

A Textual Criticism and Lexical Analysis of Isaiah 62

Philip Suciadi Chia¹⁾, Juanda²⁾

¹⁾ Southern Baptist Theological Seminary - Kentucky USA
E-mail: pchia275@students.sbts.edu

²⁾ Evangelical Theological Seminary of Indonesia - Surabaya
E-mail: juanda@stti-surabaya.ac.id

Abstract

This research presents a methodology and example of doing both a textual criticism and a word study or a lexical analysis of the Hebrew word. The textual external evidence strongly favors the consonantal text of reading one because all the ancient versions support it. The internal evidence, though it is not as strong as external evidence, has endorsements from its context and appearances of that word in Hebrew Bible. In Isaiah 62:1, the best understanding of לִפִּיר is not from literal sense but rather symbolic. The context of the usage of this term is God will restore Zion, particularly in her salvation, which is symbolized as a torch that burns. It means that Yahweh will make glorious Zion's deliverance like a torch so that all nations, including their kings, will be witnesses of Zion's restoration.

Keywords: Variants, Text, Evidence

INTRODUCTION

This research presents a methodology and example of doing both a *textual criticism* and a word study or a *lexical analysis* of the Hebrew word. These examples are taken from Isaiah 62. This paper has a purpose to *introduce* a textual criticism and a lexical analysis world to Old Testament students in Indonesia.

THE TEXT OF ISAIAH 62:5 “בִּנְיָ”

I. VARIANTS

A. BHS/Aleppo:

Text:

כִּי־יִבְעַל בְּחֹר בְּתוּלָה יִבְעֹלוּ בְּנֵיךָ וּמִשׁוּשׁ חֲתָן
עַל־כֻּלָּה יִשִּׁישׁ עֲלֶיךָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ:

Translation:

For young man will marry *with* a virgin.
Your sons will marry you and the rejoicing
of bridegroom over the bride. So, your God
will rejoice over you

Vorlage:

כִּי־יִבְעַל בְּחֹר בְּתוּלָה יִבְעֹלוּ בְּנֵיךָ וּמִשׁוּשׁ חֲתָן
עַל־כֻּלָּה יִשִּׁישׁ עֲלֶיךָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ

B. 1QIsa^a

Text:

כִּי־יִבְעַל בְּחֹר בְּתוּלָה יִבְעֹלוּ בְּנֵיךָ וּמִשׁוּשׁ
חֲתָן עַל־כֻּלָּה יִשִּׁישׁ עֲלֶיךָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ

Translation:

For young man will marry *with* a virgin.
Your sons will marry you and the rejoicing
of bridegroom over the bride. So, your God
will rejoice over you

Vorlage:

I. Arabic:

Text:

اشعياؤه كَمَا يَتَزَوَّجُ الشَّابُّ عَذْرَاءَ يَتَزَوَّجُكَ
بَنُوكِ. وَكَفَّرَحَ الْعَرِيسُ بِالْعُرُوسِ يَفْرَحُ بِكِ إِلَهَكَ

Translation: As a young man marries a maiden, so will your sons marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.

Vorlage:

כִּי־יִבְעַל בַּחֹר בַּתֹּלָה יִבְעֹלֹךְ בִּנְיָן וּמִשׁוֹשׁ חַתָּן עַל־
כֻּלָּה יִשְׂיֵשׁ עֲלֶיךָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ בַּחֹר

The variants display two distinct problems. Nonetheless, this paper will analyze word problem of בִּנְיָן in the MT.

II. PROBLEM: בִּנְיָן A. POSSIBLE READINGS

בִּנְיָן (4)	בִּנְיָן (3)	בִּנְיָן (2)	בִּנְיָן (1)
		(From the verb בָּנָה)	(From the noun בֵּן)

B. External Evidence

	בִּנְיָן (4)	בִּנְיָן (3)	בִּנְיָן (2)	בִּנְיָן (1)
Textual Witnesses		1QIsa ^a and 1QIsa ^b	(From the verb בָּנָה)	(From the noun בֵּן)
			1QIsa ^a and 1QIsa ^b could be read to support either (1) or (2).	
Translational Witnesses			LXX, Aquila, Syriac, Targum, Arabic, Vulgate	

Reading 4 is the weakest attestation and should be rejected based on the external evidence. Three of four first readings concur in their consonantal text, but the main problem is its root. It shows a propensity of highly interpretive translation its *Vorlage* is difficult to determine, although the table above favors the first reading.

C. Internal Evidence

1. Simplification of the Text

The difference between Readings 1 and 2

is derived from their vowels letter. The first reading chose *games-games* as its first two vowels בִּנְיָן. On the other hand, the second reading had *holem-patah* as its first two vowels בְּנִיָּה. Therefore, the translation of first reading is “so shall your sons marry you”, while the second is “your builders will marry you”. Reading 4 can be translated as your builder as well.

