells of the power and wisdom of God. The last section (7-8) mocks the weakness of the idols and the center hinge (6) links the two.

The first section (1-5) is composed of five inverted cameos. The outside pair of cameos tells of God's power. The center speaks of his knowledge and understanding (3).

The outside parallelism (1 & 5) is not as distinct as most of the inverted parallelisms in Isaiah, yet a pair of ideas is matched together. In the first cameo the power of God is affirmed over the *waters* and the *heavens*. This appears to be a variation on the common pair of *earth* and *heaven*. The matching cameo (5) mentions the greatness of God and the *trees* (of Lebanon), the *animals* and the *nations*. One of the frequently appearing pair of ideas in Isaiah is the balancing of *nature* and *history*. That pair is imperfectly presented in these two cameos.

The inner pair of cameos (2 & 4) contains a cluster of parables which include: dust, measure, weights, scales, balances, a drop, a bucket, and fine dust. These are mostly from the world of the merchant selling his/her wares in the market. This is a split *cluster of parables*. That is, the collection of parables is divided and new material is then placed in the center. This rhetorical device is also used by Paul and appears six times in the two books here under study (cf. Plates 15, 52, 69, 90, 100).

The center climax (3) is quoted by Paul in Romans 11:34 and in I Cor 2:16. The question remains: Is Paul aware of the structure of the material he is quoting and is he by his quotation invoking all five stanzas? Furthermore these stanzas are on the topic of the *power* and *wisdom of God*. In I Cor 1:17-2:2 Paul presents an extended inversion on the power and wisdom of the *Cross*. That is, Paul deals with the same themes but with a different focus.

After the connecting hinge (6) Isaiah has two stanzas describing the weakness of the idol as compared with the wisdom and power of God.

Isaiah 40:21-26

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. ^{40:21}Have you not known?
 Have you not heard?
 Has it not been told you from the beginning?
 Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?</p> | <p>DO YOU NOT KNOW?
 Not Heard?</p> |
| <p>2. ²²It is he who sits above the circle of the earth,
 and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;
 who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,
 and spreads them like a tent to dwell in;</p> | <p>PEOPLE LIKE: GRASSHOPPERS
 Heavens like: A Tent</p> |
| <p>3. ²³who brings princes to naught,
 and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing.</p> | <p>RULERS LIKE
 Stubble</p> |
| <p>4. ²⁴Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown,
 scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,
 when he blows upon them, and they wither,
 and the tempest carries them off like stubble.</p> <p>-----</p> | <p>-----</p> |
| <p>5. ²⁵To whom then will you compare me,
 that I should be like him? says the Holy One.</p> | <p>WHAT IS GOD LIKE?
 Look At the Stars</p> |
| <p>6. ²⁶Lift up your eyes on high and see:
 who created these?</p> | <p>THEIR NUMBER
 Their Name</p> |
| <p>7. He who brings out their host by number,
 calling them all by name;</p> | <p>GOD'S POWER SEEN
 In the Night Sky</p> |
| <p>8. by the greatness of his might,
 and because he is strong in power
 not one is missing.</p> | |

Notes on Isaiah 40:21-26

This striking prophetic homily is on the topic of "How can we know God?" The material again falls into two sections, and the two homilies are thematically related. This can be seen as follows:

40:12-20 God is wise and powerful.
 With what will you compare him?
 An idol!? The idols are created by man and powerless.

40:21-26 The people are like grasshoppers.
 The heavens like a tent.
 Princes are like stubble.

 So what is God like?
 Look at the heavens.
 God is like nothing else.
 But you can know his might and power by the stars he has created.

For Isaiah much is explained through the use of parables. This is like that. He begins a list, but from the perspective of God. For God, the people are *like grasshoppers* (v. 22) . The heavens are *like a Bedouin tent* (v. 22). The princes and rulers of the earth are *like the stubble of the earth* (v. 23-24). But what is God like? What parable will fit him (v. 25)? Then there is silence. No parable for God is offered. But God's power can be known by contemplating the night sky (v. 26).

Isaiah 40:27-31

1. ^{40:27}Why do you say, O Jacob,
and speak, O Israel,
"My way is hid from the Lord,
and my right is disregarded by my God"? DON'T SAY
God Does Not Know
Or Care!
2. ²⁸Have you not known?
Have you not heard? GOD IS
The Lord is the everlasting God, Everlasting/Creator
The Creator of the ends of the earth.
3. He does not faint or grow weary,
his understanding is unsearchable. GOD DOES NOT
Faint - Weary
4. ²⁹He gives power to the faint, GOD GIVES STRENGTH
and to him who has no might he increases strength.
5. ³⁰Even youths shall faint and be weary, YOUTH
and young men shall fall exhausted; Exhausted
6. ³¹but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles, WAIT FOR L. RENEW STR.
7. they shall run and not be weary, BELIEVER
they shall walk and not faint. Not Faint - Weary

Notes on Isaiah 40:27-31

The rhetorical style of this homily is the “high-jump format” that Paul uses frequently in *I Corinthians*.

Seven cameos make up the homily. This feature is also common to *I Corinthians*.

The two opening stanzas reflect a dialogue between the prophet and the people. They say that God does not know (our way is hid from him) or care what happens to us (our right is disregarded.) The implication is that God is powerless to help. The prophet's answer appears in the five inverted stanzas which follow (3-5).

A number of rhetorical features are exhibited in cameos 3 - 7. The parallels between cameos are clear and strong. In 3 God does not grow weary; in 7 the believers do not tire. In 4 God gives power, while in the matching cameo (6) the believers themselves renew their strength. This balancing of the *sovereignty of God* and the *freedom and responsibility of the believing community* is a common pair of theological ideas that reoccurs numerous times both in *Isaiah* and in *I Corinthians*. The center, the beginning and the end are tied together with the key words *faint* and *weary*. The climax in 5 warns them that the way ahead is exhausting. God's blessings will not deliver them from the hardships of the road. Finally, there is a clear turning point in cameo 6 which is strengthened by the incorporation of the parable of the soaring eagle.

Isaiah 41:1-7

1. ^{41:1}Listen to me in silence, O coastlands;
let the peoples renew their strength;
let them approach, then let them speak;
let us together draw near for judgment. COASTLANDS/PEOPLES
Draw Near - Judgment
2. ²Who stirred up one from the east
whom victory meets at every step? WHO HAS
Raised up Cyrus?
3. He gives up nations before him,
so that he tramples kings under foot; CYRUS MARCHES
Victoriously
4. he makes them like dust with his sword,
like driven stubble with his bow. PARABLE OF
Dust/Stubble
5. ³He pursues them and passes on safely,
by paths his feet have not trod. CYRUS MARCHES
Victoriously
6. ⁴Who has performed and done this,
calling the generations from the beginning?
I, the Lord, the first,
and with the last; I am He. WHO HAS
Raised up Cyrus?
7. ⁵The coastlands have seen and are afraid,
the ends of the earth tremble;
they have drawn near and come. COASTLANDS/ENDS OF THE EARTH
Draw Near - Afraid/Tremble
-
8. ⁶Every one helps his neighbor,
and says to his brother, "Take courage!"
9. ⁷The craftsman encourages the goldsmith,
and he who smoothes with the hammer him who strikes the anvil,
10. saying of the soldering, "It is good";
and they fasten it with nails so that it cannot be moved.

Notes on Isaiah 41:1-7

The opening homily is a finely crafted prophetic rhetorical template composed of seven inverted cameos.

The final three stanzas are on the topic of making idols. This latter fragmentary material may have been placed here in the text due to a catchword association. Cameo 7 speaks of trembling and cameo 8 refers to neighbors and brothers encouraging one another. The two sections are only marginally related.

The parallels in the seven cameo inversion are significant. The outer pair (1 & 7) brings together the peoples (i.e. Israel) and the ends of the earth (i.e. the nations). Each draws near.

The second pair (2 & 6) is composed of two questions about who has raised up Cyrus. At the end of cameo 6 the answer is given.

This feature of adding critical new information at the end of the second half of a parallelism also occurs in 66:7-14 (v. 13). In this latter case Jerusalem as a comforting mother suddenly becomes God who like a like a mother comforts the people. In the Gospel of John clarifying definitions occur just past the center of extended inversions. One case of this style appears 1 Corinthians 1:12 just past the center of 1:10-16.

The third pair of parallel cameos (3 & 5) refers to the victories of Cyrus. In the first (3) God acts. God "gives up nations before him." In the second (5) Cyrus is the actor. This balance between the act of God and the act of people is a common pair in the parallelisms that appear in both *II Isaiah* and *I Corinthians*.

The only parables in the structure are placed in the center. Thus this homily is another example of an encased parable.

Isaiah 41:8-14

1. a.^{41:8}But **you, Israel, my servant**, ISRAEL (servant)
 b. **Jacob**, whom I have **chosen**, Jacob (chosen)
 the offspring of **Abraham**, my friend;
⁹you whom I took from the ends of the earth, The Tradition
 and called from its farthest corners,
 c. saying to you, "**You are my servant**, YOU SERVE ME (servant)
 d. I **have chosen you** and **not cast you off**"; Not Cast off (chosen)
2. a.¹⁰ **fear not**, for **I** am **with you**, FEAR NOT
 b. be not dismayed, for **I am your God**; I am Your God
 c. I will strengthen you, **I will help you**, I Will Help
 d. I will **uphold you with** my victorious **right hand**. My Right Hand
3. a.¹¹Behold, they shall be put to **shame** and confounded SHAMED
 b. **all** who are **incensed** against you. All Against You
 c. They shall be **as nothing** and shall perish, As Nothing
 d. those who **struggle** against you. Enemies
4. a.¹²You shall **seek** and **not find** them, NOT FOUND
 b. those who **contend** with you. Contenders
 c. They shall be **as nothing** at all, As Nothing
 d. those who **war** against you. Enemies
5. b.¹³For **I**, the Lord **your God**, I - YOUR GOD
 d. hold **your right hand**; Your Right Hand
 a. it is **I** who say **to you**, "**Fear not**,
 c. **I will help you**." Fear Not
 I Will Help
6. b.¹⁴Fear not, you **worm Jacob**, JACOB - worm
 a. you men of **Israel!** Israel
 c. **I will come to your aid**, says the Lord; I Serve You
 d. your **redeemer** is the **Holy One** of Israel. Redeemed
- 7.¹⁵Behold, I will make of you a **threshing sledge**,
 new, sharp, and having teeth;
 you shall thresh the mountains and crush them,
 and you shall make the hills like chaff;
¹⁶you shall winnow them and the wind shall carry them away,
 and the tempest shall scatter them.

Notes on Isaiah 41:8-14

This homily uses seven cameos. The first six are inverted and a final seventh cameo is attached to the end. This last cameo is composed of the powerful image of a threshing sledge and what it will do. It also offers dramatic detail to the center in cameos 3 and 4 where those who war against Israel shall "perish" and be "as nothing."

In this prophetic homily Isaiah's poetic skills are brilliantly displayed. In the poem all three forms of parallelism are in use. The lines are in pairs which I have called *straight line parallelism*. Individual lines in the matching cameos relate to one another in *step parallelism* (with perfect order in the center pair and imperfect order in the outer cameos). The overall structure of the six cameos uses *inverted parallelism*.

In cameo 1 the outer four lines relate to one another through the words *servant* and *chosen*. At the same time lines 1a. b. c. d. relate to the four lines of cameo 6 (cf. 6a. b. c. d.). The first cameo (1a.b.) begins with Israel and Jacob. Jacob and Israel reoccur in cameo 6. But there is a difference. In the first cameo (1a,c) *they serve God* while in the last cameo (6c) *God helps them*. In the first cameo Jacob and Israel are *chosen* (1b.d.) and are God's *servant* (1a.c. I.e. they have a place of special honor). But in the last cameo Jacob has become a *worm* (6b) and they need the *help* of God (6c). No pride or presumption is allowable. Finally 1d and 6d are also parallel.

Furthermore cameo 1 inverts internally. In its center it presents a reference to the ancient tradition, namely Abraham. Like Abraham they are called from the ends of the earth (southern Iraq). Paul also creates a small inverted poem out of the first stanza in a larger inversion (I Cor 2:10-11)

In 2 and 5 the theme of "right hand" is central. God upholds the people with His own right hand (2) and then holds on to the right hand of Israel as to a child (5). Again, all four themes in 2 are repeated in 5. However they are not in precise sequence. Cameo 5 has a point of turning in the first line. This point of turning is not as sharp or total as other points of turning in Isaiah. This is because the comfort of God's right hand appears in cameo 2. Yet cameo 5 *does* give the reasons for cameos 3 and 4. Also the more personal assurance that God will "hold your right hand" has a special power and tenderness.

Isaiah 41:15-20

(An encased nature miracle)

- | | | |
|----|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. | ^{41:16b} And you shall rejoice in the Lord ;
in the Holy One of Israel you shall glory. | LORD
Holy one of Israel |
| 2. | ¹⁷ When the poor and needy seek water ,
and there is none ,
and their tongue is parched with thirst ,
I the Lord will answer them ,
I the God of Israel will not forsake them . | PEOPLE IN NEED
(God acts to save) |
| 3. | ¹⁸ I will open rivers on the bare heights ,
and fountains in the midst of the valleys ;
I will make the wilderness a pool of water ,
and the dry land springs of water . | WATER IN
The Dry Land |
| 4. | ¹⁹ I will put in the wilderness the cedar ,
the acacia , the myrtle , and the olive ;
I will set in the desert the cypress ,
the plane and the pine together; | TREES IN
The Dry Land |
| 5. | ²⁰ that men may see and know ,
may consider and understand together, | PEOPLE SEE
(know and understand) |
| 6. | that the hand of the Lord has done this ,
the Holy One of Israel has created it . | LORD
Holy one of Israel |

 Note: Other “encased nature miracles” appear in Isaiah 42:13-17, 45:1-3.

Notes on Isaiah 41:15-20

This prophetic homily has six inverted cameos, with a nature miracle in the center.

The homily opens and closes with strong references to "the Lord" and "The Holy One of Israel." Then in cameos 3 and 4 there is a collection of parabolic nature miracles. This is a "split parabolic cluster."

Cameo 1 announces that they will rejoice in the Lord/ the Holy One. The parallel in cameo 6 gives the reasons. Cameo 2 tells of God's care for the poor and needy. The matching stanza is a point of turning that tells *why* God does all of this; namely that they may *see and know*. An encased parable of a miraculous flow of water and the resulting trees appears in the center of the ring composition. There is a relationship between the center and the outside.

Isaiah 41:21-29

- | | | |
|-----|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. | ^{41:21} Set forth your case, says the Lord;
²² bring your proofs, says the King of Jacob.
Let them bring them,
and tell us what is to happen. | BRING YOUR IDOLS!
Make Your Case! |
| 2. | Tell us the former things, what they are,
that we may consider them,
that we may know their outcome; | TELL US
The Past! |
| 3. | or declare to us the things to come
²³ tell us what is to come hereafter,
that we may know that you are gods; | TELL US
The Future! |
| 4. | do good, or do harm,
that we may be dismayed and terrified. | DO GOOD
Or Evil! |
| 5. | ²⁴ Behold, you are nothing,
and your work is naught;
an abomination is he who chooses you. | YOUR CASE
Fails |
| | ----- | ----- |
| 6. | ²⁵ I stirred up one from the north, and he has come,
from the rising of the sun, and he shall call on my name;
he shall trample on rulers as on mortar,
as the potter treads clay. | GOD
Acts |
| 7. | ²⁶ Who declared it from the beginning, that we might know,
and beforetime, that we might say, "He is right"?
There was none who declared it, none who proclaimed,
none who heard your words. | WHO
Spoke? |
| 8. | ²⁷ I first have declared it to Zion,
and I give to Jerusalem a herald of good tidings. | GOD SPEAKS TO
Zion/Jerusalem |
| 9. | ²⁸ But when I look there is no one;
among these there is no counselor
who, when I ask, gives an answer. | THE IDOLS
Are Silent |
| 10. | ²⁹ Behold, they are all a delusion;
their works are nothing;
their molten images are empty wind. | IDOLS
Cannot Act |

Notes on Isaiah 41:21-29

This prophetic homily against idols is constructed of two interrelated inverted sections. The first taunts the idols. The idol worshippers are initially challenged to bring their idols (1). Then, in sequence, the idols are told to "Tell us former things!" Failing that command they are called on to "declare... things to come!" Still silent they are requested to "Do something, good or evil will do, but do something!" Finally comes a series of insults "you are nothing: your work is nothing: your followers are worse than nothing!"

In the second section God, by contrast, both speaks and acts. The first pair of parallelisms again contrasts God's power to act (6) and the idols' powerlessness to do the same (10). In the second semantic envelope God speaks (7) and the idols are silent (9)

The climax focuses on the word and the messenger that are given to Zion and Jerusalem. The word of God and the prophetic herald of good tidings appear parallel to each other in the climax in cameo 8.

Isaiah often places his parables in the center of inversions, as we have noted. Here in cameo 6, the parable of Cyrus as a potter appears at the beginning rather than in the middle. The center and the beginning are related, yet in the prophet's mind the good news for Zion/Jerusalem and God's gift of a herald were more important than the Persian conqueror treading out the clay.

Isaiah 42:1-9

1. ^{42:1}Behold my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my spirit upon him,
he will bring forth justice to the nations. MY SERVANT
My Chosen
My Spirit
Justice to the Nations
2. ²He will not cry out or lift up his voice,
or make it heard in the street; HE WILL NOT CRY OUT
3. ³a bruised reed he will not break,
and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;
he will faithfully bring forth justice. PAR: REED
Par: Wick
Faith/Justice
4. ⁴He will not fail
or be discouraged HE WILL NOT FAIL
5. till he has established justice in the land;
and the coastlands wait for his law. JUSTICE IN THE LAND
His Torah
-
7. ⁵Thus says God, the Lord,
who created the heavens and stretched them out,
who spread forth the earth and what comes from it, (creation)
who gives breath to the people upon it
and spirit to those who walk in it: FORMER THINGS:
8. ⁶I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness,
I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I AM THE LORD
I Called/Kept You
9. I have given you as a covenant to the people,
a light to the nations YOUR TASK
(covenant/light)
10. ⁷to open the eyes that are blind
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
from the prison those who sit in darkness. YOUR TASK
(compassion/justice)
11. ⁸I am the Lord, that is my name;
my glory I give to no other,
nor my praise to graven images. I AM THE LORD
My Glory -
To No Other
12. ⁹Behold, the former things have come to pass,
and new things I now declare;
before they spring forth
I tell you (pl) of them. NEW THINGS
(announced)

Notes on Isaiah 42:1-9

As in the previous plate, this prophetic homily is composed of two sections each of which displays “ring composition.” But here an additional rhetorical feature unites them. The two sections interlock. A theme of justice to all that appears on the *outside* of the first section becomes the *center* of the second section. This theme is justice for Israel and the nations. This can be seen as follows:

1 justice to the nations (i.e. the Gentiles)
 2
 3
 4
 5 justice to the land (i.e. Israel)

 7
 8
 9 covenant to the people (i.e. Israel)
 a light to the nations (i.e. the Gentiles)
 10
 11
 12

In this manner the two sections are closely interlocked.

This particular prophetic homily has perhaps as great an impact on New Testament theology as any other Old Testament passage and a tracing of even the high points of this influence is beyond the scope of this overview. Yet the structure of the homily is important for any study of the material.

In the first five cameo section the theme of *justice* appears in the *center* and on the *outside*. What the servant will *do* is found in cameos 1, 3 and 5. What he will *not do* appears in cameos 2 and 4. The first section is an encased parable. The relationship of the center to the outside reinforces the impact of the material. The justice announced in cameos 1, 3 and 5 is defined by the parables in the center. The form of *justice* which the servant brings is encouragement for the weak and faltering.

But the two sections of this homily are interlocked in another way. In cameo 1 God says, "I have put my spirit upon him" for “the nations” (1) and at the same time God gives spirit to all who walk on the earth (cameo 7).

Turning to the second section, the outer pair of stanzas takes up the well-known theme of creation and redemption. Creation appears in 7 and in 12 salvation/redemption is referred to as "new things." The reader knows that there is a relationship between the center and the outside. Thus the "new things" of cameo 12 are known to be the four specifics of "covenant... light...sight and freedom: mentioned in cameos 9 and 10.

Cameos 8 and 11 each begin with "I am the Lord." The first shows God's love (I have taken you by the hand), while the second affirms God's own integrity/holiness (my glory I give to no other). There may be an intended relationship between the centers of the two sections. The bruised reed of cameo 3 may be related to the prisoners of cameo 10. In like maner the parable of the dimly burning wick (a light image) is metaphorically related to the blind of cameo 10a. If this is Isaiah's intent then the four specifics of cameo 10 would further define the justice called for in the first section. The new covenant (now a person) and the new law (his law) are also important aspects of the richness of this homily.

The baptism of Jesus quotes two of the four lines in cameo 1. Is, therefore, the entire prophetic homily invoked?

Isaiah 42:10-17

1. ^{42:10}Sing to the Lord a new song,
his praise from the end of the earth!
Let the sea roar and all that fills it,
the coastlands and their inhabitants. SING TO THE LORD
Praise - Coastlands
2. ¹¹Let the desert and its cities lift up their voice,
the villages that Kedar inhabits;
let the inhabitants of Sela sing for joy,
let them shout from the top of the mountains. DESERT LIFT UP VOICE
Inhabitants Of Kedar
Inhabitants Of Sela
Mountains Shout
3. ¹²Let them give glory to the Lord,
and declare his praise in the coastlands. GIVE GLORY TO THE LORD
Praise - Coastlands
-
4. ¹³The Lord goes forth like a mighty man,
like a man of war he stirs up his fury;
he cries out, he shouts aloud,
he shows himself mighty against his foes. LORD LIKE A MAN
Angry Against Foes
(Judgment)
5. ¹⁴For a long time I have held my peace,
I have kept still and restrained myself;
now I will cry out like a woman in travail,
I will gasp and pant. LORD LIKE A WOMAN
Cry Our in Travail
(Salvation)
6. ¹⁵I will lay waste mountains and hills
and dry up all their herbage;
I will turn the rivers into islands,
and dry up the pools NATURE MIRACLE:
Drought
(Judgment)
7. ¹⁶And I will lead the blind
in a way that they know not,
in paths that they have not known
I will guide them. LORD ACTS
To Lead the Blind
I will turn the darkness before them into light, (Salvation explained)
the rough places into level ground.
These are the things I will do,
and I will not forsake them.
8. ¹⁷They shall be turned back and utterly put to shame,
who trust in graven images,
who say to molten images,
"You are our gods." LORD WILL SHAME
Idol Worshipers
(judgment explained)

Notes on Isaiah 42:10-17

Many of the prophetic homilies of Isaiah are composed of two sections. This homily follows that pattern. The interrelation between the two sections is, in this case, thematic rather than structural. The first section (cameos 1-3) breaks forth with great exuberance calling on the desert, the cities, the villages, the mountains, the coastlands, the sea, indeed the end of the earth to sing a new song to the Lord. The reason for this joyous call to all creation for an outburst of praise is set forth in the second section (cameos 4-8). The Lord of judgment and mercy is shaming idol worshipers and showing compassion on those in darkness. He in fact offers a new birth to the latter.

