

Isaiah 24:15 as its only occurrence. This is obviously a mere guess, based on the verse that we are now considering. Certain commentaries state that since the latter part of the verse, which speaks of glorifying God in the isles of the sea, would refer to the west, we must conclude that "in the fires" should logically refer to the east. In order to provide a basis for this interpretation it is alleged that the "fires" in this verse must refer to the reddish sky at sunrise in the east.

This is surely a very forced interpretation. As a rule sunsets are more colorful than sunrises. There would certainly be no more reason to use the word "fires" to describe the east than to use it to describe the west. Surely this is reading something into the Scripture, in order to produce a desired symmetry. What the Bible says is "fires" and it does not seem to fit with the preceding thoughts. A new idea is clearly being added.

The most natural way to interpret the idea of glorifying God in the fires is to take it as referring to the fires of persecution and adversity. Did Isaiah, as he wrote these words, have a glimpse of Israel in Maccabean days, facing the effort to destroy the true religion? Did he see men tortured and murdered for their faith and therefore cry out, "Glorify God in the fires"? Did he look forward and see the early Christian martyrs tied to posts in Nero's garden, covered with pitch and then ignited to give light to Nero's festivals? Did he see the martyrs of Reformation days, many of whom were burned at the stake for their faith? Surely this is the most logical way to interpret the expression, "Glorify the LORD in the fires." But we must be careful not to read something into the passage. This is a remarkable idea, but we must not extract it merely from one word.