

## Isaiah

### ISAIAH ī-zā'ə

Of all the prophets of Israel, Isaiah stands out as incomparably the greatest. Writing with majestic grandeur, this gifted eighth-century B.C. author exalts the grace of God in salvation. For this, if for no other reason, he has well been called “the evangelical prophet.”

#### I. Name

The Heb *yēša'yāhū* was the form current in the 8th cent B.C., the shorter variant *yēša'yā* becoming more popular subsequently, and occurring in the fifth-century-B.C. Elephantine papyri. Greek and Latin equivalents were *Ēsaia*s and *Isaia*e respectively. Thus the AV uses “Esay” in 2 Esd. 2:18; Sir. 48:22, and “Esaias” in the NT (Mt. 3:3; 4:14; etc.). The name means “Yahweh is salvation,” and is thus similar to names such as Joshua, Elisha, and Jesus.

#### II. Personal History

Little is known about the man himself. He is said to have been the son of Amoz (not the contemporary prophet Amos), and he exercised his ministry in and around Jerusalem. Inasmuch as he had ready access to kings (cf. 7:3), it has been thought that he was of royal descent. By tradition he was the cousin of King Uzziah (791/90–740/39 B.C.). Whether this was actually the case or not, it must be remembered that it was the custom in ancient times for prophets to move freely in court circles and to associate with monarchs, sometimes on a friendly basis (cf. 1 K. 19:15f) and sometimes not (cf. 2 Ch. 18:4–27). In the same way some prophets exhibited a decided interest in temple worship and its implications for national destiny, and thus it would not have been unusual for Isaiah to have had the kind of contact with the Jerusalem temple implied in the vision that resulted in his call, or the personal friendship with a priest that 8:2 seems to indicate.

As appears from 8:3 he was married, and designated his wife “the prophetess,” perhaps because she also prophesied. He had two sons, who each bore a symbolic name. One of these, Shear-jashub (“a remnant shall return”), held out the promise that a faithful minority would survive the collapse of national life (7:3), while the other, Maher-shalal-hash-baz (“hasten booty, speed spoil”), symbolized Assyria’s mad desire for conquest (8:3). Like Elijah before him, Isaiah normally would have been clad in a garment of sackcloth, and would have worn sandals. This customary prophetic garb was discarded for three years, however, when in obedience to God’s command and as a means of reinforcing his statements about the pointlessness of Judah’s reliance on Egypt against Assyria, Isaiah walked about Jerusalem wearing only a loincloth (Isa. 20:2–6). No doubt his behavior must have appeared somewhat bizarre in the eyes of his fellow Judeans, and may have led some of them to describe him in terms of the “mad fellow” epithet used in 2 K. 9:11 of the young prophet sent to anoint Jehu. Precisely how long Isaiah functioned as prophet, evangelist, and adviser to the royal court is unknown. His last appearance that can be dated with reasonable certainty was at the time of Sennacherib’s campaign in 701 B.C. If there was factual evidence to show that Sennacherib had launched a second attack against Jerusalem, this date could be lowered to ca 688 B.C. There is no a priori reason why Isaiah should not have survived into Manasseh’s reign, since the absence of that king’s name from the superscription of the prophecy (1:1) need only mean that Isaiah played a modest public role at the end of his life. The date of his death, however, must remain entirely conjectural.

#### III. Call

From the superscription it is legitimate to conclude that Isaiah’s ministry must have involved at least a portion of the reign of Uzziah, perhaps during the time of his leprosy when Jotham acted as co-regent and subsequently as king (2 K. 15:5), since he

received visions at that time. Such an indication that Isaiah was already active as a prophet challenges the popular view that he received his call in connection with the events mentioned in ch 6. Instead, it would seem to indicate that Isaiah experienced on that occasion a reconsecration or rededication to his prophetic task, which was in effect to warn his contemporaries of impending disaster and divine judgment (6:9–13), and at the same time to promise that redemption would be the lot of a repentant remnant (6:13). (Or ch 6 may describe a calling to speak to the people, whereas formerly he had spoken to the king.) Isaiah in his vision found himself in the temple, where he received the symbolical assurance of the forgiveness of his sins and a commission to preach to his own people for the Lord. His remarkable readiness to serve in this capacity appeared in his eager response to the commission, which proved to be one whose discharge resulted in the hardening of the will of the nation to which he had been sent. The entire ministry of Isaiah was one of faithful fulfillment of his responsibilities as a prophet of God. His horizons, both political and spiritual, were virtually unbounded, and he was in every sense of the term the universal prophet of Israel.

#### IV. Literary Genius and Style

For versatility of expression and brilliance of imagery Isaiah had no superior, not even a rival. His style marks the climax of Hebrew literary art. Epigrams and metaphors, particularly of flood, storm, and sound (1:13; 5:18, 22; 8:8; 10:22; 28:17, 20; 30:28, 30), interrogation and dialogue (6:8; 10:8f), antithesis and alliteration (1:18; 3:24; 17:10, 12), hyperbole and parable (2:7; 5:1–7; 28:23–29), even paronomasia, or play upon words (5:7; 7:9), characterize Isaiah's book as the great masterpiece of Hebrew literature. He is also famous for his richness of vocabulary and synonyms. For example, Ezekiel uses 1535 words; Jeremiah, 1653; the psalmists 2170; while Isaiah uses 2186. Isaiah was also an

orator: Jerome likened him to Demosthenes; and a poet: he frequently elaborates his messages in rhythmic or poetic style (12:1–6; 25:1–5; 26:1–12; 38:10–20; 42:1–4; 49:1–9; 50:4–9; 52:13–53:12; 60–62; 66:5–24); and in several instances slips into elegiac rhythm, e.g., in 37:22–29 there is a fine taunting poem on Sennacherib, and in 14:4–23 another on the king of Babylon.

#### V. Traditions Concerning His Martyrdom

Nothing definite or historical is known concerning the prophet's end. Toward the close of the 2nd cent A.D., however, there was a tradition to the effect that he suffered martyrdom in the heathen reaction that occurred under King Manasseh, because of certain speeches concerning God and the Holy City that his contemporaries alleged were contrary to the law. Indeed the Mishnah explicitly states that Manasseh slew him. Justin Martyr also (A.D. 150), in his controversial dialogue with the Jew Trypho, reproaches the Jews with this accusation, "whom ye sawed asunder with a wooden saw"; this tradition is further confirmed by a Jewish apocalypse of the 2nd cent A.D., *Ascension of Isaiah*, and mentioned by Epiphanius in the 4th century. It is barely possible that there is an allusion to his martyrdom in He. 11:37, which reads, "They were stoned, they were sawn in two," but this is by no means certain. In any case Isaiah probably survived the great catastrophe of the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib in 701 B.C., and possibly also the death of Hezekiah in 699 B.C., for in 2 Ch. 32:32 it is stated that Isaiah wrote a biography of King Hezekiah. If so, his prophetic activity extended over a period of more than forty years, ending presumably in the early part of Manasseh's reign (687/6–642/1 B.C.), and certainly during the period of his co-regency (696/5–687/6 B.C.).

#### VI. Historical Background

According to the title of his book (1:1f), Isaiah prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. He dates his

inaugural vision (6:1) in the year of Uzziah's death, which was approximately 740 B.C. This marks, therefore, the beginning of his prophetic ministry. And we know that he was still active as late as the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib in 701 B.C. Hence the minimum period of his activity as a prophet was from 740 to 701 B.C. As a young man Isaiah witnessed the rapid development of Judah into a strong commercial and military state; for under Uzziah Judah attained a degree of prosperity and strength not enjoyed since the days of Solomon. Walls, towers, fortifications, a large standing army, a port for commerce on the Red Sea, increased inland trade, tribute from the Ammonites, success in war with the Philistines and the Arabians — all these became Judah's during Uzziah's long and prosperous reign of approximately fifty-two years, this period of time including his co-regency from 791/90 B.C. with his father Amaziah (796–767 B.C.). But along with power and wealth came also avarice, oppression, religious formality, and corruption. The temple revenues indeed were greatly increased, but religion and life were too frequently dissociated; the nation's progress was altogether material. During the reign of Jotham (740/39–732/1 B.C.), who for several years was probably associated with his father as co-regent, a new power began to appear over the eastern horizon. The Assyrians, with whom Ahab had come in contact at the Battle of Qarqar in 853 B.C., and to whom Jehu had paid tribute in 841 B.C., began to manifest anew their characteristic lust of conquest. Tiglathpileser III (called "Pul" in 2 K. 15:19), who reigned over Assyria from 745 to 727 B.C., turned his attention westward, and ca 740 B.C. reduced Arpad, Calno, Carchemish, Hamath, and Damascus, causing them to pay tribute. His presence in the West led Pekah king of Israel and Rezin king of Damascus to form an alliance in order to resist further encroachment on the part of Assyria. When Ahaz refused to join their confederacy they resolved to dethrone him and set in his stead the son of Tabeel upon the throne of David (2 K. 16:5; Isa. 7:6). The struggle that ensued is commonly known as the

Syro-Ephraimitic war (734 B.C.) — one of the great events in Isaiah's period. Ahaz in panic sent to Tiglath-pileser for help (2 K. 16:7), who of course responded with alacrity. The result was that the great Assyrian warrior sacked Gaza, carried all of Galilee and Gilead into captivity (734), and finally took Damascus (732 B.C.). Ahaz was forced to pay dearly for his protection and Judah was brought very low (2 K. 15:29; 16:7–9; 2 Ch. 28:19; Isa. 7:1). The religious as well as the political effect of Ahaz' policy was decidedly baneful. To please Tiglath-pileser, Ahaz went to Damascus to join in the celebration of his victories, and while there saw a Syrian altar, a pattern of which he sent to Jerusalem and had a copy set up in the temple in place of the brazen altar of Solomon. Thus Ahaz, with all the influence of a king, sponsored idolatry in Jerusalem, even causing his sons to pass through the fire (2 K. 16:10–16; 2 Ch. 28:3).

Hezekiah succeeded Ahaz, beginning to rule at the age of twenty-five as co-regent (729 B.C.) and reigning until his death in 687/6 B.C. Isaiah was at least fifteen years his senior. The young king inherited from his father a heavy burden. The splendor of the reigns of Uzziah and Jotham was rapidly fading before the ever menacing and avaricious Assyrians. Hezekiah began his reign with many reforms. "He removed the high places, and broke the pillars, and cut down the Asherah" (2 K. 18:4, 22). He even invited the surviving remnant of Israel to join in celebrating the Passover (2 Ch. 30:1). But Israel's end was drawing near. Hoshea, the vacillating puppet-king of Israel (732/1–723/2 B.C.), encouraged by Egypt, refused to continue to pay Assyria his annual tribute (2 K. 17:4); whereupon Shalmaneser IV, who had succeeded Tiglath-pileser, promptly appeared before the gates of Samaria in 724 B.C., and for nearly three years besieged the city (2 K. 17:5). Finally, the city was captured by Sargon II (or by Shalmaneser, but claimed by Sargon), who succeeded Shalmaneser IV in 722 B.C., 27,292 of Israel's choicest people (according to Sargon's own description) were deported to Assyria, and colonists were brought from Babylon and other

adjacent districts and placed in the cities of Samaria (2 K. 17:6, 24). Thus the kingdom of Israel passed into oblivion, and Judah was left exposed to the direct ravages, political and religious, of her Assyro-Babylonian neighbors. In fact Judah itself barely escaped destruction by promising heavy tribute. This was the second great political crisis during Isaiah's ministry.

Other crises were soon to follow. One was the desperate illness of King Hezekiah, who faced certain death ca 714 B.C., though the chronology presents some difficulties. Being childless, he was seriously concerned for the future of the Davidic dynasty. He resorted to prayer, however, and God graciously extended his life fifteen years (2 K. 20; Isa. 38). His illness occurred during the period of Babylon's independence under Merodach-baladan, the ever ambitious, irresistible, and uncompromising enemy of Assyria, who for twelve years (722–710 B.C.) maintained independent supremacy over Babylon. Taking advantage of Hezekiah's wonderful cure, Merodach seized the opportunity, sending an embassy to Jerusalem to congratulate him on his recovery (712 B.C.), and at the same time probably sought to form an alliance with Judah to resist Assyrian supremacy (2 K. 20:12–15; Isa. 39). Nothing, however, came of the alliance, for the following year Sargon's army reappeared in Philistia in order to discipline Ashdod for conspiracy with the king of Egypt (711 B.C.).

The greatest crisis was yet to come. Its story is as follows: Judah and her neighbors groaned more and more under the heavy exactions of Assyria. Accordingly, when Sargon was assassinated and Sennacherib came to the throne in 705 B.C., rebellion broke out on all sides. Merodach-baladan, who had been expelled by Sargon in 709 B.C., again took Babylon and held it for at least six months in 703 B.C. Hezekiah, who was encouraged by Egypt and all Philistia, except Padi of Ekron, the puppet-king of Sargon, refused to continue to pay Assyria tribute (2 K. 18:7). Meanwhile a strong pro-Egypt party had sprung up in

Jerusalem. In view of all these circumstances, Sennacherib in 701 B.C. marched westward with a vast army, sweeping everything before him. Tyre was invested though not taken; on the other hand, Joppa, Eltekeh, Ekron, Ashkelon, Ammon, Moab, and Edom all promptly yielded to his demands. Hezekiah was panic stricken and hastened to bring rich tribute, stripping even the temple and the palace of their treasures to do so (2 K. 18:13–16). But Sennacherib was not satisfied. He overran Judah, capturing, as he tells us in his inscription, forty-six walled towns and smaller villages without number, carrying 200,150 of Judah's population into captivity to Assyria, and demanding as tribute eight hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold (a talent equaled about 30 kilograms, or 65 pounds); he took also, he claims, Hezekiah's daughters and palace women, seized his male and female singers, and carried away enormous spoil.

But the end was not yet. Sennacherib himself, with the bulk of the army, halted in Philistia to reduce Lachish; thence he sent a strong detachment under his commander-in-chief, the Rabshakeh, to besiege Jerusalem (2 K. 18:17–19:8; Isa. 36:2–37:8). He describes this blockade in his own inscription: "I shut up Hezekiah in Jerusalem like a bird in a cage." The Rabshakeh, however, failed to capture the city and returned to Sennacherib, who meanwhile had completely conquered Lachish, and was now warring against Libnah. A second expedition against Jerusalem was planned, but hearing that Tirhakah (at that time the commander-in-chief of Egypt's forces and only afterward "king of Ethiopia") was approaching, Sennacherib was forced to content himself with sending messengers with a letter to Hezekiah, demanding immediate surrender of the city (2 K. 19:9ff; Isa. 37:9ff). Hezekiah, however, through Isaiah's influence held out; and in due time, though Sennacherib disposed of Tirhakah's army without difficulty, his immense host in some mysterious way — by plague or otherwise — was suddenly smitten, and the great Assyrian conqueror was forced to return to Nineveh, possibly because Merodach-

baladan had again appeared in Babylonia. Sennacherib never again returned to Palestine, so far as we know, during the subsequent twenty years of his reign, though he did make an independent expedition into north Arabia (691–689 B.C.). This invasion of Judah by Sennacherib in 701 B.C. was the great political event in Isaiah's ministry. Had it not been for the prophet's statesmanship, Jerusalem might have capitulated. Isaiah had at this time been preaching forty years. How much longer he labored is not known.