The first section is composed of three simple inverted stanzas. Kedar refers to desert dwellers while Sela is the mountain city of Petra. The relationships between cameos 1 and 3 are strong. The author is in the hill country. He looks one way to the coastlands (1,3) and the other way to the desert and the mountains (2).

The second section is composed of five inverted stanzas. This section is striking in that it contains the very unusual feature of two parables and a nature miracle all in a row. In cameo 4 God is like a *mighty man*; in cameo 5 God is like a *women in travail*. These two parables are followed by a nature miracle about drought. The man is clearly a symbol of anger and judgment. He goes to war, stirs up fury, shouts and is mighty against foes. The judgment theme is repeated in the balancing cameo (8) where the enemy under judgment is identified as the idol worshipers.

The second parable on "God like a woman" (5) is matched in cameo 7 with the acts of the Lord to save. Throughout Isaiah 40-66 the mother and the mother giving birth are positive images and symbols of salvation (cf. 49:15, 54:1, 62:4-5, 66:10-13). All the things that the Lord does for the blind in cameo 7 fit the imagery of what a mother does for her newborn child. The climax of cameo 7 comes in the final line with the promise, "I will not forsake them." In Is 49:15 God affirms that even if a mother forgets her suckling child "yet I will not forget you." The closeness of the language in the two texts reinforces the possibility that cameo 7 (above) is meant to be parallel to cameo 5. That is, *judgment* is at the beginning (4), middle (6) and end of the rhetorical structure (8). Salvation appears in cameos 5 and 7. In short, God acts *like a man in judgment* and *like a woman in salvation*.

Isaiah 42:18-25

1. ^{42:18}Hear, you deaf;
and look, you blind, that you may see!
- LISTEN - DEAF
See - Blind
- ¹⁹Who is blind but my servant,
or deaf as my messenger whom I send?
Who is blind as my dedicated one
or blind as the servant of the Lord?
- MY SERVANT
Blind & Deaf
- ²⁰He sees many things, but does not observe them;
his ears are open, but he does not hear.
2. ²¹The *Lord* was pleased,
for *his righteousness'* sake,
to magnify *his law* and make it glorious.
- THE LORD
Righteous
His Torah
3. ²²But this is a people robbed and plundered,
they are all of them trapped in holes
and hidden in prisons;
they have become a prey with none to rescue,
spoil with none to say, "Restore!"
- THIS PEOPLE
Robbed & Trapped
4. ²³Who among you will give ear to this,
will attend and listen for the time to come?
- WHO WILL LISTEN?
For the Future
-
5. ²⁴Who gave up Jacob to the spoiler,
and Israel to the robbers?
- WHO SURRENDERED
Jacob and Israel?
6. Was it not *the Lord*, against whom we have sinned,
in whose *ways* they would *not walk*,
and *whose law* they would *not obey*?
- THE LORD
His Ways
His Torah
7. ²⁵So he poured upon him the heat of his anger
and the might of battle;
it set him on fire round about,
but he did not understand;
it burned him,
but he did not take it to heart.
- THE LORD PUNISHED
(Israel) Did not Understand

Notes on Isaiah 42:18-25

Here eight cameos are fashioned into a single homily. Reduced to its simplest outline the movement of the cameos is as follows:

1. Listen – you deaf
2. My servant is deaf
3. The *righteous Lord*
Magnified his glorious *Torah*
4. My people are trapped
5. Who will listen?
-
6. Who gave Jacob to the robbers?
7. The *righteous Lord*
Whose *Torah* we reject
8. The Lord punished – he (Israel) did not understand

The “servant” here is a personification of Jacob/Israel. The prophet addresses his readers whom he calls “deaf” and “blind” (cameos 1 & 4). God’s blind/deaf “messenger/servant” (2) is robbed and imprisoned (4). In the middle of all this discouraging news is the fact of God with his righteousness and his glorious law (3).

The second half of the homily the prophet explains why all of this happened. The Lord with his ways and his torah are rejected (cameo 7). He is the one who has given up Jacob to the spoilers (6) and he has punished him with fire (8).

The *Lord* with his *righteousness* (his ways) and his *Torah* appear at the center of each half of the homily.

Isaiah 43:1-7

^{43:1}But now thus says the Lord,

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 1. | he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel:
"Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine. | CREATED - JACOB
Formed - Israel
Called by My Name |
| 2. | ² When you pass through the waters I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you. | I AM WITH YOU
You Pass/Walk
Through Danger |
| 3. | a. ³ For I am the Lord your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.
b. I give Egypt as your ransom,
Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you. | I AM GOD
Holy One/ Savior
I Give Egypt
Ethiopia/Seba |
| 4. | a. ⁴ Because you are precious in my eyes,
and honored, and I love you,
b. I give men in return for you,
peoples in exchange for your life. | YOU ARE PRECIOUS
Honored/ Loved
I Give Men
People |
| 5. | ⁵ Fear not, for I am with you;
I will bring your offspring from the east,
and from the west I will gather you;
⁶ I will say to the north, Give up,
and to the south, Do not withhold;
bring my sons from afar
and my daughters from the end of the earth, | I AM WITH YOU
I will Bring
From Far Off
Men/Women |
| 6. | ⁷ every one who is called by my name,
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed and made." | CALLED BY MY NAME
All Created for Me |

Notes on Isaiah 43:1-7

Six inverted cameos form the rhetorical structure of this prophetic homily. Three pairs of inverted parallelisms present themselves to the reader. The first is cameo 1 and 6. In 1 those "called by my name" are *Jacob and Israel*. The parallel stanza (6) reflects a promise to *everyone who is created and formed* and "called by my name." The language of the latter is reflected in I Cor. 1:2 and in Acts 15:17. Here God calls both *Israel* and *the nations*.

The second pair of cameos (2 & 5) also contains a classical parallelism. The verbs in cameo 2 are active with "you pass through" and "you walk." That is, the people themselves must take the initiative to return. In the matching cameo (5) the people are passive. God is the actor who brings them in from the end of the earth.

The climactic center (3-4) has an unusual A-B-A-B structure which is evidence of the author's creativity. At the same time a remarkable set of theological pairs is set forth. These are:

I am the Holy One - You are Honored

I am the Savior - You are Loved

The two great prophetic themes of, "God is Holy and thus cares for honor" (cf. Ezekiel) and "God is a Savior who loves" (cf. Jeremiah and Hosea) both appear in the climax of this text in parallel stanzas.

When the center and the outside are compared a fourth classical theological pair of ideas appears. On the outside (1 & 6) God is *creator*. In the center (3 & 4) God is *redeemer*. The stanzas of this homily, therefore, include four classical theological pairs found elsewhere in similar structures in both the Old and New Testaments. These are:

1. God calls *Israel* and the *nations* (Gentiles)
2. The *people return*, and *God brings them back* (His action and their responsibility)
3. God is both *holy* and *loving*
4. God is both *creator* and *redeemer*

Isaiah 43:8-13

1. ^{43:8}Bring forth the people who are blind, yet have eyes,
who are deaf, yet have ears!
⁹Let all the nations gather together,
and let the peoples assemble. ASSEMBLE
The People
2. Who among them can declare this,
and show us the former things?
Let them bring their witnesses to justify them,
and let them hear and say, It is true. BRING
Witnesses
3. ¹⁰"You are my witnesses," says the Lord,
"and my servant whom I have chosen,
that you may know and believe me
and understand that I am He. YOU ARE MY WITNESSES
I am he
(God is God)
4. Before me no god was formed
nor shall there be any after me. NO OTHER GOD
5. ¹¹I, I am the Lord,
and besides me there is no savior. I AM THE LORD
The Only Savior
6. ¹²I declared and saved and proclaimed,
when there was no strange god among you; NO OTHER GOD
7. and you are my witnesses," says the Lord.
¹³"I am God, and also henceforth I am He;
there is none who can deliver from my hand;
I work and who can hinder it?" YOU ARE MY WITNESSES
I am he
(God saves)

Notes on Isaiah 43:8-13

This homily utilizes the well-known pattern of seven stanzas. In this case we have another example of the “high jump format” common in *I Corinthians*. The homily opens with a call for the nations and the peoples to assemble to hear a case (cameos 1 & 2). The blind and deaf referred to are most certainly those set forth in the previous homily. Here both Israel and the nations are summoned to be an audience to see if the blind and deaf can make a case.

The homily continues with the “jump,” that is composed of cameos 3-7, which is God's own presentation to the assembled nations and peoples. The two outer cameos (3 & 7) are closely parallel. Yet there is progression from 3 to 7. In the first (3) the community is called on to know/believe/understand that God is God. In cameo 7 they are called on to begin with this awareness and then to perceive that God acts to save.

Cameo 4 is closely aligned to cameo 6. Both speak of no other/strange gods. Here also there is progression between the two cameos. In the first (4) the reader learns that there was no god before or after God. The matching cameo (6) reminds them that before they started introducing strange (so called) gods that God acted to save.

The climax (as usual) is in the center. In this case the center does not really advance the discussion but is rather a simple affirmation of the message of the entire homily. This center is related to the beginning and end of the five cameo ring composition. The first line of the center summarizes the conclusion of the first cameo (3). The second line summarizes the conclusion of the last cameo (7).

The strong phrase "You are my witnesses" reappears in the commission spoken by the risen Jesus to the disciples recorded in Acts 1:8. If the entire above homily is invoked by the quotation then Acts 1:8 takes on new meanings.

ISAIAH 43:14-24

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| 1. | ^{43:14} Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer,
the Holy one of Israel: | LORD - REDEEMER
Holy one - of Israel |
| 2. | "For your sake I will send to Babylon
and break down all the bars, | BABYLON |
| 3. | and the shouting of the Chaldeans
will be turned to lamentations. | CHALDEANS |
| 4. | ¹⁵ I am the Lord, your Holy One,
the Creator of Israel, your King."
----- | LORD - HOLY ONE
Creator/King of Israel
----- |
| 5. | ¹⁶ Thus says the Lord,
who makes a <i>way in the sea</i> ,
a path in the <i>mighty waters</i> , | A WAY
In the Waters |
| 6. | ¹⁷ who brings forth chariot and horse,
army and warrior;
they lie down, they cannot rise,
they are extinguished, quenched like a wick: | EXODUS I |
| 7. | ¹⁸ "Remember not the former things,
nor consider the things of old.
¹⁹ Behold, I am doing a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? | EXODUS II |
| 8. | I will make a <i>way</i> in the wilderness
and <i>rivers in the desert</i> .
----- | WAY - RIVERS
In Wilderness/Desert
----- |
| 9. | ²⁰ The wild beasts will honor me,
The jackals and the ostriches; | WILD BEASTS
Honor Me |
| 10. | for I give <i>water</i> in the wilderness,
<i>rivers</i> in the desert, | I GIVE WATER
In the Desert |
| 11. | to give drink to my chosen people,
²¹ the people whom I formed for myself
that they might declare my praise.
----- | MY PEOPLE
Should Praise Me
----- |
| 12. | ²² Yet you did not call upon me, O Jacob;
but you have been weary of me, O Israel! | YOU ARE
Weary of Me |
| 13. | ²³ You have not brought me your sheep for burnt offerings,
or honored me with your sacrifices. | NO SHEEP
No Sacrifices |
| 14. | I have not burdened you with offerings,
or wearied you with frankincense. | I HAVE NOT
Wearied You |
| 15. | ²⁴ You have not bought me sweet cane with money,
or satisfied me with the fat of your sacrifices. | NO CANE
No Sacrifices |
| 16. | But you have burdened me with your sins,
you have wearied me with your iniquities." | I AM
Weary of You |

Notes on Isaiah 43:14-24

This prophetic homily is composed of four interlocking sections. The progression of ideas through the four sections can be summarized as follows:

1-4 I (God) saved you from the Babylonians/Chaldeans.

5-8 I (God) saved you from the sea (Exodus 1) and I have now staged a second Exodus with a watered path in the desert by which you can return.

9-11 Even the beasts honor me for this great event. I expect at least this much from you my people.

12-16 But, you offer me nothing! You claim that I have wearied you. I did not do so. The truth of the matter is - you have wearied me!

Each of the four sections of the homily uses inverted parallelism. In each case a theme from one section is carried on in the next. The sections will be examined in turn.

Section I (cameos 1-4)

The inversion of the four cameos in this section is unmistakable. In cameo 1 God is seen as *redeemer*. This is balanced with cameo 4 where God is declared to be the *Creator* of Israel. This is one of the often repeated pair of ideas that appears in external parallelism. The *Creator* must be the *redeemer*. *Holiness* and *love* are also paired. On the outside (1 & 4) *God is Holy*. In the center (2 & 3) God delivers them from Babylon and the Chaldeans *for their sake*, that is, he saves them because he loves them.

Section II

A way in the sea (5-6) is balanced by a way in the wilderness (7-8). In cameo 6 the imagery of the *first Exodus* is set forth. In 7, the *new Exodus* is declared.

Section III

The third section opens with the assurance that the wild beasts will honor God (9) for his miraculous creation of water in the wilderness (10). In cameo 11 the chosen people are told that they should at least do as well as the animals and praise God for his gifts. This section is interlocked with section II. This is accomplished by the positioning of the *water theme* at the beginning and the end of section II. The *water theme* then reappears in the center of section III.

Section IV

The actual response of the people is now recorded. The beginning, the center and the end of this section are all on the theme of "Who is making whom weary?" In cameo 12 Israel is accused of not calling on God and having become weary of Him. In cameo 14 God declares that He has not wearied them nor burdened them. While in 16 the prophet affirms that the people have by contrast wearied God! In cameos 13 and 15 the details of their failure to honor Him are set forth.

Notes on Isaiah 43:25- 44:8

The two sections of this passage may appear together in the text because of the similarity of their opening lines. The first starts, "I, I am He." The second begins, "I am the first and I am the last." Yet, they are only loosely related. The first (1-7) is on the topic of the judgment and mercy of God. The second (8-13) affirms that God alone is God, there is no other. This latter section is perhaps better understood as an introduction to the two following plates which discuss the futility of idols. I have left cameos 8-13 on the same page with cameos 1-7 as a formatting convenience.

Section I

Isaiah 43:25-44:5 is a single passage with seven cameos that follow the "high jump format," common to *I Corinthians*. This homily opens (1) with the assurance of pardon. Cameo 2 defends the fairness of God's past judgments on the people. An older tradition appears in the center of the cameo. It is of considerable interest that Adam is blamed for the Fall not Eve.

Cameos 3-7 are then an extended affirmation of God's present and future blessings. The outside parallelisms of the five cameos deal with Jacob and Israel. In the opening cameo of the inversion (3) they are named "chosen" and "my servant." Help is promised. In the matching cameo (7) Jacob and Israel remember that they belong to God.

Cameos 4-6 are another case of a split cluster of parables. The parables (4 & 6) are about water, plants and trees. The promise of the gift of God's Spirit appears in the center of the five cameos and thus in the middle of the parables.

The parables are about land and water. Land and water rights are always critical national issues in the Middle East. The remarkable feature of this climax (5) is the fact that the promise is not about *land* and *nation* but about the *outpouring of God's Spirit*. The parables are given specific meaning by the interpretation that is injected into their center. The symbols used have the following meanings:

water/streams = my Spirit/ my blessing

thirsty land/dry ground = your descendants/ your offspring

The above is significant for two reasons. It makes clear that Biblical parables indeed have symbols. Furthermore, the authors of those parables are occasionally willing to identify the symbols (cf. Isaiah 5:7 and the parable of the sower and its interpretation in the Gospels [Mark 4:2-20 and parallels]).

Also, the two-sided theme of *God is holy* and *God is love* also appears here. In cameo 1 God acts for his own sake (i.e. God is holy. cf. Ez. 36:22-23). In the five inverted stanzas God helps, chooses, gives spirit, and blesses the people. That is, God acts for their sake; namely God loves them. Isaiah 44:6-8 (cameos 8-13) is the opening statement of a four cameo homily on God and idols. Here a simple inclusio governs the structure of the material. The theme of "no God beside me!" dominates the outer frame (9, 13). The inner three cameos (10-12) are in sequence. The challenge of, "Let them witness if they can!" shifts to "you are my witnesses." The latter appears in the great commission in Matt 28:16. Through reinterpretation cameo 9 takes on new meaning in Rev. 1:17.

Isaiah 44:9-17

1. ^{44:9}All who make idols are nothing,
and the things they delight in do not profit;
their witnesses neither see nor know,
that they may be put to shame. IDOL MAKERS
Shamed
2. ¹⁰Who fashions a god or casts an image
that is profitable for nothing? IDOL MAKE RS
¹¹Behold, all his fellows shall be put to shame,
and the craftsmen are but men; Shamed
3. let them all assemble,
let them stand forth,
they shall be terrified,
they shall be put to shame together. IDOL MAKERS
Shamed
4. ¹²The ironsmith fashions it
and works it over the coals;
he shapes it with hammers,
and forges it with his strong arm;
he becomes hungry and his strength fails,
he drinks no water and is faint. THE IRONSMITH
Makes an Idol
(and gets tired)
5. ¹³The carpenter stretches a line,
he marks it out with a pencil;
he fashions it with planes,
and marks it with a compass;
he shapes it into the figure of a man,
with the beauty of a man, to dwell in a house. THE CARPENTER
Makes an Idol
6. ¹⁴He cuts down cedars;
or he chooses a holm tree or an oak
and lets it grow strong
among the trees of the forest;
he plants a cedar and the rain nourishes it. SELECTS WOOD FOR IDOL
Grows Wood for an Idol
7. ¹⁵Then it becomes fuel for a man;
he takes a part of it and warms himself, BURNS WOOD
(for heat)
8. he kindles a fire
and bakes bread; BURNS WOOD
(for cooking)
9. also he makes a god and worships it, MAKES A GOD
he makes it a graven image and falls down before it. (worships)
10. ¹⁶Half of it he burns in the fire;
over the half he eats flesh,
he roasts meat and is satisfied BURNS WOOD
(for cooking)
11. also he warms himself and says,
"Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire." BURNS WOOD
(for heat)
12. ¹⁷And the rest of it he makes into a god, his idol;
and falls down to it and worships it;
he prays to it and says,
"Deliver me, for thou art my god!" MAKES AN IDOL
(worships)

Notes on Isaiah 44:9-17

This passage (v. 9-20) is often printed as a prose story. Yet its rhetorical form is striking. Ideas presented in the first three cameos move in a straight line. At the same time they exhibit step parallelism when compared. Three times the idol makers are mentioned. Three times they are shamed. The specifics of their shame appear in the sections that follow (cameos 6 -12, and plate 17).

The overall structure of cameos 4 -12 has appeared before in Isaiah. This is another case of the "high jump format." The first three cameos are a general introduction. Starting with cameos 4 (the ironsmith) and cameo 5 (the carpenter) Isaiah becomes very specific as he presents seven inverted cameos with two stanzas of introduction. The ironsmith appears first (4) then the carpenter (5). Curiously, in 5-6 there is an inverted order. That is, the reader expects "plants tree" then "grows wood," followed by "selects wood," and finally "makes an idol." But strangely, the order is reversed. This is certainly intentional. Isaiah's purpose may be to point back from the idol to the wood to the tree to the seed to the rain and finally to the God who gave the rain and thus caused the tree to grow. In short the prophet subtly asks, "Where do you think all of this came from?" The creator God is responsible for the very existence of this block of wood from which the idol is made.

The idea of "make a (wooden) idol" appears at the beginning (cameo 6), in the middle (9) and at the end (12). In the center (9) the idea of *worshipping the idol* first appears. This idea is intensified at the end where the idol worshiper calls for salvation from his self-made idol. The second pair of ideas centers on wood for heat (7 & 11). The third focuses on wood for cooking (8 & 10). As noted, the worship of the idol appears in the climactic center.

This topic continues with the following homily which is as follows:

Notes on Isaiah 44:17-20

This plate is the third in a collection of three homilies on idols and the one living, powerful God. The previous homily (cameos 4-12) includes a trilogy of "wood for warmth," "wood for cooking" and "wood for an idol." Here that trilogy is repeated. It now forms the center of a new ring composition. This homily is also composed of seven stanzas. But in this latter case three themes are placed in the center rather than one. Isaiah has very skillfully repeated the three themes of "wood for heat," "wood for cooking" and "wood for idols." The new element introduced is "they do not understand (2, 6). The beginning of the previous homily (1-3) talks of the idol-maker being *shamed*. This shame is now explained. They are *stupid*. Furthermore they cannot understand their own stupidity.

All in all the deceptively simple story form of the material tends to mask the carefully-crafted nature of the parallelistic artistry. The Parables of Jesus are similar in that they also are stories and yet often contain sophisticated rhetorical forms. The same is true of *I Corinthians*.

Isaiah 44:21-28

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. ^{44:21} Remember these things, O Jacob
and Israel, for you are my servant;
I formed you, you are my servant;
O Israel, you will not be forgotten by me. | GOD MADE
Israel My Servant |
| 2. ²² I have swept away your transgressions like a cloud,
and your sins like mist;
return to me, for I have redeemed you. | GOD
Redeems You |
| 3. ²³ Sing, O heavens, for the Lord has done it;
shout, O depths of the earth;
break forth into singing, O mountains,
O forest, and every tree in it! | NATURE
Shouts |
| 4. For the Lord has redeemed Jacob,
and will be glorified in Israel. | GOD
Redeems Israel |
| 5. ²⁴ Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer,
who formed you from the womb:
"I am the Lord, who made all things,
who stretched out the heavens alone,
who spread out the earth - Who was with me? - | GOD MADE
Israel
& All Things |
| -----
6. ²⁵ who frustrates the omens of liars,
and makes fools of diviners;
who turns wise men back,
and makes their knowledge foolish; | -----
GOD CONFOUNDS
The Wise |
| 7. ²⁶ who confirms the word of his servant,
and performs the counsel of his messengers; | GOD CONFIRMS
His Messengers |
| -----
8. who says of Jerusalem, 'She shall be inhabited,'
and of the cities of Judah, 'They shall be built,
and I will raise up their ruins'; | -----
GOD REBUILDS
Jerusalem/Judah |
| 9. ²⁷ who says to the deep, 'Be dry,
I will dry up your rivers'; | GOD CAUSES DROUGHT
(nature) |
| 10. ²⁸ who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd,
and he shall fulfill all my purpose'; | GOD CHOOSES CYRUS
(history) |
| 11. saying of Jerusalem, 'She shall be built,'
and of the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid.'" | GOD REBUILDS
Jerusalem |

Notes on Isaiah 44:21-28

This prophetic homily has three sections. It opens and closes with ring compositions that focus on the fact that God has redeemed (1-5) and will rebuild (8-11) Jacob/Israel and Jerusalem. In the center of the homily are two cameos that declare God's having made the "wise" foolish and has confirmed the word of his servant. Paul quotes from cameo 6 in I Cor 1:20. A number of times in I Corinthians Paul composes an extended homily out of three sections.

