

(Isa 47:6). Such a verdict assumes that even the Babylonian king should have known to honor the non-negotiable expectations of the creator.¹⁹

3. Zion, David, Jerusalem and Israel are peculiarly chosen by YHWH in YHWH's exclusive prerogative. It is impossible to read First Isaiah without recognizing this commitment on YHWH's part. ~~However~~, the Isaiah tradition ~~also~~ affirms ~~that~~ YHWH's designation of the city, king, temple, and people as chosen does not ~~exempt them from~~ the non-negotiable requirements of creation. Thus, the chosen stand along with all others before the exclusive prerogative of YHWH. This is a God who will not be mocked, nor presumed upon, or taken for granted. The prohibition against mocking YHWH, of course, pertains in the Isaiah tradition especially to Assyria, for ~~Assyria~~ is the dominant superpower ~~in First Isaiah~~ (see Isa 37:4, 17, 23, 24). Assyria mocked YHWH by imagining that it could act autonomously in the world according to the permit of the Assyrian gods. ~~However~~, ~~this~~ danger ~~also~~ applies ~~to~~ the chosen establishment in Jerusalem. This is ~~a~~ creator who will not tolerate a recalcitrant creation. ~~This~~ is a God who will not accommodate ~~a~~ city, king, temple, or people ~~that~~ does not honor the will of the creator.

As a result, the Isaiah tradition is ~~loaded~~ with terrifying judgment ~~upon~~ the future for the will of the creator and the ultimate inviolability of creation. Like other traditions in Israel, Isaiah must thread the needle, holding together the chosenness of Israel and the sovereignty of YHWH. In this tradition, as with others of the prophets, in circumstances of acute crisis, it is first of all the sovereignty of YHWH that prevails, even against the chosen.

Divine judgment as defense of the will of the creator and therefore the wellbeing of creation is central to First Isaiah. In Isa 1:24, the prophetic *therefore* of judgment begins with an assertion of the Sovereign: "Therefore says the Sovereign, the Lord of Hosts, The Mighty One of Israel." Then follows in the oracle a series of first person

¹⁹ It is ~~this~~ large mandate that has led, eventually, to the Helsinki Declaration of Human Rights; or, for that matter, even the US Declaration of Independence "holds these truths to be self-evident."

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