## VII. Analysis and Contents

There are six general divisions of the book: (1) chs 1–12, prophecies concerning Judah and Jerusalem, closing with promises of restoration and a psalm of thanksgiving; (2) chs 13–23, oracles of judgment and salvation, for the most part concerning those foreign nations whose fortunes affected Judah and Jerusalem; (3) chs 24–27, the Lord's world-judgment in the redemption of Israel; (4) chs 28–35, a cycle of prophetic warnings against alliance with Egypt, closing with a prophecy concerning Edom and a promise of Israel's ransom; (5) chs 36–39, history, prophecy, and song intermingled, serving both as an appendix to chs 1–35 and as an introduction to chs 40–66; (6) chs 40–66, prophecies of comfort and salvation, and also of the future glory awaiting Israel.

By examining in detail these several divisions we can trace better the prophet's thought. Thus, chs 1–12 reveal Judah's social sins (chs 1–6) and its political entanglements (chs 7–12); ch 1 is an introduction, in which the prophet strikes the chief notes of his entire book: thoughtlessness (vv 2–9), formalism in worship (vv 10–17), pardon (vv 18–23), and judgment (vv 24–31). Chapters 2–4 contain three distinct pictures of Zion: (a) its exaltation (2:2–4), (b) its present idolatry (2:5–4:1), and (c) its eventual purification (4:2–6). Chapter 5 contains an arraignment of Judah and Jerusalem, composed of three parts: (a) a parable of the Lord's vineyard (vv 1–7); (b) a series of six woes pronounced against

insatiable greed (vv 8–10), dissipation (vv 11–17), daring defiance against the Lord (vv 18f), confusion of moral distinctions (v 20), political self-conceit (v 21), and misdirected heroism (vv 22f); and (c) an announcement of imminent judgment. The Assyrian is on the way and there will be no escape (vv 24–30). Chapter 6 recounts the prophet's inaugural vision and commission. It is really an apologetic, standing as it does after the prophet's denunciations of his contemporaries. When they tacitly object to his message of threatening and disaster, he is able to reply that, having pronounced "woe" upon himself in the year that King Uzziah died, he had the authority to pronounce woe upon them (6:5). Plainly Isaiah tells them that Judah's sins are hopeless. They are becoming spiritually insensible. They have eyes but they cannot see. Only judgment can avail: "the righteous judgment of a forgotten God" awaits them. A "holy seed," however, still existed in Israel's stock (6:13).

In chs 7–12, Isaiah appears in the role of a practical statesman. He warns Ahaz against political entanglements with Assyria. The section 7:1–9:7 (MT 6) is a prophecy of Immanuel, history and prediction being intermingled. It describes the Syro-Ephraimitic uprising ca 734 B.C. when Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Damascus, in attempting to defend themselves against the Assyrians, demanded that Ahaz of Jerusalem should become their ally. But Ahaz preferred the friendship of Assyria, and refused to enter into alliance with them. In order to defend himself, he applied to Assyria for assistance, sending ambassadors with many precious treasures, both royal and sacred, to bribe Tiglath-pileser. It was at this juncture that Isaiah, at the Lord's bidding, expostulated with Ahaz concerning the fatal step he was about to take, and as a practical statesman warned Ahaz, "the king of No-Faith," that the only path of safety lay in loyalty to the Lord and avoidance of foreign alliances; that "God is with us" for salvation; and that no "conspiracy" could possibly be successful unless God too was against them. When, however, the prophet's message of promise and

salvation found no welcome, he committed it to his disciples, bound up and sealed for future use, assuring his hearers that to them a child was born and a son was given, in whose day the empire of David would be established upon a basis of justice and righteousness. The messianic scion was the ground of the prophet's hope. This hope, though unprecedented, he thus early in his ministry committed, written and sealed, to his inner circle of "disciples." See IMMANUEL.

The section 9:8 (MT 7)–10:4 contains an announcement to Israel of accumulated wrath and impending ruin, with a refrain (9:12, 17, 21 [MT 11,16, 20]; 10:4). Here, in an artistic poem composed of four strophes, the prophet describes the great calamities that the Lord has sent down upon Israel but that have gone unheeded: foreign invasion (9:8–12), defeat in battle (9:13–17), anarchy (9:18–21), and impending captivity (10:1–4). Yet the Lord's judgments have been ignored: "For all this his anger is not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still." Divine discipline has failed; only judgment remains.

In 10:5–34, Assyria is declared to be an instrument of the Lord, the rod of the Lord's anger. Chapters 11–12 predict Israel's return from exile, including a vision of the Messiah's reign of ideal peace. For Isaiah's vision of the nation's future reached far beyond mere exile. To him the downfall of Assyria was the signal for the commencement of a new era in Israel's history. Assyria has no future, its downfall is fatal; Judah has a future, its calamities are only disciplinary. An ideal Prince will be raised up in whose advent all nature will rejoice, even dumb animals (11:1–10). A second great exodus will take place, for the Lord will set His hand again "a second time" to recover the remnant of His people "from the four corners of the earth" (11:11f). In that day, "Ephraim shall not be jealous of Judah, and Judah shall not harass Ephraim" (11:13). On the contrary, the reunited nation, redeemed and occupying their rightful territory (11:14–16), shall sing a hymn of thanksgiving, proclaiming the salvation of the Lord to all the earth (ch 12).

Chapters 13–23 contain oracles of judgment and salvation, for the most part concerning those foreign nations whose fortunes affected Judah and Jerusalem. They are grouped together by the editor, as similar foreign oracles are in Jer. 46–51 and Ezk. 25–32. Isaiah's horizon was worldwide. First among the foreign prophecies stands the oracle concerning Babylon (13:1–14:23), in which he predicts the utter destruction of the city (13:2–22), and sings a dirge or taunt-song over its fallen king (14:4–23). The king alluded to is almost beyond doubt an Assyrian (not a Babylonian) monarch of the 8th cent; the brief prophecy immediately following in 14:24–27 concerning Assyria tacitly confirms this interpretation. Another brief oracle concerning Babylon (21:1–10) describes the city's fall as imminent. Both oracles stand or fall together as genuine prophecies of Isaiah. Both seem to have been written in Jerusalem (13:2; 21:9, 10). It cannot be said that either is unrelated in thought and language to Isaiah's age (14:13; 21:2); each foretells the doom to fall on Babylon (13:19; 21:9) at the hands of the Medes (13:17; 21:2); and each describes the Israelites as already in exile — but not necessarily *all* Israel.

The section 14:24–27 tells of the certain destruction of the Assyrian.

The passage 14:28–32 is an oracle concerning Philistia.

Chapters 15–16 are ancient oracles against Moab, whose dirgelike meter resembles that of chs 13–14. These oracles consist of two separate prophecies belonging to two different periods in Isaiah's ministry (16:13f). The three points of particular interest in the oracles are: (1) the prophet's tender sympathy for Moab in her affliction (15:5; 16:11). As Delitzsch says, "There is no prophecy in the book of Isaiah in which the heart of the prophet is so painfully affected by what his mind sees, and his mouth is obliged to prophesy." (2) Moab's pathetic appeal for shelter from her foes; particularly the ground on which she urges it, namely, the messianic hope that the Davidic dynasty shall

always stand and be able to repulse its foes (16:5). The prophecy is an echo of 9:5–7. (3) The promise that a remnant of Moab, though small, shall be saved (16:14). The prophet predicts that Moab, wearied of prayer to CHEMOSH in the high places, will seek the living God (v 12).

The passage 17:1–11 is an oracle concerning Damascus and Israel, in which Isaiah predicts the fate of the two allies — Syria and Ephraim — in the Syro-Ephraimitic war of 734 B.C., with a promise that only a scanty remnant will survive (17:6). In 17:12–14, the prophet boldly announces the complete annihilation of Judah's unnamed foes — the Assyrians.

Chapter 18 describes ETHIOPIA as in great excitement, sending ambassadors here and there — possibly all the way to Jerusalem — ostensibly seeking aid in making preparations for war. Assyria had already taken Damascus (732 B.C.) and Samaria (722 B.C.), and consequently Egypt and Ethiopia were in fear of invasion. Isaiah bids the ambassadors to return home and quietly watch the Lord thwart Assyria's confident attempt to subjugate Judah; and he adds that when the Ethiopians have seen God's hand in the coming deliverance of Judah and Jerusalem (701 B.C.), they will bring a present to the Lord to His abode in Mt. Zion.

Chapter 19, which is an oracle concerning Egypt, contains both a threat (vv 1–17) and a promise (vv 18–25), and is one of Isaiah's most remarkable foreign messages. Egypt is smitten and thereby led to abandon its idols for the worship of the Lord (vv 19–22). Still more remarkable, it is prophesied that in that day Egypt and Assyria will join with Judah in a triple alliance of common worship to the Lord and of blessing to others (vv 23–25). Isaiah's missionary outlook here is remarkable.

Chapter 20 describes Sargon's march against Egypt and Ethiopia, containing a brief symbolic prediction of Assyria's victory over Egypt and Ethiopia. By donning a captive's garb for three years, Isaiah attempts to teach the citizens of Jerusalem that the siege of Ashdod was but a means to an end in Sargon's plan of campaign,

and that it was sheer folly for the Egyptian party in Jerusalem, who were ever urging reliance upon Egypt, to look in that direction for help. In 21:11f is a brief oracle concerning Seir or Edom, "the only gentle utterance in the OT upon Israel's hereditary foe." Edom is in great anxiety. The prophet's answer is disappointing, though its tone is sympathetic. In 21:13–17 is a brief oracle concerning Arabia. It contains a sympathetic appeal to the Temanites to give bread and water to the caravans of Dedan, who have been driven by war from their usual route of travel.

Chapter 22 concerns the foreign temper within the theocracy. It is composed of two parts: (1) an oracle "of the valley of vision," i.e., Jerusalem (vv 1–14); and (2) a tirade against Shebna, the steward of the palace. Isaiah pauses, as it were, in his series of warnings to foreign nations to rebuke the foreign temper of the frivolous inhabitants of Jerusalem, and in particular Shebna, a high official in the government. The reckless and God-ignoring citizens of the capital are pictured as indulging themselves in hilarious eating and drinking, when the enemy is at that very moment standing before the gates of the city. Shebna, on the other hand, seems to have been an ostentatious foreigner, perhaps a Syrian by birth, quite possibly one of the Egyptian party, whose policy was antagonistic to that of Isaiah and the king. Isaiah's prediction of Shebna's fall was evidently fulfilled (36:3; 37:2).

Chapter 23 concerns Tyre. In this oracle Isaiah predicts that Tyre shall be laid waste (v 1), its commercial glory humbled (v 9), its colonies made independent (v 10), and Tyre itself forgotten for "seventy years" (v 15); but "after the end of seventy years," its trade will revive, its business prosperity will return, and it will dedicate its gains in merchandise as holy to the Lord (v 18).

The third great section of the book of Isaiah embraces chs 24–27, which tell of the Lord's world-judgment, issuing in the redemption of Israel. These prophecies are closely related to chs 13–23. They express the same tender

emotion as that already observed in 15:5; 16:11, and sum up as in one grand finale the prophet's oracles to Israel's neighbors. For religious importance they stand second to none in the book of Isaiah, teaching the necessity of divine discipline and the glorious redemption awaiting the faithful in Israel. They are a spiritual commentary on the great Assyrian crisis of the 8th cent; they are messages of salvation intended not for declamation but for meditation, and were probably addressed more particularly to the prophet's inner circle of "disciples" (8:16). These chapters partake of the nature of apocalypse. Strictly speaking, however, they are prophecy, not apocalypse. No one ascends into heaven or talks with an angel, as in Dnl. 7 and Rev. 4. They are apocalypse only in the sense that certain things are predicted as sure to come to pass Isaiah was fond of this kind of prophecy. He frequently lifts his reader out of the sphere of mere history to paint pictures of the distant future (2:2-4; 4:2-6; 11:6-16; 30:27-33).

In ch 24 the prophet announces a general judgment of the earth (i.e., the land of Judah), and of "the city" (collective for Judah's towns), after which will dawn a better day (vv 1-15). The prophet fancies he hears songs of deliverance, but alas! they are premature; more judgment must follow. In ch 25 the prophet transports himself to the period after the Assyrian catastrophe and, identifying himself with the redeemed, puts into their mouths songs of praise and thanksgiving for their deliverance. Verses 6-8 describe the Lord's bountiful banquet on Mt. Zion to all nations, who, in keeping with 2:2-4, come up to Jerusalem to celebrate "a feast of fat things," rich and marrowy. While the people are present at the banquet, the Lord graciously removes their spiritual blindness so that they behold Him as the true dispenser of life and grace. He also abolishes war (cf. 2:4), and its sad accompaniment, "tears," so that "the earth" (i.e., the land of Judah) is no longer the battlefield of the nations, but the blessed abode of the redeemed, living in peace and happiness. The prophet's aim is not political but religious.

In 26:1-19 Judah sings a song over Jerusalem, the impregnable city of God. The prophet, taking again his stand with the redeemed remnant of the nation, vividly portrays their thankful trust in the Lord, who has been to them a veritable "everlasting rock" (26:4). With hope he joyfully exclaims, Let the Lord's dead ones live! Let Israel's dead bodies arise! The Lord will bring life from the dead! (v 19). This is the first clear statement of the resurrection in the OT. But it is national and restricted to Israel (cf. v 14), and is merely Isaiah's method of expressing a hope of the return of Israel's faithful ones from captivity (cf. Hos. 6:2; Ezk. 37:1-14; Dnl. 12:2).

In 26:20-27:13 the prophet shows that Israel's chastisements are temporary. He begins by exhorting his own people, his disciples, to continue a little longer in the solitude of prayer, till God's wrath has shattered the world-powers (26:20-27:1). He next predicts that the true vineyard of the Lord will henceforth be safely guarded against the briars and thorns of foreign invasion (27:2-6). And then, after showing that the Lord's chastisements of Israel were light compared with His judgments upon other nations (27:7-11), he promises that if Israel will only repent, the Lord will spare no pains to gather "one by one" the remnant of His people from Assyria and Egypt (cf. 11:11); and together they shall once more worship the Lord in the holy mountain at Jerusalem (27:12f).