The reason of this emendation is because the first reading seems unacceptable. The idea (concept) of incest which sons are marrying their mother is infelicitous. Therefore, *BHS* offers also the second reading that proposes to correct the vocalization becomes בְּנִיָּה, “your builder,” as referring to God (as in Ps. 147:2). It means that some translators have a predilection to adopt Reading 4.

2. Explanatory Power

Reading 1 and 2 have the same consonantal text but they are different in their vocalization. The second reading uses a verbal form and refers to the plural participle form, whereas the first reading employs a noun form. On the other hand, reading 4 denotes a singular noun because of the removal of י.

3. Summary of Internal Evidence

Reading 2 and 4 can be rejected for two reasons. First is the occurrence of this word in Hebrew Bible. The word בְּנִיָּה with the translation of your builders only occurs once in the Hebrew Bible (Ez. 27:4),² while 44 times this word appears as your sons. In the book of Isaiah itself, the word בְּנִיָּה occurs seven times (49:17, 22, 25; 51:20; 54:13; 60:4, 9). For the word “בִּנְיָן” also appears only once in the Old Testament with form *qal* participle masculine singular construct.³ The second reason is a contextual argument. The promise of descendants resonates in Isaiah 60-62 (60:4, 9, 21-22). These

²In *qal* participle masculine plural construct with suffix 2nd person feminine singular

³Four times this word emerges in the OT with form *qal* participle masculine singular absolute.

descendants will work the land and profit from it as it is described in Isaiah 62:9. Prophesying that “your sons will marry you” indicates that the children of those who received the promise of the land will take possession of it while also accepting the responsibility to husband with joy akin to that of a new bridegroom.

D. Conclusion

Reading one has a stronger possibility of translation. The textual external evidence strongly favors the consonantal text of reading one because all the ancient versions support it. The internal evidence, though it is not as strong as external evidence, has endorsements from its context and appearances of that word in Hebrew Bible.

LEXICAL STUDY OF תִּפְּלָה IN ISAIAH 62:1

I. Usage in the MT

The noun תִּפְּלָה appears 13 times in the Hebrew Scriptures and only once occurs in the book of Isaiah.⁴ It is evenly divided between literal and symbolic meaning. A brief of its usage as classified by meaning is given below based on their various contexts.

A. Summary of Usage.⁵

1. Literal meaning:

- Torch (Ju. 7:16; 7:20; 15:4; 15:4; 15:5).
- Flaming Torch: usually with שָׁרָף (Gen. 15:17).
- Lightning flashes (Ex. 20:18).

2. Symbolic meaning:

- Symbolic of conquering power that Yahweh gives to Judah (Zech. 12:6).
- Symbolic of the majestic the eyes of

angel (Dan. 10:6).

c. Symbolic of the furious and energetic action of war chariots to attack enemy (Na. 2:4).

d. Symbolic of the image of animal that of pent-up breath with water in a hot steam jet coming from its mouth.

e. Symbolic of the appearance of heavenly beings (Ez. 1:13).

f. Symbolic of Zion's glorious deliverance (Isa. 62:1).

B. Observations

From the literal meaning, the noun תִּפְּלָה gives definition as something that gives out the light such as torch or flash. Hebrew Bible sometimes adds the word שָׁרָף to denote a flaming or burning connotation. However, in symbolic sense, the meaning should be scrutinized from the context. Nahum 2:4, for instance, uses תִּפְּלָה to symbolize the furious and energetic attack, but Ezekiel 1:13 depicts the magnificent of heavenly being appearance.

C. Conclusion

Based on this short study, the word תִּפְּלָה has both literal and symbolic which is depended to its context.

II. Usage in Ancient Translations

Employing ancient translations of Hebrew, such as Septuagint, we can obtain possible synonyms for our word of study תִּפְּלָה. These synonyms, although sometimes generating previously unseen meaning, are most often helpful for depth studying to give diverse meanings which are a related to תִּפְּלָה.

A. Septuagint

In Septuagint, the text is διὰ Σιωνοῦ σιωπῆς οὐκ αἰδία καὶ διὰ Ἱερουσαλὴμ οὐκ ἀνήσωξεν ἄν ἐξέλθῃ ὡς φῶς δίκαιο σὺν ἡμῖν

⁴The controversial verse is Job 12:5. The first word, תִּפְּלָה (*lapid*), could be rendered “a torch of scorn”. However, the ל (*lamed*) is often taken as an otiose letter, and the noun תִּפְּלָה (*pid*) is “misfortune,

calamity” (cf. Job 30:24; 31:29). If this verse is counted, then it will be 14 verses.

⁵All of these verse follow NAS.

