

# Isaiah 1:21-31

## A Bilingual Edition

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The original Hebrew is presented in Tiberian Masoretic dress. Vertical alignment of versets facilitates the observation of parallelisms. A verset of two to three stress units is given a line of its own, with stress units marked by the use of the *maqeph* like MT, but not always in accordance with it. Interstitial gaps of varying dimensions set off lines, strophes, and stanzas. A circulus is placed over a word if its consonantal skeleton or vocalization is at variance with MT. An introduction to the building blocks of ancient Hebrew verse, discussions of individual poems, and background essays of a technical nature are offered elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

The English translation is designed to enhance appreciation of the poetry of the original. The goal has been to furnish a global approximation of the poetry and prosody of the Hebrew, even if the results are necessarily piecemeal. I sometimes retain examples of enallage, chiasm, ellipsis, and inversion which perforce result in a less idiomatic rendering. Differences in the use of blank spacing define stress units, versets, lines, strophes, and stanzas. Minimal use of capitalization and punctuation is intentional. By and large capitalization marks the onset of a stanza as defined in the general rule.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See the writer's "Regularities in Ancient Hebrew Verse: An Overview," and supporting essays, at [www.ancienthebrewpoetry.typepad.com](http://www.ancienthebrewpoetry.typepad.com).

<sup>2</sup> The general rule: ancient Hebrew verse is confined within a system of "twos and threes": two to three "stress units" make up a "verset"; two to three versets a poetic "line"; two to three lines a "strophe"; two to three strophes a "stanza"; two to three stanzas a "section"; and two to three sections a poem, or an extensive section thereof.

Isaiah 1:21-23

How she has become a whore  
the town of integrity  
“full of justice  
law and order lodge in her”  
but now murderers!  
your silver has become slag  
your drink diluted with water  
your rulers are rogues  
associates of thieves  
all of them love a bribe  
and chase after gifts  
the orphan they do not defend  
the widow's cause  
does not come before them

ישעיהו א 21-23

איכה היתה לזונה  
קרית נאמנה  
מלאתי משפט  
צדק יליו בה  
ועתה מרצחים  
כסף היה לסיגים  
סבאך מהול במים  
שריך סוררים  
וחברי גנבים  
כלו אהב שחד  
ורדף שלמנים  
יתום לא ישפטו  
וריב אלמנה  
לא יבוא אליהם

Isaiah 1:24-28

Herewith the word of the Lord  
of Yahweh of Armies  
of the Bull of Israel

oh I'll be satisfied of my foes  
I'll be avenged of my enemies  
and turn my hand against you

I'll smelt away your slag in a crucible  
remove all your dross  
and restore your judges as before  
your counselors as of yore

after that they'll call you  
"citadel of justice  
town of integrity"

Zion shall be redeemed in the judgment  
her repentant ones in an act of justice  
but he'll break rebels  
and sinners alike  
those who take leave of Yahweh will perish

ישעיהו א 24-28

לְכֹן נֶאֱמַר הַאֲדוֹן  
יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת  
אֲבִיר יִשְׂרָאֵל

הוּא אֲנַחֵם מִצָּרֵי  
וְאֲנַקְמָה מֵאוֹיְבָי  
וְאֲשִׁיבָה יָדִי עָלֶיךָ

וְאֲצַרְךָ בְּכַרְסֵי  
וְאֲסִירָה כָּל-בְּדִילֶיךָ

וְאֲשִׁיבָה שְׂפָטֶיךָ כְּבְרָאשׁוֹנָה  
וְיַעֲצִיךָ כְּבַתְחִלָּה

אַחֲרֵי-כֵן יִקְרָא לְךָ  
עִיר הַצְּדָקָה  
קְרִיַּה נְאֻמָּנָה

צִיּוֹן בְּמִשְׁפַּט תִּפְדָּה  
וְשָׁבִיָּה בְּצִדְקָה

וְשָׁבַר פְּשָׁעִים

וְחַטָּאִים יַחֲדוּ

וְעֹזְבֵי יְהוָה יִכָּלוּ

Isaiah 1: 29-31

and you'll be ashamed of the trees  
in which you delighted  
you will blanch because of the gardens  
you preferred

and you'll compare to a tree  
of withering leaf  
to a garden in which water  
is lacking

and the mighty tree will be like tinder  
its owner like a spark  
both will burn together  
with none to douse

ישעיהו א 29-31

כִּי־תִבְשׁוּ מֵאֵילִים  
אֲשֶׁר חֲמַדְתֶּם  
וְתַחֲפְרוּ מֵהַגְּנוֹת  
אֲשֶׁר בַּחֲרַתֶּם

כִּי־תִחְיֶהוּ כַּאֵלֶּה  
נֹבֵלֶת עֵלֶה

וְכַגְּנֹה אֲשֶׁר מִים  
אֵין לָהּ

וְהִיא הַחֶסֶן לְנֹעֶרֶת  
וּבְעֵלּוֹ לְנִיצוֹץ

וּבְעֵרוֹ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו  
וְאֵין מְכַבֵּה