The prophet's fundamental standpoint in chs 24-27 is the same as that of 2:2-4 and chs 13-23. Yet the prophet not infrequently throws himself forward into the remote future, oscillating between his own times and those of Israel's restoration. It is especially noteworthy how he sustains himself in a long and continued transportation of himself to the period of Israel's redemption. He even studies to identify himself with the new Israel that will emerge out of the present chaos of political events. His visions of Israel's redemption carry him in ecstasy far away into the remote future, to a time when the nation's sufferings are all over; so that when he writes down what he saw in vision he describes it as a discipline that is past.

For example, in 25:1–8 the prophet, transported to the end of time, celebrates in song what he saw, and describes how the fall of the world-empire is followed by the conversion of the heathen. In 26:8f he looks back into the past from the standpoint of the redeemed in the last days, and tells how Israel longingly waited for the manifestation of God's righteousness which has now taken place, while in 27:7–9 he places himself in the midst of the nation's sufferings, in full view of its glorious future, and portrays how the Lord's dealings with Israel have not been the punishment of wrath, but the discipline of love. This kind of apocalypse, or prophecy, was indeed to be expected from the very beginning of the group of prophecies, which are introduced with the word "Behold!" Such a manner of introduction is peculiar to Isaiah, and of itself leads us to expect a message that is unique.

The practical religious value of these prophecies to Isaiah's own age would be very great. In a period of war and repeated foreign invasion, when but few people were left in the land (24:6, 13; 26:18), and Judah's cities were laid waste and desolate (24:10, 12; 25:2; 26:5; 27:10), and music and gladness were wanting (24:8), when the nation still clung to its idols (27:9), and the Assyrians' work of destruction was still incomplete, other calamities were sure to follow (24:16). It would certainly be comforting to know that forgiveness was still possible (27:9), that the Lord was still the keeper of His vineyard (27:3f), that His judgments were to last but for a little moment (26:20), that though His people should be scattered, He would soon carefully gather them "one by one" (27:12f), that in company with other nations they would feast together on Mt. Zion as the Lord's guests (25:6–10), and that Jerusalem should henceforth become the center of life and religion to all nations (24:23; 25:6; 27:13). Such faith in the Lord, such exhortations and such songs and confessions of the redeemed, seen in vision, would be a source of rich spiritual comfort to the few suffering saints in Judah and Jerusalem, and a guiding

star to the faithful disciples of the prophet's most inner circle.

Chapters 28–35 contain a cycle of prophetic warnings against alliance with Egypt, closing with a prophecy concerning Edom and a promise of Israel's ransom. As in 5:8–23, the prophet indulges in a series of six woes.

(1) Woe to drunken, scoffing politicians (ch 28). This is one of the great chapters of Isaiah's book. In the opening section (vv 1–6) the prophet points in warning to the proud drunkards of Ephraim whose crown (Samaria) is rapidly fading. He next turns to the scoffing politicians of Jerusalem, rebuking especially the bibulous priests who stumble in judgment, and the staggering prophets who err in vision (vv 7–22). He closes with a most instructive parable from agriculture, teaching that God's judgments are not arbitrary; that as the husbandman does not plow and harrow his fields the whole year round, so God will not punish His people forever; and as the husbandman does not thresh all kinds of grain with equal severity, no more will God discipline His people beyond their deserts (vv 23–29).

(2) Woe to formalists in religion (29:1–14). Isaiah's second woe is pronounced upon Ariel, the altar-hearth of God, i.e., Jerusalem, the sacrificial center of Israel's worship of the Lord in Zion. But now Zion's worship has become wholly conventional, formal, and therefore insincere; it is learned by rote (v 13; cf. 1:10–15; Mic. 6:6–8). Therefore, says Isaiah, the Lord is forced to do an extraordinary work among them, in order to bring them back to a true knowledge of Himself (v 14).

(3) Woe to those who hide their plans from God (29:15–24). What their plans are, which they are devising in secret, the prophet does not yet disclose; but he doubtless alludes to their intrigues with the Egyptians and their purpose to break faith with the Assyrians, to whom they were bound by treaty to pay annual tribute. Isaiah bravely remonstrates with them for supposing that any policy will succeed that excludes the counsel and wisdom of the Holy One. They are but clay; He is the potter. At this

point, though somewhat abruptly, Isaiah turns his face toward the messianic future. In a very little while, he says, Lebanon, which is now overrun by Assyria's army, shall become a fruitful field, and the blind and deaf and spiritually weak shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

(4) Woe to the pro-Egyptian party (ch 30). Isaiah's fourth woe is directed against the rebellious politicians who stubbornly, and now openly, advocate making a league with Egypt. They have at length succeeded apparently in winning over the king to their side, and an embassy is already on its way to Egypt, bearing across the desert of the Exodus rich treasures with which to purchase the friendship of their former oppressors. Isaiah now condemns what he can no longer prevent. Egypt is a Rahab "who sits still," i.e., a mythological sea monster, menacing in appearance but slow to act. When the crisis comes, Egypt will do nothing, causing Israel only shame and confusion.

(5) Woe to those who trust in horses and chariots (chs 31–32). Isaiah's fifth woe is a still more vehement denunciation of those who trust in Egypt's horses and chariots, and disregard the Holy One of Israel. Those who do so forget that the Egyptians are but men and their horses flesh, and that mere flesh cannot avail in a conflict with spirit. Eventually the Lord means to deliver Jerusalem, if the children of Israel will but turn from their idolatries to Him; and in that day Assyria will be vanquished. A new era will dawn upon Judah. Society will be regenerated. The renovation will begin at the top. Conscience also will be sharpened, and moral distinctions will no longer be confused (32:1–8). As Delitzsch puts it, "The aristocracy of birth and wealth will be replaced by an aristocracy of character." The careless and indifferent women, too, in that day will no longer menace the social welfare of the state (32:9–14); with the outpouring of the Lord's spirit an ideal commonwealth will emerge, in which social righteousness, peace, plenty, and security will abound (32:15–20).

(6) Woe to the Assyrian destroyer (ch 33). Isaiah's last woe is directed against the treacherous spoiler himself, who has already laid waste the cities of Judah, and is now beginning to lay siege to Jerusalem (701 B.C.). The prophet prays, and while he prays, behold! the mighty hosts of the Assyrians are routed and the long-besieged but now triumphant inhabitants of Jerusalem rush out like locusts upon the spoil that the vanishing adversary has been forced to leave behind. The destroyer's plan to reduce Jerusalem has come to naught. The whole earth beholds the spectacle of Assyria's defeat and is filled with awe and amazement at the mighty work of the Lord. Only the righteous may henceforth dwell in Jerusalem. Their eyes shall behold the Messiah-king in his beauty, reigning no longer like Hezekiah over a limited and restricted territory, but over a land unbounded, whose inhabitants enjoy the Lord's peace and protection, and are free from all sin, and therefore from all sickness (vv 17–24). With this beautiful picture of the messianic future, the prophet's woes find an appropriate conclusion. Isaiah never pronounced a woe without adding a corresponding promise.

In chs 34–35, the prophet utters a fierce cry for justice against "all the nations," but against Edom in particular. His tone is that of judgment. Edom is guilty of high crimes against Zion (34:8f); therefore it is doomed to destruction. On the other hand, the scattered ones of Israel shall return from exile and "obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (ch 35).

Chapters 36–39 have history, prophecy, and song intermingled. These chapters serve both as an appendix to chs 1–35 and as an introduction to chs 40–66. In them three important historical events are narrated, in which Isaiah was a prominent factor: (1) the double attempt of Sennacherib to obtain possession of Jerusalem (chs 36–37); (2) Hezekiah's sickness and recovery (ch 38); (3) the coming of the embassy from Merodach-baladan (ch 39). With certain important omissions and insertions these chapters are

duplicated almost verbatim in 2 K. 18:13–20:19. They are introduced with the chronological note, “In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah.” Various attempts have been made to solve the mystery of this date. If the author is alluding to the siege of 701 B.C., difficulty arises, because that event occurred not in Hezekiah’s “fourteenth” but in his twenty-sixth year, according to the biblical chronology of his life; or, if with some we date Hezekiah’s accession to the throne of Judah as 729 B.C., then the siege of 701 B.C. occurred, as is evident, in Hezekiah’s twenty-eighth year. It is barely possible of course that “the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah” was the fourteenth of the “fifteen years” which were *added* to his life, but more probably it alludes to the fourteenth year of his reign. On the whole it is better to take the phrase as a general chronological caption for the entire section, with special reference to ch 38, the story of Hezekiah’s sickness, which actually fell in his fourteenth year (714 B.C.), and which, coupled with Sargon’s expected presence at Ashdod, was *the* great personal crisis of the king’s life. *See also* CHRONOLOGY OF THE OT V.B.

Sennacherib made two attempts in 701 B.C. to reduce Jerusalem: one from Lachish, with an army headed by the Rabshakeh (36:2–37:8), and another from Libnah with a threat conveyed by messengers (37:9–13). The brief section contained in 2 K. 18:14–16 is omitted from between vv 1 and 2 of Isa. 36, because it was not the prophet’s aim at this time to recount the nation’s humiliation. Isaiah’s last “word” concerning Assyria (37:21–35) is one of the prophet’s grandest predictions. It is composed of three parts: (1) a taunt-song, in elegiac rhythm, on the inevitable humiliation of Sennacherib (vv 22–29); (2) a short poem in different rhythm, directed to Hezekiah, in order to encourage his faith (vv 30–32); (3) a definite prediction, in less elevated style, of the sure deliverance of Jerusalem (vv 33–35). Isaiah’s prediction was literally fulfilled.

The section 38:9–20 contains Hezekiah’s Song of Thanksgiving, in which he celebrates his recovery from some mortal sickness. It is a

beautiful, plaintive “writing,” omitted altogether by the author of the book of Kings (cf. 2 K. 20). Hezekiah was sick in 714 B.C. Two years later Merodach-baladan, the veteran archenemy of Assyria, having heard of his wonderful recovery, sent letters and a present to congratulate him. Doubtless, also, political motives prompted the recalcitrant Babylonian. But be that as it may, Hezekiah was greatly flattered by the visit of Merodach-baladan’s envoys, and, in a moment of weakness, showed them all his royal treasures. This was an inexcusable blunder, as the sight of his many precious possessions would naturally excite Babylonian cupidity to possess Jerusalem. Isaiah not only solemnly condemned the king’s conduct, but he announced with more than ordinary insight that the days were coming when all the accumulated resources of Jerusalem would be carried away to Babylon (39:3–6; cf. Mic. 4:10). This final prediction of judgment is the most marvelous of all Isaiah’s minatory utterances, because he distinctly asserts that not the Assyrians, who were then at the height of their power, but the Babylonians would be the instruments of the divine vengeance in consummating the destruction of Jerusalem. There seems to be no real reason to doubt the genuineness of this prediction. In it, indeed, we have a prophetic basis for chs 40–66, which follow.

Coming now to chs 40–66, we have prophecies of comfort, salvation, and of the future glory awaiting Israel. These chapters naturally fall into three sections: (1) chs 40–48, announcing deliverance from captivity through Cyrus; (2) chs 49–57, describing the sufferings of the “Servant” of the Lord, this section ending like the former with the refrain, “There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked” (57:21; cf. 48:22); (3) chs 58–66, announcing the final abolition of all national distinctions and the future glory of the people of God. Chapter 60 is the characteristic chapter of this section, as ch 53 is of the second, and ch 40 of the first.

In greater detail, the first section (chs 40–48) demonstrates the deity of the Lord through His unique power to predict. The basis of the

comfort that the prophet announces is Israel's incomparable God (ch 40). Israel's all-powerful Lord is incomparable. In the prologue (40:1–11) he hears the four voices: (1) of grace (vv 1f); (2) of prophecy (vv 3–5); (3) of faith (vv 6–8), and (4) of evangelism (vv 9–11). Then, after exalting the unique character of Israel's all-but-forgotten God (vv 12–26), he exhorts the people not to suppose that the Lord is ignorant of, or indifferent to, Israel's misery. Israel must wait for salvation. They are clamoring for deliverance prematurely. Only wait, he repeats; for with such a God, Israel has no reason to despair (vv 27–31).

In ch 41 he declares that the supreme proof of the Lord's sole deity is His power to predict. He inquires, "Who stirred up one from the east?" Though the hero is left unnamed, Cyrus is doubtless in the prophet's mind (cf. 44:28; 45:1). He is not, however, already appearing upon the horizon of history as some fancy, but rather *predicted* as sure to come. The verb tenses that express completed action are perfects of certainty, and are used in precisely the same manner as those in 3:8; 5:13; 21:9. The answer to the inquiry is, "I, the Lord, the first, and with the last; I am He" (41:4). Israel is the Lord's servant. The dialogue continues; but it is no longer between the Lord and the nations, as in vv 1–7, but between the Lord and the idols (vv 21–29). Addressing the dumb idols, the Lord is represented as saying, Predict something, if you are real deities. As for myself, I am going to raise up a hero from the north who will subdue all who oppose him. And I announce my purpose now in advance "from the beginning," "beforetime," before there is the slightest ground for thinking that such a hero exists or ever will exist (v 26), in order that the future may verify my prediction, and prove my sole deity. I, the Lord, alone know the future. In vv 25–29, the prophet even projects himself into the future and speaks from the standpoint of the fulfillment of his prediction. This, as we saw above, was a characteristic of Isaiah in chs 24–27.

In 42:1–43:13 the prophet announces also a spiritual agent of redemption, namely, the

Lord's "Servant." Not only a temporal agent (Cyrus) shall be raised up to mediate Israel's redemption, which is the first step in the process of the universal salvation contemplated, but a spiritual factor. The Lord's "Servant" shall be employed in bringing the good tidings of salvation to the exiles and to the Gentiles also. In 42:1–9 the prophet describes this ideal figure and the work he will execute. The glorious future evokes a brief hymn of thanksgiving for the redemption that the prophet beholds in prospect (42:10–17). Israel has long been blind and deaf to the Lord's instructions (42:18f), but now the Lord is determined to redeem them even at the cost of the most opulent nations of the world, that they may publish His law to all peoples (42:18–43:13).

In 43:14–44:23 forgiveness is made the pledge of deliverance. The Lord's determination to redeem Israel is all of grace. Salvation is a gift. The Lord has blotted out their transgressions for His own sake (43:25). "This passage," Dillmann observes, "marks the highest point of grace in the OT." Gods of wood and stone are nonentities. Those who manufacture idols are blind and dull of heart, and are "feeding on ashes." The section 44:9–20 is a most remorseless exposure of the folly of idolatry.