οὐτὸ δὲ σωτήριόν μου ὡς λαμπὰς καυθήσεται.
A Greek-English Lexicon of Septuagint gives other definitions regarding to this term:⁶

1. Something that gives out light: Torch (Gen. 15:17; Na. 2:5; Zech. 12:6).
2. Flash(es) of lighting (Ex. 20:18).

B. List of Synonyms

Possible synonyms of *לפיד* are listed below along with their basic definition.

- *נברשתא*: Candlestick (Dan. 5:5).

C. Observation

לפיד has one synonym which is *נברשתא* and it appears only once in the bible (Dan. 5:5). *נברשתא* has a similar meaning with the literal meaning of *לפיד*.

D. Conclusion

נברשתא has a connotation to give out light as well as *לפיד*.

III. Cognate Languages

By scrutinizing those languages which are connected to Hebrew, it is possible to find the history of the root *לפיד*, will assist to comprehend on the meanings presented above. The following cognates derive from BDB and HALOT.⁷

A. List of Cognates

- Jewish Aramaic: Shining object or torch.
- Syriac: Shining object or torch.
- Christian Palestinian Aramaic: Shining object or torch.
- Mandaean: Shining object or torch.
- Arabic: Shining object or torch.

B. Observations:

There is a united meaning throughout this list of cognates. All of them have shining object or torch definition.

C. Conclusion:

Study of cognate languages is confirming the meaning of shining object or torch.

IV. Summary

The general sense of *לפיד* scrutinized in Biblical Hebrew usage, that it has dual meanings both literal and symbolic definition. Nevertheless, ancient translation and cognate languages denote the meaning of *לפיד* only in literal sense. Hebrew Bible, on the other hand, shows the flexibility definition of *לפיד* and it is employed in sundry contexts as symbolization.

In Isaiah 62:1, the best understanding of *לפיד* is not from literal sense but rather symbolic. The context of the usage of this term is God will restore Zion, particularly in her salvation, which is symbolized as a torch that burns. It means that Yahweh will make glorious Zion's deliverance like a torch so that all nations, including their kings, will be witnesses of Zion's restoration.

REFERENCES

- [1] Ackerman, Susan. 'Sacred Sex, Sacrifice and Death: Understanding a Prophetic Poem', *Bible Review* 6 (Feb. 1990).
- [2] Andersen, F. I. 'Salience, Implicature, Ambiguity and Redundancy in clause-clause relationships in Biblical Hebrew'. *In Biblical Hebrew and Discourse Linguistics*, ed. R.D. Bergen. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994.
- [3] Blenkinsopp, Joseph. *Isaiah 56-66 A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: The Anchor Bible, 2003.

(Oxford: Clarendon Press); and Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of Old Testament*, 5 Vols. (New York: E. J. Brill, 1994).

⁶T. Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Leuven, Belgium: PEETERS, Warotstraat, 2009), 424-5.

⁷Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*

-
- [4] Brown, Francis S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.
- [5] Brueggemann, Walter. *Isaiah 40-66*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Know Press, 1998.
- [6] Buksbazen, Victor. *The Prophet Isaiah*. Collingswood, N.J: The Spearhead Press, 1971.
- [7] Butler, Paul T. *Isaiah III*. USA: College Press Publishing Company, 1978.
- [8] Davies, Andrew. *Double Standards in Isaiah Re-evaluating Prophetic Ethics & Divine Justice*. Netherlands, Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2000.
- [9] Goldingay, John. *New International Biblical Commentary on Isaiah*. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc. 2001.
- [10] Horton, Stanley M. *Isaiah*. Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 2000.
- [11] Koehler, Ludwig and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of Old Testament*, 5 Vols. New York: E. J Brill, 1994.
- [12] Mackay, John L. *Isaiah 40-66*. Faverdale North, Darlington: MPG Books Group, 2009.
- [13] T. Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*. Leuven, Belgium: PEETERS, Warotstraat, 2009.
- [14] Oswalt, John N. *The Book of Isaiah Chapter 1-39*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986.
- [15] _____, *The book of Isaiah. Chapter 40-66*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998.
- [16] Schullion, SJ, John. *Old Testament Message: A Biblical-Theological Commentary on Isaiah 40:66*. Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, Inc, 1982.
- [17] Smart, J. D. *History and Theology in Second Isaiah*. Philadelphia: Epworth, 1965.
- [18] Thompson, Michael. *Isaiah 40-66*. Ivatt Way, Peterborough: 2001.
- [19] Westermann, Claus. *Isaiah 40-66*. Westminster: John Knox Press, 1969.
- [20] Whybray, R. N. *Isaiah 40-66*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: WM. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1975.
- [21] Williams, Ronald J. *Williams' Hebrew Syntax*. Canada: University of Toronto, 2007.
- [22] Young, Edward J. *The book of Isaiah 40-66*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972.