The two outer sections of the homily are on the theme of redemption. God is the author of the redemption in each case although they are different in nature. In the first, redemption is defined in terms of the forgiveness of their sins. In the second, it is seen in the rebuilding of the cities of Judah, Jerusalem and the temple. This political return is made possible by God's act through his shepherd Cyrus. Return to God (2c) is thus balanced with return to Jerusalem (8). The same kind of a theological balance is reflected in the Song of Zechariah (Luke 1:67-79) where salvation from enemies (v.71) is balanced with salvation from sin (v.77).

In the first section cameos 1 and 5 bring into balance God's forming of Israel (1) with God's forming of the heavens, the earth and all things (5). Redemption is the theme of cameos 2 and 4 while in the climax (3) the heavens, the earth, the mountains and the forest all sing praises to God the author of this redemption.

In the last section the redemption of Jerusalem, the cities of Judah and the temple are the outer frame. The power of God over nature (9) and history (10) form the center.

In cameo 1 Israel is "my servant." At the same time in the center of the homily (cameo 7) "the word of his servant" is best understood to be the prophet himself. The "wise men" are frustrated and the "word of his servant" is confirmed. Isaiah and his colleagues are established as having spoken God's truth.

Isaiah 45:1-7

- | | | |
|-----|--|--|
| 1. | ^{45:1} Thus says the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus,
whose right hand I have grasped, | CYRUS
I Anointed/Grasped |
| 2. | to subdue nations before him
and ungird the loins of kings, | KINGS' (private parts)
Uncovered |
| 3. | to open doors before him
that gates may not be closed; | DOORS OPENED
Gates Not Closed |
| 4. | ² I will go before you
and level the mountains, | MOUNTAINS
Leveled |
| 5. | I will break in pieces the doors of bronze
and cut asunder the bars of iron, | DOORS BROKEN
Bars Cut |
| 6. | ³ I will give you the treasures of darkness
and the hoards in secret places, | Treasures (of kings)
Uncovered |
| 7. | that you may know that it is I, the Lord
the God of Israel, who <i>call you by your name</i> .
----- | CYRUS
I Called You by Name
----- |
| 8. | ⁴ For the sake of my servant Jacob
and Israel my chosen,

----- | FOR JACOB
For Israel

----- |
| 9. | <i>I call you by your name,</i>
I surname you, though you do not know me
⁵ <i>I am the Lord</i> , and there is no other
besides me there is no god
I gird you,
though you do not know me | WHAT I DO

WHO I AM

WHAT I DO |
| 10. | ⁶ that men may know,
from the rising of the sun
and from the west
that there is none beside me | THAT ALL
May Know |
| 11. | <i>I am the Lord</i> ,
and there is no other
⁷ I form light and create darkness,
I make weal and create woe,
<i>I am the Lord</i>
who do all these things. | WHO I AM

WHAT I DO

WHO I AM |

Notes on Isaiah 45:1-7

This prophetic homily is comprised of two inverted poems with a central climax that acts like a hinge or fulcrum balancing the structures on either side. The above "fulcrum" (cameo 8) stands out sharply from the material on either side. Paul uses this same literary style in 1 Cor 3:9b. Here the two main sections concentrate exclusively on "Cyrus" (1-7) and "all men" (9-11) while in the center (8) God affirms that all of this effort is for the sake of "my servant" Jacob/Israel.

The first poem is composed of seven pairs of inverted lines which form yet another case of the prophetic rhetorical template. Cyrus is named and anointed in cameo 1 and chosen/called in cameo 7. Kings have their secrets exposed (2 and 6). Gates/doors/bars are opened/broken (3 and 5). The center breaks into a nature miracle about mountains.

The second half is composed of three complex cameos. The first (9) and the last (11) are parallel. The themes of (A) "What I do" and (B) "Who I am" are balanced in each. Only 9 is A-B-A while 11 is reversed into B-A-B. This can be seen as follows:

Stanza 9: I call	Stanza 11: I am the Lord
I am the Lord	I create
I gird	I am the Lord

This precise literary method of interlocking the outside stanzas of ring composition homily also appears in Is. 56:1-8.

The climax of the second section (9-11) appears in 10 where God wants all (from East to West) to know Him alone as God. The end of the *first half* affirms a desire that Cyrus might know God. There is a similar vision for *all people* in the center of the *second half*. Thus the homily as a unit affirms that God acts through Cyrus (1-7) to save Jacob/Israel (8) in order that all people may know him alone as God (9-11).

Isaiah 45:8-13

1. ^{45:8}Shower, O heavens, from above,
and let the *skies rain down righteousness*;
let the earth open, that *salvation may sprout forth*,
and let it cause *righteousness to spring* up also;
I the Lord have created it. PARABLE OF:
Growth
(righteousness/salvation)
2. ⁹Woe to him who strives with his Maker,
an *earthen vessel with the potter!*
Does the clay say to him who fashions it,
'What are you making'?
or 'Your work has no handles'? PARABLE OF:
Potter and Vessel
3. ¹⁰Woe to him who says to *a father*,
'What are you *begetting*'?
or to a *woman*,
'With what are you *in travail*'?" PARABLE OF:
Mother/Father
Child
4. ¹¹Thus says the Lord,
the *Holy One* of Israel, and *his Maker*:
"Will you question me about *my children*,
or command me concerning the work of my hands? PARABLE OF:
Mother/Father
(applied)
5. ¹²*I made the earth*,
and *created man* upon it;
it was *my hands* that *stretched out the heavens*,
and I commanded all their host. PARABLE OF
Potter and Vessel
(applied)
6. ¹³I awakened him (Cyrus) in righteousness,
and I will make straight all his ways;
he shall build my city
and set my exiles free,
not for price or reward,"
says the Lord of hosts. PARABLE OF
Growth (applied)
(Righteousness/Freedom)

Notes on Isaiah 45:8-13

Some in the prophet's community are shocked at his theology. They cannot absorb the idea that Cyrus is the anointed of God. This homily is the prophet's answer. Its structure is nearly identical to the last half of Is 42:13-17. In each of these texts Isaiah constructs three stanzas around three parables. He then interprets those parables in an inverted fashion in a set of three matching stanzas. In 42:13-17 the nature miracle in the center is not interpreted, otherwise the two texts are structurally identical. Significantly each text is rich with powerful positive female imagery.

The first parable (1) is about the rain and the plants that sprout forth and spring up. The symbols in stanza 1 are already partly identified. The rain is *righteousness* and the plants that result from this rain are *salvation*. In the matching cameo (6) Cyrus is identified as the one through whom God will carry out his work of salvation/freedom.

The second pair of cameos (2 & 5) opens with the parable of the potter (2). The clay has no right to tell the potter how to fashion his wares. The answering cameo (5) affirms that God has created the heavens and the earth and the people on it.

The climax in the center becomes more specific. The parable is that of a father and a mother and their new baby. Cameo 3 points out that no one has the right to say to the parents, "What is this?!!" In like manner (4) no one has the right to question God about his children (i.e. Cyrus).

When the two halves of each parallelism are brought together the following meanings appear:

Parable one: Like rain I send down my righteousness (i.e. saving acts.) Among these saving acts is raising up Cyrus and setting you free.

Parable two: I am like a potter. You are the clay. I have fashioned the earth and all of you. Do not criticize my work!!

Parable three: I am like a father and a mother. I have given birth to Cyrus. It is rude of you to find him ugly!

Significantly, the above parables have symbols and those symbols are identified. The methodology of this passage is thus important background for the parable of the sower in the Gospels with its accompanying interpretation.

Notes on Isaiah 45:14-19

This homily is constructed of three sections. Each section uses different a rhetorical structure. The first (1-3) is a straight line sequence. The second is composed of four stanzas of step parallelism. (4-7). The final section has five stanzas of inverted parallelism (8-12).

The first section promises that the nations will acknowledge God as the only God and will bow down to God's people. The third section affirms that there is no god but the creator God. The third also notes that God did not create in chaos (9) nor can he be found there (11).

The center section is the climax of the homily. In the center the God of Israel is affirmed as the Savior (3 & 5). The other pair of cameos in the step parallelism announces that the idol makers will be shamed (5) but God's people will not. The secrecy motif appears in the second and third sections. In the center God hides himself (4) and at the end he does speak in secret (11).

Isaiah 45:20-25

- | | | |
|-------|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1. | ^{45:20} Assemble yourselves and come,
draw near together,
you survivors of the nations! | ASSEMBLE
Draw Near |
| 2. | They have no knowledge
who carry about their wooden idols,
and keep on praying to a god
that cannot save. | WOODEN IDOLS
Cannot Save |
| 3. | ²¹ Declare and present your case;
let them take counsel together!
Who told this long ago?
Who declared it of old? | DECLARE/DISCUSS
Who Told This? |
| 4. | Was it not I, the Lord?
And there is no other god besides me,
a righteous God and a Savior;
there is none besides me." | THE LORD ALONE
Is Savior |
| ----- | | |
| 5. | ²² Turn to me and be saved,
all the ends of the earth! | BE SAVED
All The Earth |
| 6. | For I am God, and there is no other.
²³ By myself I have sworn,
from my mouth has gone forth in righteousness
a word that shall not return; | ONLY GOD
A Righteous Word |
| 7. | 'To me every knee shall bow,
every tongue shall swear.' | EVERY KNEE
Every Tongue |
| 8. | ²⁴ only in the Lord, it shall be said of me
are righteousness and strength;
to him shall come and be ashamed,
all who were incensed against him. | ONLY THE LORD
Righteousness |
| 9. | ²⁵ In the Lord they shall be justified
and shall glory - all the offspring of Israel." | BE JUSTIFIED
All Israel |

Notes on Isaiah 45:20-25

The two sections of this prophetic homily are thematically linked. The first affirms that God alone (not idols) can save. The second states that God will save all the earth along with all the offspring of Israel.

This homily takes its theme from the center of the previous homily. But there is progression. In the previous homily (cameos 4-7) salvation is exclusively for *Israel*. Here the vision of salvation includes *all the earth*.

The step parallelism of the first four cameos of this homily presents two pairs of themes familiar to the reader of II Isaiah. The first is "Draw near (1) and present your case (3)." The second is, "The idols cannot save (2). God alone can save (4)."

The second section is inverted and climaxes at cameo 7 which becomes the conclusion to the Christological hymn in Phil 2:5-11. It is my conviction that these structures were known and that Paul is invoking the entire five stanzas when he quotes the above climax. The outer parallelism, as noted, affirms the salvation of God for all the earth and for Israel (5 & 9). The second parallelism (6 & 8) unites around the themes of "God alone" and "righteousness."

The center climax (7) is perhaps the strongest affirmation in scripture of a salvation available to all peoples. The center (7) is clearly related to the outside (5 & 9). Cameo 5 calls on "all the earth" to turn to God. Cameo 9 is addressed to the offspring of Israel. Salvation is available to "all the earth" and to "Israel."

Isaiah 46:1-7

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. ^{46:1} Bel bows down, Nebo stoops,
their idols are on beasts and cattle;
these things you carry are loaded
as burdens on weary beasts. | IDOLS CARRIED
By Weary Beasts |
| 2. ² they stoop, they bow down together,
they cannot save the burden
but themselves go into captivity.- | IDOLS AND BEASTS BOW
They Cannot Save |
| 3. ³ hearken to me, O house of Jacob
all the remnant of the house of Israel,
who have been borne by me from your birth
carried from the womb; | GOD HAS CARRIED ISRAEL
From Birth |
| 4. ⁴ even to your old age I am He
and to gray hairs I will carry you,
I have made, and I will bear;
I will carry and <i>will save</i> . | GOD MADE/CARRIES
God Saved |
| ----- | |
| 5. ⁵ To whom will you liken me and make me equal,
and compare me, that we may be alike? | GOD HAS NO EQUAL
He is Unique |
| 6. ⁶ Those who lavish gold from the purse,
and weigh out silver in the scales, | PAY FOR AN IDOL
With Gold/Silver |
| 7. hire a goldsmith, and he makes it into a god;
then they fall down and worship! | MAKE AN IDOL
Worship an Idol |
| 8. ⁷ They lift it upon their shoulders,
they carry it, | LIFT AN IDOL
Carry It |
| 9. They set it in its place, and it stands there;
it cannot move from its place. | POSITION AN IDOL
It Cannot Move |
| 10. If one cries to it, it does not answer
<i>or save</i> him from his trouble. | IT CANNOT ANSWER
Or Save |

Notes on Isaiah 46:1-7

The theme of this prophetic homily in two sections is "God alone made, carries and saves." The first four cameos are in step parallelism. The second five form a straight line series. Each ends on the theme of *salvation*. The first speaks of God who *can save*. The second tells of idols who *cannot save*.

The boldness of the imagery in the first four cameos of step parallelism is striking. The prophet observes that the gods of Babylon are carried on the backs of animals (1). The animals are worn out and unable to save the gods they carry. Indeed the animals themselves are captured along with the gods on their backs (2). God then shouts at them, "The idols are carried by powerless animals. With you - I am not carried but rather *I carry you!* I have carried you from the womb (3) to the end of your life. More than that I made you and I will save you (4)!" The *creator* is the *redeemer*. The imagery speaks eloquently of the humility of God who is among His people to serve and save.

The six parallelisms of the second section form a straight line sequence which ends with the idol who cannot save.

Isaiah 46:8-13

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 1. | ^{46:8} "Remember this and consider,
recall it to mind, you transgressors
⁹ remember the former things of old;
for I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is none like me, | REMEMBER/THINK
You Sinners

I AM GOD
None Like Me |
| 2. | ¹⁰ declaring the end from the beginning
and from ancient times things not yet done,
saying, 'My counsel shall stand,
and I will accomplish all my purpose,' | I SPOKE
I Will Act |
| 3. | ¹¹ calling a bird of prey from the east,
the man of my counsel from a far country. | PARABLE OF:
Bird of Prey: Cyrus |
| 4. | I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass;
I have purposed, and I will do it. | I SPOKE
I Will Act |
| 5. | ¹² Hearken to me, you stubborn of heart,
you who are far from deliverance:
¹³ I bring near my deliverance, it is not far off,
and my salvation will not tarry;
I will put salvation in Zion
for Israel my glory." | LISTEN
You Sinners

I BRING NEAR
My Salvation |

Notes on Isaiah 46:8-13

The theme of salvation set forth in the previous homily is here given specific historical content. God saves by calling Cyrus. This section is best understood as the third part of a single prophetic homily which includes the two previous homilies. When seen together the message of the three sections is as follows:

1. God alone can save (46:1-7, cameos 1-4)
2. The idols cannot save (46:1-7, cameos 5-9)
3. God saves by calling (46:8-13)
"the man of my own counsel" (Cyrus)

This third section is composed of five inverted cameos with a parable in the center. The two outer cameos (1 & 5) are each composed of two primary elements each of which is matched in the other stanza. This can be seen as follows:

Cameo #1	Cameo #5
A. Remember you transgressors	Listen you stubborn of heart
B. There is no God like me	I will save Israel

The salvation referred to relates to a specific act in history, the calling of Cyrus. Thus the outside is related to the center.

In the second pair of cameos God declares his intent and affirms that he will carry it out (2 & 4).

The five cameos are an encased parable. The only parabolic language is found in cameo 3. Cyrus is likened to a bird of prey. Again, with the parable comes its interpretation. The first line of cameo 3 is the parable. The second identifies the symbol in the parable.

Isaiah 47:1-7

1. ^{47:1}Come down and sit in the dust,
O virgin daughter of Babylon;
sit on the ground without a throne,
O daughter of the Chaldeans!
For you shall no more be called
tender and delicate.
- THE BABYLONIAN/CHALDEAN
Mistress (no more)
2. ²Take the millstones and grind meal,
put off your veil,
strip off your robe, uncover your legs,
pass through the rivers.
³Your nakedness shall be uncovered,
and your shame shall be seen.
- GOD HAS NO MERCY
On You (Bab./Chal.)
3. I will take vengeance,
and I will spare no man.
- GOD PUNISHES
Bab./Chal.
- 3b. ⁴(Our Redeemer, the Lord of hosts is his name, is the Holy One of Israel.)
4. ⁵Sit in silence, and go into darkness,
O daughter of the Chaldeans;
for you shall no more be called
the mistress of kingdoms.
- BAB./CHAL.
MISTRESS
(no more)
5. ⁶I was angry with my people,
I profaned my heritage;
I gave them into your hand
- GOD PUNISHED
Israel
6. You showed them no mercy;
on the aged you made your yoke
exceedingly heavy.
- YOU HAD NO MERCY
On Israel
7. ⁷You said, "I shall be mistress for ever,"
so that you did not lay these things to heart
or remember their end.
- THE BABYLONIAN/CHALDEAN
Mistress (no more)

Notes on Isaiah 47:1-7

This prophetic homily is composed of seven inverted cameos and is a further case of the prophetic rhetorical template. Of special interest is the fact that extra comment appears in the center that stands apart from the parallelisms of the seven cameos. This may be a comment added by Isaiah or a later clarifying "footnote." In *1 Corinthians*, Paul takes the liberty to add a few critical comments to some of his own structured homilies. As he did this he was following a precedent that was available to him in Isaiah.

The theme of "The proud mistress who is now humiliated" occurs at the beginning (1), the middle (4) and at the end (7). She is called "virgin daughter" in cameo 1. At the end (7) she is referred to as "mistress." Both words appear in the center (4).

The second pair of cameos (2 & 6) sets out a balancing of: I will have no mercy on Bab./Chal. (2) and Bab./Chal. had no mercy on Israel (6). There is a Middle Eastern cultural touch to each side of the descriptions in 2 and 6. In the first (2) the picture is of the humiliation (by exposure of the face and legs) of the proud princess accustomed to long robes and a throne. In cameo 6, the aged (who are highly honored in Middle Eastern culture) are humiliated with a heavy yoke. In each case someone expecting honor is humiliated.

In cameos 3 and 5 judgment is declared as from God, both on the "mistress" (in the present) and on Israel (in the past).

Another focus appearing in the same lines is the fact that cameos 2 and 6 tell the reader what the "mistress" will now do (2) and what she did in the past (6). Cameos 3 and 5 tell what God will do in the present (3) and what he did in the past (5). A further balancing of cameos occurs in 2-3 as compared with 5-6. The first pair of cameos tells of judgment on Bab./Chal. The second pair speaks of judgment on Israel.

As demonstrated in this text, the uncovering of the legs is humiliating and shameful in Middle Eastern culture where long robes have always been the traditional dress of people of rank. The father in Luke 15:20 voluntarily accepts this shame as he takes his robes in his hands and runs down the village street to reconcile his wayward son.

Isaiah 47:13-15

- 9.^{47:13}You are wearied with your many counsels;
let them stand forth and save you, MANY COMPANIONS
Let Them Save You
10. those who divide the heavens,
 who gaze at the stars,
 who at the new moons
 predict what shall befall you. THESE DIVINERS
Predict Your Future
11. ¹⁴Behold, they are like stubble,
 the fire consumes them
 they cannot deliver themselves
 from the power of the flame. PARABLE OF:
Burning Stubble
(cannot save themselves)
12. No coal for warming oneself is this,
 no fire to sit before! ARE WORTHLESS
- 13.¹⁵Such to you are those with whom you have labored,
 who have trafficked with you from your youth; THESE COMPANIONS
 they wander about each in his own direction; Cannot Save You
 there is no one to save you.
-

Notes on Isaiah 47:8-15

This prophetic homily is composed of two sections. The subject is: sorceries cannot protect (cameos 1-8) and star worship cannot save (9-13). Each section ends with the same thrust. In each case they have worked hard at their idol worship from their youth (8 & 13) and all their efforts are in vain. Step parallelism appears in the first eight stanzas while the more common ring composition is again used in cameos 9-13.

The first half of the homily tells the reader that the sorcerers will suffer sudden staggering loss. The eight cameos of step parallelism focus on four ideas each of which is stated twice. These are:

You feel secure	(1 & 5)
You are proud	(2 & 6)
You will suffer	(3 & 7)
Your sorceries are worthless to save	(4 & 8)

There is a biting irony in cameo 8 which taunts idol worshipers with the challenge that maybe their sorceries can "inspire terror!!" So, why not "stand fast" in them? Paul uses similar sarcasm in I Cor 4:8.

The second half of the homily focuses on astrologers. The inverted parallelism climaxes in cameo 11 with the encased parable of the burning stubble. Paul brings one of his homilies in 1 Corinthians to a similar climax by using the image of the fire of "the day" in 3:13-14. In cameo 9 the many counsels are wandering about lost (13) so let them save you (9 & 13)! A parable about stubble in the fire appears in the center of the five cameos (11). At the same time the three interior cameos have an easy forward flow. The diviners offer worthless predictions (10), cannot even save themselves (11), and the fire of their destruction is itself worthless - you cannot warm yourself by it (12). The irony of cameo 8 thus reappears. The external parallelism of cameos 10 and 12 is weak. I have followed the above format for the three inner cameos only because of the encased parable in the center.

A center and outside relationship appears. The star gazers cannot save you (9 & 13) or themselves (11). Again the center not only contains a parable but also some interpretation of that parable (Is 42:1-4).