In 44:24–45:25 the prophet at length names the hero of Israel's salvation and describes his mission. He is Cyrus. He shall build Jerusalem and lay the foundations of the temple (44:28); he shall also subdue nations and let the exiles go free (45:1, 13). He speaks of Cyrus in the most extraordinary, almost extravagant terms. He is the Lord's "shepherd" (44:28); he is also the Lord's "anointed," i.e., Messiah (45:1), "the man of my counsel" (46:11), whom the Lord has called by name, and surnamed without his ever knowing Him (45:3f); the one "whom the Lord loves" (48:14), whose right hand the Lord grasps (45:1), and who will perform all the Lord's purposes (44:28); though but "a bird of prey from the east" (46:11). The vividness with which the prophet speaks of Cyrus leads some to suppose that the latter is already upon the horizon. This, however, is a mistake. Scarcely

would a contemporary have spoken in such terms of the real Cyrus of 538 B.C. The prophet regards him (i.e., the Cyrus of his own prediction, not the Cyrus of history) as the fulfillment of predictions spoken long before. That is to say, in one and the same context, Cyrus is both predicted and treated as a proof that prediction is being fulfilled (44:24–28; 45:21). Such a phenomenon in prophecy can best be explained by supposing that the prophet projected himself into the future from an earlier age. Most extraordinary of all, in 45:14–17 the prophet soars in imagination until he sees, as a result of Cyrus' victories, the conquered nations renouncing their idols, and attracted to the Lord as the Savior of all mankind (45:22). On any theory of origin, the predictive element in these prophecies is written large.

Chapters 46–47 describe further the distinctive work of Cyrus, though Cyrus himself is but once referred to. Particular emphasis is laid on the complete collapse of the Babylonian religion, the prophet being apparently more concerned with the humiliation of Babylon's idols than with the fall of the city itself. Of course the destruction of the city would imply the defeat of its gods, as also the emancipation of Israel. But here again all is in the future; in fact, the Lord's incomparable superiority and unique deity are proven by His power to predict "the end from the beginning" and bring His prediction to pass (46:10f).

Chapter 47 is a dirge over the downfall of the imperial city, strongly resembling the taunt-song over the king of Babylon in 14:4–21.

Chapter 48 is a hortatory summary and recapitulation of the argument contained in chs 40–47, the prophet again emphasizing the following points: (1) the Lord's unique power to predict; (2) that salvation is of grace; (3) that Cyrus' advent will be the crowning proof of the Lord's abiding presence among His people; (4) that God's chastisements were only disciplinary; and (5) that even now there is hope, if they will but accept the Lord's proffered salvation. Alas! that there is no peace

or salvation for the godless (48:20–22). Thus ends the first division of Isaiah's remarkable vision of Israel's deliverance from captivity through Cyrus.

The second section (chs 49–57) deals with the spiritual agent of salvation, the Lord's Suffering Servant. With ch 49 the prophet leaves off attempting further to prove the sole deity of the Lord by means of prediction, and drops entirely his description of Cyrus' victories and the overthrow of Babylon, in order to set forth in greater detail the character and mission of the suffering Servant of the Lord. In chs 40–48 he had alluded several times to this unique and somewhat enigmatical personage, speaking of him both collectively and as an individual (41:8–10; 42:1–9, 18–22; 43:10; 44:1–5, 21–28; 45:4; 48:20–22); but now he defines with greater precision both his prophetic and priestly functions, his equipment for his task, his sufferings and humiliation, and also his final exaltation. Altogether in these prophecies he mentions the Servant some twenty times. But there are four distinctive servant passages in which the prophet seems to rise above the collective masses of all Israel to at least a personification of the pious within Israel or, better, to a unique person embodying within himself all that is best in the Israel within Israel. They are the following: (1) 42:1–9, a poem descriptive of the Servant's gentle manner and worldwide mission; (2) 49:1–13, describing the Servant's mission and spiritual success; (3) 50:4–11, the Servant's soliloquy concerning His perfection through suffering; and (4) 52:13–53:12, the Servant's vicarious suffering and ultimate exaltation. In this last of the four servant passages we reach the climax of the prophet's inspired symphony, the acme of Israel's messianic hope. The profoundest thoughts in the OT revelation are to be found in this section. It is a vindication of the Servant, so clear and so true, and wrought out with such pathos and potency, that it holds first place among messianic predictions. Polycarp called it "the golden passion of the OT." According to the NT (cf. Acts 8:32f) it has been realized in Jesus Christ.

Chapters 58–66 describe the future glory of the people of God. Having described in chs 40–48 the temporal agent of Israel’s salvation, Cyrus, and in chs 49–57 the spiritual agent of their salvation, the Servant of the Lord, the prophet proceeds in this last section to define the conditions on which salvation may be enjoyed. He begins, as before, with a double imperative, “Cry aloud, spare not” (cf. 40:1; 49:1).

In ch 58 he discusses true fasting and faithful sabbath observance.

In ch 59 he beseeches Israel to forsake their sins. It is their sins, he urges, that have hidden the Lord’s face and retarded the nation’s salvation. In vv 9–12 the prophet identifies himself with the people and leads them in their devotions. The Lord is grieved over Israel’s forlorn condition, and, seeing their helplessness, He arms himself like a warrior to interfere judicially (vv 15–19). Israel shall be redeemed. With them as the nucleus of a new nation, the Lord will enter anew into covenant relation, and put His spirit upon them, which will abide with them henceforth and forever (vv 20f).

Chapters 60–61 describe the future blessedness of Zion. The long-looked-for “light” (cf. 59:9) begins to dawn: “Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you” (60:1). The prophet pauses at this point to paint a picture of the redeemed community. As in 2:3f the Gentiles are seen flocking to Zion, which becomes the mistress of the nations. Foreigners build its walls, and its gates are kept open continually without fear of siege. The Gentiles acknowledge that Zion is the spiritual center of the world. Even Israel’s oppressors regard it as “the city of the Lord,” as “majestic for ever,” in which the Lord sits as its everlasting light (60:10–22).

In ch 61, which Drummond has called “the program of Christianity,” the Servant of the Lord is again introduced, though anonymously, as the herald of salvation (vv 1–3). The gospel monologue of the Servant is followed by a promise of the restoration and blessedness of Jerusalem (vv 4–11). Thus the prophecy moves

steadily forward toward its goal in Jesus Christ (cf. Lk. 4:18–21).

In 62:1–63:6 Zion’s salvation is described as drawing near. The nations will be spectators of the great event. A new name that will better symbolize its true character shall be given to Zion, Heb *ḥep̄sî–bāh*, “My delight is in her”; for Jerusalem shall no more be called desolate. On the other hand, Zion’s enemies will all be vanquished. In a brief poem of peculiar dramatic beauty (63:1–6), the prophet portrays the Lord’s vengeance, as a victorious warrior, upon all those who retard Israel’s deliverance. Edom in particular was Israel’s insatiate foe. Hence the prophet represents the Lord’s judgment of the nations as taking place on Edom’s unhallowed soil. The Lord, whose mighty arm has wrought salvation, returns as victor, having slain all of Israel’s foes.

In 63:7–64:12, the Lord’s “servants” resort to prayer. They appeal to the Lord as the Begetter and Father of the nations (63:16; 64:8). With this thought of the Fatherhood of God imbedded in his language, Isaiah had opened his very first oracle to Judah and Jerusalem (cf. 1:2). As the prayer proceeds, the language becomes increasingly tumultuous. The people are thrown into despair because the Lord seems to have abandoned them altogether (63:19). They recognize that the condition of Jerusalem is desperate. “Our holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, has been burned by fire, and all our pleasant places have become ruins” (64:11). Such language, however, is the language of fervent prayer and must not be taken with rigid literalness, as 63:18 and 3:8 plainly show.

Finally, in chs 65–66, the Lord answers His people’s supplications, distinguishing sharply between His own servants and Israel’s apostates. Only His chosen seed shall be delivered (65:9). Those who have obdurately provoked the Lord by sacrificing in gardens (65:3; 66:17), offering libations to Fortune and Destiny (65:11), sitting among the graves to obtain oracles from the dead, and, like the Egyptians, eating swine’s flesh and broth of

abominable things that were supposed to possess magical properties, lodging in vaults or crypts in which heathen mysteries were celebrated (65:4), and at the same time fancying that by celebrating such heathen mysteries they are holier than others and thereby disqualified to discharge the ordinary duties of life (65:5) — such the Lord designs to punish, measuring their work into their bosom and destroying them utterly with the sword (65:7, 12). On the other hand, the servants of the Lord shall inherit His holy mountains. They shall rejoice and sing for joy of heart, and bless themselves in the God of amen, i.e., in the God of truth (65:9, 14, 16). The Lord will create new heavens and a new earth, people will live and grow old like the patriarchs; they will possess houses and vineyards and enjoy them; for an era of idyllic peace will be ushered in with the coming of the messianic age, in which even the natures of wild animals will be changed and the most rapacious of wild animals will live together in harmony (65:17–25). Religion will become spiritual and decentralized, mystic cults will disappear, and incredulous scoffers will be silenced. Zion's population will be marvelously multiplied, and the people will be comforted and rejoice (66:1–14). Furthermore, all nations will flock to Zion to behold the Lord's glory, and from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, all flesh will come up to worship in Jerusalem (66:15–23).

It is evident that the book of Isaiah closes, practically as it begins, with a polemic against false worship, and the alternate reward of the righteous and punishment of the wicked. The only essential difference between the prophet's earlier and later oracles is this: Isaiah, in his riper years, on the basis of nearly half a century's experience as a preacher, paints a much brighter eschatological picture than was possible in his early ministry. His picture of the messianic age not only transcends those of his contemporaries in the 8th cent B.C., but he penetrates regions beyond the spiritual horizon of any and all OT seers. Such language as that contained in 66:1f, in particular, anticipates the

great principle enunciated by Jesus in Jn. 4:24, namely, that "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

### VIII. The Critical Problem

**A. History of Criticism** The Isaianic authorship of the entire prophecy was never questioned either in the OT period or that of early Christendom. The frequency with which the NT referred to Isaiah, who was cited more than all the other OT prophets combined, confirmed the view in the minds of early Christians that the composition was an integer, consciously composed by a single person. The NT references are as follows: Mt. 3:3; 8:17; 12:17–21; 13:14f; 15:7–9; Mk. 1:2f; 7:6f; Lk. 3:4–6; 4:17–19; Jn. 1:23; 12:38–41; Acts 8:28–33; 28:25–29; Rom. 9:27–29; 10:16, 20f. If these quotations are examined, it will be seen that they refer to all parts of the prophecy, with citations from the first thirty-nine chapters being about the same in number as those from the last twenty-seven chapters. Many of these do not refer to the book as such, but rather attribute the utterance quoted to the man Isaiah himself. Hence we meet such phrases as "Isaiah the prophet," "the prophet Isaiah," "Isaiah prophesied," "Isaiah said again," "Isaiah said ... saw ... spoke," "Isaiah cries," "Isaiah says," "As Isaiah said before," "Isaiah becomes bold and says," "Well spoke the Holy Ghost through Isaiah the prophet." Thus it appears that the NT attributes various sections of the prophecy to the man Isaiah himself.

The unity of Isaiah was maintained in Christendom without question until the late 18th cent, though this degree of unanimity was not as evident in certain Jewish circles. It may have been that the talmudic tradition (TB *Baba Bathra* 15a) furnished some freedom for speculation in this respect, affirming that "Hezekiah and his company wrote Isaiah, Proverbs, the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes," even though the verb "wrote" was being employed technically in the sense of "edited" or "compiled." The allusion to the "company" of Hezekiah was evidently to his eighth-century

B.C. contemporaries who were responsible, under his direction, for the compilation and arranging of certain literary products (cf. Prov. 25:1). Be this as it may, the Talmud clearly set the writings of Isaiah against an eighth-century B.C. Palestinian milieu and credited Hezekiah's "company" with their arrangement in extant form. Some medieval Jewish commentators, however, began to question this tradition; e.g., Ibn Ezra (A.D. 1092–1167) denied that Isaiah was the author of the last twenty-seven chapters. In the following century a Spanish Jew, Moses Ibn Gekatilla, also wrote a commentary on Isaiah in which he denied that chs 40–66 were the work of the eighth-century prophet, and attributed them instead to the postexilic period. These tendencies exerted no influence upon contemporary Christian opinion, however, and it was not until the 18th cent that the impact of European rationalistic thought began to be felt on the prophecy of Isaiah.

Modern literary criticism of the book can be said to have begun with Döderlein's *Esaias* (1775), in which the author suggested, without any compelling evidence, that the book comprised two distinct works. In the German edition (1779–81) of the commentary on Isaiah by R. Lowth, J. B. Koppe advanced the view that ch 50 might have come from an exilic writer, perhaps Ezekiel, but again nothing was adduced in the nature of historical evidence. Almost immediately this trend attracted the attention of German scholars, and in his OT introduction Eichhorn adopted the position held by the medieval Jewish commentators, regarding chs 40–66 as the work of some person other than Isaiah ben Amoz. With the commentary by Gesenius (1821) there emerged the view that, while chs 40–66 were non-Isaianic in character, they were still an essential literary unity. This opinion was supported by scholars such as Knobel, G. A. Smith, König, and Torrey, though not all critics who reviewed the problem were convinced that these chapters were the work of a single author, an unknown exilic prophet who by this time had become known for convenience as Second or Deutero-

Isaiah. Thus Stade, in his *Geschichte des Volkes Israel* (1888), stoutly refuted the possibility that the last five chapters of the prophecy in their extant form could have been written by Isaiah at all. Budde enlarged this number in 1891 to include at least chs 56–59, but Duhm and Marti found that even this suggestion was inadequate. Instead, in 1892, they advanced the opinion that chs 40–55 had been composed by a Second Isaiah in Babylon somewhat before the liberating decree of Cyrus in 538 B.C., while a third or Trito-Isaiah was credited with having written chs 56–66, probably in Palestine and subsequent to 538 B.C.

The opinions of Duhm and Marti found quick acceptance and were soon adopted as the official literary-critical view of the composition of Isaiah. Not all liberal scholars were attracted to it, however, because some of them, caught up in the fervor of source-fragmentation, were already challenging the postulated unity of chs 40–55. In this the way had been opened up by Rückert, who as early as 1831 had used the pronouncement "there is no peace, says the Lord, to the wicked" (48:22), which occurred in similar form in 57:21, to divide chs 40–55 into two subsections consisting of chs 40–48 and 49–55. Kuenen in 1889 maintained that the bulk of chs 50–55 had come from a period later than 536 B.C., and that Second Isaiah could conceivably have had a hand in composing the material. Kusters, however, denied any section of chs 40–55 to a Second Isaiah, and this view was adopted by Cheyne in the *Polychrome Bible* (1898). The pervasive influence of Duhm was seen in the writings of Skinner, especially his *Cambridge Bible* commentary on Isaiah (1896–98), and he, along with A. B. Davidson and G. A. Smith, was responsible for promoting German literary-critical views relating to the composition of Isaiah among English-speaking peoples.

