

Throughout the Vision of Isaiah certain passages show a marked structural resemblance to the arch in architecture, in which a wall opening is spanned by means of stone blocks assembled into an upward curve that maintains its shape and stability through mutual pressure of the separate pieces. The blocks usually have a wedge shape, with the block at the crown of the arch being called the keystone since it conveys balancing lateral pressures to the two sides of the structure. In the following example, the parallel thoughts of the verses marked A-A', B-B', C-C', and D-D' serve as the blocks of the two sides of the arch held in balance by the keystone, vv 7c-9. (Because of typographical considerations, the textual arch appears on its side, but the resemblance should be readily apparent to the reader.)

A "I reared my children—but they rebelled against me." (1:2)

B "An ox knows. . . . Israel does not know." (1:3)

C "Woe! Sinning nation!" Why more? (1:4-5)

D Only wounds left—countryside desolate (1:6-7b)

KEYSTONE Daughter Zion isolated, like a city under siege—except for the remnant left by YHWH, would be like Sodom (1:7c-9)

D' Empty, useless worship (1:10-15a)

C' "Hands full of blood! Wash yourselves." (1:15b-17)

B' "Come, . . . let us test each other." (1:18-20)

A' How has the faithful city become a harlot? (1:21-23)