Isaiah 48:1-11

- | | | |
|-----|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. | ^{48:1} Hear this, O house of Jacob,
who are called by the name of Israel,
and who came forth from the loins of Judah | HEAR THIS
Jacob/Israel/Judah |
| 2. | who swear by the name of the Lord,
and confess the God of Israel, | WHO SWEAR
Who Confess |
| 3. | but not in truth
or righteousness. | NO TRUTH
No Righteousness |
| 4. | ² For they call themselves after the holy city,
and support themselves on the God of Israel;
The Lord of hosts is his name. | WHO CALL
Who Support |
| 5. | ³ The former things I declared of old,
they went forth from my mouth and I made them known;
then suddenly I did them and they came to pass. | I SPOKE
I Acted |
| 6. | -----
⁴ Because I know that you are obstinate,
and your neck is an iron sinew
and your forehead brass, | -----
I KNOW YOU
Are Obstinate |
| 7. | ⁵ I declared them to you from of old,
before they came to pass I announced them to you, | FROM OF OLD
I Announced |
| 8. | lest you should say, 'My idol did them,
my graven image and my molten image commanded them. | LEST YOU SAY:
'My Idol' |
| 9. | ⁶ "You have heard; now see all this;
and will you not declare it? | HEARD BEFORE
Now See |
| 10. | From this time forth I make you hear new things,
hidden things which you have not known. | NEW
Hidden |
| 11. | ⁷ They are created now, not long ago;
before today you have never heard of them, | CREATED NOW
Not Heard Before |
| 12. | lest you should say,
'Behold, I knew them.' | LEST YOU SAY:
'I Knew' |
| 13. | ⁸ You have never heard, you have never known,
from of old your ear has not been opened. | FROM OF OLD
You Never Heard |
| 14. | For I knew that you would deal very treacherously,
and that from birth you were called a rebel. | I KNOW YOU ARE
Treacherously |
| 15. | -----
⁹ For my name's sake I defer my anger,
for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you,
that I may not cut you off. | -----
FOR MY SAKE
My Praise |
| 16. | ¹⁰ Behold, I have refined you, but not like silver;
I have tried you in the furnace of affliction. | SILVER
Furnace |
| 17. | ¹¹ For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it,
for how should my name be profaned?
My glory I will not give to another. | FOR MY SAKE
My Glory |

Notes on Isaiah 48:1-11

This prophetic homily is composed of three interrelated sections. The first two sections exhibit the rare literary device of interlocking. That is, each section uses ring composition. Whereupon, the outside of the first section is thematically related to the center of the second.

In the first section (1-5) God reminds them of former things which he declared and fulfilled. In the second section (6-14) he announces new things. But in each section the failures of the people are made clear. In the first section they lack truth and righteousness. In the second, idol worship again appears and the people are metaphorically described as having a neck of iron and a forehead of brass. The homily concludes with section three on God's restrained anger. He does it for his own sake and yet it refines them in the furnace of affliction.

As noted, the homily opens with a call to remember what God did in the past. The first cameo calls them to attention. The parallel cameo (5) records the message God has for them. The second pair of matched cameos (2 & 4) depict a people who swear/confess/call/support themselves on God. But alas their words and deeds are not in truth or righteousness (3).

The parallels in the second section (6-14) are strong and clear. In cameos 6 and 14 harsh language appears. The first has the only parabolic speech of the section (a neck of iron and a forehead of brass). The second points out that they were treacherous since their birth. The critical tone of the language continues in cameos 7 and 13. From of old they have been told (7) but likewise, from of old they have never heard (13). Their insolent potential answers dominate cameos 8 & 16. In cameo 9 and 11 what was not heard is now seen and done. In the climax (10) appears the promise of new things which were hidden in the past. (cf. I Cor 2:7-10).

The third section (15-17) is a simple encased parable on the refining anger of God. The parable is important for the topic. God is not just angry at their treachery and willing to restrain that anger. But

the anger itself is a positive force. It is like a refiners fire that will purify them. Furthermore, God does this for his own sake, for the sake of his praise (15) and his glory (17). This theme of Divine forbearance reoccurs in Romans 3:25.

Isaiah 48:12-22

1. ^{48:12}"Hearken to me, O Jacob,
and Israel, whom I called!
I am He, I am the first,
and I am the last. LISTEN!
I Called Israel
God – First and Last
2. ¹³My hand laid the foundation of the earth,
and my right hand spread out the heavens;
when I call to them,
they stand forth together. I CREATED E. AND HEAVEN
I Call Them -They Obey
3. ¹⁴Assemble, all of you, and hear!
Who among them has declared these things? DRAW NEAR - LISTEN!
Who Spoke?
4. The Lord loves him;
he shall perform his purpose on Babylon,
and his arm shall be against the Chaldeans. GOD LOVES CYRUS
Cyrus Will Fight!
5. ¹⁵I, even I, have spoken and called him,
I have brought him,
and he will prosper in his way. GOD CALLED CYRUS
Cyrus Will Win!
6. ¹⁶Draw near to me, hear this:
from the beginning I have not spoken in secret,
from the time it came to be I have been there."
And now the Lord God has sent me and his Spirit. DRAW NEAR - LISTEN!
God Spoke!
& God Sent Me & His Spirit
7. ¹⁷Thus says the Lord,
your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: THE LORD IS
Redeemer of Israel
8. I am the Lord your God,
who teaches you to profit,
who leads you in the way you should go. I LEAD YOU
In The Right Way
9. ¹⁸O that you had hearkened to my commandments!
Then your peace would have been *like a river*, PARABLES OF
and your righteousness *like the waves* of the sea; Lost Peace
10. ¹⁹your offspring would have been *like the sand*,
and your descendants *like its grains*;
their name would *never be cut off*" PARABLES OF
or destroyed from before me. Lost Security
11. ²⁰Go forth from Babylon,
flee from Chaldea, YOU GO FORTH
Flee Babylon/Chaldea
12. declare this with a shout of joy, proclaim it,
send it forth to the end of the earth;
say, "The Lord has redeemed his servant Jacob!" THE LORD IS
Redeemer of Jacob
13. ²¹They thirsted not when he led them through the deserts;
he made water flow for them from the rock;
he cleft the rock and water gushed out. REMEMBER
The Exodus
²²"There is *no peace*," says the Lord,
"for the wicked." No Peace for the Wicked

Notes on Isaiah 48:12-22

The overall structure of this homily is noteworthy. Again, a single homily is composed of two sections. The first section exhibits a mini “high jump” format. An abbreviation of the first section is as follows:

- 1-2. Listen! I called Israel
I created the earth and the Heavens and they obey
- 3-5. Listen!
I love Cyrus
I have called him and he will prosper
- 6. God has spoken – through the prophet and his Spirit

The second section (7-13) tells the people what to do in light of the above. They are to "Go forth from Babylon etc." In short, the first half says "I have called Cyrus and he is going to defeat the Babylonians/Chaldeans." The second half concludes, "Therefore get out of there!"

The external parallelisms in each half of the structure are unmistakable. The center of the second half (9-10) is again a cluster of interpreted parables.

The final cameo (13) is structurally unusual. We have noted many cases of an extra cameo at the beginning of a set of inverted parallelisms. Here there is an extra cameo at the end of a ring composition. It appears that Isaiah's mind has been triggered by the "peace like a river" image in the center of the structure (9). He thinks first about the river and recalls the first exodus when water did flow like a river out of the rock. But that peace was not available for those in exile in Babylon because of their sins. He turns in conclusion to the subject of peace and repeats the fact that it is not available to the wicked.

Isaiah 49:1-7

- | | | |
|-----|--|--|
| 1. | ^{49:1} Listen to me, O coastlands,
and hearken, you peoples from afar. | LISTEN
You Peoples |
| 2. | The Lord called me from the womb,
from the body of my mother he named my name. | LORD CALLED ME
Named Me From Birth |
| 3. | ² He made my mouth like a <i>sharp sword</i> ,
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
he made me a <i>polished arrow</i> ,
in his <i>quiver</i> he hid me away. | PARABLES OF
Sword/ Arrow/ Quiver |
| 4. | ³ And he said to me, "You are my servant,
Israel, in whom I will be glorified." | HE SAID:
You Are My Servant |
| 5. | ⁴ But I said, "I have labored in vain,
I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity;
yet surely my right is with the Lord,
and my recompense with my God."
----- | I SAID:
My Labor - Wasted
But God is Just
----- |
| 6. | ⁵ And now the Lord says,
who formed me from the womb to be his servant, | GOD SAYS:
His Servant |
| 7. | to bring Jacob back to him,
and that Israel might be gathered to him, | JACOB - RETURN
Israel Gathered |
| 8. | for I am honored in the eyes of the Lord,
and my God has become my strength - | S. HONORED
Made Strong |
| 9. | ⁶ he says: "It is too light a thing,
that you should be my servant | HE SAYS: ONLY
My Servant? |
| 10. | to raise up the tribes of Jacob
and to restore the preserved of Israel; | FOR JACOB
And Israel |
| 11. | I will give you as a light to the nations,
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."
----- | TO NATIONS
To End of Earth.
----- |
| 12. | ⁷ Thus says the Lord,
the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, | THE LORD
Redeemer of Israel |
| 13. | to one deeply despised,
abhorred by the nations,
the servant of rulers: | DESPISED BY NATIONS
Servant of Rulers |
| 14. | "Kings shall see and arise;
princes, and they shall prostrate themselves; | KINGS SHALL BOW
To You |
| 15. | because of the Lord, who is faithful,
the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you." | THE LORD
Holy One – Chosen You |

Notes on Isaiah 49:1-7

This prophetic homily on the servant of Yahweh is composed of three sections. The three interlock around the theme of the identify of the servant. In the first section (1-5) it is possible to see the servant as an individual. Yet a strong case can be made that the servant is the community. In cameo 2 he is named and in cameo 4 he is called Israel. The "hiding away" in the parables (3) appears to be a reference to exile. Although ambiguous, the weight of the language seems to indicate that the community is intended. In the third section (12-15) the servant again appears to be the community. At the time of writing the servant is abhorred by the nations (13) but in the future kings and princes will bow to him (14). All of this language is in harmony with Isaiah's vision of the return from Babylon.

By contrast, in cameos 6-11, the servant is an individual distinct from the community. He is *not Israel*. His task is to *bring Israel back to God* (7). But this task is not enough for the servant. He is also to be a light to the nations (11). This same balance between the servant as the community and the servant as an individual will appear in the following homily. There, as here, servant = individual and servant = community appear in the structure as a pair of theological ideas held in balance within the homily.

Parables are at the center of the first section (1-5). Otherwise the section exhibits a straight line progression with only hints of inversion. The rarer step parallelism used in cameos 6-11 climaxes at the end with a vision of the servant as more than a restorer of Israel, indeed as a light to the nations. The parallels are evident. The first three cameos (6-8) affirm the servant's concern for Israel. The parallel cameos (9-11) then assert his greater task, that of being the agent of God's salvation to the end of the earth. The two ideas, that God cares for Israel and for the nations appear often in Isaiah. In plate 9 this same theological pair occurs twice and is again attached to the ministry of the servant who is distinct from the community.

In the first section God calls the servant from the womb (2). In the second he forms him as a servant in the womb (6).

Isaiah 49:8-13

⁸Thus says the Lord:

1. "In a time of favor I have answered you,
in a day of salvation I have helped you;
I have kept you and given you
as a covenant to the people,
GOD HAS HELPED
The Servant
2. to establish the land,
to apportion the desolate heritages;
⁹saying to the prisoners, 'Come forth,'
to those who are in darkness, 'Appear.'
FREED PRISONERS
Establish the Land
3. They shall feed along the ways,
on all the bare heights shall be their pasture;
THE WAYS
The Heights
4. ¹⁰they shall not hunger or thirst,
neither scorching wind nor sun shall smite them,
for he who has pity on them will lead them,
and by springs of water will guide them.
SAFE FROM
Hunger/Sun/Wind
Led to
Water
5. ¹¹And I will make all my mountains a way,
and my highways shall be raised up.
MY MOUNTAINS
A Way
6. ¹²Lo, these shall come from afar,
and lo, these from the north
and from the west
and these from the land of Syene."
THESE (prisoners) COME
From the Lands
7. ¹³Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth;
break forth, O mountains, into singing!
For the Lord has comforted his people,
and will have compassion on his afflicted.
GOD HAS HELPED
The People

Notes on Isaiah 49:8-30

This homily is a prophetic rhetorical template with seven cameos of inverted parallelism. God helps the *servant* in cameo 1 and he helps/comforts *his people* in cameo 7 which is its parallel.

Cameos 2 and 6 form the second pair. The first tells the reader about the land to which the people are going. The second speaks of the lands from which they are coming. Ways and mountains/heights appear in each side of the third set of pairs (3 & 5).

The central climax is in the form of another nature miracle. Wind and sun will not smite them and God will provide springs along the way. This center is thematically attached to the end. In the center God has pity on them and at the end (7) God has comfort and compassion.

Through the servant (1) God intends to lead and guide his people (4) and thus express his pity and compassion (7). In cameos 3-4 there is a picture of the good shepherd who protects his sheep/people from sun and wind. He assures their food and drink and has pity on them (4).

Isaiah 49:14-21

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. ^{49:14} But Zion said, "The Lord has forsaken me,
my Lord has forgotten me." | ZION
Forgotten |
| 2. ¹⁵ "Can a woman forget her sucking child,
that she should have no compassion
on the son of her womb?" | PARABLE OF
Mother & Child |
| 3. Even these may forget,
yet I will not forget you. | MOTHER FORGETS
Lord Remembers Zion |
| 4. ¹⁶ Behold, I have graven you
on the palms of my hands;
your walls are continually before me. | LORD REMEMBERS
Zion |
| 5. ¹⁷ Your builders outstrip your destroyers,
and those who laid you waste go forth from you. | YOUR DESTROYERS
Gone |
| 6. ¹⁸ Lift up your eyes round about and see;
they all gather, they come to you. | YOUR PEOPLE
Gather |
| 7. As I live, says the Lord,
you shall put them all on as an ornament
you shall bind them on as a bride does. | PARABLE OF
Bride's Jewelry |
| 8. ¹⁹ "Surely your waste and your desolate places
and your devastated land -
surely now you will be too narrow for your inhabitants,
and those who swallow you up will be far away. | ONCE DESOLATE
Now Crowded |
| 9. ²⁰ The children born in the time of your bereavement
will yet say in your ears:
'The place is too narrow for me;
make room for me to dwell in.' | YOUR CHILDREN SAY:
Too Crowded |
| 10. ²¹ Then you will say in your heart:
'Who has borne me these?
I was bereaved and barren,
Exiled and put away.
And who has brought up these?
Behold, I was left alone.
Whence then have these come?'" | HOW BORN?
Not from Me
Abandoned
HOW RAISED?
Not from Me!
From Where? |

Notes on Isaiah 49:14-21

This entire passage is a conversation between the personified city of Jerusalem (Zion) and God. The discussion is constructed around three strong female parables. These are:

- I. The parable of the *mother and her child*.
A mother may forget her child, but God will not forget Jerusalem.
- II. The parable of the *bride and her wedding jewelry*.
Jerusalem welcomes her inhabitants like a bride putting on wedding jewelry.
- III. The parable of the *childless widow*.
Jerusalem was a childless rejected widow.
Suddenly she has many children.

The three female parables dominate and unite the ten cameos. Cameo 10 exhibits step parallelism.

Notes on Isaiah 49:22-26

This homily calls on all flesh (both Israel and the nations) to know that God is rescuing his people and their children from tyrants who in turn will be punished. Three pairs of cameos form the structure of the above six cameo prophetic homily.

In the opening cameo (1) both the nations and the peoples (i.e. Israel) are addressed. In the parallel cameo (6) all flesh shall know that God has saved Israel.

Cameos 2 and 5 are each in two parts. Care for the children appears in the first (2A & 5A). The humiliation (2B) and brutal destruction of their opponents (5B) appears in the second halves of the two stanzas. In the center God vindicates and rescues them.

Each of the two cameos in the center is connected to the last cameo. In the center (3) the phrase "you will know that I am the Lord" appears. This is parallel to the first part of cameo 6 which reads, "all flesh shall know that I am the Lord." Cameo 4, in the center, tells of the captives being rescued. At the end (6) God is called Savior and Redeemer.

Study Guide to Isaiah 40-66

Part 2 - Isaiah 50-59

(A Demonstration and Explanation of its Rhetorical Forms)

Kenneth E. Bailey

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2011

This study was made to provide background evidence for:

Kenneth E. Bailey, *Paul through Mediterranean Eyes: Cultural Studies in 1 Corinthians* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2011) pp. 560

[For a discussion of "Prophetic Homily Style and its Interpretation," see the above volume, pages 29-49.]

Isaiah 50:1-3

^{50:1}Thus says the Lord:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. "Where is your mother's bill of divorce,
with which I put her away? | YOUR MOTHER
Divorced? |
| 2. Or which of my creditors is it
to whom I have sold you? | YOU
Sold? |
| 3. Behold, for your iniquities you were sold,
and for your transgressions your mother was put away. | YOUR FAULT
Your mother's fault |
| 4. ² Why, when I came, was there no man?
When I called, was there no one to answer? | I CAME TO SAVE
No one responded |
| 5. Is my hand shortened, that it cannot redeem?
Or have I no power to deliver? | AM I
Weak? |
| 6. Behold, by my rebuke I dry up the sea,
I make the rivers a desert;
their fish stink for lack of water,
and die of thirst. | I CAUSE
Desert |
| 7. ³ I clothe the heavens with blackness,
and make sackcloth their covering." | I DARKEN
The heavens |

Notes on Isaiah 50:1-3

This brief text is another case of a seven-cameo prophetic homily. Only here the stanzas are not fully inverted. The first three cameos are built on one set of images. The last three on a second set. Cameo 4 is the climax and, as in the case in inverted parallelism, it appears in the center.

In the first set of three cameos the "mother" referred to is again Jerusalem. The people are the children and God is clearly the father. The people have complained that their exile is God's fault. He (the father) has divorced his wife (Jerusalem) and like a poor man who cannot pay his debts has sold his children. God's answer is - produce the "bill of divorce!" (1) and "To whom am I in debt?" (2). No, answers God, you were sold and your mother was put away, but it is your fault not mine (3)!

In the last three cameos God cries out that he is powerful and can save (5). Indeed he has caused deserts (6) and has darkened the heavens (7). Cameos 6 - 7 indirectly affirm that God's power over nature is evidence of his power over history. That is, God argues, "Of course I can redeem/save (5)! Just look at my power over nature (6 & 7)!"

Cameos 1-3 form a sequence as do cameos 5-7. Yet the inner cameos (3 & 5) function in a special way. That is, cameo 1 and 2 are the parable and 3 is its explanation. The same happens in the second half. The conceptual theological content appears in 5 and the parables which create the deeper level of meaning which goes beyond concept then follow in 6 and 7. Thus this text is another example of parables with interpretation attached.

In the center (4) God affirms that He *came to save* and *no one responded*. This center then relates to each half of the seven-stanza homily. God did come. That is, he did not abandon his family (1-3). Furthermore, he is powerful to save (5-7). When the seven stanzas are summarized the main thrust of the material can be seen as follows:

- 1-3. (Parable of mother, father and child)
You caused the problem not me!
4. I came and called!
No one answered!
- 5-7. I have power to save.
(Parables of God's power over nature and the parable of sackcloth).

The overall passage is theologically and metaphorically powerful. It begins and ends with parables.

The parable of the divorced mother and the children sold into slavery opens the unit. At the end (7)

God dries up the sea and covers the heavens with sackcloth.

Isaiah 50:4-11

- | | | |
|-------|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. | ^{50:4} The Lord God has given me
the tongue of those who are taught, | GOD GAVE ME
A Tongue |
| 2. | that I may know how to sustain with a word
him that is weary. | TO SUSTAIN THE WEARY
By Speaking |
| 3. | Morning by morning he wakens,
he wakens my ear. | GOD WAKENS
My Ear |
| 4. | To hear as those who are taught
⁵ The Lord God has opened my ear. | TO HEAR
By an Open Ear |
| ----- | | |
| 5. | I was not rebellious, (-)
I turned not backward. (-)
⁶ I gave my back to the smiters, (+)
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; (+)
I hid not my face (-)
from shame and spitting. (-) | PERSECUTORS
Torment the Servant |
| 6. | ⁷ For the Lord God helps me;
therefore I have not been confounded; | SERVANT
(helped) |
| 7. | therefore I have set my face
like a flint, | PARABLE OF
Flint |
| 8. | and I know that I shall not be put to shame;
⁸ he who vindicates me is near. | SERVANT
(vindicated) |
| 9. | Who will contend with me?
Let us stand up together.
Who is my adversary?
Let him come near to me. | PERSECUTORS
And the Servant |
| 10. | ⁹ Behold, the Lord God helps me;
who will declare me guilty? | SERVANT
(helped) |
| 11. | hold, all of them will wear out like a garment;
moth will eat them up. | PARABLE OF
Moth/ Garment |
| 12. | ¹⁰ he one among you who fears the Lord
let him obey the voice of his servant!
he one who walks in darkness
and has no light,
let him trust in the name of the Lord
and rely upon his God! | SERVANT
(obeyed) |
| 13. | ¹¹ Behold, all you who kindle a fire,
who set brands alight!
Walk by the light of your fire,
and by the brands which you have kindled!
This shall you have from my hand:
you shall lie down in torment. | PERSECUTORS
Tormented |

Notes on Isaiah 50:4-11

This homily opens with four cameos (1-4) formatted as A-B-A-B. This step parallelism appears to be dominant in that the first couplet tells of the gift of a tongue like the learners and the second (2) gives the reason for the gift. Then in cameo 3 God gives an awakened ear. The purpose of the gift appears in 4. Finally, the first cameo (1) is closely parallel to the last (4). The Lord God appears in each as a giver and "those who are taught" appear in both forming an inclusio.

The nine cameos that follow compose one of the four famous Servant Songs. They exhibit simple rhetorical forms that yield significant insights. In a number of cases a rhetorical counterpoint is at work. I have projected visually the construction of the nine cameos. The homily falls into two interlocking sections of ring composition. The form is as follows:

A
 B
 C
 B
 A
 B
 C
 B
 A

The "A's" form a progression as do the "B's". The "C's" are two encased parables where the first is about the servant and the second reflects the tormenters. Each of these groupings of cameos has a special emphasis. The homily as a whole can be summarized as follows:

- 1-4 The servant speaks as his people speak (1, 2) and hears as they hear (3, 4). Thus he can sustain them.
- A. (5,9,13) He suffers (5), but outlasts his persecutors (9) who are tormented by their own fires (13).
- B. (6,8,10,12) God *helps him* and he is *vindicated* (6,8,10). Finally the Lord speaks through the servant who is obeyed (12).

C. (7,11) The servant's face is like flint (7). His opponents are moth eaten and worn out like an old garment (11).

When seen in greater detail this first presentation of the suffering of God's special servant is very carefully constructed with two interlocking sets of inverted parallelism (as noted above). Cameo 1 is itself inverted. What the servant *will not do* is on the outside and what he *will do* is in the center. The outside and the center are related in each case to his face and back. In this stanza (5) the servant is tormented. This is matched at the end (13) where his persecutors are tormented. In the middle (9) the servant is ready for the second round of the confrontation but the tormentors have disappeared. There is therefore a progression through the three cameos as follows:

#5. The servant is tormented by oppressors.

