# Isaiah

### Week 2

## AUTHORSHIP

- Overview
  - In spite of the lack of evidence that any part of Isaiah ever existed without any other part as far back as the 200's BC, the dogma of most scholarship today is that two or more individuals authored Isaiah.
  - In most circles this is simply taken for granted with little effort to justify the position, even though the theologians proposing it made their arguments in the late 1700's & early 1800's before the DSS were discovered.

This perspective arose, most notably in the deistic<sup>1</sup> climate of 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe.

Vaticinium ex eventu, prophecy after the fact, is a driving principle for many kinds of higher criticism.

- The argument goes like this: since there's no such thing as predictive prophecy, any *apparent* predictive prophecy is either the result of bad interpretation or it was written after the fact.
- Discuss the McKenzie article
- Discuss the concept of higher criticism (the points below are from Archer)
- Higher criticism concerns itself with the authorship, dating and circumstances surrounding some particular bible text.

Thus, it is not intrinsically hostile to the faith.

Four attitudes must accompany our examination of higher criticism:

- 1. You must think like an adult...children hold that what they want to be true must be true...adults hold that objective truth is the final authority
- 2. You must not be afraid to examine the Bible inductively
- 3. You must not begin with a chip on your shoulder about higher criticism from the start.
- 4. You must not begin with presuppositions that undermine your objectivity

"The only thing which makes higher criticism dangerous is if incorrect presuppositions are laid down as the foundation for this investigation." Gleason Archer

For example:

- If it is assumed from the start that a book is a forgery
- If it is assumed from the start that the supernatural is impossible
- If it is assumed from the start that God does not exist

Otherwise, every deduction made from these assumptions will be fatally warped by them.

Critical theory begins with the assumption that the Bible is authored by humans apart from God.

# An Historical Overview of the Arguments<sup>2</sup>

- Because of the predictions about Babylon in chs. 40-66, those portions of Isaiah must have been written during the Babylonian captivity
  - (i.e. Doederlein<sup>3</sup> after Eichhorn<sup>4</sup> the dean of the school of higher criticism and the major contributor to the JEDP theory of the Pentateuch.)
  - Wait a minute, if non-supernaturality is the basis for this division then what about Ch.13 where Babylon is predicted to be the conqueror of Judah ... Doederlein's Deutero-Isaiah<sup>5</sup> claims about the authorship of 40-66 on the basis of the Babylonian predictions do not hold up.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Deism is antagonistic to the notion of supernatural intervention and hence to the idea that Isaiah could have foretold the future

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Much of this material derives from Gleason L. Archer; see his tape #T01411 at the study center.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> 1789

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> JEDP published 1787; deutero-Isaiah in 1783

 O.K. So, all of the chapters in Isaiah I that refer to Babylon, must also have come from Deutero-Isaiah according to Ernst Rosenmueller<sup>6</sup>

### Don't let the data interfere with a perfectly fine theory

But, the whole idea of a Babylonian author for the last half of Isaiah plus any other apparently prophetic passages doesn't hold up.

The zoological, botanical and geographical references in 40-66, are not alluvial, as you would expect from a document written in Babylon - they are Syrian or Palestinian.

- Also, the work is devoid of any Chaladean words as would be expected if written in Babylon.
- O.K. then three authors worked on Isaiah, all of whom lived in and around Israel (i.e. according to Bernard Duhm<sup>7</sup> & K. Marti)<sup>8</sup>

Isaiah 1-39 written by Isaiah c. 739-680;

Deutero 40-55 written from Lebannon c. 540 BC and

Trito 56-66 was written in Jerusalem c. 450 BC

If this anti-supernaturalism is the basis for all this wrangling then what about the prophecy of Jesus in 52-53?

This was written before Jesus<sup>9</sup> so it cannot be interpreted as referring to Jesus → They say, then, that our interpretation is false OR that NT authors creatively reported biographies of Christ that matched the servant material.

Then what is the proper interpretation?