When the form-critical procedures of Gunkel began to be applied to Isaiah, some scholars regarded chs 40–55 as an anthology of poetic material composed by Second Isaiah and arranged without regard to particular order. Those who supported such a position included

Gressmann, Mowinckel, Eissfeldt, and Volz. The speculations of Duhm regarding the possibility of a Trito or Third Isaiah who had supposedly been the author of chs 56–65 also found advocates in Europe, among whom were Kosters, Littmann, Box, Elliger, and Sellin. Other liberal critics wondered if chs 56–66 could in fact be assigned with confidence to a single author, and the results of their speculations, which attributed various sections of these chapters to the work of anonymous individual writers, tended to increase still further the fragmentation of the prophecy and carry the process to all sorts of subjective extremes. Writers who pursued this line of approach included Cheyne, Budde, Buttenwieser, Marti, Levy, and Lods.

As part of the general literary criticism of Isaiah, some sections of the prophecy that became known as the servant passages (42:1–4, or perhaps 1–9; 49:1–6, or perhaps 1–9; 50:4–9, or perhaps 4–11; 52:13–53:12) fell under scholarly scrutiny, and provoked wide divergences of opinion in consequence. For the first three hundred years of its existence, the Church commonly identified the Servant of Isaiah with the righteous, whether on an individual or collective basis, while at the same time interpreting ch 53 as a messianic prophecy. Subsequently the messianic interpretation became the standard way of regarding the Servant of the Lord, but when European scholars began to reject Isaianic authorship of the prophecy, the Davidic messiah was gradually abandoned in favor of seeing the Servant in terms of the whole nation of Israel. In the 18th cent this was begun by Semler (1771), Koppe (1779), and Eichhorn (1794), and continued in the following century with some variations by Vatke (1835), Ewald (1840), Davidson (1863), Cheyne (1870), and Driver (1888) among others, most of whom thought of an ideal and spiritual Israel rather than an actual historical people.

While these attempts at interpretation were taking place, the significance of which will be considered subsequently, scholars were attempting to relate the composition of the

servant passages to the work of one or more of the “Isaias” allegedly involved in the writing of chs 40–66. Fullkrug, Ley, and Blank thought that the poems were composed by Second Isaiah during the Exile as part of the section of the prophecy attributed to him, while Condamin, Sellin, Levy, and others maintained that, while Second Isaiah was the author, the material was late rather than early, and was incorporated into the prophecy in the postexilic period. Some European scholars, including Fischer, Rudolph, and Hempel, thought that the servant passages had been written by Second Isaiah after the bulk of his work had been completed, and as a result had been interpolated into the Hebrew text. Wellhausen offered a variant form of this hypothesis in suggesting that the poems had been composed by an earlier unknown author and had been taken over by Second Isaiah, who incorporated them later into his own work. Yet another view, supported by Duhm, Kittel, Kennett, and others, suggested that the oracles were the work of an anonymous composer who wrote at a later time than Second Isaiah and whose compositions were added subsequently to the prophecy by an equally unknown editor. In all of these speculations the appeal to ignorance was a marked feature, and none of the scholars involved apparently thought it either desirable or necessary to attempt to adduce objective data by which their conclusions could be tested, preferring instead to follow the highly subjective a priori procedures employed by the Graf-Wellhausen school.

These attempts to fragment the prophecy of Isaiah were more than essays in literary criticism. They were in fact a microcosm of the age, and one expression of the evolutionary *Zeitgeist* that could be found both in the humanities and in the descriptive sciences in the 19th century. The philosophical speculations of Hegel had encouraged the European savants to think in terms of a social and intellectual environment in which progress and development were assured. Consequently it was confidently imagined that the ratiocinative processes of the nineteenth-

century European intelligentsia could, by their essential superiority, challenge definitively the cogitations and the literature of earlier ages, expose the fallacies and frailties of nonEuropean thought as never before, strip away firmly the mythological accretions which were thought to have accumulated over the millennia, and reveal for the first time the true nature and content of the material under consideration. The confidence which the nineteenth-century literary critics had in their ability to unravel the mysteries of the authorship and date of OT books seemed boundless; even when they were based on only the flimsiest evidence, or as often happened on no evidence at all, the pronouncements of liberal scholars were made with a breathtaking degree of assurance and finality. Consequently it is not surprising to read in the literature of the day that the division of Isaiah among several authors represented "one of the most assured results of modern literary criticism." Needless to say, the approaches and conclusions espoused by the Graf-Wellhausen school were not by any means shared by more conservative scholars, and the emotional fervor engendered by the fragmenting of Isaiah provoked an equally vigorous reaction among those who viewed the prophecy as a literary unity. While there were undoubted diatribes and denunciations on both sides, there were also discussions of an extremely high academic order, and in some respects the erudition of late nineteenth-century OT scholarship reached its apogee in the controversy about the literary and historical criticism of Isaiah. One of the earliest, and perhaps the most outstanding conservative study of Isaiah, and one which anticipated many later objections to the literary unity of the book, was made in 1846 by J. A. Alexander. He began by attacking the basic weaknesses in the a priori approach of contemporary liberal scholarship (*see* PENTATEUCH; CRITICISM), and went on to uphold the Isaianic authorship of chs 40–66. In this connection he stated that it would be unparalleled in all literary history for a brilliant and erudite author such as Isaiah to have

produced a series of prophecies of such vital importance for the Babylonian exiles, and then to have disappeared both from the local scene and from human memory without leaving any trace of his own personality upon them. He also asked how it was possible for this anonymous material to have been attached to the writings of Isaiah ben Amoz when, according to liberal critics, they had little or nothing in common. In addition he pointed out how comparatively few references to Babylon and the Exile occurred in chs 40–66, a matter that C. C. Torrey was to take up with perception and insight many years later.

In a commentary on Isaiah begun in 1845 by Drechsler and completed in 1857 by Delitzsch and Hahn, the literary unity of chs 40–66 and their Isaianic authorship were again maintained. Delitzsch held that chs 36–39 formed a link between the Assyrian and Babylonian periods, and suggested that chs 1–39 served as a preparation for chs 40–66. From the same period came a brilliant commentary on Isaiah by Rudolph Stier, in which the literary integrity of the prophecy was emphasized. Five years later, in 1855, a Jewish-Italian commentary on Isaiah was published by Luzzatto. In this book the author advanced the view that the last twenty-seven chapters had been written by Isaiah ben Amoz, and that they differed from some other sections of the book in comprising prophecies concerning the future.

In 1866 the first edition of Franz Delitzsch's commentary on Isaiah appeared, and at once was recognized as an outstanding combination of philological expertise and spiritual insight. By the time the fourth edition was translated into English (1889) and furnished with an introduction by S. R. Driver, it became apparent that Delitzsch had accommodated his views throughout the work to those of most contemporary liberal scholars. He never capitulated completely, however, to the current critical speculations regarding the authorship of Isaiah, for he chose to think of chs 40–66 as "testamentary discourses of the one Isaiah, and the entire prophetic collection as the

progressive development of his incomparable charism" (*Biblical comm on the Prophecies of Isaiah* [1880], II, pp. 125f). Elsewhere he thought that the author of chs 40–66 was "in any case a prophet of the Isaianic type, but of an Isaianic type peculiarly developed," and of the material itself as being attributable ultimately to Isaiah, if, in fact, he was not the immediate author (pp. 129, 133).

Despite unremitting opposition from conservative scholars, the divisive theories of Duhm held the field in liberal circles, and conveyed the general impression that the literary-critical problems of Isaiah were settled to all intents and purposes. Impressive though this show of critical unanimity appeared, it was not destined to survive more than the first four decades of the 20th century. Unmistakable fissures in the facade began to appear by about 1940, and became evident in 1944 when Sidney Smith delivered a series of lectures on what he deemed to be the historical material illustrative of chs 40–55. Instead of employing the type-analytical (*Gattungsforschung*) techniques of Gunkel and Gressmann, Smith related the historical events of the period between 547 and 538 B.C. to the section of Isaiah that he was studying. Having achieved this objective, he then set out the material in the original structure of speeches composed by the prophet that had then been circulated, according to Smith, in the form of approximately twenty-two pamphlets. These included all of the servant passages, the last of which (52:13–53:12) Smith connected with the death of Isaiah himself.

A barrage of criticism greeted the publication of the book, and there can be no question but that some of the strictures were richly deserved. Smith's treatment of the servant passages, the fourth one in particular, was very unsatisfactory, and much of the historical material that he had adduced to support his thesis was extremely tenuous. His treatment of the problem was outstanding, however, in the way in which he proposed serious historical links between the period of 547–538 B.C. and the material in chs 40–55 of Isaiah. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that the criticisms of his

position were aroused in no small measure by a fear of what the future might hold for the entire scheme of liberal criticism of Isaiah.

In 1962, Mauchline published a commentary on chs 1–39 of the prophecy, and a notable feature of the work was the conservative position adopted toward sections that had been regarded previously as interpolations by later editors. The results of his study enabled him to see Isaiah as the substantial author of chs 13–27, and in this conclusion he diverged considerably from many liberal scholars, who had commonly assigned certain sections of that material to a postexilic period. There were certain contradictions in his method, however, and they seemed to be of a kind that would beset anyone writing from a general liberal background. Thus he saw no inconsistency, as other critics had done, between the references to Babylon in ch 39 and Isaianic authorship of that section; at the same time he utilized the mention of the Medes and Babylon in Isa. 13:17–19 as a reason for adhering to an exilic date for the passage. Had he allowed room for a genuinely predictive element in the narrative, however, the apparent problem would have been resolved immediately.

The literary-critical position was reemphasized by the publication of J. L. McKenzie's commentary on Second Isaiah (AB, 1968). He studiously ignored any position other than his own, and seemed blissfully unaware of the effect that certain evidence from Qumrân (see below) has had upon the literary-critical problem of Isaiah. Meanwhile, conservative scholars were continuing to argue for the integrity and Isaianic authorship of the prophecy, and their writings included works by Allis (1950), Young (1965–74), and Buksbazen (1971–74).

**B. Arguments for Divided Authorship** From the preceding survey it will have become apparent that, as long as only internal evidence is considered, the polarization of views concerning the authorship and date of the prophecy is much the same now as it was a century ago. Before any attempt is made to

resolve this situation, it would seem desirable to subject the arguments for a divided authorship of the prophecy to careful examination so as to test their validity. According to S. R. Driver (*intro to the Literature of the OT* [9th ed 1913], pp. 236ff), these fell into three broad categories. First, chs 40–66 seemed to point to a period of composition toward the close of the Babylonian Exile rather than to a time in the 8th cent B.C. According to this view the Exile was presupposed, not predicted, and those addressed were thought to be already exiled and awaiting a return to Palestine. In consonance with their general disavowal of a predictive element in prophecy, liberal literary critics held that it was impossible for Isaiah to have sustained so lengthy a futuristic standpoint and to have addressed persons who were more than a century in the future.

The second argument for separating chs 40–66 and assigning them to some author other than Isaiah ben Amoz rested upon stylistic considerations. Accordingly it was argued that new imagery and phraseology occurred to replace (to some degree at least) the ideas and terminology of chs 1–39, with phenomena such as the duplication of words occurring more prominently in chs 40–66. The literary style of this latter section was held to be marked by a personification of cities and nature alike, a dramatic depicting of the fortunes of individuals and nations, and an impassioned lyricism that made the section one of outstanding literary quality. By contrast, the style of Isaiah ben Amoz in chs 1–39 was described as terse and compact, and the thought and ideas as moving in a measured, unexceptional manner.

The third criterion for the division of the prophecy involved the theological concepts of chs 40–66. Thus it was alleged that, whereas earlier chapters spoke of God's majesty, later ones described His uniqueness and eternity. In the first part of the prophecy it was maintained that the remnant constituted the faithful left behind in Jerusalem, whereas in later chapters the remnant consisted of the exiled Judeans

about to be brought back to Palestine. A third supposition was that the messianic king of chs 1–39 was replaced by the servant concept of chs 40–66.

### C. Arguments Against Divided Authorship

Conservative scholars met the first of these objections by recognizing that the difference in the time-perspective between the first and second supposed divisions of the prophecy was of an ideal rather than a real nature. Taking their cue from remarks such as those made by Driver (intro, p. 237) to the effect that there were instances where Isaiah ben Amoz projected himself into the future and then described certain events yet to take place as though they had already occurred (cf. 5:13–17; 9:1–7; 23:1, 14), they asked why it would not have been possible for a prophet as great as the author of chs 40–66 to have maintained exactly the same kind of ideal standpoint for some prolonged period also. In addition it was pointed out that the Exile was not an event that was still very much in the future for Isaiah, but a process that had for long been initiated by God's people, and whose culmination was in fact a commonplace of prophetic observation and prediction.

Issue was also taken with the way in which critical scholars either minimized or else rejected completely the predictive element in prophecy, and in particular their allegation that it would be unprecedented for the name of Cyrus to have been mentioned more than a century and a half before his birth.

Conservative writers then cited the prophetic utterance that foretold the name of Josiah more than three hundred years before he was born (1 K. 13:1f), the mention of Bethlehem by Micah, Isaiah's contemporary, as the birthplace of the Messiah (Mic. 5:2; Mt. 2:6) some six hundred years before the event, and the subjugation of Tyre by the Babylonians as predicted both by Ezekiel (26:2–21) and Zechariah (9:1–4). The first of these prophecies proved particularly embarrassing to liberal scholars, since there was absolutely no possibility whatever of the Hebrew text being

corrupt at that point, and in the end they quietly gave up the task of attempting to meet this devastating criticism of their position, other than insisting that there could be no predictive element in prophecy.

Equally difficult for liberal scholarship was the task of furnishing convincing evidence for the theory that chs 40–66 were written in Babylonia. Duhm and others followed the general tradition of the Graf-Wellhausen school by formulating speculative accounts of the way in which this eventuality could have happened, but no amount of critical ingenuity could furnish any actual proof. C. C. Torrey, one of the more extreme critics of his day, was so skeptical of this kind of approach that he asserted flatly that the few references to Babylon and Cyrus in chs 40–66 were bungling editorial insertions, and that the bulk of the material could be assigned without question to a Palestinian milieu. Some liberal scholars made a determined attempt to see a Babylonian background in the description of religion, buildings, and local scenery, but when pressed they were forced to concede that nothing of a cultural, geographical, or topographical nature suggested any locale other than Palestine as the place of origin of the prophecy. That no place other than Judah or Jerusalem was mentioned in chs 40–66 as the actual home of the Judeans supported this Palestinian provenance. From the foregoing discussion it would therefore appear that the Babylonian Exile was in fact being predicted rather than being presupposed in chs 40–66, and that those addressed were still living in Palestine and had not yet been transported as captives to Babylonia.