#9. The servant appears for the second confrontation.
The oppressors are nowhere to be found.

#13. The oppressors themselves are tormented by their own fires.

In summary, in the first cameo (5) of the above three cameos the servant is the tormented underdog. But the servant does not turn away or hide his face. Instead he accepts suffering. Then in 9 there is a call for the persecutors to "stand up together" with the servant. The two appear as equals, but the oppressors do not present themselves. At the end (cameo 13) the persecutors are told that they will lie down in torment. They are not overcome by force but rather are warned of the self-destructive consequences of their own fires.

Moving to the second set of related cameos (6, 8, 10, and 12) a single theme (as noted) moves through all four stanzas. The affirmations about the servant which appear in these stanzas can be summarized as follows:

6. The Lord helps the servant. He is not confounded.

8. The Lord vindicates the servant. He is not ashamed.

10. The Lord helps the servant. Who will call him guilty?

12. The Lord speaks through the servant's voice. Those lost in darkness are to obey him.

Thus the final cameo in this list of four applies to this part of the homily. Namely:

Those who fear God - obey the servant!

Finally, encased parables appear at the centers of the inversions. In the first the servant is steadfast in his suffering. His face is *like flint*. In the second we learn that the persecutors will wear out *like a garment* and will be eaten up by the moth. They will not fall by exterior forces of violence that oppose them but rather will slowly and quietly disintegrate. There is a center and outside relationship as well. The outside (5, 9 and 13) is on the conflict between the servant and his oppressors. The first encased parable is about the servant (he is like flint) while the second is about the oppressors (they are like moth and a garment).

Traditionally this third servant song is seen to run only from cameo 1 to 11. Some commentators include cameo 12. The literary form would indicate that cameo 13 is necessarily a part of the original song. Only when the rhetorical form is discerned is it possible to uncover some of the deeper levels of meaning in the song.

Isaiah 51:1-8

- | | | |
|------|---|---|
| 1. | ^{51:1} "Hearken to me, you who pursue deliverance,
you who seek the Lord; | YOU WHO SEEK
The Lord |
| 2. | look to the rock from which you were hewn,
and to the cistern from which you were taken out. | ABRAHAM THE ROCK
Sara the Cistern |
| 3. | ² Look to Abraham your father
and to Sarah who bore you; | PARABLE OF
Abraham/ Sarah |
| 4. | for when he was but one I called him,
and I blessed him and made him many. | ABRAHAM IS CALLED
Abraham Is Blessed |
| 5. | ³ For the Lord will comfort Zion;
he will comfort all her waste places, | THE LORD
Comforts Zion |
| 6. | and will make her wilderness like Eden,
her desert like the garden of the Lord; | PARABLE OF
Eden |
| 7. | joy and gladness will be found in her,
thanksgiving and the voice of song.
----- | ZION
Rejoices
----- |
| 8. | ⁴ "Listen to me, my people,
and give ear to me, my nation;
for a law will go forth from me,
and my justice for a light to the peoples. | LAW
Justice |
| 9. | ⁵ My deliverance draws near speedily,
my salvation has gone forth,
and my arms will rule the peoples;
the coastlands wait for me,
and for my arm they hope. | DELIVERANCE
Salvation |
| 10. | ⁶ Lift up your eyes to the heavens,
and look at the earth beneath;
for the heavens will vanish like smoke,
the earth will wear out like a garment,
and they who dwell in it will die like gnats; | PARABLE OF:
Smoke/ Garment
Gnats |
| 11. | but my salvation will be for ever,
and my deliverance will never be ended. | SALVATION
Deliverance |
| 12. | ⁷ Hearken to me, you who know righteousness,
the people in whose heart is my law;
----- | RIGHTEOUSNESS
Law
----- |
| 12b. | fear not the reproach of men,
and be not dismayed at their reviling. | FEAR NOT
Curses of Men |
| 13. | ⁸ For the moth will eat them up like a garment,
and the worm will eat them like wool; | PARABLE OF
Moth/ Worm |
| 14. | but my deliverance will be forever,
and my salvation to all generations." | MY SALVATION
Forever |

Notes on Isaiah 50:1-8

This prophetic homily is composed of three stanzas. It looks backward to Eden, Abraham and Sara and forward to the eschaton. The message is one of comfort and assurance. The homily offers joy and gladness in the present (1-7) and assurance of a never ending salvation in the future (8-14).

Structurally the homily exhibits two examples of encased older tradition (2, 6). It also has two encased parables (10, 13). Each of these four is the climax of an inversion. The four inversions fall into three sections. The theme of deliverance occurs in cameos 1, 9, 11 and 14.

The first section offers three affirmations (1, 5 & 7). In between these three are sandwiched the encased traditions. The first contains the example of Abraham and Sarah. Two lines describe Sarah as a rock and as a cistern (literally "mouth of a cistern"). The latter has often been translated "quarry" which brings it into close approximate to the previous line. But the structure of the material is critical for interpretation. Abraham and Sarah appear in the center of an inversion (3). Then in cameo 4 Abraham is described as called and blessed. Thus a reader tuned to the parallelisms in the material expects a description of Sarah in 2. A cistern is womb shaped and a specific reference to birth appears in the next line (3b). They have come from the womb of Sarah like rock (or water?) lifted out of a cistern. The two lines in 2 refer to Sarah even as 4 points to Abraham. Sarah is complimented with the title *rock* which can be feminine in Hebrew. The title itself is often used for God. The point of the Abraham/Sarah reference seems to be, "Remember Abraham and Sarah. They were called from the place where you now live in exile. They migrated to the promised land and you can return to it. They prospered and so will you."

The second item of encased tradition is the Garden of Eden (6). This tradition is used as a parable about what God will do for Zion.

The second section (8-12) is eschatological in nature. The structure climaxes with a cluster of encased parables about smoke, a garment and gnats. The promise of deliverance that appears in 1 - 7 is repeated in 9 and 11. But now there is an outer semantic envelope of law and justice/righteousness (cf. 8 & 12).

The plate closes with encouragement in regard to their opponents and a final promise of deliverance. Again an encased parable climaxes the statement.

Notes on Isaiah 51:9-16

Three sections again form single prophetic homily. The overall theme is that God is *their* God. He saved in the past and will do so in the present. They need not fear the oppressor. God is powerful over myth, history and nature. Each section uses ring composition. The three cameos climax on the giving of the *word* (cameos 11-13).

The first section (1-4) remembers God's strength in the "first exodus" (cameo 1). The balancing cameo (4) affirms ransom and return in the "second exodus" that is the second return from foreign lands. In the center God's power over Rahab and the dragon (2) are parallel with His power over nature at the sea of reeds (3).

The second section picks up the theme of ransom and return in the closing stanza of the first section (4) and creates a parallel between God who comforts (5) and God who releases (9). In the center the power of the creator God again appears. The interlocking of these two sections is interesting in that the same theme appears on the outside of each, and at the center of each the topic of God's power over nature in established. This can be seen as follows:

First Section:

- 1 Strong arm
as of old
- 3. God dried up
the *sea*
- 4. God ransoms
the sea

Second Section:

- 5 I am he who
comforts you
- 7. God stretched out the *heavens*
Laid foundations for the *earth*
- 9 He (God)
releases

At the same time there is progression from the first section to the second. The second section introduces the topic of fear of the oppressor in cameos 6 and 8.

The final section (cameos 10-14) also picks up the theme of God's power over nature. With great skill Isaiah reuses the theme of the sea (3), the heavens and the earth (7). These same three nature references (in the same order) then appear in the third (11 & 14). In the final section, however, these three nature references are split and the climax of the homily appears in their center. That climax is the giving of the words of God to the people. A new outer frame also appears. This is the affirmation that He is their God (10) and they are His people (14). Again the strong overtones of the first Exodus appear.

This homily is remarkable in its disregard for the length of the cameos. There are cameos of one, two, three, four and five lines. This fluctuation in the number of lines in a cameo is common throughout the material under study but is more pronounced here than elsewhere.

Notes on Isaiah 51:17-23

The material of this plate falls into seven inverted stanzas which form a prophetic rhetorical template. Jerusalem is again a forsaken mother. In the first cameo she is told to stand up. In the parallel cameo (7) her enemies, who told her to lie down, will now themselves suffer. The cup/bowl of God's wrath which she has drunk (2) she will drink no more (6). Among all her sons there are now none to guide her (3) for all her sons have fainted and are trapped (5). In the center she is left with famine and sword and no one to comfort or condole her.

In cameo 6, however, hope is born. The cup of wrath will be removed from Jerusalem's hand and placed in the hand of her tormenters.

Isaiah 52:1-6

- | | | |
|-------|--|---|
| 1. | ^{52:1} Awake, awake
put on your strength, O Zion; | PUT ON STRENGTH
O Zion |
| 2. | put on your beautiful garments,
O Jerusalem, the holy city; | PUT ON BEAUTIFUL CLOTHES
O Jerusalem |
| 3. | for there shall no more come into you
the uncircumcised and the unclean. | NO MORE
Unclean |
| 4. | ² Shake yourself from the dust, arise;
O captive Jerusalem; | SHAKE OFF DUST
O Jerusalem |
| 5. | loose the bonds from your neck,
O captive daughter of Zion | TAKE OFF BONDS
O Zion |
| ----- | | |
| 6. | ³ For thus says the Lord:
"You were sold for nothing,
and you shall be redeemed without money. | REDEEMED
For Nothing |
| 7. | ⁴ For thus says the Lord God:
My people went down at the first into Egypt to sojourn there,
and the Assyrians oppressed them for nothing. | OPPRESSED
For Nothing |
| 8. | ⁵ Now therefore what have I here,
says the Lord,
seeing that my people are taken away for nothing? | TAKEN AWAY
For Nothing |
| 9. | Their rulers wail,
says the Lord
and continually all the day my name is despised. | MY NAME
Despised |
| 10. | ⁶ Therefore my people shall know my name;
therefore in that day they shall know
that it is I who speak; here am I. | MY NAME
Known |

Notes on Isaiah 52:1-6

The opening five lines exhibit a simple counterpoint. One set of themes is "put on" and "take off."

These appear in the following order:

1. "put on"
2. "put on"

4. "shake off"
5. "take off"

If the reader concentrates on these themes the material has an AA - BB structure. But if the placement of Zion and Jerusalem is traced the same poem has the inverted structure set forth in the above formatting. We have chosen the latter because of the importance of the city of Jerusalem for Isaiah. Captive Jerusalem is set free and the uncircumcised and the unclean will not be there.

The last five cameos appear to move in a straight line sequence to a climax in cameo 10. The theme of "redemption" ties the two sections together. Cameos 1-5 are a great burst of exuberance over the redemption of Jerusalem. Further reflection on that redemption is the main topic of cameos 6-10.

Sold/oppressed/taken away" unite cameos 6-8. The phrase "Thus says the Lord" occurs in four of them and "it is I who speak" appears in the last. There is a hint of inclusio in that the material is predominantly negative. The only positives appear in the first of the series (6) where redemption is promised and at the end (10) where on that day the people shall know that "I who speak; here am I." In spite of the above the five cameos are loosely interrelated.

Isaiah 52:7-12

- | | | |
|-------|--|---|
| 1. | ^{52:7} How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of him who brings good tidings,
who publishes peace,
who brings good tidings of good,
who publishes salvation,
who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." | MESSENGER BRINGS
The Word of Salvation |
| 2. | ⁸ Hark, your watchmen lift up their voice,
together they sing for joy;
for eye to eye they see
the return of the Lord to Zion. | WATCHMEN
Sing
God Returns |
| 3. | ⁹ Break forth together into singing,
you waste places of Jerusalem;
for the Lord has comforted his people,
he has redeemed Jerusalem. | RUBBLE FILLED LOTS
Sing
God Redeems |
| 4. | ¹⁰ The Lord has bared his holy arm
before the eyes of all the nations;
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God. | NATIONS WITNESS
The Act of Salvation |
| ----- | | ----- |
| 5. | ¹¹ Depart, depart, go out thence,
touch no unclean thing;
go out from the midst of her, purify yourselves,
you who bear the vessels of the Lord. | GO OUT FROM BAB.
Purify Yourselves |
| 6. | ¹² For you shall not go out in haste,
and you shall not go in flight,
for the Lord will go before you,
and the God of Israel will be your rear guard. | GO NOT IN FLIGHT
God is Before/Behind |

Notes on Isaiah 52:7-12

The first four cameos focus on events in Jerusalem and form a simple inversion. In cameo 1 the word of *salvation is heard*. In cameo 4 all nations *see the act of salvation*. In the middle both the watchmen (2) and the empty lots (3) sing for joy at God's return and at his comfort of the people.

The last two cameos are set back in Babylon. The people are commanded to depart from that city and to both purify themselves and keep from defilement. Finally they are not to leave in a state of fear as fugitives. God goes before and behind.

The two sections are related. The first says,

"God has returned to Jerusalem."

The second concludes,

"God is before you and behind you."

This latter text stands behind Hebrews 2:2 where Jesus is "the pioneer and perfecter of our faith."

Isaiah 52:13-53:4

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 1. | ^{52:13} Behold, my servant shall prosper,
he shall be exalted and lifted up,
and shall be very high.
----- | MY SERVANT
Exalted |
| 2. | ¹⁴ As many were astonished at him -
his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance,
and his form beyond that of the sons of men - | AMAZEMENT
No Form
No Beauty |
| 3. | ¹⁵ so shall he startle many nations;
kings shall shut their mouths because of him; | NATIONS/KINGS
Amazed |
| 4. | ^{53:1} for that which has not been told them they shall see,
and that which they have not heard they shall understand. | THE UNKNOWN
Revealed |
| 5. | Who has believed what we have heard?
And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? | REVEALED
To Us |
| 6. | ² For he grew up before him like a young plant,
and like a root out of dry ground;
he had no form or comeliness that we should look at him,
and no beauty that we should desire him.
----- | PARABLES OF
Amazement
No Form
No Beauty |
| 7. | ³ He was despised
and rejected by others; | DESPISED
By Others |
| 8. | a man of sorrows,
and acquainted with grief; | ACQUAINTED WITH
Sorrows/Grief |
| 9. | and as one from whom others hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not. | PARABLE OF A PERSON
Despised/Esteemed Not |
| 10. | ⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows; | HAS BORNE OUR
Griefs/Sorrows |
| 11. | Yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.
----- | ESTEEMED NOT
Smitten by God |
| 12. | ⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions,
he was bruised for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that made us whole,
and with his stripes we are healed. | HE SUFFERED
For Us
His Suffering =
Our Healing |
| 13. | ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned every one to his own way; | PARABLE OF
The Lost Sheep |
| 14. | and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.
----- | HE SUFFERED
For Us |

15. ⁷He was oppressed and he was afflicted,
yet he opened not his mouth; HE WAS OPPRESSED
He Was Silent
16. like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, PARABLE OF THE
Suffering Lamb
17. so he opened not his mouth. HE WAS SILENT
⁸By oppression and judgment he was taken away. He Was Oppressed
-
18. And as for his generation, who considered
that he was cut off out of the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people? HE SUFFERED
For God's People
19. ⁹And they made his grave with the wicked
and with a rich man in his death, HIS
Grave
20. although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth. HIS
Innocence
21. ¹⁰Yet it was the will of the Lord to bruise him;
he has put him to grief. HIS SUFFERING
Was God's Will
-
22. When he makes himself an offering for sin, HIS ATONEMENT
23. he shall see his offspring,
he shall prolong his days
the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. THE FRUIT
Of Victory
24. ¹¹Through the travail of his soul
he shall see light
and be satisfied. I SUFFERING
See Light
Be Satisfied
25. By his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant,
make many to be accounted righteous; MANY
Made Righteous
26. and he shall bear their iniquities. HIS ATONEMENT
-
27. ¹²Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; HIS GREATNESS
28. because he poured out his soul to death,
and was numbered with the transgressors. HIS DEATH
29. Yet he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors. HIS ATONEMENT

Notes on Isaiah 52:13-53:12

This most famous of the servant songs of Isaiah falls into eight sections. I will offer brief comments on the structure of the material section by section.

Section One (cameo 1)

The servant is here exalted in a four-fold manner. The song exhibits inclusio in that the final section (cameo 27) will refer back to this exaltation.

Section two (cameos 2 - 6)

This section opens with an announcement as to how astonished people were at seeing him (2). This amazement is strengthened with two parables in 6. One is astonished (2) to see a root out of dry ground (6). Cameo 2 and 6 also tell of his lack of form or beauty. The center (3-5) offers a straight-line sequence.

Section Three (7-11)

The five cameos in this section exhibit inverted parallelism. He is rejected by men in 7. The matching cameo (11) does not say that he is smitten by God but only that "*we esteemed him stricken/smitten.*" References to "sorrows and to grief tie cameos 8 and 10 together. The center presents the parable of the suffering man (9).

Section Four (cameos 12-14)

- | | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 12. | ^{53:5} But he was wounded for our transgressions,
he was bruised for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that made us whole,
and with his stripes we are healed. | HE SUFFERED
For Us
His Suffering =
Our Healing |
| 13. | ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned every one to his own way; | PARABLE OF
The Lost Sheep |
| 14. | and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all. | HE SUFFERED
For Us |

Section Six (cameos 18-21)

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------------------------------|
| 18. | ^{8b} And as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? | HE SUFFERED
For God's People |
| 19. | ⁹ And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, | HIS
Grave |
| 20. | although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. | HIS
Innocence |
| 21. | ¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the Lord to bruise him; he has put him to grief. | HIS SUFFERING
Was God's Will |

The four cameos in this section are inverted. The first (18) and the last (21) speak of the meaning of his death. In the first he is stricken for transgression. In the second his suffering is affirmed to be God's will and God's act. The center (cameos 19 & 20) speaks of his burial and his innocence.

Section Seven (cameos 22-26)

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 22. | ^{10b} When he makes himself an offering for sin, | HIS ATONEMENT |
| 23. | he shall see his offspring,
he shall prolong his days
the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. | THE FRUIT
Of Victory |
| 24. | ¹¹ Through the travail of his soul
he shall see light
and be satisfied. | I
SUFFERING
Light
Is Satisfied |
| 25. | By his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant,
make many to be accounted righteous; | THE FRUIT
Of Victory |
| 26. | and he shall bear their iniquities. | HIS ATONEMENT |

Again the cameos are inverted. *Atonement* is on the outside. The next inversion tells of the successful *result of that atonement*. The two cameos compliment each other in a significant way. The first (23) speaks of the prospering of the will of the Lord. In the parallel stanza (25) this is defined as the making of "many to be accounted righteous." While in the center the servant sees the result of his suffering and is satisfied.

Section Eight (cameos 27-29)

27. ^{53:12}Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; HIS GREATNESS
28. because he poured out his soul to death,
and was numbered with the transgressors. HIS DEATH
29. Yet he bore the sin of man
and made intercession for the transgressors. HIS ATONEMENT

The final six lines summarize the entire song. This is as follows:

- 27 - his greatness (cameo 1)
- 28 - his suffering (cameo 2-21)
- 29 - his atonement (cameo 22-29)

The material in cameos 22-27 begins with references to the suffering of the servant. Gradually the atoning significance of that suffering is introduced. The last two categories overlap. This final section completes the inclusio. The six lines of this summary can also be seen as formative for the composition of the Lucan account of the upper room.

Notes on Isaiah 54:1-8

Jerusalem is once more likened to a woman. In this case she was shameful in her youth and in later years widowed and forsaken. The two halves of the homily are related. In the first half the barren one, without getting pregnant, suddenly has many children (1). These children will fill the cities (3). Thus the only thing to do is to "enlarge the tent." The language describes a bedu tent with its curtains, long tent ropes and strong stakes. Long after settling in stone houses Old Testament writers preserved nostalgic recollections of their nomad existence.

As the second half opens (4), the lady is told twice that she will not be put to shame. In the parallel cameo (9) the husband (God) admits twice that he was angry (for a moment) and then twice affirms his love and compassion.

The six lines of cameos 5 and 8 are carefully matched around the themes of the forsaken widow who can forget her shame because the Lord has called her. In the center God (the husband) is seen as creator (6) and then as redeemer (7).

Each of the three matched pairs of cameos presents a redeeming contrast. This is as follows:

4 You will not be shamed

9 Because I will gather you and love you forever

5 You will forget the shame of youth and your widowhood

8 Because the Lord has called you like a youth and widow

6 God is your maker

7 And your redeemer

Finally, the two lines of cameo 7 contain one of Isaiah's major themes. In this parallelism God is affirmed as the *Holy One of Israel* and as the *God of the whole earth*.

Notes on Isaiah 54:9-17

The four sections of this homily form a unity which can be seen and summarized as follows:

1-6 I will always love you

7-9 You shall prosper

10-13 Your enemies will fail

14 This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord

The initial six stanzas form three pairs of inverted cameos. The older tradition is often placed in the center. Here it occurs on the outside. The parallels are strong. There is a center to outside relationship in that Noah (1) was storm tossed (6) and at the same time God made a special covenant with him (4). God tells them that the same is happening to them. A point of turning occurs in the center in cameo 4.

Cameo 7-9 offer a poetic vision of a city built with gemstones, flourishing in prosperity and righteousness. The oppressors are discussed in 10-13. They are under God's power and the community need not fear them. The final two lines look back over the section and affirm all of it as the heritage of the servants of the Lord.