Are we so committed to anti-supernaturalism that we must deny the integrity of the whole Bible to maintain it?

#### More about this later

O.K., let's look at a passage that is indisputably written by Isaiah - Chapter 6 (esp. vv.11-13) This section makes a clear prediction about the destruction of Judah and the eventual return. It makes a prediction in 739 about an event to take place 154 years into the future.

- Vv. 11-12 say that Judah will be devastated and depopulated; something that happened over 150 years after Isaiah.
- V. 13 says literally, "but [there will] still be a tenth-part in it [i.e. the exiled people] and it will return [w<sup>e</sup>sabah] and it will be for burning [i.e. subjected to fiery trials], like a terebinth or like an oak, which in [their] felling [still have] a root-stump in them, a holy seed [shall be] its root-stump."
- *w<sup>e</sup>sabah* is held to mean "again" by higher critics meaning, "and it will again be subject to burning" thus eliminating the interpretation "it shall return" from the verb *sub* "to return"; this dampens the prediction a bit but fails to eliminate it.
- However, these analysts have failed to translate  $w^e$  sabah properly because three verses later he gives his firstborn son the name "a remnant shall return," which is what Shear-jashub means, a translation that no critic denies; where else would he come up with such a name; the same verb, *sub* is used in 6:13 and in 7:3.
- ∴ vaticinium ex eventu prophecy after the fulfillment; the driving principle in higher criticism is defeated

### Specific Authorship Arguments<sup>10</sup>

	In support of multiple authorship.		Against multiple authorship.
	Supernaturalism is preposterous.		Anti-supernaturalism is a priori
•	The Cyrus prophecies tax credibility (c.f. 41:2-5 thru 48:14)	•	This is not the only example of a name prophecy (c.f. Josiah, 3 centuries ahead, 1Ki.13:2; Bethlehem, 7 centuries ahead, Mi.5:2); The

<sup>5</sup> Doederlein (1745–1792); The 2<sup>nd</sup> Isaiah author was referred to as Deutero-Isaiah.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> 1768-1835

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> 1892; Duhm also argues that the Servant Songs 42:1-4; 49:1-6, 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12 are written by a 4<sup>th</sup> author.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Writing from 1892 to 1900 before the DSS discovery

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> The scrolls were discovered & uncovered btw. 1947 and 1956

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Much of this material derives from Gleason L. Archer; see his tape #T01411 at the study center.

<ul> <li>There is a radical change of style between chs. 1-39 and 40-66; the latter</li> <li>There is a radical change of style between chs. 1-39 and 40-66; the latter</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Light of Statistical Linguistics<sup>11</sup>, showed that the variations in Isaiah are so strong as to prove multiple authorship.</li> <li>and 40-66</li> <li>However, stylometry (the use of statistical analysis of word frequency to determine authorship) is problematic.<sup>12</sup> This does not accommodate variations in an author's writing over</li> </ul>	for multiple authors. <ul> <li>There are, indeed, some variations in language</li> </ul>
<ul> <li>Radday's <i>The Unity of Isaiah in the Light of Statistical Linguistics</i><sup>11</sup>, showed that the variations in Isaiah are so strong as to prove multiple authorship.</li> <li>throughout Isaiah and especially between 1-39 and 40-66</li> <li>However, stylometry (the use of statistical analysis of word frequency to determine authorship) is problematic.<sup>12</sup> This does not</li> </ul>	for multiple authors. <ul> <li>There are, indeed, some variations in language</li> </ul>	I Dittorongog in languago and stylo argue I Those analyses are subjective

<sup>11</sup> published in 1973

<sup>12</sup> Early use of less refined techniques yielded bad results. For example, Morton analyzed Paul's epistles, concluding that 6 different authors wrote them but the same method indicated that Joyce's Ulysses was written by 5 authors and that a completely different author had written another indisputable Joyce work (A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Read from a poem you've written and a scientific paper.

