

Isaiah 24:22

This verse contains a word that has definite meaning in Hebrew, but for which there is no corresponding word in English. This is the word which is regularly used for the intervention of a higher power to make a great change in the condition of one with less power. It is thus used for levying troops for an army. It is used for punishing evil doers, but it is also frequently used for a higher power intervening in order to make a condition better rather than worse (e.g., Ruth 1:6). The KJV regularly translates it as "visited," which hardly conveys any meaning in modern English.

Since there is no English equivalent, it is probably necessary to make a choice. It does not seem to me to make much sense to say: "they will be shut up in prison and will be punished after many days." It almost sounds as if, when God seizes the powers in heaven and the kings on the earth, He shuts them in a dungeon while He makes up His mind what to do about them, and, as in our American court system, they may be kept there for several years before they are punished. The term can just as well mean that after being shut in prison for a time they are released. Otherwise there seems to be no point in mentioning the "many days." In his commentary on Isaiah Franz Delitzsch says that he considers this latter to be the meaning of the statement, and compares it with Rev. 20:3 and 7.