Isaiah 55:1-5

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. ^{55:1} Ho, every one who thirsts,
come to the waters; | THIRSTY ONE
Come and Drink |
| 2. and he who has no money,
come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
without money and without price. | BUY
Without Money |
| 3. ² Why do you spend your money
for that which is not bread,
and your labor
for that which does not satisfy? | DO NOT
Waste Money |
| 4. Harken diligently to me, and eat what is good,
and delight yourselves in fatness.
³ Incline your ear, and come to me;
hear, that your soul may live;
----- | EAT WHAT IS GOOD
Come and Live

COVENANT
For You |
| 5. and I will make with you
an everlasting covenant, | |
| 6. ⁴ my steadfast, sure love for David.
Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples
a leader and commander for the peoples | DAVID
Over the People |
| 7. ⁵ Behold, you shall call nations that you know not,
and nations that knew you not shall run to you,
because of the Lord your God, | YOU
Call Nations |
| 8. and of the Holy One of Israel,
for he has glorified you.
----- | GLORY
For You

----- |

Isaiah 55: 6-13

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. ^{55:6} Seek the Lord while he may be found,
call upon him while he is near; | SEEK THE LORD
While Near |
| 2. ⁷ let the wicked forsake his way,
and the unrighteous man his thoughts; | HIS WAYS
His Thoughts |
| 3. let him return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on him.
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. | RETURN TO THE LORD.
For Mercy/Pardon |
| ----- | |
| 4. ⁸ For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord.
⁹ For as the heavens
are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts. | MY THOUGHTS
My Ways
Parable
Parable
My Ways
MY THOUGHTS |
| ----- | |
| 5. ¹⁰ For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,
and return not thither but water the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, | THE RAIN
Not Return
Result |
| 6. ¹¹ so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and prosper in the thing for which I sent it. | MY WORD
Not Return
Result |
| ----- | |
| 7. ¹² For you shall go out in joy,
and be led forth in peace; | GO IN JOY
Be Led in Peace |
| 8. the mountains and the hills before you
shall break forth into singing, | MOUNTAINS
Sing |
| 9. and all the trees of the field
shall clap their hands. | TREES
Clap |
| 10. ¹³ Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;
instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; | TREES GROW
Not Thorns |
| 11. and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial,
for an everlasting sign which shall not be cut off. | MEMORIAL
Sign |

Notes on Isaiah 55

The first section of this homily is composed of three parts. Cameos 1-3 are in a straight line that climaxes at the end with the references to *mercy and pardon*. The second part (4) uses ring composition as it picks up on the center of the first part (ways & thoughts) reuses it twice and then creates a climax in the center with the *parable* of the *heavens* and the *earth*. The third part (5-6) expands that *parable* of the *heavens* and the *earth* and brings the six cameos to a climax.

We must return to God (1-3) but cannot because he is too far away (4). But all is not lost – God, through his word, will come to us (5-6).

The second section begins with the classical parallel between our responsibility “you shall go out” and God’s sovereignty expressed in “you shall be led forth.” A collection of three parables appears in the center (8-10) which together invoke seven images (mountains, hills, trees, thorn, cypress, brier, myrtle).

Notes on (Isaiah 56:1-8)

This remarkable prophetic homily is composed of ten inverted cameos divided into three sections. The theme is: God welcomes outsiders. Of special interest are cameos 1 and 10 that form an interlocking pair. This can be seen as follows:

- 1 Piety of the faithful
 God saves
 Piety of the faithful
- 10 *God saves*
 piety of the faithful
 God saves

Cameo 1 speaks of "believers - God saves - believers" while in cameo 10 the order is reversed and becomes "God saves - believers - God saves." Furthermore the "piety" mentioned in cameo 1 has to do with justice while the piety in cameo 10 focuses on prayers and sacrifices. The two form a pair.

In the center the topics of the Sabbath (2 & 9) and foreigners (3 & 8) are each mentioned twice. In cameo 4 the eunuch describes himself as a dry tree. That is, as one who has "no fruit." In Middle Eastern culture a person with no children is considered tragically forgotten. Dry trees are naturally cut down. Both the imagery and its meaning are captured in the parallel cameo 7 where the longed-for children are mentioned along with the promise that the eunuch shall "not be cut off." The center again presents the piety of the faithful and the faithfulness of God and his covenant. The center thus relates to the beginning and the end.

The passage is important for the incident of the cleansing of the temple in the gospels. If Jesus is invoking this homily by quoting from it then his anger is related to the rejection of foreigners and outcasts and not only to the commercialization of the temple courts.

The above text also provides significant background for the parable of the great banquet in Luke. In each text, after the outcasts of Israel there are yet others to be gathered in (cf. Luke 14:22-24).

Notes Isaiah 56:9-12

The above seven cameos of inverted parallelism combine into a single homily. I have called this rhetorical style the prophetic rhetorical template composed of seven cameos that come together using ring composition. The outer semantic envelope (1 & 7) characterizes the leadership of the community as beasts (of both field and forest) who do nothing but eat (1) and get drunk (7).

The second set of external parallelisms brings together the watchmen (2) and the shepherds (6). In the Middle East watchmen have the news of the town. They observe all the comings and goings of the people and are sought out for information about the town's happenings. Obviously their primary responsibility is to watch. But these watchmen are both blind and without knowledge. In Isaiah 53:6 the phrase "turned... to his own way" is parallel to "have gone astray," and refers to lost sheep. But here *the shepherds* are lost (6) so by implication what hope is there for the poor sheep? Furthermore they care only for themselves.

Dogs in Middle Eastern culture (Jewish and non-Jewish) are considered unclean and despised. In village life they are never kept as pets but only as watch dogs. But, the dogs in this text cannot bark (3). They are therefore worthless. But more than that they are expensive to keep, they have a "mighty appetite (5)."

The climax in the center is related to the outside of the structure. The leaders stuff themselves (1), get drunk (7) and fall asleep as a result (4).

Isaiah 57:1-10

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. ^{57:1} The righteous man perishes,
and no one lays it to heart;
devout men are taken away,
while no one understands. | THE RIGHTEOUS
Perish |
| 2. For the righteous man is taken away from calamity,
² he enters into peace;
they rest in their beds
who walk in their uprightness.
----- | THE RIGHTEOUS
Do Not Perish
----- |
| 3. ³ But you, draw near hither,
sons of the sorceress,
offspring of the adulterer and the harlot. | YOU CHILDREN OF
Immorality |
| 4. ⁴ Of whom are you making sport?
Against whom do you open your mouth wide
and put out your tongue? | WHO ARE
You Mocking? |
| 5. Are you not children of transgression,
the offspring of deceit,
----- | YOU CHILDREN OF
Sin/Deceit
----- |
| 6. ⁵ you who burn with lust among the oaks,
under every green tree;
who slay your children in the valleys,
under the clefts of the rocks?
⁶ among the smooth stones of the valley is your portion;
they, they, are your lot;
to them you have poured out a drink offering,
you have brought a cereal offering.
Shall I be appeased for these things? | YOU GO DOWN
In the Valley
Fornicating
Killing your Children
To Worship Idols |
| 7. ⁷ Upon a high and lofty mountain you have set your bed,
and thither you went up to offer sacrifice.
⁸ Behind the door and the doorpost
you have set up your symbol;
for, deserting me, you have uncovered your bed,
you have gone up to it,
you have made it wide;
and you have made a bargain for yourself with them,
you have loved their bed,
you have looked on nakedness, | YOU WENT UP
On a Mountain
And Immorality
Worshipped Idols |
| 8. ⁹ You journeyed to Moloch with oil
and multiplied your perfumes;
you sent your envoys far off,
and sent down even to Sheol.
¹⁰ You were wearied with the length of your way,
but you did not say, "It is hopeless";
you found new life for your strength,
and so you were not faint. | YOU WENT OUT
On Long Journeys
Even To Sheol
To Worship Idols |

Notes on Isaiah 57:1-10

The first section of this homily is composed of two cameos that appear to make diametrically opposing statements. The first says the righteous perish and no one cares. The second affirms just the opposite. The reader is left with many unanswered questions as a result.

The second section is a three cameo inversion with cameo 3 parallel to 5. The topic is the idol worshipers and their rude attacks on someone, presumably the worshipers of God and the prophet.

The last section also deals with idolatry. To worship their idols the people go down in the valley (6), up on the mountain (7) and far away (8) to pursue their offerings, immorality and child sacrifice. The material is topically and stylistically distinct from previous material. Rhetorical structure is almost entirely missing and the cameos are significantly longer.

Isaiah 57:11-21

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| 1. | ^{57:11} Whom did you dread and fear,
so that you lied,
and did not remember me,
and did not give me a thought? | WHOM DID
You Fear?
You Forgot Me |
| 2. | Have I not held my peace, even for a long time,
and so you do not fear me. | YOU DO NOT
Fear Me |
| 3. | ¹² I will tell of your righteousness and your doings,
but they will not help you.
¹³ When you cry out,
let your collection of idols deliver you!
The wind will carry them off,
a breath will take them away. | YOUR IDOLS
Will Not Help/Save
They are Powerless |
| 4. | But he who takes refuge in me shall possess the land,
and shall inherit my holy mountain.
¹⁴ And it shall be said,
"Build up, build up, prepare the way,
remove every obstruction from my people's way." | THE FAITHFUL
Inherit the Land |
| 5. | ¹⁵ For thus says the high and lofty One
who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy:
"I dwell in the high and holy place,
and also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit. The Humble
to revive the spirit of the humble,
and to revive the heart of the contrite. | I DWELL WITH
The Contrite
I Revive
The Humble |
| 6. | ¹⁶ For I will not contend for ever,
nor will I always be angry; | NOT ALWAYS
Angry |
| 7. | for from me proceeds the spirit,
and I have made the breath of life. | FROM ME
Spirit/Life |
| 8. | ¹⁷ Because of the iniquity of his covetousness I was angry,
I smote him, I hid my face and was angry;
but he went on backsliding in the way of his own heart. | FOR SIN I
Was Angry |
| 9. | ¹⁸ I have seen his ways, but I will heal him;
I will lead him and requite him with comfort,
creating for his mourners the fruit of the lips.
¹⁹ Peace, peace, to the far and to the near, says the Lord;
and I will heal him. | I HEAL/ LEAD
I Give Comfort/Peace |
| 10. | ²⁰ But the wicked are like the tossing sea;
for it cannot rest,
and its waters toss up mire and dirt.
²¹ There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked." | FOR THE WICKED
The Tossing Sea
No Peace |

Notes on Isaiah 57:11-21

This homily is a classical early example of the “high jump format” that appears often in 1 Corinthians. Here Isaiah opens with three cameos followed by a prophetic rhetorical template of seven inverted stanzas.

The homily begins with a discussion of idolatry. They did not fear God, indeed they had forgotten him. Cameo 3 taunts the idol worshipers with affirmations of the powerlessness of their idols.

The homily continues with the familiar seven cameos. In the outside pair the righteous (who inherit the land) are contrasted with the wicked (who, like the tossing sea, have no rest). The second set of matching stanzas tells of God's care for the faithful. He will dwell with them and revive them (5). He will also lead, comfort and heal them (9). The anger of God is dealt with in cameos 6 and 8. The climax in the center affirms that *from God proceeds the spirit*.

The center climax (7) is a strong theological statement but is not easily related to the six stanzas around it.

Isaiah 58:1-9

1. ^{58:1}*Cry aloud, spare not,
lift up your voice like a trumpet;
declare to my people their transgression,
to the house of Jacob their sins.* PARABLE OF THE TRUMPET
Tell of Sins
2. A. ²Yet they seek me daily,
and delight to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that did righteousness
and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; FALSE
Righteousness
B. they ask of me righteous judgments,
they delight to draw near to God. THEY DRAW NEAR
God Does Not See or Notice
³Why have we fasted, and thou seest it not?
Why have we humbled ourselves, and thou takest no knowledge of it?'
3. Behold, in the day of your fast
you seek your own pleasure
and oppress all your workers. YOU CHOOSE:
Your Pleasure
⁴Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to hit with wicked fist. Fight Oppress Workers
4. Fasting like yours this day
will not make your voice to be heard on high. GOD - NOT CHOOSE
Your Fast
⁵Is such the fast that I choose,
a day for a man to humble himself?
5. Is it to bow down his head like a rush,
and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? PARABLES OF:
Rush, Ashes
Sackcloth
(a show)
Will you call this a fast,
and a day acceptable to the Lord?
6. ⁶Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of wickedness,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke? GOD'S CHOOSES:
Justice!
Freedom
7. ⁷Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover him
and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? GOD'S CHOOSES:
Compassion!
- 8 A. ⁸Then shall your light break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up speedily;
your righteousness shall go before you,
the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS
Is Light/Healing
B. ⁹Then you shall call,
and the Lord will answer;
you shall cry,
and he will say, Here I am." THEY CALL ON GOD
He Hears & Comes

Notes on Isaiah 58:1-9

Again Isaiah chooses the “high jump format” common to *First Corinthians*. The introduction is a single cameo (1) which includes a parable about a trumpet. The parable of the rush occurs in the center (5), and the parable of the dawn appears at the end (8). The rest of the structure breaks into seven cameos of inverted parallelism with an encased parable in the center. Again Isaiah has chosen to use the prophetic rhetorical template for the bulk of the homily. Just past the center, in cameo 6, there is a strong point of turning.

The first cameo of the prophetic rhetorical template (2) is composed of two parts (2A & 2B). The counterpart to these ideas appears in 8A and 8B. 2A alludes to a false righteousness that in 2B fails to get God's attention. In contrast 8A richly praises a true righteousness and in 8B God's attention is assured.

In cameo 3 they fast and yet seek their own pleasure. During the time of fasting they get tired and irritable (to show how much they are suffering from the fast) and at the same time oppress their workers. All of this is their choice for a fast. God's choice appears in the contrasting cameo 7. God wants compassion for the hungry, homeless and naked!

In cameo 4 the reader is told that a show of personal humility is not God's choice of a fast. God prefers justice advocacy (6)! Line 6d is edited into the text of Isaiah 61:1-2 as it appears in Luke 4:18-19. Both texts clearly affirm liberation.

With the help of the parable of the rush, the center cameo (5) spells out the specific details as to how the people try to impress God with their show of religion. Alas! Their fasting is not acceptable to God.

Isaiah 58:9c-14

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. ^{58:9c}If you take away from the midst of you the yoke,
the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness,
¹⁰if you pour yourself out for the hungry
and satisfy the desire of the afflicted,</p> | <p><u>IF YOU CREATE</u>
Social Justice</p> |
| <p>2. then shall your light rise in the darkness
and your gloom be as the noonday,
¹¹And the Lord will guide you continually,
and satisfy your desire with good things,
and make your bones strong;</p> | <p><u>THEN GOD WILL</u>
Prosper You</p> |
| <p>3. and you shall be like a watered garden
like a spring of water,
whose waters fail not.</p> | <p><u>YOU WILL BE:</u>
Like a Garden
And a Spring</p> |
| <p>4. ¹²And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to dwell in.</p> | <p><u>YOUR WORK</u>
Will Be:
Prosperous</p> |
| <p>5. ¹³If you turn back your foot from the sabbath,
from doing your pleasure on my holy day,
and call the sabbath a delight
and the holy day of the Lord honorable;
if you honor it, not going your own ways,
or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly;</p> | <p><u>IF YOU KEEP</u>
The Sabbath</p> |
| <p>6. ¹⁴then you shall take delight in the Lord,
and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth
I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.</p> | <p><u>THEN GOD WILL</u>
Prosper You</p> |

Notes on Isaiah 58:9c-14

In the previous plate formal religion was rejected in preference to justice advocacy and compassion. Here the importance of justice advocacy is affirmed and along with it the value of Sabbath observance.

The parables are again in the center showcasing another instance of an encased parable.

The outer semantic envelope is simpler in this case. The outer two cameos relate to one another in step parallelism with an “if – then” repeated pattern. The balance between the four cameos is striking. A summary of the entire rhetorical structure is as follows:

1. If you create social justice
2. then God will prosper you.

3. You will be like a garden and spring
4. and your work of rebuilding will succeed.

5. If you keep the sabbath
6. then God will prosper you.

Paul uses this simple rhetorical pattern twice in the opening verses of I Corinthians. The parallelism of the six cameos create a significant unity for the overall homily.

0. ¹Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save,
or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; *Isaiah 59:1-13*
1. A. ²But your iniquities have made a separation
between you and your God YOUR SINS AND GOD
and your sins have hid his face from you
so that he does not hear.
- B. ³For your hands are defiled with blood
and your fingers with iniquity; YOUR SINS
your lips have spoken lies, (Words and Deeds)
your tongue mutters wickedness.
2. ⁴No one enters suit justly,
no one goes to law honestly; NO JUSTICE
they rely on empty pleas, they speak lies,
they conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity.
3. ⁵They hatch adders' eggs,
they weave the spider's web; PARABLES OF:
he who eats their eggs dies, Snake
and from one which is crushed a viper is hatched. Spider
⁶Their webs will not serve as clothing; Viper
men will not cover themselves with what they make. Clothing
- 4.a Their works are works of iniquity,
and deeds of violence are in their hands.
- ⁷Their feet run to evil, EVIL DEEDS
and they make haste to shed innocent blood; Evil Thoughts
their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity,
desolation and destruction are in their highways.
5. ⁸The way of *peace* they know not,
and there is *no justice* in their paths; NO PEACE
they have made their *roads crooked*,
no one who goes in them knows *peace*.
6. ⁹Therefore justice is far from us,
and righteousness does not overtake us. NO JUSTICE
No Righteousness
7. We look for light, and behold, darkness,
and for brightness, but we walk in gloom.
- ¹⁰We grope for the wall like the blind,
We grope like those who have no eyes; PARABLES OF:
we stumble at noon as in the twilight, Blind/ DEAD
among those in full vigor we are like dead men. Bears
¹¹We all growl like bears, Dead Men
we moan and moan like doves. Bears
Doves
8. We look for justice, but there is none;
for salvation, but it is far from us. NO JUSTICE
No Salvation

- 9.A ¹²For our transgressions are multiplied before thee,
 and our sins testify against us;
 for our transgressions are with us, OUR SINS BEFORE GOD
 and we know our iniquities:
- B. ¹³transgressing, and denying the Lord, OUR SINS
 and turning away from following our God, Denying the Lord
 speaking oppression and revolt, Oppression, Revolt, Lying
 conceiving and uttering from the heart lying words.

Notes on Isaiah 59:1-13

This homily opens with a brief introduction and then presents nine cameos that use ring composition.

The climax is again in the center. That center focuses on the absence of peace.

The two outer stanzas divide in each case into two parts. Each contains a clear point of turning just past the center.

The introduction (0) calls the people to attention and then the rest of the homily describes the desperate plight of the people which is not the fault of God but results from their sin.

The outer parallelisms (1A & B ; 9A & B) match precisely. In 1A their sin separates them from God and in 9A their sin witnessed against them. 1B speaks of violence and lies while 9B tells of oppression and lies.

Cameos 4 and 7 form a striking pair. An extensive group of parables appears with other material in the center. This rhetorical device is also used by Paul in a number of places in 1 Corinthians.

The center climax brings into sharp focus the fact that when justice is denied and violence holds sway that there is no peace in the land and even the way of peace is not known.

Stanza nine records a dramatic and sobering shift. Up to that point the prophet blames others. His finger is harshly pointed at "you" (1) and then "they" (2-5). As a result of this "we" are obliged to

suffer (6-8). But in cameo 9 *our sin and oppression* suddenly and dramatically become a part of the problem.

Isaiah 59:14-21

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. ^{59:14} Justice is turned back,
and righteousness stands afar off; | NO JUSTICE
No Righteousness |
| 2. for truth has fallen in the public squares,
and uprightness cannot enter.
¹⁵ Truth is lacking,
and he who departs from evil makes himself a prey. | TRUTH FALLS
No Space for Uprightness |
| 3. The Lord saw it, and it displeased him
that there was <i>no justice</i> .
¹⁶ He saw that there was no man,
and wondered that there was no one to intervene;
and <i>his own arm saved him</i> ,
and his righteousness upheld him. | LORD SAW INJUSTICE
Lord Brought Salvation |
| 4. ¹⁷ He put on righteousness as a breastplate,
and a <i>helmet of salvation</i> upon his head;
he put on garments of vengeance for clothing,
and wrapped himself in fury as a mantle. | LORD COMES
As Savior |
| 5. ¹⁸ According to their deeds, so will he repay,
wrath to his adversaries, requital to his enemies;
to the coastlands he will render requital. | LORD REPAYS
Enemies |
| 6. ¹⁹ So they shall fear the name of the Lord from the west,
and his glory from the rising of the sun; | LORD KNOWN
And Glorified |
| 7. for he will come like a rushing stream,
which the wind of the Lord drives. | LORD COMES
Like Stream & Wind |
| 8. ²⁰ And <i>he will come to Zion as Redeemer</i> ,
to those in Jacob who turn from transgression,
says the Lord. | GOD COMES
As Redeemer
To Zion |
| ----- | |
| 9. ²¹ And as for me, this is my covenant with them, says the Lord
my spirit which is upon you, | COVENANT/ SPIRIT |

and my words which I have put in your mouth, My Words For You and
 shall not depart out of your mouth, Your Children - Forever
 or out of the mouth of your children,
 or out of the mouth of your children's children, says the Lord
 from this time forth and for evermore.

Notes on Isaiah 59:14-21

Cameos 1-8 form yet another example of the "high-jump format" that often appears in Isaiah and in 1s Corinthians. The "approach" is cameos 1-3. Cameos 4-5 are the "jump." The climax comes in cameo 6 (the "crossing of the bar") and finally cameos 7-8 are the "descent" after the climax in cameo 6.

The "approach" (1-3) opens with an affirmation that there is no justice (1) or truth (2) and the Lord is displeased. Thus the Lord decided to intervene and come himself to save (3).

The five cameo ring composition opens and closes with the theme of "savior" (4) and "redeemer" (8) which form a pair. After preparing himself for battle the Lord engages with the enemy (5) like a rushing stream or wind (7). The climax appears in the center (6) where the name of the Lord and his glory is known "from the west" to "the rising of the sun."

In the concluding aside (9) God speaks directly to his people about his word and the covenant given to them. Adding an extra cameo to the end of a "high jump" homily is rare.

Study Guide for Isaiah 40-66

Part 3 - Isaiah 60-66

(A Demonstration and Explanation of its Rhetorical Forms)

Kenneth E. Bailey

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2011

This study was made to provide background evidence for:

Kenneth E. Bailey, *Paul through Mediterranean Eyes: Cultural Studies in 1 Corinthians* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2011) 560 pages.

[For a discussion of "Prophetic Homily Style and its Interpretation" see: the above volume, pages 29-49.]

ISAIAH 60:1-9

- | | | |
|------|--|--------------------------|
| 1.a. | ^{60:1} Arise (קומי), give light (אורי); | ARISE/ SHINE |
| b. | for <i>your light</i> has come, | Your Light - Come |
| c. | and the <i>glory of the Lord</i> | Glory of the Lord |
| d. | has <i>shone forth</i> (זרח) upon you. | Shone Forth on Jerusalem |

The center also has to do with coming of the Gentile nations to Jerusalem and can be summarized as follows:

- 1-3 God glorifies Jerusalem
- 4 her children come
- 5-7 the nations come with wealth and flocks
- 8 her children come
- 9 God glorifies Jerusalem

The opening section (1-3) contains three cameos as seen above. The message is clear - God has glorified Jerusalem and the nations will come to see this great sight.

The second section contains a simple inversion. On the outside (4 & 8) the children of Jerusalem come to her from afar bringing wealth. In the center (5-7) the nations come to Jerusalem bringing wealth. Midian, Ephah, Sheba, Kedar and Nebaioth are all mentioned specifically as coming with animals, gold and frankincense.