<ul> <li>Other prophets do not address their future audience, yet Isaiah does in chapters 40-55, which are set 150 years after Isaiah's death, and in chapters 56- 66 which are set 200 years after Isaiah's death.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Isaiah's perspective changes radically from the culture and time of his life to a time after his deathhe is entirely dependent upon God's revelation for the data of his writing. Also, this material is conciliatoryan effort to admonish and comfort Judah; Prophetic schools are known to exist at this time and scribes are known to work as secretaries for Bible authors (e.g. Romans and Galatians differ radically in language and style, yet no one doubts Paul's authorship b/c it is evident in the text itself that scribe was used). It is possible that Isaiah used a secretary and that some differences in style are thus accounted for; If the criteria for subdividing Isaiah is so clear, why is there so little agreement between scholars about how the book should be divided upone is left with the impression that the criticisms are highly subjective.</li> <li>This is rare but not unheard of (Ez.37-48; Dan.7-11; Zech.8-13 and shorter portions of other prophetic books).</li> </ul>
The unity of the text argues for an Isaiah school. An Isaiah school must have existed, from which Isaiah II and later an Isaiah III was authored.	<ul> <li>The unity of the text argues for a single Palestinian author.</li> <li>The only evidence for this school is the unity of Isaiah but this is what the critics are trying to prove; how can the differences be used to argue for multiple authors and the unity also be used to argue for multiple authorsit's apparent that many of these arguments are substantially post hoc;</li> <li>The entire book appears to have been written from a Palestinian perspective (40-66 are rocky, mountainous and full of Palestinian flora/fauna, yet Babylon is alluvial)</li> <li>The use of <i>Holy one of Israel</i> 13 times in chs.1- 39, 13 times in 40-66 and only 7 times in the rest of the Bible; Margalioth has shown many phrases which appear in both parts of the book but only rarely elsewhere;<sup>14</sup></li> <li>Young has shown numerous concepts that appear throughout Isaiah but rarely elsewhere;<sup>15</sup></li> <li>The unity of thought can be seen through comprehensive inductive studies<sup>16</sup></li> <li>All chapters are written in pure Hebrew w/o</li> </ul>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> *The Indivisible Isaiah*, New York: Yeshiva University, 1964.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Who wrote Isaiah?, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958, pp.58-60

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> The Book of Isaiah. Chapters 1-39, John N. Oswalt, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986, pp.17-23; specifically the central theme of the nature and destiny of the people of God; the topic of trusting God; the means by which God will satisfy his covenant promises to Abraham, Moses and David; violence 1:15 & 59:3,7; religious hypocrisy 29:13 & 58:2,4

<ul> <li>Aramaisms or Babylonian terms both of which characterize known post-exilic books;</li> <li>Isaiah's use of the prophetic perfect verb tense is a marked stylistic trait throughout the book (5:13; 8:23; 9:1-7; 10:28-31; 41:25; 45:13; 53:1-12)future events were essentially accomplished in the purposes of God.</li> <li>Idolatry is a feature of pre-exilic Judah but not post-exilic Israel, yet 40-66 is full of admonitions against idolatry<sup>17</sup></li> <li>The New Testament holds to one author See the appendix, New Testament Citations from Isaiah</li> </ul>
<ul> <li>Jewish tradition holds for one author <sup>18</sup></li> <li>Later prophets (Nahum 1:15Isa.52:7; Zeph. 2:15Isa.47:8, 10);</li> <li>see the next section entitled, Canonicity</li> <li>Septuagint, LXX, has one heading for the entire book; Josephus holds to one author;</li> <li>silence from the Qumran community about the supposed multiple authorship and</li> <li>rabbinic tradition up to the emergence of rationalistic critical approaches holds to one author.<sup>19</sup></li> </ul>

Canonicity - Should Isaiah belong in the Bible?