Arguments from literary style have always been rather tenuous and highly subjective in nature, though this fact was unfortunately not recognized by the members of the Graf-Wellhausen school. Curiously enough, the adherents of this approach to OT study saw no inconsistency whatever in investigating material ascribed to some biblical author, and then denying to his literary activity certain parts of the corpus simply because the literary form and vocabulary of each chapter did not

happen to correspond in minute detail. Conservative scholars were not slow to point out the anomalies involved, and this, along with the much wider knowledge of ancient Near Eastern languages that scholars now possess, has resulted in far less reliance being placed upon this form of argument than was the case previously. It is now conceded openly that arguments based on style can prove to be extremely precarious in nature, and not infrequently to be resting upon a complete misunderstanding of the literary situation, as the following example will show. Liberal scholars have commonly argued that, because a Mesopotamian literary idiom occurs in Isa. 45:7, an exilic date and a Babylonian provenance must obviously be indicated for the chapter in question, and by implication, for chs 40–55 at the least. The idiom referred to is known to modern scholars as *merismus*, in which antonyms used in pairs are employed to designate the totality of a given situation. This particular form originated with the Sumerians, and is one of the oldest literary idioms known. At an early period its usage diffused northward into the subsequent Babylonian culture, and westward into the language and thought of Egypt. On prima facie grounds, the incidence of *merismus* in Isa. 45:7 could equally well imply an Egyptian or a Mesopotamian origin for the material. Yet because purely speculative considerations demanded for liberal scholars a Babylonian provenance, the possibility that the chapter could have come (at least on the grounds of this particular piece of linguistic evidence) from Egypt was never even considered, let alone dismissed. If the incidence of *merismus* were to be in fact the deciding criterion, however, the very first chapter of the prophecy would have to be attributed to someone other than Isaiah ben Amoz, and to a period other than the 8th cent B.C., since the second verse contains an obvious *merismus* (“heavens ... earth”). Yet not even the most radical literary critic has been presumptuous enough to make this suggestion. Obviously Isaiah’s use of *merismus*, which of course is not restricted to the two verses mentioned above,

cannot possibly determine the date of any section of any composition, prophetic or otherwise. Certain *merismus* expressions do have another extremely important function in the prophecy of Isaiah, the significance of which will be examined subsequently.

Even with the information that was then at their disposal, nineteenth-century scholars were clearly wrong in suggesting the kind of wide stylistic divergences that they did, because a close study of the prophecy shows that chs 1–39 and 40–66 have close verbal agreement in specific instances. For example, emphatic reduplication occurs in 2:7, 8; 6:3; 8:9; 24:16, 23; 40:1; 43:11, 25; 48:15; 51:12; 57:19; and 62:10. The agonies of a woman in labor are mentioned in 13:8; 21:3; 26:17, 18; 42:14; 54:1; 66:7, while the position occupied by Zion in the prophet's thoughts can be seen in 2:3; 4:4; 18:7; 24:23; 28:16; 29:8; 30:19; 31:9; 33:5, 20; 34:8; 46:13; 49:14; 51:3; 16; 52:1; 59:20; 60:14; 62:1, 11; 66:8. It is rather interesting from a stylistic standpoint that the expression "the mouth of the Lord has spoken" should occur in 1:20; 40:5; 58:14, and be found nowhere else to the OT, and that the phrase translated "running with water" (30:25) and "flowing streams" (44:4) should not be found anywhere else in the Hebrew scriptures.

An examination of the foregoing shows that so far from diverging midway through the extant prophecy, the literary style of the book exhibits an amazing consistency. It also makes clear that Isaiah's literary style differed significantly from that of every other OT prophet, and in particular shows that it diverged widely from that employed by Ezekiel and the postexilic prophets.

The same considerations hold good for the theological differences alleged for chs 1–39 and 40–66. In this connection notice should be taken of a characteristic name for God, "the Holy One of Israel." It occurs twenty-six times in the prophecy, and only six times elsewhere in the OT, one of which is in a parallel passage in Kings (2 K. 19:22; cf. Ps. 71:22; 78:41; 89:18 [MT 19]; Jer. 50:29; 51:5). This unique

description unifies the various sections in which it appears, and stamps them with the personal imprimatur of the one who saw the vision of the most high God seated on His throne, and heard the angelic choir singing His praise and glory (6:3). Against the unproven assertion that the two supposed divisions of the prophecy exhibit substantial theological differences, the presence of this concept of God as the Holy One of Israel is a strong argument for the theological unity of the work, distributed as it is twelve times in chs 1–39 (1:4; 5:19, 24; 10:20; 12:6; 17:7; 29:19; 30:11f, 15; 31:1; 37:23) and thirteen times in chs 40–66 (41:14, 16, 20; 43:3, 14; 45:11; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7; 54:5; 55:5; 60:9, 14). Such an even and consistent distribution would have been impossible had the prophecy as a whole arisen from such diverse historical circumstances as the liberal critics claimed. Another concept which occurs with some frequency in the prophecy is that of a highway (11:16; 35:8; 40:3; 43:19; 49:11; 57:14; 62:10). References to the temple and its worship also presuppose a uniform preexilic Palestinian milieu throughout. Thus 1:11–15 reflects a situation when all was flourishing in the land, whereas the attack of Sennacherib has brought about different conditions in 43:23f In 66:1–3, 6, 20, not only is the existence of the temple and its ritual presupposed, but the prophet is active in condemning those very features that were to occupy Jeremiah's thoughts so much in the following century.

One of the most important unifying theological concepts has to do with the strictures of Isaiah concerning idolatry. Such references, especially as they occur in chs 40–66, present a uniform picture of preexilic veneration of Canaanite deities and indulgence in the sensual rituals now illustrated by archeological discoveries at Ugarit (Râs Shamrah). Critical scholars have failed to observe that, apart from the description of Babylonian idolatry in 47:13, all other references to such practices in chs 40–66 are specifically to the preexilic Canaanite variety mentioned in 1:13, 29; 2:8; 8:19, and elsewhere. Such allusions in later chapters of

the extant prophecy include 40:19; 41:7, 29; 42:17; 44:9, 25; 45:16; 46:6f; 48:5; 57:5f; 66:3, 17. Of the preceding, it is impossible to interpret 44:9, 25 and 57:5 in any terms other than those of the familiar preexilic Canaanite idolatry. If this material had in fact come from the Exile and had been written by an unknown prophet, it is most strange that the author was so actively concerned with something that was meaningless to his compatriots in Babylonia, and which in fact, both socially and religiously, was a completely dead issue. But since the ancient Hebrew prophets were not given to answering questions that their hearers were not asking, it can only be concluded that those who interpret the material of chs 40–66 in terms of an exilic or postexilic standpoint are construing incorrectly such evidence as they purport to possess. There can be no doubt that, in reality, the social and religious background of the content of chs 40–66 is that of the preexilic period, as Kissane showed so competently (E. J. Kissane, *Book of Isaiah* [1943], II, xlvi ff). If nineteenth-century literary critics had made an honest attempt to relate chs 40–66 to Hebrew history, it would have become clear to them immediately that certain portions of that section could not be relegated to any point within the exilic period. Thus in 40:9 the stronghold of Zion and the cities of Judah are still in existence, a situation vastly different from the known conditions at the time of the Exile. Again, in 62:6 the walls of Jerusalem were mentioned explicitly in a context of well-being and prosperity, and it is impossible to interpret this state of affairs either in terms of the Exile or the early postexilic period. By contrast, against an obvious background of eighth-century-B.C. life in the southern kingdom, Isaiah regards the Exile as an already accomplished fact, as in 1:7–9; 5:13; and 14:1–4. Theology, religion, and history thus combine to emphasize the unity of background and provenance of the extant work.

The later chapters of the prophecy of Isaiah have a far greater degree of consonance with the statements of the eighth-century B.C. prophets about current religious and moral

conditions than most liberal critics have been prepared to concede. Such reflections can be seen in 44:23f; 45:8; 50:1; 55:12f; 56:1; 57:1; 59:3; 61:8; 63:3–5. Especially striking are the similarities between the doctrines of Isa. 40–66 and the teachings of Micah. The following resemblances should be noted: Isa. 41:15f and Mic. 4:13; Isa. 47:2f and Mic. 1:11; Isa. 48:2 and Mic. 3:11; Isa. 49:23 and Mic. 7:17; Isa. 52:12 and Mic. 2:13; Isa. 58:1 and Mic. 3:8. Quite obviously the same confident expectation of the future under God's providence, the same overall conception of the ancient Near Eastern nations, and the joyous hope that a remnant would return from exile to perpetuate the ancestral faith, were characteristic of both prophets.

Conservative scholars generally answered the arguments relating to supposed differences in theological standpoint and perspective by demonstrating that the concepts elaborated in later sections of the prophecy were broader and more extended in scope than their counterparts in chs 1–39. Thus the messiah, who had been described in earlier parts of the prophecy in terms of a king who would be of Davidic stock, was subsequently thought of as the Servant of the Lord. But even here the mention of David in 55:3 makes it evident that the earlier concept of a royal Davidic descendant had not by any means been abandoned in favor of the servant ideal. As will be shown subsequently, the extant prophecy exhibits a remarkable parallelism of both structure and thought so that specific theological emphases occur in a context that makes it extremely difficult to argue against the integrity of the work and an eighth-century-B.C. Palestinian provenance. There is no evidence for the assertion that in chs 1–39 the remnant comprised the faithful left behind in Jerusalem, but in chs 40–66 it was understood as the exiled group of Judeans preparing to return to Palestine. As observed above, it is impossible to show that any locale other than Judean soil was the place from which chs 40–66 emerged. The topography, the references to Canaanite idolatry, and the significance of the temple and

the house of David all point to a distinctively Palestinian background and refute any suggestion of a Babylonian provenance.

One other strong argument against a divided authorship should be noted in passing, and this has to do with the predictive element in the prophecy. Prediction was of the essence of prophetic activity (cf. Dt. 18:22), and Isaiah was particularly gifted in this direction. Without any warning he repeatedly leaped from despair to hope, from threat to promise, and from the actual to the ideal. While he spoke of his own age, of course, he also addressed himself to the days that would follow, as shown by the fact that his verb tenses are typically futures and prophetic perfects. The following historical situations in the prophecy are worthy of note. Before the Syro-Ephraimitic war (734 B.C.), he predicted that within sixty-five years Ephraim should be broken to pieces (7:8); and that before the child Maher-shalal-hashbaz should have knowledge to cry, "My father," or "My mother," the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria should be carried away (8:4; cf. 7:16). These are, however, but two of numerous predictions, as shown above, among his earlier prophecies (cf. 1:27f; 2:2-4; 6:13; 10:20-23; 11:6-16; 17:14). Shortly before the downfall of Samaria in 722 B.C. Isaiah predicted that Tyre should be forgotten seventy years, and that after the end of seventy years its merchandise should be dedicated to the Lord (23:15, 18). In like manner, prior to the siege of Ashdod in 711 B.C., he proclaimed that within three years Moab should be brought into contempt (16:14), and that within a year all the glory of Kedar should fail (21:16). And not long prior to the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib in 701 B.C. he predicted that in an instant, suddenly, a multitude of Jerusalem's foes should be as dust (29:5); that yet a very little while and Lebanon should be turned into a fruitful field (29:17); and that Assyria should be dismayed and fall by the sword, but not of men (30:17, 31; 31:8). And more, that for days beyond a year, the careless women of Jerusalem should be troubled (32:10, 16-20); and that the righteous in Zion should see Jerusalem a quiet habitation,

and return and come with singing (33:17ff; 35:4, 10); but that Sennacherib, on the contrary, should hear tidings and return without shooting an arrow into the city (37:7, 26-29, 33-35).

In like manner, *after* the siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib in 701 B.C. was over, the prophet seems to have continued to predict; and, in order to demonstrate to the suffering and unbelieving remnant about him the deity of the Lord and the folly of idolatry, pointed to the predictions which he had already made in the earlier years of his ministry, and to the fact that they had been fulfilled. These references include 41:21-23, 26; 42:9, 23; 43:9, 12; 44:7f, 27f; 45:3f, 11, 13; 46:10f; 48:3, 5; 48:6-8, 14-16. There can be no doubt that these predictions are as consistent throughout the extant prophecy as they are explicit and emphatic.

**D. The Prophecy as an Anthology** As W. F. Albright pointed out (FSAC, p. 275), scholars are becoming increasingly aware that most OT prophecies are really anthologies of oracular and sermonic material, since their contents are seldom in chronological order. The Hebrew prophets did not set out to elaborate a system of theology in their teachings, but instead spoke the divine word as they received it in spiritual fellowship with God. They addressed themselves to the needs of their age, and were infinitely more concerned about speaking to the contemporary situation than in correlating specific utterances to a given phase or epoch of history, in the manner that a chronicler might have done. Thus it is not surprising, even in fairly short prophecies, to encounter chronologically different sections in juxtaposition. It would seem that, in most instances, the aim of the written prophecy was to afford permanence for the spoken word in that and subsequent generations, mindful of the fact that, in the ancient Near East, anything of importance was committed to writing either when it happened or shortly afterward.

By definition, an anthology of written work can, and most frequently does, emerge from an

extended period of the author's literary activity, and thus can be expected not only to reflect specific differences of literary style, but an equal diversity of social, historical, or religious circumstances, many of which would have prompted the composition of various items of the collection in the first instance. Again, an anthology normally comprises selections from the author's works, where a single individual is involved, and not his entire production of literature. While some of the Minor Prophets may have written or spoken little else beyond what is attributed to them in extant works, major writers such as Jeremiah or Isaiah probably produced far more than has actually survived. Certainly it is correct to regard Isaiah as an anthology in the sense described above because of the evidence furnished by the superscription of 1:1. This verse comprises a heading for the prophecy and speaks specifically of the revelatory material received by Isaiah in visions in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. The nature of the prophecy as an anthology is further indicated by the presence of superscriptions in 2:1 and 13:1; these may well have pointed to the presence of earlier collections of prophetic pronouncements.