The final cameo (9) returns to the theme with which this section started, namely that God has glorified Jerusalem.

Isaiah 60:10-16

1. ^{60:10}Foreigners shall build up your walls,
and their kings shall minister to you;
for in my wrath I smote you,

THE NATIONS WILL SERVE YOU
I Smote You & Had Mercy

stanzas which climax in cameo 2 on the wealth that Jerusalem will receive from the nations. The outer two cameos (1, 2) tell of how Jerusalem (once punished, now blessed) will be served by the nations (who will suffer if they fail to serve). The two main themes of the first section are:

1. The nations will serve Jerusalem
2. Jerusalem will receive the wealth of the nations

Each of the above themes reappears in the second section of this rhetorical form.

The second section exhibits step parallelism created from three pairs of cameos. The first pair (4 & 7) tells of the glory that will come to the temple (4) and the majesty that will be given to Jerusalem (7). The second pair of cameos (5 & 8) concentrates on the kings/nations who will serve Jerusalem. Female and male imagery are boldly combined in 8b. The third pair of cameos (6 & 9) includes five names for God. Only in this last pair of stanzas is God named. In the first (6) the nations know that Jerusalem belongs to the *Lord*, the *Holy One*. In the second (9) Jerusalem itself knows that the *Lord/Savior/Redeemer/Mighty One* has done all this.

Isaiah 60:17-22

1. ^{60:17} Instead of bronze I will bring gold,
and instead of iron I will bring silver;
instead of wood, bronze,
instead of stones, iron.

THE BEST
Building Materials

-----	-----
2. I will make your overseers peace and your taskmasters righteousness.	PEACE Righteousness
3. ¹⁸ Violence shall no more be heard in your land, devastation or destruction within your borders;	NO VIOLENCE No Destruction
4. you shall call your walls salvation and your gates praise.	SALVATION Praise
-----	-----
5. ¹⁹ The sun shall be no more your light by day,	SUN NOT YOUR Light by Day
6. nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you by night;	MOON NOT YOUR Light by Night
7. but the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory.	THE LORD IS Your Light/Glory
8. ²⁰ Your sun shall no more go down,	YOUR SUN Sets Not
9. nor your moon withdraw itself;	YOUR MOON Withdraws Not
10. for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended.	THE LORD IS Your Light/Joy
-----	-----
11. ²¹ Your people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land for ever,	THE RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE Posses the Land
12. the shoot of my planting, the work of my hands, that I might be glorified.	GOD PLANTS & Is Glorified
13. ²² The least one shall become a clan, and the smallest one a mighty nation;	THE PEOPLE Multiply
14. I am the Lord; in its time I will hasten it.	GOD DOES IT Quickly

Notes on Isaiah 60:17-22

This section is composed of four short items of praise for Jerusalem that are as follows:

- 1 Your building materials

2-4 Your security and piety

5-10 Your source of light

11-12 Your people

The first cameo tells of the costly metals and gemstones that will be used in the construction of the new Jerusalem. Some of this language is used by Paul to describe the "third temple" which is the Christian community in his day (I Cor 3:12). The second section has three inverted stanzas. The negatives are in the center (no violence, no devastation) and the positives on the outside. These four positives also interrelate. Two refer to their God-given security (peace and salvation) and two to their piety (righteousness and praise). The text thus affirms that where there is righteousness and worship there is peace and security.

The third poem tells of the sun (5 & 8) and the moon (6 & 9) and of the Lord who will be their everlasting light (7 & 10). The imagery is simple and powerful.

ISAIAH 61:1-7

- | | | |
|----|--|--|
| 1. | ^{61:1} The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me | THE LORD'S SPIRIT
The Lord's Anointed |
| 2. | to bring good tidings to the poor; | POOR |

- | | | |
|-----|--|--|
| | he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, | Brokenhearted |
| 3. | to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening to those who are bound; | CAPTIVES
The Bound |
| 4. | ² to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor
and the day of vengeance of our God;
----- | THE LORD'S FAVOR
The Lord's Vengeance
----- |
| 5. | to comfort all who mourn;
³ to grant to those who mourn in Zion -
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit; | COMFORT THE MOURNING
give them flowers
Gladness & Praise |
| 6. | that they may be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the Lord,
that he may be glorified. | THAT THEY MAY BE OAKS
That God may be Glorified |
| 7. | ⁴ They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations. | RUINS BUILT
Cities Repaired
(from the past) |
| 8. | ⁵ Aliens shall stand and feed your flocks,
foreigners shall be your plowmen and vine-dressers; | ALIENS YOUR SHEPHERDS
And Farm Workers |
| 9. | ⁶ but you shall be called the priests of the Lord,
men shall speak of you as the ministers of our God; | YOU - PRIESTS
You - Ministers |
| 10. | you shall eat the wealth of the nations,
and in their riches you shall glory. | THE NATIONS
Wealth is Yours |
| 11. | ⁷ Instead of your shame you shall have a double portion,
instead of dishonor you shall rejoice in your lot;
therefore in your land you shall possess a double portion;
yours shall be everlasting joy. | A GOOD LOT
In Your Land - Joy
(in the future) |

Notes on Isaiah 61:1-7

The two sections of this homily are thematically interrelated. The first is composed of four cameos of inverted parallelism. The outer cameos (1 & 4) tell of the messenger of God who has the Lord's

Spirit and anointing (1) and who will announce the Lord's favor and vengeance (4). The specific recipients of this grace are the poor, the brokenhearted (2), the captives and the bound (3). The LXX identifies the figure here described with the suffering servant of Isaiah 42:7 in that this latter text has governed the Greek translation of 61:1f (i.e. 3b above). The text of Luke 4:18 endorses this identification by accepting the LXX version of Isaiah 61:1.

The second section falls into the "high-jump format." The "approach" is comprised of cameos 5-6. The "jump" is 7-8 with the climax of the "crossing of the bar" in cameo 9. Cameos 10-11 are the "decent" to the far side.

The servant must comfort them and give them joy and encouragement (5). The purpose of these gifts is that they might be strong (like oaks) and glorify God. Without this transformation they will not be able to take on the task ahead.

That task is presented in five inverted cameos. The outside pair of matching cameos (7 & 11) tells that with this newly given strength, the people are to rebuild the cities (7) and rejoice in the lot/land (11). The second pair announces that foreigners will be their agricultural workers (8) and the wealth of the nations will be their glory (10). The climax of the final section affirms their priestly task before the Lord (9).

Isaiah 61:8-11

- | | |
|--|----------|
| 1. ^{61:8} For I the Lord love justice,
I hate robbery and wrong; | JUSTICE |
| 2. will faithfully give them their recompense, | COVENANT |

and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

- | | | |
|-----------------|--|--|
| 3. ⁹ | Their descendants shall be known <i>among the nations</i> ,
and their offspring in the midst of the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge them,
that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed. | AMONG THE NATIONS
God's Blessing
On His People |
| 4. | ¹⁰ I will greatly <i>rejoice</i> in the Lord,
my soul shall <i>exult</i> in my God; | REJOICE AND
Exult in God |
| 5. | for he has clothed me with the garments of <i>salvation</i> ,
he has covered me with the robe of <i>righteousness</i> , | SALVATION
Righteousness |
| 6. | as a <i>bridegroom</i> decks himself with a garland,
as a <i>bride</i> adorns herself with her jewels | BRIDEGROOM
Bride |
| 7. | ¹¹ for as the earth brings forth its shoots
and as the garden causes what is sown in it to spring up
so the Lord God will cause <i>righteousness</i> | EARTH
Garden
Righteousness |
| 8. | and <i>praise</i> | PRAISE |
| 9. | to spring forth <i>before all the nations</i> . | BEFORE NATIONS |

Notes on Isaiah 61:8-11

This homily also uses the "high jump format." The first two cameos are the "approach," (the introduction). Cameos 3-5 are the "jump." As usual the climax appears in the center with cameo 6 and the descent on the far side (7-9) repeats (backwards) the three themes set out in cameos 3-5.

The parallel ideas are as follows:

3. among the nations
4. rejoicing and exultation
5. righteousness
6. like bridegroom and bride
7. righteousness
8. praise
- 9 before all the nations

In terms of a presentation of a series of ideas the above format follows the prophetic rhetorical template of seven inverted cameos. The unusual element of this particular series of seven cameos is that the last two (8-9) are extremely brief. All seven ideas are represented and the three matching cameos are intact.

It is impossible to know the reason for the brevity in cameos 8 and 9. Perhaps the prophet ran out of space on his page - who knows. What is striking, however, is that the author realizes his need to repeat "praise" in cameo 8 to match cameo 4 and to make a second reference to the "nations" in cameo 9 to match cameo 3. (A somewhat similar structure occurs in Luke 6:32-35c. In this latter text there are cameos on *Love, do good and lend*. These three cameos are then summarized.)

The gender equality in the climax is worthy of note. Neither the bride nor the groom dominate. The redeemed city of Jerusalem is likened to both of them. The returnees from Babylon, be they male or female, could equally identify with the prophet's message. The nations (Gentiles) are witnesses to the blessings of God on his peoples. Cameo 3 emphasizes God's act in blessing his people. Cameos 7-8 focus on their responses of righteousness and praise. God dresses them with righteousness (his act) and righteousness will spring forth (9 - their act).

Striking parables again appear in the center. The three themes that lead into those parables are repeated and reversed in the closing cameos (8 & 9). Encased parables are common throughout II Isaiah.

Isaiah 62:1-7

1. ^{62:1}For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
until her vindication goes forth as brightness,
and her salvation as a burning torch.
²the nations shall see your vindication,
and all the kings your glory;

NO SILENCE
No Rest Until
Vindication of Jerusalem
(seen by nations)

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 2. | and you shall be called by a new name
which the mouth of the Lord will give. | GOD GIVES JER.
A New Name |
| | ³ You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. | |
| 3. | ⁴ You shall no more be termed Forsaken,
and your land shall no more be termed Desolate,
But you shall be called My delight is in her,
and your land Married;
for the Lord delights in you,
and your land shall be married. | GOD MARRIES
Zion/the Land |
| 4. | ⁵ For as a young man marries a virgin,
so shall your sons marry you,
and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,
so shall your God rejoice over you. | GOD AND YOUR SONS
Marry Zion/Jerusalem
Zion/the Land |
| 5. | ⁶ Upon your walls, O Jerusalem,
I have set watchmen;
all the day and all the night
they shall never be silent.
You who put the Lord in remembrance,
take no rest, and give him no rest
until he establishes Jerusalem
and makes it a praise in the land. | NO SILENCE/REST
Until God Establishes
Jerusalem in the Land |

Notes on Isaiah 62:1-7

One of the oft repeated pairs of ideas in the parallelisms of Isaiah has to do with *Israel and the nations*. A number of different words can represent this pair. One is the nations and the peoples. A second is the nations and the land or the nations and Zion or Jacob or Jerusalem. This five cameo rhetorical structure opens and closes with long cameos that are parallel in several places. These are summarized in the words appearing to the right of the text (cf. cameo 1 and 5). Of particular interest is the reference to the nations (1e,f) and the land (5h).

Cameo 5 ends with references to Jerusalem and the land. The three center cameos appear to be in a sequence united around wedding imagery.

The parables in the material are dramatic. They are not strategically placed in one cameo but instead are scattered through each of the first four cameos. They include: a burning torch, a crown, a diadem, a wedding, a bride and a groom. Curiously, in cameo 4 both "your sons" and "God" end up married to Jerusalem.

Isaiah 62:10-12

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. ^{62:8} The Lord has sworn by his right hand
and by his mighty arm; | GOD HAS SWORN
By His Arm |
| 2. I will not again give your grain
to be food for your enemies, | NO ENEMY SHALL
Eat your Food |
| 3. and foreigners shall not drink your wine
for which you have labored; | NO ENEMY SHALL
Drink Your Wine |
| 4. ⁹ but those who garner it shall eat it
and praise the Lord, | YOU SHALL EAT IT
And Praise God |

- | | | |
|-------|--|--|
| 5. | and those who gather it shall drink it
in the courts of my sanctuary. | YOU SHALL DRINK IT
In My Sanctuary |
| ----- | | ----- |
| 6. | ¹⁰ Go through, go through the gates,
prepare the way for the people;
build up, build up the highway
clear it of stones,
1 lift up an ensign over the peoples. | PREPARE THE WAY
Lift Up the Ensign |
| 7. | ¹¹ Behold, the Lord has proclaimed
to the end of the earth;
Say to the daughter of Zion,
"Behold, your salvation comes;
behold, his reward is with him
and his recompense before him." | THE LORD PROCLAIMED:
Salvation Comes |
| 8. | ¹² And they shall be called The holy people,
The redeemed of the Lord;
and you shall be called Sought out,
a city not forsaken. | THEY - CALLED: HOLY PEOPLE
Your Called - Sought out |

Notes on Isaiah 62:8-12

The upper part of this homily has an introduction followed by four short cameos which have a balanced counterpoint. If the theme of *you and your enemies* is observed the material becomes:

- 7 enemies
- 8 enemies
- 9 you
- 10 you

The above is an example of an AA-BB structure. But if the *food and drink* theme is followed the same cameos appear as:

7 food
 8 drink
 9 food
 10 drink

This forms AB-AB parallelism. Both sets of parallelisms are present and formatting requires a selection. In this case the two appear to be of relatively equal strength and the choice made was arbitrary.

The three final cameos are in sequence and unite around the theme of the return of the people to Jerusalem.

Isaiah 63:1-6

- | | | |
|----|--|--|
| 1. | ^{63:1} Who is this that comes from Edom,
in crimsoned garments from Bozrah,
he that is glorious in his apparel,
marching in the greatness of his strength? | A BLOODIED KILLER
Is Glorified |
| 2. | "It is I, announcing vindication,
mighty to save."
² Why is thy apparel red,
and thy garments like his that treads in the wine press? | VINDICATION/ SALVATION
Red Garments |
| 3. | ³ I have trodden the wine press alone, | ALONE |

	and from the people no one was with me;	No one With Me
4.	I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood is sprinkled upon my garments,	TROD IN ANGER In My Wrath Life Blood Upon Me
5.	and I have stained all my raiment. ⁴ For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and my year of redemption has come.	GARMENTS STAINED (red) Day of Vengeance Year of Redemption
6.	⁵ I looked, but there was no one to help; I was appalled, but there was no one to uphold; so my own arm brought me victory, and my wrath upheld me.	NO ONE TO HELP None to Uphold My Arm - Victory
7.	⁶ I trod down the peoples in my anger, I made them drunk in my wrath and I poured out their lifeblood on the earth."	TROD IN ANGER In My Wrath Blood on Earth

Notes on Isaiah 63:1-6

This homily is composed of the familiar seven cameos. However, after a short introduction the format uses step parallelism as a structure.

The passage stands in sharp contrast to the servant songs that appear in Isaiah 40-55 where evil is removed through vicarious suffering. Here a spirit of militant vengeance is established and admired. In the first cameo the main actor "marches" on stage and the red color of his garments is praised as is "the greatness of his strength." The step parallelism of cameos 2-7 is clear and strong. The question arises

as to the relationship between this passage and the Phinehas tradition stemming from Numbers 25. A number of features appear both in Num 25 and Is 63:1-6. Among these are:

1. Each is involved in killing people.
2. Each acted alone (in each case their having acted alone is a significant feature of the account).
3. In both cases life blood is poured out on the earth.
4. Wrath is a feature present in each.
5. Phinehas makes atonement and the bloodied killer from Bozrah/Edom is engaged in vindication, salvation and redemption.
6. A "day of vengeance" is spelled out in 5 above. The same theme is assumed in the case of Phinehas.
7. Each is admired.

With so many central overlapping features the question naturally arises concerning the possible influence of both the Num 25 account and the ensuing Phinehas tradition on this singular passage in Isaiah.

All through Isaiah 40-55 there is the constant affirmation that a new reality is unfolding. It has long been observed that this refers to the startling choice of Cyrus as God's servant. But other features of Isaiah 40-55 are likewise new to Isaiah's readers. Among them is the discussion of the redemptive nature of innocent suffering. It is easy to see how the "Phinehas party" in the community could have become nervous regarding this new theology and have demanded "equal time." Their violence promoting views are perhaps represented in the above passage.

Isaiah 63:7-14

1. ^{63:7}I will remember the steadfast love of the Lord,
the praises of the Lord,
according to all that the Lord has granted us,
and the great goodness to the house of Israel
which he has granted them according to his mercy,
according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

I WILL REMEMBER
God's Past Love

2. ⁸For he said,
"Surely they are my people,
sons who will not deal falsely."
And he became their Savior.

GOD SAID
"Surely They Will be Faithful"
He Became - Savior

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 3. | ⁹ In all their affliction he was afflicted,
and the angel of his presence saved them;
in his love and in his pity he redeemed them;
he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old. | GOD SUFFERED
Saved
Loved
Carried |
| 4. | ¹⁰ But they rebelled
and grieved his holy Spirit;
therefore he turned to be their enemy,
and himself fought against them.

----- | THE PEOPLE WERE
Nor Faithful
He Became - Enemy

----- |
| 5. | ¹¹ Then he remembered the days of old,
of Moses his servant. | MOSES
His Servant |
| 6. | Where is he who brought up out of the sea
the shepherds of his flock? | BROUGHT OUT
Shepherds |
| 7. | Where is he who put in the midst of them
his holy Spirit? | PUT IN
Holy Spirit |
| 8. | ¹² Who caused his glorious arm
to go at the right hand of Moses?

----- | HIS ARM
Moses

----- |
| 9. | Who divided the waters before them
to make for himself an everlasting name,
¹³ who led them through the depths? | AN EVERLASTING NAME
Led the People |
| 10. | Like a horse in the desert,
they did not stumble. | PARABLE OF:
The Horse |
| 11. | ¹⁴ Like cattle that go down into the valley,
the Spirit of the Lord gave them rest. | PARABLE OF:
The Cattle |
| 12. | So thou didst lead thy people,
to make for thyself a glorious name. | LED PEOPLE
Made a Glorious Name |

Notes on Isaiah 63:7-14

This remarkable homily of three interlocked sections with an introduction exhibits a psalm like quality. It can be seen as a unit with its own inner structure and message.

As in a number of previous homilies, the introduction stands apart from what follows. The three sections of the "psalm" interlock in several striking ways. First, each reflects on the past, particularly the days of the Exodus. Each mentions the Holy Spirit (4b, 7b) or the Spirit of the Lord (11c).

The first and third sections together make an important theological statement. There is a set pair that often appears in the parallelisms of Biblical literature. One part of this pair affirms, "God saves because he loves." The other half tells the reader, "God saves because he is holy." This pair appears as follows in the first and last sections of this passage.

3 God saves/redeems/carries because of his love and pity

9,12 God saves "to make for himself an everlasting/glorious name"

The latter theme is related to the Holiness of God in Ezekiel 36:20-23. Because of God's holiness he is a God of honor and integrity. Furthermore God returns (*yishubib*) the sheep/soul "for his name sake (Ps 23:3)." Here in Isaiah God acts out of his holiness/integrity to save. He does so to make for himself an *everlasting* (9) and *glorious* (12) name. As observed the Biblical authors often interlock two sections of poetry by making the center of one homily the outside of the following cameo. In this text Isaiah has taken a classical theological pair (love and holiness) and has placed the first in the middle of the opening cameo (1) and positioning the second at the beginning and end of the final cameo (12).

After the introduction (1), the first section opens with a wistful hope on the part of God that the people will "not deal falsely" (2). This hope is not realized. Rather, rebellion results (4). This rarely found tension between wistful longing and unrealized hope is at the heart of the parable of the unjust vine dressers (Luke 20:9-18). The center is packed with the language of love, tenderness and compassion. The suffering of God with his people is affirmed. Furthermore, in the three cameos (2-4) a trinity appears. *God* speaks in cameo 2. In cameo 3, he acts through "the *angel of his presence*" and in cameo 4 the people grieve his *Holy Spirit*.

The second section (5-8) recalls Moses by name on the outside of the section (5 & 8). The "brought out" (shepherds) and "put in" (Spirit) dominates the lines of cameos 6 and 7. At the same time the center of this second section is parallel to the center of the last section. Each has a parable and each refers to the Spirit of God. This can be seen as follows:

6 - Shepherds/flock 10 - horse in the desert

7 - Holy Spirit 11 - Spirit of the Lord

Finally, the second section is also linked to the last section with a repetition of glory in the closing cameo of each (cf. 8 & 12).

The third section is structurally identical to the second and nearly identical to the first section. It is quite likely that Isaiah intended three cameos for each section with ring composition appearing in each. I have formatted four cameos in each of the last two sections only to focus on the parallels between them. This final section has two references to God's leading during the Exodus, two references to concern for his name and in the center two parables one active and aggressive (the marching horse), the other passive and peaceful (the resting cow).

Isaiah 63:15-64:3

1. ^{63:15} Look down from heaven and see,
from thy holy and glorious habitation.
Where are thy zeal and thy might?
The yearning of thy heart and thy compassion
are withheld from me.

LOOK DOWN
From Heaven
(for love's sake)

2. ¹⁶ For thou art our Father,
though Abraham does not know us
and Israel does not acknowledge us;
thou, O Lord, art our Father,
our Redeemer from of old is thy name.

OUR FATHER
We are Yours
(and rejected)

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 3. | ¹⁷ O Lord, why dost thou make us err from thy ways
and harden our heart, so that we fear thee not? | WE ARE
Estranged! |
| 4. | Return for the sake of thy servants,
the tribes of thy heritage. | RETURN TO
Your Servants |
| 5. | ¹⁸ Thy holy people possessed thy sanctuary a little while;
our adversaries have trodden it down. | WE ARE
Trodden Down |
| 6. | ¹⁹ We have become like those over whom thou hast never ruled,
like those who are not called by thy name. | WE ARE
Estranged! |
| 7. | ^{64:1} O that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down,
that the mountains might quake at thy presence -
² as when fire kindles brushwood
and the fire causes water to boil -
to make thy name known to thy adversaries,
and that the nations might tremble at thy presence!
³ When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for,
they camest down, the mountains quaked at thy presence. | COME DOWN
From Heaven
(for thy name's sake) |

Notes on Isaiah 63:15-64:3

The previous plate looks to the glories of the past when God was active and powerful to save. In this plate the people weep in the present. The author longs for God's powerful presence but does not find it.

The material is again structured into a seven cameo inversion. The center is related to the beginning and the end. The beginning (1) asks God to *look down*. The end (7) requests that he *come down*.

These two are then summarized in the center with the call for God to *return* to his servants and his heritage (4).

