

"the city" is quite out of place. There are many cities, and it would be difficult to choose any one that would properly be referred to as simply "the city." Verse 13 begins with the words: "When thus it shall be in the midst of the land." The word that was rendered as "earth" six times in earlier verses is here translated "land," (as was already the case in verses 3 and 11). "Earth" would seem quite out of place in this verse, which is most naturally interpreted as referring to the midst of a particular country rather than to the midst of the whole world.

Thus many specific statements in these twelve and one-half verses fit best with the interpretation that is suggested by the parallel with the general practice of the prophets, who so often begin a passage with rebuke for the sin of the people of their own day, and then go on to provide specific encouragement to the godly. This leads naturally to the conclusion that Isaiah 24:1-12 is a prediction of exile, rather than a description of eventual judgment upon the earth as a whole. Such judgment may well be contained in statements later on in the chapter. Here it seems most unlikely. The only thing that makes the other impression seem so probable is the frequent use of the English word "earth."

In verses 1 to 13 the word _____ occurs nine times. The King James Version translates it "earth" six times and "land" three times. To the English reader, unfamiliar with the Hebrew, these appear to be two different words. Yet it would seem most likely that the word in this unified passage is either "earth," referring to the whole globe, or "land" referring to Israel. Surely it would be better to translate it one way or the other. Here at first sight the Revised Standard Version seems to be superior, in this passage, to the King James Version. In every one of these instances it translates _____ by the same English word. Unfortunately, however, it selects the wrong one of the two. To my mind it is not nearly as important which word is selected as that one be used consistently throughout this unified passage, and that a footnote be inserted in case of doubt to give the student the authority to make his own determination as to which