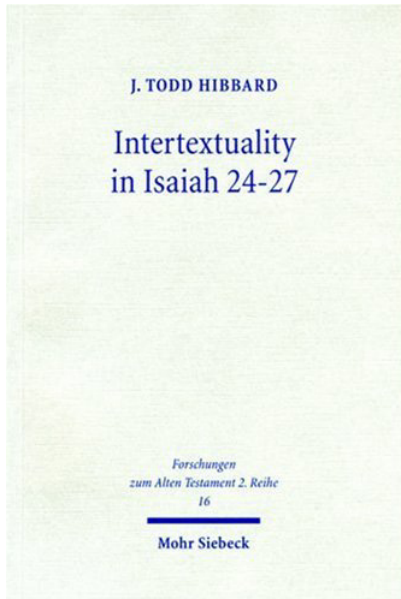


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Hibbard, J. Todd

Intertextuality in Isaiah 24–27: The Reuse and Evocation of Earlier Texts and Traditions

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Jeffery M. Leonard
Samford University
Birmingham, Alabama

Isaiah 24–27, the so-called Isaian Apocalypse, has long been regarded as one of the most difficult sections of the Isaianic prophetic tradition. The texts that coalesce to form this unit are littered with text-critical, grammatical, and linguistic problems, some of which bear directly on the interpretation of the section as a whole (see, e.g., Isa 25:10b–11 and 27:7–8). Even more difficult, however, are the problems of genre, unity, and date that have occupied commentators from Duhm to the present day.

Todd Hibbard's treatment of Isa 24–27, a revised version of the doctoral dissertation he completed under Joseph Blenkinsopp at Notre Dame, is a welcome addition to the roster of studies that have taken on this challenging section. As the title of the work suggests, the author's chief contribution lies in his exploration of intertextual connections between Isa 24–27 and other texts in Isaiah and the rest of the Hebrew Bible. Hibbard gives careful consideration to the manner in which earlier texts are redeployed in Isa 24–27 and in so doing clarifies the larger purpose and meaning of the collection.

In chapter 1, Hibbard outlines the methodological principles that guide his study. While affirming the validity of other, more synchronic notions of intertextuality, he adopts a diachronic approach that openly seeks to understand the intent of the author(s) who

composed this unit. Hibbard outlines four criteria that must adhere for an intertextual relationship to exist: (1) the texts must contain shared vocabulary, preferably vocabulary that is not common to the rest of the Hebrew Bible; (2) the texts must exhibit a measure of thematic coherence; (3) the proposed connection must in some way contribute to the meaning of the later text; (4) the textual connection must be chronologically possible. To the author's credit, these methodological guidelines are used consistently throughout the remainder of the study. Hibbard also stresses the importance of moving beyond the identification of an intertext to the consideration of the literary form of the connection (quotation, allusion, echo, etc.) and the effect the connection has on the meaning of Isa 24–27.

While this first chapter provides a helpful summary of the author's method, it would have benefited from a more thorough interaction with the work of biblical scholars who share (or oppose) his diachronic approach. The significant challenges involved in certifying a textual connection and establishing the chronological priority of connected texts have generated a variety of method-oriented studies in recent years. Given the importance of methodology for his study, it would have been helpful to see Hibbard sharpen his approach through a conversation with works such as the series of essays on prophetic allusion in *Bringing Out the Treasure: Inner Biblical Allusion in Zechariah 9–14* (ed. Mark J. Boda and Michael H. Floyd, with a major contribution by Rex Mason; London: T&T Clark, 2003), the criticisms lodged against Michael Fishbane's method by Lyle Eslinger ("Inner-Biblical Exegesis and Inner-Biblical Allusion: The Question of Category," *VT* 42 [1992]: 47–58), and the responses to Eslinger by Benjamin Sommer ("Exegesis, Allusion and Intertextuality in the Hebrew Bible: A Response to Lyle Eslinger," *VT* 46 [1996]: 479–89) and William Schniedewind ("'Are We His People or Not': Biblical Interpretation During Crisis," *Bib* 76 [1995]: 540–50).