The balancing of love and holiness evidenced in the previous passage reoccurs here in simpler form. The first cameo pleads that God's "yearning of heart" and "compassion" are withheld. The author appeals to God's love. The last cameo calls on God to come down "to make thy name known..." which is an appeal to God's holiness. These two themes are then skillfully represented in the center where Isaiah pleads as follows:

Return for the sake of thy servants
 (for our sake, out of your love for us)
 the tribes of thy heritage
 (because of your own heritage/name/honor/holiness
 which is in danger of being damaged!!)

In cameo 7 two parables are encased with a double reference to the quaking mountains.

Cameos 2 & 3 relate to 5 & 6 as follows:

2 PROBLEM: You are our father - but Abraham won't admit
 that he knows us.

3 RESULT: We are estranged - we err from your ways
 and fear thee not!

5 PROBLEM: We are your people in your sanctuary
 - but enemies have taken it.

6 RESULT: We are estranged - like people never under
 your rule, or like those
 not called by your name.

It is possible to see 2 and 3 as a single cameo (likewise 5 and 6). I have chosen to format them as separate cameos due to the distinctions evidenced above.

Isaiah 64:4-11

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 1. | ^{64:4} From of old no one has heard
or perceived by the ear,
no eye has seen a God besides thee, | YOU ALONE
Are God |
| 2. | who works for those who wait for him.
⁵ Thou meetest him that joyfully works righteousness,
those that remember thee in thy ways. | YOU SERVE THE RIGHTEOUS
Who Remember You |
| 3. | Behold, thou wast angry,
and we sinned;
in our sins we have been a long time, | YOUR ANGER
Our Sin |

and shall we be saved? (saved?)

4. ⁶We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.
We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. PAR. OF:
Polluted Garment
Leaf/ Wind
5. ⁷There is no one that calls upon thy name,
that bestirs himself to take hold of thee;
for thou hast hid thy face from us,
and hast delivered us into the hand of our iniquities. (delivered to evil) OUR SIN
Your Hiddenness
6. ⁸Yet, O Lord, thou art our Father;
we are the clay, and thou art our potter;
we are all the work of thy hand. YOU ARE OUR FATHER
Our Potter
7. ⁹Be not exceedingly angry, O Lord,
and remember not iniquity for ever.
Behold, consider, we are all thy people. REMEMBER NOT SIN
Consider Thy People
8. ¹⁰Thy holy cities have become a wilderness,
Zion has become a wilderness,
Jerusalem desolation. JERUSALEM
A Desolation
9. ¹¹Our holy and beautiful house
where our fathers praised thee,
has been burned by fire,
and all our pleasant places have become ruins. THE TEMPLE
Burned

Notes on Isaiah 64:4-11

This homily has seven cameos with inversion in the three center cameos. Cameos 1 & 2 match cameos 6 & 7 in a straight line sequence. Cameo 6 affirms God as our Father. This theme is reused extensively in the New Testament. The center climax is again composed of parables. The *polluted garment* and the *leaf in the wind* (4) illustrate dramatically the prophet's main point. The final two cameos 8 and 9 form a conclusion to the homily as a whole.

There are parallels between cameos 3 and 5. Each cameo represents a move. The first (3) opens with reference to God who is angry over sin. The stanza closes with anxiety over salvation. The parallel cameo (5) begins by describing their estrangement from God and closes with the fear that they have been "delivered into the hand" of their iniquities. (i.e. salvation is hopeless).

Isaiah 64:12-65:7

- | | | |
|----|--|--|
| 1. | ^{64:12} Wilt thou restrain thyself at these things, O Lord?
Wilt thou keep silent,
and afflict us sorely? | RESTRAINT?
Silence?
Punishment? |
| 2. | ^{65:1} I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me;
I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me.
I said, "Here am I, here am I,"
to a nation that did not call on my name. | I CAN BE SOUGHT
By People Who
Do Not Want Me |
| 3. | ² I spread out my hands all the day | |

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| | to a rebellious people,
who walk in a way that is not good,
following their own devices; | A REBELLIOUS
People |
| 4. | ³ a people who provoke me
to my face continually,
sacrificing in gardens
and burning incense upon bricks; | AN IDOLATROUS
People |
| 5. | ⁴ who sit in tombs,
and spend the night in secret places;
who eat swine's flesh,
and broth of abominable things is in their vessels; | A POLLUTED
People |
| 6. | ⁵ who say, "Keep to yourself,
do not come near me, for I am set apart from you."
These are a smoke in my nostrils,
a fire that burns all the day. | YOU ARE A PEOPLE
Who Do Not
Want Me |
| 7. | ⁶ Behold, it is written before me:
"I will not keep silent, but I will repay,
yea, I will repay into their bosom
⁷ their iniquities and their fathers' iniquities together,
says the Lord;
because they burned incense upon the mountains
and reviled me upon the hills,
I will measure into their bosom
payment for their former doings." | I WILL NOT BE SILENT
I Will Not Keep Silent
I Will Punish |

Notes on Isaiah 64:12 - 65:7

Seven cameos again form a homily. The climax in the center is in this case composed of three cameos that move in a sequence. There is a connection between the end (7) and the center (4). In each case the sin of burning incense is condemned. In the middle (4) God is provoked and at the end (7) he is reviled.

The uncertainty about God's silence in cameo 1 is clarified in cameo 7. The last stanza opens with two lines (cameo 7) that provide parallels with the opening stanza (1). The specifics that have triggered God's anger are in the center and the affirmation that payment "into their bosom" becomes the outer frame.

In cameo 2 God pledges his availability to be sought out. In 6 the people confirm that they do not want to draw near to God. The center, like the end, spells out the sad details of revellion, idolatry and pollution.

Isaiah 65:8-16

1.^{65:8} Thus says the Lord:

"As the wine is found in the cluster,
and they say, 'Do not destroy it,
for there is a blessing in it,'
so I will do for my servants' sake,
and not destroy them all.

FOR MY SERVANTS' SAKE
I Will Not Destroy All

2. ⁹I will bring forth descendants from Jacob,
and from Judah inheritors of my mountains;
my chosen shall inherit it,
and my servants shall dwell there.

MY MOUNTAIN
My Servants Inherit

3. ¹⁰Sharon shall become a pasture for flocks,
and the Valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down,
for my people who have sought me. THE VALLEYS
A Blessing For Those
Who Seek Me
4. ¹¹But you who forsake the Lord,
who forget my holy mountain,
who set a table for Fortune
and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny; MY HOLY MOUNTAIN
You Forsake!
5. ¹²I will destine you to the sword,
and all of you shall bow down to the slaughter;
because, when I called, you did not answer,
when I spoke, you did not listen,
but you did what was evil in my eyes,
and chose what I did not delight in." I WILL DESTROY ALL
For You Did Not Listen
You Sinned
6. ¹³Therefore thus says the Lord God:
"Behold, my servants shall eat,
but you shall be hungry;
¹⁴behold, my servants shall drink,
but you shall be thirsty; MY SERVANTS: PLENTY
For You: Want
7. behold, my servants shall rejoice,
but you shall be put to shame;
behold, my servants shall sing for gladness of heart,
but you shall cry out for pain of heart,
and shall wail for anguish of spirit. MY SERVANTS: JOY
For You: Shame/Pain
8. ¹⁵You shall leave your name
to my chosen for a curse,
and the Lord God will slay you;
but his servants he will call by a different name. FOR YOU:
Shame/ Death
For His Servants:
Another Name
9. ¹⁶So that he who blesses himself in the land
shall bless himself by the God of truth,
and he who takes an oath in the land
shall swear by the God of truth;
because the former troubles are forgotten
and are hid from my eyes. BLESSINGS/ OATHS
By God of Truth

Notes on Isaiah 65:8-16

The first five cameos of this homily use ring composition. The following three cameos (6-8) are a straight line sequence which continues the contrasts between my servants and "you who reject the Lord." The final cameo (9) appears to be a fragment or a transition to what follows.

The outer frame (1 & 5) of the five cameos of ring composition contrasts God's *willingness to not destroy* (1) with his *will to destroy* (5). Moving towards the center, the next set of parallelisms (2 & 4) tells of the mountain of the Lord and those who dwell there. In the first (2) "my servants" *dwell in my mountain*. In the second (4) those who forsake the Lord are identified as those who *forget my holy mountain*. There is sharp contrast between the mountain(s) on the one hand (2 & 4) and the valley/plain on the other (3). This contrast creates the climax of the homily which focuses on the safety and prosperity of the plane of Sharon and the Valley of Achor (3). Among villagers in the Middle East it is known that sheep do not lie down unless fed, watered and made secure from danger.

The second section continues the same theme but with clusters of simple parallelisms. Blessings are offered to "my servants" and judgment to "you" (meaning those "who forsake the Lord" [cf. 4]). Stanzas 6 and 7 may be a background to Luke 15:17 where the prodigal son remembers that his father's servants have enough and he is in want. The final fragment (9) appears to be only marginally connected to its context.

Isaiah 65:17-25

1.	^{65:17} "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; -----	NEW HEAVENS New Earth -----
2.	and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.	THE PAST Forgotten
3.	¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create;	JOY, GLADNESS Create
4.	for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.	CREATE JER. For People

- | | | |
|-----|---|--|
| 5. | ¹⁹ I will rejoice in Jerusalem,
and be glad in my people. | JOY IN JER.
Glad in People |
| 6. | ²⁰ No more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping
and the cry of distress.
----- | THE PAST
No More
----- |
| 7. | No more shall there be in it
and infant that lives but a few days,
or an old man who does not fill out his days,
for the child shall die a hundred years old,
and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed. | LONG LIFE
For Their Children |
| 8. | ²¹ They shall build houses and inhabit them;
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
²² They shall not build and another inhabit;
they shall not plant and another eat; | THEY WORK AND
They Benefit |
| 9. | for like the days of a tree
shall the days of my people be, | PARABLE OF
The Tree |
| 10. | and my chosen shall long enjoy
the work of their hands.
They shall not labor in vain,
or bear children for calamity; | THEY WORK
They Benefit |
| 11. | ²³ for they shall be the offspring
of the blessed of the Lord,
and their children with them.

----- | GOOD LIFE
For Their Children

----- |
| 12. | ²⁴ Before they call I will answer,
while they are yet speaking I will hear. | I WILL HEAR |
| 13. | ²⁵ The wolf and the lamb shall feed together,
the lion shall eat straw like the ox;
and dust shall be the serpent's food.
They shall not hurt or destroy
in all my holy mountain,"
says the Lord. | PEACE |

Notes on Isaiah 65:17-25

The vision of the new earth promised in cameo 1 unfolds in the three following sections. Each section speaks to a different aspect of that vision as follows:

- 2-6 The sorrow of the past is forgotten
There is joy in a recreated Jerusalem in the present
- 7-11 The people will prosper with long life
They will reap the benefit of their labor

12-13 God will hear and answer them
 Traditional enemies will come together in peace

The vision of a new heaven and a new earth (1) remains mysterious. This collection of material is remarkable for its use of material quoted and revised from Amos and Isaiah of Jerusalem.

In the first section, (cameos 2-6) ring composition climaxes in the center. Forgetting the past (2) and the details of that painful past (6) open and close the five cameos. The themes of *gladness* and *rejoicing* join 3 and 5. At the same time the center (4) is carefully linked to cameos 3 and 5. The theme of *create* unites cameos 3 and 4 while *Jerusalem and people* tie the center (4) to cameo (5).

The second section also uses five cameos but they are of greater length. The two outer cameos (7 & 11) promise *long life* (7) and *blessing* (11) to the children of the community. Cameo 8 reverses the judgment of Amos 5:11 by promising the laborers the fruit of their labor. The matching cameo (5) reinforces the same idea by repetition. The parable of the tree appears in the climactic center.

The final section opens with God's responsiveness to their petitions (12) and concludes (13) by quoting and summarizing the vision of peace recorded in Isaiah 11:6-9.

ISAIAH 66:1-6

^{66:1}Thus says the Lord:

1. "Heaven is my throne
 and the earth is my footstool;
 what is the house which you would *build for me*, GOD REJECTS
 and what is the *place of my rest*? The Temple
²All these things my hand has made,
 and so all these things are mine,
 says the Lord.

2. But this is *the man* to whom *I will look*, I LOOK AT THE POOR
 he that is *poor* and *contrite in spirit*, Trembling at My Word
 and *trembles at my word*.
3. ³He who *slaughters an ox*
 is like him who *kills a man*;
 he who *sacrifices a lamb*, PARABLES OF:
 like him who *breaks a dog's neck*; Sacrifices and
 he who presents a *cereal offering*, Offerings
 like him who *offers swine's blood*; As Evil
 he who makes a memorial offering of *frankincense*,
 like him who *blesses an idol*.
4. These have *chosen* their *own ways*,
 and their soul *delights* in *their abominations*;
⁴I also will *choose affliction* for *them*, THEY CHOSE EVIL
 and bring their *fears upon them*; I Choose Judgment
because, when *I called*, *no one answered*, They Do Not Listen
 when *I spoke they did not listen*; They Choose Evil
 but *they did* what was *evil in my eyes*,
 and *chose* that in which *I did not delight*."
5. ⁵Hear *the word of the Lord*, YOU WHO
 you who *tremble at his word*: Tremble at His Word
 "*Your brethren* who *hate you*
 and *cast you out* for *my name's sake* YOUR OPPRESSORS
 have said, 'Let the Lord be glorified, Shall Be Shamed
 that we may see your joy';
 but it is *they who shall be put to shame*.
6. ⁶Hark, an uproar from the city!
A voice from the temple! GOD SPEAKS JUDGMENT
 The *voice of the Lord*, From the Temple
 rendering *recompense to his enemies!*

Notes on (Isaiah 66:1-6)

This homily exhibits a six cameo ring composition. The temple appears at the beginning and the end while what happens in the temple is the climax in the center.

The first cameos tell of God's rejection of the temple as a place of his rest (1). In the parallel cameo (6) the voice of God is heard from the temple in judgment on his enemies. These enemies are specified in the center of the homily (3 & 4).

The second pair of cameos (2 & 5) form the positives of the homily. In cameo 2 those *who tremble at the word* of God are specified as being the poor and contrite in spirit. Then in cameo 5 these same *tremblers at his word* are rejected by their brethren who hate them and cast them out thinking that they are serving God by so doing. The conclusion of the cameo vindicates the tremblers.

The center of the homily (3) opens with four parables. These speak of killing a man, breaking a dog's neck, offering swine's blood and blessing an idol. The reason for this angry language is given in the matching cameo (4). The sacrifices and offerings under criticism are not accompanied by obedience to the word/voice of God. The point of turning appears in cameo 4e with the phrase,
 "because, when I called, no one answered,
 and when I spoke they did not listen;"

Indeed those who "tremble at his word" are cast out (5). Sacrifices and offerings thereby become an abomination (4b).

In Jesus' parable of the *Pharisee and the Tax Collector* (Luke 18:9-14) there is a similar scene. (The following page notes these similarities.) In Acts 7:48-50 Stephen quotes the first stanza of this text. If Stephen is invoking the entire passage the violent anger of the people takes on new meaning.

Points of Comparison between Isaiah 66:1-6 and the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican Luke 18:9-14¹

Similarities

1. Both are set in the temple.
2. Each deals with a person who is shut out.

¹ See: Kenneth E. Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2008), pp. 352-354.

3. In both the person shut out is the hero of the story.
4. Each has arrogant people who shut out others and consider this rejection of others a service to God. Considerable self-righteousness is thus condemned in each.
5. Both mention the sacrifices in the temple.
6. Each has a pious man in awe/fear before God. (One trembles, the other beats his chest.)
7. Each has a person(s) who chooses that in which *he delights* rather than choosing that which *pleases God*.
8. In each the sacrifice by itself is not enough without a contrite spirit which in each case is praised.
9. There is judgment in each.

Contrasts

1. The language of Isaiah is extremely harsh. The parable is hard hitting but softer.
2. In Isaiah the sacrifices are not under attack but rather the inadequacies of the one who makes them (cameo 3). The reason for this attack is specified in cameo 4. Thus the system is not under attack but rather the failure to hear and answer God, and the apparent assumption that the sacrifices are enough and that the latter is unnecessary. Up to this point the two texts are similar. The difference between them is that in Isaiah the entire sacrificial system is under discussion and the parable mentions only the atonement sacrifice.
3. There is judgment in each account. Yet this theme is dealt with differently in each text. Judgment in Isaiah is bold and harsh. The Pharisee is judged in the parable in that he goes down to his house without being justified. The judgment flows from his actions rather from an act of God.

Conclusion

The parable is a brilliant "update" by Jesus of Nazareth of the theological content of the above prophetic homily through selection, expansion and conversion into a parable.

ISAIAH 66:7-14

1. ^{66:7}"*Before she was in labor*
she gave birth; ZION GAVE BIRTH
before her pain came upon her Before Labor!
she was delivered of a son. Never Heard/Seen!!
⁸Who has *heard* such a thing?
Who has *seen* such things?
2. Shall *a land* be born in one day?
Shall *a nation* be brought forth in one moment? ZION GAVE BIRTH
For as soon as *Zion* was in labor In One Day

she *brought forth her sons*.

3. ⁹Shall I *bring to the birth*
and *not cause to bring forth?* says the Lord;
shall I, who *cause to bring forth*,
shut the womb? says your God. GOD BRINGS TO FULL TERM.
God Shall Deliver
(God as midwife)
4. ¹⁰*Rejoice with Jerusalem*, and be glad for her
all you who love her;
rejoice with her in joy,
all you who mourn over her; REJOICE WITH JERUSALEM
(mourning ended)
5. ¹¹that you may suck and be satisfied
with her comforting breasts;
that you may drink deeply with delight
from the abundance of her glory." PARABLE OF:
Jerusalem Your Mother
(comforted by Jer.)
6. ¹²For thus says *the Lord*:
Behold, *I will extend to her Peace*
like a river,
and *like an overflowing stream*
*the glory of the nations.*² PARABLES OF:
River/Stream
7. And you shall suck,
you shall be carried up on her hip,
and dandled upon her knees.
As one whom his mother comforts,
so I will comfort you;
you shall be *comforted in Jerusalem*. PARABLES OF:
Jerusalem your Mother

GOD LIKE A MOTHER
(comforted by God)
8. You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice;
your bones shall flourish like the grass;
and it shall be known
that the hand of the Lord is with his servants,
and his indignation is against his enemies.

Notes on Isaiah 66:7-14

This prophetic homily, rich in female images, follows the "high-jump format." In the first three cameos Zion is the mother. The nation and the people are her children. God is the midwife. Indeed God has brought the mother (Zion) to full term and God causes her to give birth.

The second section is composed of five inverted cameos that carry on the same imagery. Now the people are likened to a newborn baby sucking (and comforted) at its mother's breasts. Only in this ring composition structure the mother images are repeated twice (5 & 7) and new images are placed in the

² My translation following the Hebrew word order.

center. The new metaphors invoke a river and an overflowing stream. Isaiah often places a piece of an earlier sacred tradition in the center of a ring composition. Here the images in the center of the rhetorical structure are revised from Amos 5:24. Amos' focus on justice and righteousness is shifted to peace and glory. Thus the climax is an *encased tradition* and at the same time an *encased parable*. In addition the tradition is reshaped and given a new thrust.

The inner pair of stanzas (5 & 7), as noted, are images of a mother. Jerusalem as their mother appears on each side of the climax. Cameo 7 mirrors cameo 5. At the end of cameo 7 a new element is introduced. In cameo 5 Zion/Jerusalem is their mother and her breasts comfort them. In cameo 7 Jerusalem is still their mother. But then suddenly at the end of cameo 7 the mother who is comforting them is *God* and Jerusalem is merely the *place* where the comforting takes place.

Isaiah begins with an affirmation that they are sustained and comforted by Jerusalem. But this dependence on Jerusalem shifts. In the final analysis it is God who sustains them.

In Isaiah 63:16 and in 64:8 God is *our Father*. Here Isaiah presents God as comforting the people like a mother. Earlier in Isaiah (42:14) God cries out (saves?) like a woman. The picture of God who is called a father who comforts like a mother is brilliantly presented in the Gospel of Luke in the parable of the prodigal son as the son returns and is welcomed (comforted) by the father with a kiss and an embrace (cf. Luke 15:20-24). The father is expected to remain in the house to receive or reject the returning beggar. The mother is allowed to run down the road and shower the prodigal with kisses.

The shift of focus from Jerusalem to God noted in cameo 7 is then perpetuated in the outside pair of cameos. In cameo 4 they are called on to rejoice for and with Jerusalem. In the parallel cameo (8) they are asked to rejoice because the "hand of the Lord" is with them. The exclusive focus on the city of Jerusalem that dominates the prophetic homily from stanzas 1-7a is broken and shifts to God's comfort and sustenance of his people.

Isaiah 66:15-24

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 1. ^{66:15} "For behold, the Lord will come in fire,
and his chariots like the stormwind,
to render his anger in fury,
and his rebuke with flames of fire. | THE LORD COMES
Like Wind/Fire |
| 2. ¹⁶ For by fire will the lord execute judgment,
and by his sword, upon all flesh;
and those slain by the Lord shall be many. | THE LORD COMES
In Judgment |
| 3. ¹⁷ Those who sanctify and purify themselves to go into the gardens, following one in
the midst, eating swine's flesh and the abomination and mice, shall come to an end | |

together, says the Lord.

4. ¹⁸For I know their works and their thoughts,
and I am coming to gather all nations and tongues.
5. And they shall come and shall see my glory,
¹⁹and I will set a sign among them.
6. And from them I will send survivors to the nations, to Tarshish, Put, and
Lud, who draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the coastlands afar off, that have not
heard my fame or seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the nations.
²⁰And they shall bring all your brethren from all the nations as an offering to the
Lord, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon
dromedaries, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the Lord, just as the Israelites
bring their cereal offering in a clean vessel to the house of the Lord.
²¹And some of them also I will take for priests and for Levites, says the Lord.
7. ²²For as the new heaven and the new earth
which I will make
shall remain before me, says the Lord;
so shall your descendants and your name remain. NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH
Permanent
8. ²³From new moon to new moon,
and from sabbath to sabbath,
all flesh shall come to worship before me,
says the Lord. ALL SHALL WORSHIP
Before God
9. ²⁴And they shall go forth and look on the dead bodies of the men that have rebelled
against me;
10. for their worm shall not die,
their fire shall not be quenched,
and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.

Notes on Isaiah 66:15-24

This set of cameos is without any apparent order and with little connectedness. The only parables found are in cameo 1 with the metaphors of the stormwind and the fire. There is a hint of inclusio with a reference to fire at the beginning and at the end. With the exception of a few Hebrew pause sentences no rhetorical features appear. The material is disjointed and fragmentary.