Although Isaiah may be regarded properly as an anthology, it must not be imagined that the book is a rather arbitrary selection of discourses compiled haphazardly. That the work received its extant form from the specific application of a special type of literary structure familiar to the ancient Near Eastern peoples will be made evident below. For the moment it should be noted that the extant composition manifests a certain degree of chronological order as it stands. In chs 1–39, the utterances in chs 2–5 seem to have emerged from the earliest stages of Isaiah's ministry, while 7:1–9:7 probably came from a period about 734 B.C., during the Syro-Ephraimite conflict. While some doubt remains, it may well be that chs 18–20 were the product of the period between 715 and 711 B.C. The historical material of chs 36–39, which varies only slightly from 2 K. 18:13–20:19, has been held to

be later than Isaiah since it mentioned Sennacherib's death (681 B.C.). This would be later than Isaiah unless he survived to the early years of Manasseh (687/6–642/1 B.C.), as Jewish tradition has long maintained. It may be that this historical material was arranged by the disciples of Isaiah after his death. It is exceedingly difficult, however, to maintain as liberal scholars have done that chs 36–39, in which Isaiah himself played such an important part, were in fact extraneous and specifically non-Isaianic in origin. There seem to be good grounds for thinking that this material comprised an Isaiah source upon which the compiler of Kings drew. The existence of a separate Isaianic source dealing with the life of Hezekiah appears to be indicated by 2 Ch. 32:32, which suggests that the excerpt from the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah might have been taken from the vision of Isaiah. Furthermore, that the song of Hezekiah (Isa. 38:9–20) occurred in the prophecy but not in the section in Kings indicates that the editor of the latter apparently thought the material unsuitable for his purposes. That the preservation of strict chronological sequences was not the overriding concern of the author is plain from Isa. 9:8–21, which may well comprise the earliest pronouncements of Isaiah. Again, the utterances concerning Damascus (17:1–14) may be dated somewhat before 735 B.C., a period that is probably very close to the events narrated in ch 7.

Evidence of some sort of chronological arrangement appears in chs 40–55, which predict the return from Exile and the time of restoration of national life. These include sections dealing with the work of Cyrus (41–45), predictions concerning the downfall of Babylon (46–47), and utterances describing the glories of the new Jerusalem (49–54). Nor should one ignore the suggestion that the compiler(s) arranged the material of chs 56–66 in a way that presented in alternate form prophecies whose standpoints were preexilic (56:1–57:12; 59:1–60:22; 62:1–63:19; 65:1–25) and exilic (58:1–14; 61:1–11; 64:1–12;

66:1–14), with 57:14–21 and 66:15–24 perhaps comprising fragments of such oracles.

Another suggestion regarding the manner in which the Isaianic anthology was compiled relates to the arrangement of material according to subject matter. Some scholars have seen the opening chapters (1–35) as a series of oracles emerging from Isaiah's contemporary situation, followed by a section of historical material (36–39). The next group of utterances (40–55) presupposed the Exile in Babylon, as some earlier references had done, while the remainder of the extant prophecy (56–66) comprised a diverse group of oracles that picked up themes already prominent in earlier chapters. The presence of three superscriptions in the prophecy (1:1; 2:1; 13:1) was seen as perhaps representing three separate written compilations by Isaiah, upon which the editor(s) drew subsequently. Although an approach of this sort partially explains the parallelism between different portions of the book, it does so from a purely occidental standpoint, and therefore does not offer a satisfactory explanation of the mechanics involved in the compilation of the prophecy. Quite clearly, then, the questions associated with the way in which the anthology reached its present form are much more involved than has been imagined by anyone, whether liberal or conservative, who has been approaching this piece of oriental literature on the basis of occidental theoretical presuppositions.

**E. Evidence from Qumrân** A new approach to the problem of the authorship and compilation of Isaiah became possible as the result of the recovery from Qumrân of the celebrated Dead Sea Scrolls. From Cave 1 came a complete copy of the book of Isaiah, known to scholars as 1QIsaa;. Surprisingly well preserved, it comprised fifty-four columns of clearly written Hebrew script inscribed on seventeen sheets of leather that had been stitched end to end. When unrolled it measured about 7.3 m (24 ft) in length, and was approximately 30 cm. (1 ft) in width. The text averaged twenty-nine lines to

each column, and instead of being set out in chapter-and-verse form, as in the more modern style, it was divided up into clearly marked sections and paragraphs. Although the scroll had obviously been used a great deal in antiquity, the manuscript had only ten lacunae and about one dozen small holes, a circumstance that made restoration of the text a comparatively easy matter. Copyists' errors were evident in the text, as were the corrections of such mistakes, and the work of several different hands is apparent in a few instances in the manuscript. Aside from differences in orthography and the use of certain consonants as vowel letters, the text of Isaiah in 1QIsaa; was identical with that in the much later editions of the MT.

When the scholarly world learned of the existence of an ancient Isaiah scroll among the Qumrân writings, many hoped that at long last it would be possible to say something of a positive nature about the number of Isaiahs who were responsible for the extant prophecy. A photographic edition of the scroll showed that no gap occurred between the end of ch 39 and the beginning of ch 40, as is the case in some modern translations of the prophecy. Since ch 40 began on the bottom line of a column, it would have been very easy for a copyist to have followed a division in the Hebrew text if such had actually existed in the manuscript from which he was working. But it was noticed that a break in the text occurred at the end of ch 33, where a space of three lines occurred before the commencement of ch 34. If at that stage of investigation the scholars attributed any significance to this phenomenon, it was merely to suggest that the change of authorship occurred some six chapters earlier than the literary analysts had supposed. Indeed, at least one nineteenth-century scholar, W. Robertson Smith (*Prophets of Israel* [1895], p. 355) had actually raised that possibility, but had been ignored by those who were acclaiming an "unknown prophet of the exile" as the author of at least some of the material from ch 40 onward.

Paul Kahle (*Die Hebräischen Handschriften aus der Höhle* [1951], pp. 72f) was the first to comment on the incidence of a gap in the text after ch 33; he claimed that it substantiated C. C. Torrey's notion that chs 34 and 35, along with chs 40–66, belonged to the activities of a Deutero-Isaiah. Unfortunately this observation afforded no explanation whatever of the reason why chs 36–39 came to form part of the work of this Second Isaiah. The matter remained unresolved until W. H. Brownlee published a treatise (*Meaning of the Qumrân Scrolls for the Bible* [1964]) that for the first time attempted to visualize the composition of the book from the standpoint of an ancient Near Eastern, rather than an occidental, author. Brownlee noted that in antiquity it was not unusual for books to be produced in two parts (cf. H. St. John Thackeray, *Septuagint and Jewish Worship* [1923], pp. 130ff), perhaps for convenience in handling bulky writings. Furthermore, there are good reasons for believing that literary works of high quality were often planned with a natural division in the middle of the composition. Josephus obviously attributed this sort of activity to certain of the Hebrew literary prophets in observing that Ezekiel, Daniel, and Isaiah had left their writings behind in "books" (Ant. x.5.1; x.2.2; x.11.7). The plural form would thus describe quite properly a work produced in two halves, or in bifid form, to use a more modern term. In the extant Isaiah, such a structure would encompass two sections of thirty-three chapters each, and thus it is now possible, as Brownlee has shown, to regard the break in the text of 1QIsaa; that occurs at the end of ch 33 as indicating that the ancient practice of bisecting an important literary work was being followed. For Brownlee, the extant prophecy comprised the outcome of effort by an Isaianic school, whose major achievement was the publication in two volumes of the utterances of the master.

Such an analysis constitutes the best attempt on the part of liberal scholarship to come to grips with the book's real problems, which involve method rather than history or theology. Literary criticism in the past has been far too

subjective and speculative in nature, and has failed to face the implications of objective data. The grave methodological weakness of past literary criticism was that it examined oriental literature from an occidental point of view, an error that was compounded by the application of an overriding a priori approach. Modern literary research will have to reexamine the problems upon which the nineteenth-century scholars pronounced with such authority and finality, using all of the pertinent data and applying a scientific, a posteriori method of investigation in order to interpret correctly the significance of the material under consideration. In the case of Isaiah, the evidence relating to the structure of the prophecy as furnished by 1QIsaa; indicates clearly that the extant canonical work was one of the most elaborate and artistically constructed anthologies ever to have emerged from the ancient Near East. Brownlee is correct in stating that it was written as a two-volume work, and on closer examination it can be actually seen to have been linked in series in the typical Mesopotamian scribal fashion by means of the ancient Sumerian literary figure known as *merismus*. This device, already described above, involved the use of antonymic pairs to denote totality, and in the case of Isaiah such pairs were used to comprise markers at the beginning of volumes one and two. They occur in 1:2 ("O heavens ... O earth"), introducing the first section of the scroll, and again in 34:1 ("O nations ... O peoples ... the earth ... the world"), which introduces the second section of the two-part composition.

With this kind of notation there can be no possible doubt that the balance of sections and themes as outlined by Brownlee was deliberate rather than accidental. The prophecy obviously was assembled in bifid form so that each half could circulate independently if necessary, and owing to the size of the composition there can be little question but that this would have actually taken place. It is equally clear that this arrangement was carefully planned, claimed a high degree of literary and functional artistry, and was constructed in full accord with certain

accepted compilatory techniques familiar to the scribes of antiquity. All of this the large Qumrân Isaiah scroll has now made evident. Whatever may have been the history of independent circulation of the two units forming the extant Isaiah, the prophecy had evidently been known as a unity long before the copyists of the Qumrân settlement commenced their labors.

**F. Composition and Date of Isaiah** On the basis of the foregoing information it is possible to make a new and responsible approach to the problems involving the compilation and date of the prophecy. Taking the latter first, the cumulative evidence from Qumrân demands a much closer look at the tradition of eighth-century-B.C. authorship for Isaiah. The Qumrân fellowship is now known to have originated as a schismatic group during or perhaps a little prior to the Maccabean period. All of its scriptural manuscripts were copies, and not originals; thus it is obvious that none of them could have originated in the Maccabean period, since an adequate amount of time would not have elapsed between the original autograph and the general acceptance of the composition as canonical scripture. One criterion for canonical status of material in the second and third divisions of the Hebrew canon was a comparison with the ethos of the Mosaic Law. Because of the need for manuscripts to circulate among both the religious authorities and the devout, a certain interval of time between the compilation of potentially canonical material and its final recognition as such was obviously inevitable, even if that same material, or something approximating it, had already been proclaimed orally.

If Burrows and others were correct in dating 1Qisaa ca 100 B.C. (cf. M. Burrows, *Dead Sea Scrolls* [1955], p. 118), it is clear that the extant prophecy was in its final form at least by the beginning of the 2nd cent B.C. That it evidently came from a considerably earlier period was made plain by Burrows: "The book of Isaiah certainly comes from a time several centuries before the earliest date to which this manuscript can be assigned on any grounds"

(Burrows, p. 109). How early, then, was the original bifid Isaiah set? Here again the Qumrân manuscripts throw important light on the situation. From Cave 4 a fragmentary copy of the Psalter (4QPsa<sup>a</sup>) dated to the 2nd cent B.C. showed incontrovertibly that the collection of canonical Psalms had already been fixed by the time of the Maccabees (F. M. Cross, *Ancient Library of Qumrân and Modern Biblical Studies* [1961], p. 165). This evidence alone has persuaded scholars to abandon the once popular concept of "Maccabean psalms" and instead to date the latest canonical psalms, not in the Greek period (331–65 B.C.), but in the even earlier Persian period (539–331 B.C.). The evidence from this fragmentary copy of the Psalter thus indicates that no part of the canonical OT was put in written form later than 330 B.C., and in the case of Isaiah it would seem to advance the date of composition to the middle of the Persian period at the latest.

This factual evidence immediately challenges the critical theories concerning the authorship of the prophecy. For one thing, it repudiates unequivocally the view of Volz (*Jesaja* [1932], II, 200) that chs 65–66 were written after 331 B.C. For another, it demonstrates the fallacy of the view of Kennett and others that the concept of the Suffering Servant arose as the result of the persecution of pious Jews under Antiochus IV Epiphanes (R. H. Kennett, *Composition of the Book of Isaiah* [1909], p. 85; *OT Essays* [1928], p. 146). In the same way, Duhm's theory (*Das Buch Jesaja* [1892], pp. 9f) that chs 24–27 belonged to the time of John Hyrcanus is shown to be untenable, as is any suggestion of a Third Isaiah or additional Isaiahs, credited from time to time with having had a hand in writing parts of chs 50–66 (cf. J. L. McKenzie, *Second Isaiah* [AB, 1968], pp. lxxvii–lxxxi). Suppositions of this kind are entirely a product of critical speculation, without factual basis, as the evidence from Qumrân now makes clear.

Although the theory of a Trito-Isaiah can now be dismissed without further consideration, that which involved the so-called Second Isaiah must be refuted on somewhat different grounds. Almost all liberal scholars regarded

the assumption of the existence of a Second Isaiah as constituting “one of the most assured results of modern literary criticism.” But liberal scholars have never demonstrated the existence of this unknown prophet of the exile, and it would appear from a perusal of writings in this area that no demonstration seems to be thought necessary by proponents of the Second Isaiah theory, since to mention the unknown prophet is to preclude automatically any further need to prove his alleged existence. Liberal orthodoxy in this matter has permeated even the otherwise admirable researches of Brownlee, as noted above, where he supposed that the exilic prophet had arisen from the group of Isaiah’s disciples credited with having produced the Isaianic anthology.

This concept of an alleged exilic Second Isaiah is by far the weakest point in Brownlee’s argument, and obviously vitiates some of his conclusions. As in other instances, it was not examined critically by the author because it was a fundamentally important element of orthodox theory, inadequate though it may be. Taken at face value, the assertion that a Second Isaiah was active during the exilic period has important implications for history as well as literature and spirituality. It could be held to indicate that up to 150 years after the death of the master, members of an Isaianic school were busily perpetuating the traditions of the prophet in what can only be described as a theological vacuum. A vacuum indeed, because the work of Isaiah had long given place to the lengthy and immensely significant ministry of Jeremiah and its theology of calamity, and this in turn had been followed by the tribulations of captivity in Babylonia and the ministry of Ezekiel as prophet, priest, and pastor to the exiled Jewish community. In addition there was the work of Daniel as a Jewish statesman in a heathen court, setting for the Neo-Babylonian regime a model of Hebrew piety and gaining such stature by his spiritual deportment and wisdom as to succeed ultimately to membership in a triad that governed the kingdom. Yet the work of the supposed school shows no recognition whatever of the work or

thought of Jeremiah, the witness and teachings of Ezekiel, whose activities marked a decisive turning point in Hebrew religious life, or the life and example of Daniel, the gifted Hebrew seer and saint.