- 190 B.C., Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) refers to Isaiah as having comforted the people and predicted the future (Sirach 48:24; Isa.40:1/61:1,2)
- 100 B.C., Isaiah was copied by the Qumran community
- The Qumran copies and other available texts are essentially identical
- Many NT references to Isaiah.<sup>20</sup>
- Historical events in fulfillment of the predictions herein (41:21ff; 44:6f; 45:21; 46:10; 48:5f)

### An Overview of the Book

Consider using the following outline in your studies:

- God's complaint with his people
  - The Author (1:1)
  - Israel's Problem (1:2-9)
- God's Desire for Israel (1:10-20)
- God's Response to Israel's Rebellion (1:21-31)
- God's Predictions about Israel (2:1-5:30)
- God commissions Isaiah
  - Isaiah's vision and commission (6:1-13)
  - God challenges: Rely on me alone.
    - A case study: Ahaz's faith in Assyria

God will use Assyria to judge yet he should be trusted (7:1-9:6) God's standards of morality are violated by Israel (9:7-10:4) God has control of his own judgment (10:5-12:6)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> 1:29 & 57:4-5; the reference to child sacrifice is like that occurring under Manasseh (697-642 BC) (2Ki.21:6; 2Chron.33:6); the writings of Haggai, Zechariah, Ezra, Nehemiah and Malachi, written in the 500-400's BC, denounce all sorts of sins but idolatry is not one of them.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> O. T. Allis, *The Unity of Isaiah*, Presbyterian Reformed, 1950.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Rabbi ibn Ezra is the 1<sup>st</sup> known author to express doubt about the unity of Isaiah in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> See the appendix, New Testament Citations from Isaiah

God is the judge of all the nations God judges all peoples when they rebel against him (13:1-18) Babylon (13:19-14:23) Assyria (14:24-27) Philistia (14:28-32) Moab (15:1-16:14) Syria & Ephraim (17:1-11) Reprise: God is the judge of all nations (17:12-18:7) Egypt (19:1-20:6) Reprise: God's judgment upon Babylon and her allies (21:1-22:25) God is triumphant over the nations (24:1-27:13) So, it is foolish to trust the nations (28:1-34:4) Edom (34:5-35:10) A case study: Hezekiah's faith in God (36:1-39:8)

A case study. Hezekian's faith in God (36:1-39:8)

- God will restore Judah and put an end to sin. Chs. 40-48
- He will do so in the person of the 'servant.' Chs. 49-55
- The future of these redeemed will be glorious Chs. 56-66

### An Overview of Chapters 1-16

• Major themes

Judah and Israel are incorrigibly rebellious--they will not trust God. God is sovereign and will judge all rebellious nations. A remnant of Judah will return after God's judgment. A messiah will arise with features both human and God-like.

# Selected textual notes

### Chapter 1:1

- This format, "The word of the Lord/oracle/vision which came to the prophet/the prophet saw at such and such a time," is like that of all the prophets except Ezekiel, Jonah, Haggai and Zechariah.
- "Isaiah" "Yahweh saves" or "Yahweh has wrought salvation"
- "son of Amoz" Jewish tradition holds that Amoz was Uzziah's uncle (i.e. Amaziah's brother). At least, the naming of his father implies that he was from a prominent family.
- "...concerning Judah and Jerusalem" Clearly, much more is discussed but the context and object of Isaiah's ministry was Judah.

### Chapter 6

- Why is chapter six where it is? At least two possibilities present themselves:
  - 1. The passages are recorded chronologically and this is when God's commission occurred in the narrative.
    - Thus, the earlier chapters reflect earlier revelations of Isaiah prior to his vision.
  - The passages are not, necessarily, recorded chronologically.
     Thus, the vision is placed after the first five chapters for literary and logical reas
    - Thus, the vision is placed after the first five chapters for literary and logical reasons (i.e. to set up the context for Isaiah's commission.)

### Chapter 7:14-17

 Isaiah challenges Ahaz to trust God rather than Assyria by permitting him to name a sign that Isaiah's revelation from God is trustworthy.

Ahaz is already committed and in false piety, says he will not put God to the test.