Chapters 2–5 move section by section through Isa 24–27, analyzing and comparing each pericope's use of intertextuality. At the beginning of each chapter, Hibbard provides a brief but thorough introduction to matters of content, structure, and form. Regular summaries provide a welcome overview of the author's conclusions after his necessarily detailed exegesis of the texts in question. Throughout the study, Hibbard demonstrates a thorough mastery of both recent and older Isaiah scholarship. The important studies of Blenkinsopp, Duhm, Johnson, Millar, Polaski, Sweeney, Vermeylen, and Wildberger are regularly cited both for purposes of agreement and argument.

In chapter 2, Hibbard considers Isa 24:1–20, a lengthy description of the travails visited upon creation as YHWH exercises judgment against the earth. In this section he identifies intertextual connections with a number of passages both within the Isaianic tradition and in other parts of the Tanak. He argues that a common thread running through this

section and much of Isa 24–27 is the tendency for earlier texts to be redeployed with a more universal scope. Thus, whereas Hos 4:9, Amos 5:2, and Isa 17:6 present messages of judgment against Israel, Isa 24 broadens the focus of these intertexts by extending their message to the entire world. In a similar fashion, Jer 48:43, a text originally directed toward Moab, is recast as a more universalized message of judgment against all of the earth. Hibbard argues allusions to the flood and tower stories in Gen 1–11 further highlight this theme of worldwide judgment. A final example of intertextuality in this section involves Isa 21:2 and 33:1. Here Hibbard suggests that earlier Isaianic passages are reused to condemn premature rejoicing in Isa 24:14–16a over the earth’s condemnation.

In chapter 3 Hibbard turns to Isa 24:21–25:12, a diverse section that he suggests has been redacted to depict YHWH’s enthronement as king (24:21–23), followed by a song of praise for the overthrow of an anonymous wicked city (25:1–5), then a great feast on Mount Zion for all peoples (25:6–8), followed by a song of thanksgiving (25:9–12). Hibbard notes that this section does not evoke other texts in the same, direct fashion as Isa 24:1–20. While there are some examples of overlapping vocabulary, he admits that the evocations of other texts are “closer to the thematic end of the continuum” (212), rendering his interpretive conclusions “less firm and more speculative” (70).

Hibbard suggests that Isa 24:21–23 evokes elements of several enthronement psalms (esp. Pss 47, 93, and 96–99). Whereas these psalms only depict YHWH’s enthronement over Israel, however, Hibbard sees further evidence for universalization in Isa 24’s emphasis on YHWH’s kingship over all of creation. Within the Isaiah tradition, Hibbard identifies an allusion to Isa 52:7–10, another enthronement passage. He argues that Isa 25 develops the notion of divine kingship differently than Isa 52, however, by allowing for a more positive role for other nations. He reaches similar conclusions concerning the feast depicted in Isa 25:6–8. Following several earlier commentators, Hibbard connects this feast with the meal celebrated in Exod 24. He maintains that the common denominator between these two meals is the change in status that occurs in the relationship between YHWH and the people. In Exod 24, the change involved a newly inaugurated covenant relationship. In Isa 25, however, Hibbard suggests that a new kind of relationship, one not defined by covenant, is conceived as a means of including all peoples. He maintains that the song found in Isa 25:1–5 does not allude to any particular text but rather draws upon certain themes—counsel (עצה), tyrants (עריצים), refuge, shelter—developed in earlier layers of the Isaianic tradition. He insists that these themes are once again shaped in such a way as to cast a more inclusive and universal vision of salvation. Finally, he suggests that the difficult reference to Moab in Isa 25:10b–12 draws upon the more extensive picture of judgment in Isa 2:6–22 to hold up Moab as a symbol of those who will continue to oppose YHWH even in the midst of his offer of salvation.