- "If a man will not believe God, he will believe anything." John Wesley
- Ahaz's unbelief is so strong he will not permit proof of its falseness.
- House of David....the Lord himself will give <u>you</u> a sign. "you" is plural until verse 16 when Ahaz himself is addressed.
- "sign" a signal with supernatural elements; this sign touches on the Davidic covenant how it will be fulfilled.
- alma = maid; young woman; always means an unmarried woman who is chaste;

b<sup>e</sup>tulah = a technical term for a young woman who's never had sexual relations (c.f. Gen.24:16 referring to Rebekah, although she is also termed *alma*) but it is occasionally used of a married woman (Joel 1:18; Deut.22: );

Therefore, the word used here is essentially synonymous with virgin, though less precise; Note: it is the only term that would fit a double reference b/c Isaiah's bride was a virgin at the time

of the prophecy and Mary was a virgin until sometime after Christ was born.

- Young says that in cognate languages (e.g. Ugaritic, Syriac and Arabic) alma is used to mean virgin and in fact, the earliest LXX translates it as *parthenos* the definitive Greek word for virgin.
- Rabbinic commentary on this passage is interesting:
  - Rasheeth says, "Behold the almah...the girl will be one who has never had intercourse"
  - In the Talmud, Rabbi Humni in the name of Rabbi Joshua writes, "This is messiah of whom it is said, this day I have begotten you"
- A real problem with this passage is its connection with Ahaz's time when Matthew indicates it refers to Christ.

Is this a double-reference?<sup>21</sup>

The early reference may be to Mahershalalhashbaz (8:1-4).

It may be a reference to the time that would pass until Syria/Israel were destroyed

3-12 years depending on whether this child would not yet have reached an age of intellectual discernment (2-3 years or 732 when Damascus was destroyed by Assyria) OR moral discernment (12 years, 722 when Israel fell to Assyria);

#### Double reference:

If this is a double reference then, in the near term, the virgin  $(alma)^{22}$  seems to refer to either the mother of Hezekiah (according to Walter Kaiser) or Mahershalahashbaz (according to Oswalt). The latter seems more likely because of the reference in 8:3 to "drew near," an expression that means to have first intercourse with a wife, indicating the prophetess was a virgin. It's proximity to the prediction in 7:14 and the required prophetic timeline are also relevant.<sup>23</sup>

In the far term this appears, according to NT biographers of Jesus to refer to Christ, born of a virgin.

### Motif fulfillment:

Another point to consider is that the term Immanuel appears either as a name or translated as 'god with us' at several points in this larger narrative surrounding & including the 'sign' narrative. Isaiah 7:14-15 the *alma* prophecy has a clear meaning for the immediate audience. Before a few years are up, God will be with Judah, Israel & Syria in discipline & judgment. But, we have clues in the text around the prophecy that there is more to this prophecy than meets the eye.

- Isaiah doesn't name the son of his *alma* Immanuel but Mahershalalhashbaz; a name referring to God's prediction that he would use Assyria to judge Israel/Aram and Judah.
- Immanuel is associated with God's discipline of Syria, Israel & Judah in ch.7; but then the expression 'god with us' (8:10) is tied to the experience of that discipline by Judah and the theme continues right through chapter 9 when it is said that Israel will produce the messiah who, amongst other things, will be 'God with Israel' (9:3,6).
- This theme of God being amongst His people is very old having begun in Noah's prophecy over Shem that God would dwell in his tents (Genesis 9:27; Shem being the progenitor of the Semites); continuing through the Exodus narrative (God desiring but being unable to dwell with Israel b/c of their sin but being with them in the pillar of cloud & fire and in the most holy place of the tabernacle and later the temple) right up to the prophecy of Immanuel in Isaiah that finds it's culmination in Messiah.