In chapter 4 Hibbard turns his attention to Isa 26:1–27:1, a section that he divides into a song of thanksgiving (26:1–6), a lament (26:7–19), and a pair of brief elaborations on the lament (26:20–21; 27:1). As in the previous section, he finds most of the intertextual connections in this passage to be with earlier texts in the Isaianic tradition. He argues that the song in Isa 26:1–6, like 25:10b–12, alludes to Isa 2:6–22. He suggests that, just as Moab symbolizes in Isa 25 the nations that oppose YHWH, the anonymous city in Isa 26 symbolizes those who oppose YHWH’s city, Zion. Hibbard sees in the lament that occupies Isa 26:7–19 an allusion to Isa 54:1–6. Following Polaski and Scholl, he argues that Isa 26 alludes to this passage because the text’s vision for the restoration of Zion has failed to come to fruition. Thus, the author of the lament contradicts the hopeful tone of the earlier text, using its language to remind the reader and God that the earlier expectations have not been realized. He raises the possibility of a similar allusion to Isa 66:6–16 but admits his uncertainty concerning the connection. In the elaborations that occupy Isa 26:20–27:1, Hibbard identifies allusions to Mic 1:3a and, once again, the flood story in Gen 1–11. In this case, he suggests that the flood is evoked not to emphasize YHWH’s judgment but rather to recall his preservation of a remnant through the midst of that judgment. He maintains that the virtual quotation from Micah is intended to lend a sense of authority and certainty to the later prophet’s message.

In chapter 5 Hibbard examines Isa 27:2–13, a passage that emphasizes YHWH’s judgment and the restoration of Judah. He finds in this section allusions primarily to other Isaianic texts. The most prominent of these is the well-known evocation in Isa 27:2–6 of the vineyard song found in Isa 5:1–7. Hibbard follows the lead of most commentators in suggesting that Isa 27 reverses the message of Isa 5. His chief contribution is to highlight the fact that the reversal is focused on the disposition of YHWH toward the vineyard. In Isa 27:7–13, Hibbard argues for a connection with Isa 17:1–13. He notes that this connection runs counter to the universalizing message of most of Isa 24–27 as it takes a message of judgment directed toward Syria and Israel and redirects it specifically toward “Jacob” (understood as Judah). He also sees in this section an allusion to Isa 11:10–16, a passage that proclaims hope for the nation’s restoration in the future. Hibbard argues that Isa 27 changes the vision of the earlier text significantly, however, by eliminating the notion of a restored monarchy (now replaced by YHWH’s kingship) and by emphasizing cultic observance (a feature that stands in contrast with other parts of Isa 24–27). Finally, he sees a thematic connection between Isa 27:7 and the notion of YHWH’s “striking” (נכה) that appears prominently in other parts of Isaiah.

The conclusion to the study found in chapter 6 provides a welcome restatement of the main arguments of the preceding chapters and offers a very brief nod toward some of the implications that could be drawn from his study. A substantial bibliography and valuable source and author indices round out the work.

A relatively minor criticism concerns the unfortunate number of typographical errors that remain in the published version of the study. These errors are particularly prominent in the footnotes (see, e.g., the varied references to van Wieringen's work on 141 n. 106, 144 n. 119, and 159 n. 179) and in quotations of the Hebrew text (see, e.g., the citations of Isa 24:2 on p. 42 and 25:12b on p. 73 n. 14). Readers will need to consult the biblical text carefully to double-check matters of spelling and word order when a Hebrew phrase or verse is cited.

A more significant criticism concerns Hibbard's reticence to pursue fully the implications that flow from his study. The varied approaches to intertextuality that Hibbard identifies in the individual sections of Isa 24–27 would seem to have an important bearing on the complicated redactional history of this collection. A more thorough discussion of this section's development in light of these differences would have been welcome. Just as importantly, the web of connections that Hibbard identifies within Isaiah could be more fully exploited to shed light on the development of the Isaianic tradition as a whole. With a solid base established in this study, I can only hope Hibbard will take up these matters again in the future.

These criticisms notwithstanding, Hibbard's study is a fine addition to the field of Isaiah research. Although one might argue in favor of an allusion here that Hibbard rejects or deny a connection there that he affirms, the author marshals his evidence carefully and presents a compelling case for Isa 24–27's use of intertextuality as a means of universalizing earlier prophetic messages. Future treatments of the Isaian Apocalypse will be well served by the intertextual insights presented here.