No wonder, then, that Matthew saw the entire motif (i.e. of God living amongst His people) resonating with the advent of Jesus and thus could say that Jesus filled to overflowing not just a particular prediction but the entire ancient prophecy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> The first referent (Mahershalalhashbaz) is the **type** the second referent is the **anti-type** (Christ)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> alma is the only term that would fit a double reference b/c Isaiah's bride was a virgin at the time of the prophecy and Mary was a virgin until sometime after Christ was born

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> 3-12 years depending on whether this child would not yet have reached an age of intellectual discernment (2-3 years or 732 when Damascus was destroyed by Assyria) OR moral discernment (12 years, 722 when Israel fell to Assyria);

This is probably a good time to explain *motif fulfillment*.

- Sometimes a passage is difficult to interpret, particularly if it appears to have two meanings (e.g. Hosea or Immanuel).
- Double-meaning interpretation can become very subjective; but we're clearly caught in a dilemma if we go with single interpretation every time too.
- 2 points need to be made first:
  - 1. 'fulfill' has the meaning of filled up or completed
  - 2. Bible authors frequently cite a passage in order to refer to the larger context of the passage as well
- Some prophetic passages have a much more profound meaning than we typically understand them to have
- In the case of Isaiah 7:14-15 the *alma* prophecy has a clear meaning for the immediate audience...God will be sovereign over the nations...Judah needs to respond to God's authority. Immanuel → Sovereignty of God
- But, we have clues in the text around the prophecy that there is more to this prophecy than meets the eye.
  - Isaiah doesn't name the son of his *alma* Immanuel but Mahershalalhashbaz; a name referring to God's prediction that he would use Assyria to judge Israel/Aram and discipline Judah...God's sovereignty is in the name but the name itself doesn't conform to the prophecy.
  - Yet in that very chapter describing the discipline of Judah Israel is equated with Immanuel, then later 'God is with us' in the discipline
  - The theme continues right through chapter 9 when it is said that Israel will produce the messiah who, amongst other things, will be God with Israel.
  - Each time Immanuel or 'God with us' is mentioned the motif of God's sovereignty accompanies it but the whole passage flows to the ultimate satisfaction of the prediction in the prediction of the messiah.
  - Thus, when Matthew 1:23 says that Mary's situation fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah we can completely agree...how much more could anyone have filled-to-overflowing the motif of the sovereignty of God manifest in the messiah.
    - This doesn't do violence to the proximate meaning of the prophecy...the proximate prophecy creates a ripple that amplifies the sovereignty of God in the past and anticipates his final sovereignty in the person of the messiah...
    - Matthew wasn't saying the Isaiah prophecy was a prediction of the virgin birth of Christ or a double reference to Christ and Mahershalalhashbas but a much more profound prediction of the sovereignty of God in Isaiah's time and for all time through the messiah.

### Isaiah 9:6 - How can the Son of God be the Eternal Father?

- Archer holds that the Hebrew term <sup>a</sup>bi-ad should properly be translated, "Father of Eternity," which is what it literally means, rather than Eternal Father;
- It could be translated either way but the context of describing a son suggests the former rather than the latter; also, this title points to the messiah's role as creator as seen in Jn.1:3.

### Isaiah 14:12 - Who is this passage referring to?

- *Helel* lit. "shining one"; rendered as "Dawn-bringer" by the LXX; it could refer to a king or to a kingdom (e.g. Nebuchadnezzar/Tiglath-Pileser or Babylon/Assyria);
- "King of Babylon" is a title that Assyrian kings took for themselves (e.g. Sauron, Sennacherib and Tiglath-pileser)
- It cannot be Satan b/c of vv.16, 17, 21 etc. but it could be a double reference to Satan and his human representatives in their shared arrogance and pride.

#### Homework assignment

- Read and annotate Isaiah 17-39.
- Memorize 26:3-4; 30:18-21

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- Prepare answers for the following:
  1. Who is Immanuel?
  2. List the reasons why is Chapter 14 not about Satan is about Satan? Which is the stronger argument?
  - 3. What do chapters 17-39 show you about your character and God's?