Despite the fact that chs 40–66 afford no basis for thinking that they were composed in Babylonia, those who have postulated the existence of the so-called school have placed this group of Isaianic supporters in Babylonia itself, where, if sheer historical circumstances have any meaning at all for the situation, they could not have failed to come into contact with other Judean exiles and their outstanding leaders. Nor could they possibly have avoided reflecting (to some extent at least) the teachings and traditions of Jeremiah and Ezekiel as fostered by the deported Judeans. Furthermore, the assertions concerning the existence of Deutero-Isaiah would have the credulous reader believe that the Palestinian Isaianic tradition received a new lease of quite independent life in Babylonia during the time of the Exile as the result of the work of this unknown prophet, who added to the already existing compositions of the deceased master in language that for beauty of expression and literary elegance has seldom been surpassed; but that this work bore almost no relationship to the crucial theological issues of the day as expressed particularly in the writings of Ezekiel. Had this unknown prophet actually had any existence other than in the fervid imaginations of nineteenth-century European scholars, and had he in fact been teaching and writing during the Exile, he would hardly have reflected a preexilic Palestinian background such as occurs in chs 40–55, but would instead have been in accord with Ezekiel and Daniel in depicting contemporary Mesopotamian environmental, social, moral, and religious conditions. A careful reading of chs 40–55 reveals only the most general allusions to the coming Exile, and nothing whatever pertaining to the details of life as it was ultimately experienced by the deported Judeans at *Til Abūbi*, probably located near Nippur.

Perhaps the most important repudiation of the fallacy entertained by postulating the existence of a so-called Second Isaiah is to be seen in the ignorance that he exhibited in the matter of the theological continuity between Jeremiah and Ezekiel with respect to the new covenant. Jeremiah (31:31-34) had predicted a time when the older corporate concept of covenantal relationship would be replaced by an individual one. Ezekiel went further (18:1-24) and emphasized that the individual in his dealings with God would have to bear personal responsibility for his own wrongdoings. By contrast, the postulated unknown prophet of the Exile knew nothing of the new covenant and its spiritual implications. On two occasions where the concept of covenant was introduced (Isa. 42:6; 49:8), it was related to the work of the Servant as a "covenant of the people," while Isa. 54:10 referred to it in a general manner as "my peaceful covenant" and embraced ideas of divine compassion. So formidable is this particular objection to the liberal supposition of a Second Isaiah that it has almost invariably tended to be evaded, and to date no liberal scholar has even begun to resolve the problem posed by the relationship of the historical ministry and writings of Ezekiel to that of the wholly hypothetical Deutero-Isaiah. This failure is hardly surprising in the light of a passage such as Ezk. 2:5, which suggests that there was no other prophet living in the community who was issuing the same warnings as Ezekiel. Again, in Ezk. 22:30, God was represented as telling the prophet that He had looked for a man to fill the breach, but that He had found no one. This situation would not have existed had the celebrated unknown prophet of the Exile been living and ministering in the Judean community of exiles at the time of Ezekiel, and by his utterances and example bringing his dejected hearers out of despair to new heights of creative spirituality, as is popularly supposed to have happened by those who for so long have been advocating the existence of a Second Isaiah. Surely under such conditions a man of his outstanding gifts would have been ideally

sued for whatever ministry God had for him to perform on behalf of the dispirited exiles.

The evidence furnished by the book of Ezekiel, however, knows nothing of an unknown prophet of the Exile. Any ministering that was undertaken to the exiled community was the sole responsibility of Ezekiel, since Daniel was functioning at an entirely different level in Babylonian affairs; also there is no doubt that Ezekiel was a genuine historical figure, as opposed to the imaginary Deutero-Isaiah. It would be without parallel in Hebrew history for one of the greatest, if not the greatest of the Hebrew prophets, to lavish on his contemporaries, at a time when they were experiencing one of the most serious spiritual crises of their history, some of the most exalted language and lofty spirituality in the whole of divine revelation, and having done all this to pass so completely from Hebrew tradition that not even his name managed to survive. It is even more incredible to suppose that his incomparable literary work could ever have become a mere appendix to that of a much inferior and less renowned Palestinian prophet, however much the latter might have commended himself to the former, and that for two millennia his writings should have been uniformly regarded by Jewish tradition as comprising the work of this inferior prophet. Liberal scholarship has yet to establish the degree of probability by which sections of literature emerging from a later period should have become intermingled with the writings of Isaiah ben Amoz by an inexperienced or incompetent editor in such a way that it has become virtually impossible for anyone to extract the work of the eighth-century B.C. prophet and arrange it in something like chronological order. Were any further objection needed, it can only be regarded as totally incredible that the Jews, with their almost superstitious veneration of sacred Scripture, could ever have permitted it to be mutilated in such a manner.

If this supposedly unknown individual is to be regarded as anything other than an imaginative creation of nineteenth-century critical

scholarship, it will be mandatory for his place in the history of Hebrew thought and religious institutions to be established firmly. As noted above, however, he was evidently totally unknown to both Ezekiel and Daniel, despite the outstanding talents and abilities credited to him. In the postexilic period, neither his name nor his teachings seem to have exerted the slightest influence over Haggai and Zechariah on the one hand, or over Ezra and Nehemiah on the other. By contrast, however, it is known that the thought of Ezekiel exercised a profound effect upon both temple and synagogue worship in the postexilic theocracy. In the same way it was the wholehearted application of the law of Moses, not the teachings of an unknown prophet of the Exile, that furnished Judaism with its characteristic stamp of legalism. The preoccupations of Deutero-Isaiah with the kind of idolatry typical of preexilic Canaan would have been as out of place in Babylonia, where the conditions for indulgence in Canaanite religious rites simply did not exist, as they would have been in the postexilic theocracy, if only because the Exile had made Canaanite Baal worship a completely dead issue.

That the Jews of the exilic or postexilic periods never had a tradition of a Second Isaiah or a Third Isaiah makes the supposition of his (or their) existence not merely hypothetical but extremely suspect. On purely objective grounds no evidence supports the contention of liberal scholars that there was more than one author of the extant prophecy. As with the Pentateuch, the liberal studies of the book of Isaiah are littered with undemonstrated assumptions, tendentious arguments, and unwarranted conclusions for which there is no factual evidence, and this despite the confidence with which they were promulgated. It is because such research was so far removed from accredited scientific method that it will need to be undertaken afresh, this time against a background of a posteriori scientific method and the full use of all objective data, before credible conclusions can be reached.

On the basis of the foregoing survey of hypotheses concerning the authorship of Isaiah, the present writer can only reject in all honesty any hypothesis adduced in favor of establishing the existence of a Second or Third Isaiah on the ground that such a hypothesis has been shown to be totally lacking in anything that the modern scientific approach would recognize as evidence. It seems difficult to avoid the further conclusion that Second and Third Isaiahs constitute some of the most successful myths ever foisted upon a gullible scholarly world by nineteenth-century liberal thinkers. In view of the data presented by 1Qisaa, it appears that the prophecy was the work of the one attributive author, Isaiah ben Amoz, with some possibility of assistance from his disciples. It seem to have been compiled as an anthology of this Isaiah's writings, and may well have been circulated in bifid form from the very beginning of its literary history. Its sophisticated and artistic structure would make it highly probable that the master prophet himself played a large part in shaping the final form of the work. In that event it appears likely that the prophecy was closely approaching its extant state within fifty years after the death of the prophet, and thus may be assigned with reasonable confidence to a date ca 630 B.C.

**G. Servant Oracles** Few subjects have evoked more discussion in OT theology than the problems raised by the passages relating to the work of the Servant of the Lord. As already noted, the servant passages have generally been held to comprise, as a minimum, 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9 or 50:1-11; and 52:13-53:12. For the first three centuries of its existence the Church identified the Servant with the righteous, sometimes on an individual basis but at other times on a collective basis. This was then replaced by a general messianic interpretation, which lasted until the 19th century. For liberal scholars such as Semler, Koppe, and Eichhorn, the messiah was no longer to be regarded as a scion of the house of David, but rather as a picture of the entire nation of Israel. Under Vatke and Ewald this

view was basic to the expectation that the spiritual Israel would somehow be the means of restoring the moribund physical Israel. Though others such as Cheyne, A. B. Davidson, and S. R. Driver took up this view with enthusiasm, they failed to show how an ideal Israel could suffer and die vicariously or representatively in order to redeem the actual nation. A variation of this theory envisaged the Servant as the faithful minority within the larger corpus of unrepentant Israel. This involved one portion of the nation dying to atone for and redeem the rest of the people, but the theory simply did not match the known historical facts when it was transferred to the exilic situation as depicted in Ezekiel and Daniel. Other equally unsuccessful attempts to identify the Servant related him in some way to the prophetic order, or to some specific individual such as Hezekiah, Isaiah, or Jeremiah. Delitzsch (p. 236) suggested that at its lowest level the servant concept was rooted in the entire nation of Israel. In a more developed form it was concerned with a spiritual rather than with a physical Israel, and at the highest level it represented the personage of the Redeemer-Messiah.

The view that the Servant was in fact Second Isaiah was advanced by S. Mowinckel (*Der Knecht Jahwäs* [1921]) as a reaction against the collective interpretation favored by many liberal scholars. He held that in material contiguous to the oracles, the Servant was the actual nation, whereas in the oracles themselves the missionary vocation of the Servant indicated his individuality. This theory ran into trouble in connection with the fourth oracle (52:13–53:12), to say nothing of all the problems associated with the assumption that there actually was such a person as the unknown prophet of the Exile, as noted above. Mowinckel subsequently modified his position (cf. *He That Cometh* [1956], pp. 228f) by stating that the Servant had been killed before the completion of the oracles, which had been assembled by the disciples of Deutero-Isaiah (ZAW, 49 [1931], 87ff, 242ff).

Another Scandinavian scholar, Nyberg, thought of the Servant as a supra-individual personage

belonging alike to the past, present, and future (*Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok*, 7 [1942], pp. 5ff). Not merely did this concept thus enshrine the best of all possible worlds, but it also drew upon religious and mythological elements from other beliefs. This latter element reflected to some extent the mythological view of the Servant espoused by Gressmann and Gunkel (cf. H. Gressmann, *Der Ursprung der israelitisch-jüdischen Eschatologie* [1905]; H. Gunkel, RGG [1912], III, cols 1540ff), a theory which encountered lasting difficulties because of its inability to demonstrate a positive link between the nature myths and the biblical sources.

The problems that scholars had to confront are immediately evident upon reading the oracles themselves. The personage of the Servant and the scope of his work make possible the simultaneous recognition of individual, collective, actual, and ideal elements. If a purely collective interpretation is advanced, it immediately faces the fact that the Servant of Isaiah is very different in character from Israel as depicted in the OT. Since the description of the Servant was most probably never intended to be the portrait of any specific individual, attempted identifications with known historical figures such as Uzziah, Jeremiah, or Cyrus can only be regarded as highly speculative at the best. The same conclusion must be leveled against the kind of messianic interpretation that saw the Servant in the role of some preexilic king who was thought to have undergone certain ritual punishments as part of an annual "enthronement liturgy." Redemption and atonement ceremonies were matters for the priests, not the preexilic kings, and in any event there is absolutely no factual evidence produced to date that could be cited in support of an annual enthronement ceremony in Israel such as was represented by the Babylonian *akītu* rituals.

Certain scholars have felt that those who were satisfied with the classical liberal delineation of the servant oracles took a rather restricted view of the available textual material. Thus Brownlee (pp. 193ff) suggested that additional servant songs can be found in Isa. 51:4–6, or

perhaps 1–8; 61:1ff, and 62:10–12. Similarly, Harrison (*intro to the OT* [1969], p. 797) has pointed out that, probably because of liberal preoccupations with theories of divided authorship, a prose oracle in the earlier chapters has been overlooked completely. Occurring in 22:20–25, it described the function of the divine servant, whose name was given as Eliakim, son of Hilkiah. He would have authority over Jerusalem and the house of Judah, but ultimately he would be removed from office and his powers would disappear. This oracle is of some interest historically because archeologists have found both at Tell Beit Mirsim and Bethshemesh three stamped jar handles of the 6th cent B.C. inscribed, “belonging to Eliakim, attendant of Yaukin [Jehoiachin]” (cf. 2 K. 18:18, 26, 37 par Isa. 36:3, 11, 22; cf. also 37:2).

Of the various identifications proposed for the Servant, the one that seems to suit all the data most adequately is the traditional messianic approach. In its overall construction the picture of the divine Servant is sufficiently fluid to admit of differences between the Servant and Christ the Messiah. It needs to be remembered that the Servant is not the only messianic figure in Isaiah, but this impression has been conveyed by an entirely unwarranted and arbitrary dissection of the prophecy into portions alleged by the literary critics to have come from widely separated historical periods. It is extremely difficult to believe that Isaiah was not aware, at least in part, of the historical and spiritual significance of the servant oracles, even though his eighth-century-B.C. contemporaries may have been so immersed in pagan ways as to have remained completely indifferent to any meaning, eschatological or otherwise, that the material may have had. Certainly there were those in the time of Christ who were unable to interpret such passages in terms of His status as Messiah. C. R. North is undoubtedly correct in stating that, regardless of the original of the Servant, Christ alone furnished its fulfillment (IDB, IV, 294).

*H. Cyrus* The appearance of this renowned Persian ruler’s name in Isa. 44:28 and 45:1 has supplied many liberal scholars with what they regarded as valid reason for attributing chs 40–55 to the exilic period and a specific Babylonian background. The problems posed by the incidence of the name of Cyrus (539–530 B.C.) have been met by conservative scholars in three principal ways. The first has been to reject the liberal view of an exilic date for the material as being based on a disregard for a genuinely predictive element in OT prophecy, and to assert that, in any event, Cyrus was represented by Isaiah as the subject of prediction. This latter element of the argument, which obviously would preclude anything later than an early exilic date, was even accepted by some liberal scholars, e.g., G. A. Smith (HDB, II, 493). The second approach to the problem, adopted by some modern conservative scholars such as Allis (*Unity of Isaiah* [1950], pp. 51ff) and Young (*intro to the OT* [2nd ed 1960], pp. 237f), has been to see the references as comprising prophetic previsions of the work of Cyrus that occurred 150 years later. Allis accepted somewhat uncritically the view of Josephus (*Ant.* xi.1.1) that Cyrus, having read of his destiny in Isaiah, made serious attempts to fulfil all that had been written about him. Young and Allis, however, insisted upon the predictive element in OT prophecy, and thus saw Cyrus as the subject of foretelling by Isaiah.

A third way of viewing the references to Cyrus has been to see them as explanatory glosses, inserted by a post-exilic copyist who may well have felt that Cyrus was discharging the functions of the Servant about whom Isaiah had spoken. The references in 44:28 and 45:1 are actually the only places in the prophecy where Cyrus was mentioned by name, and if the word *leḳôreš* (“of Cyrus”) is removed from the Hebrew text, it not only makes for greater smoothness in the verses involved, but focuses attention upon Jerusalem and gives promise of future restoration and glory, in consonance with other sections of chs 40–66. C. C. Torrey (*Second Isaiah: A New Interpretation* [1928], pp. vii–viii) was one of the first scholars to

recognize the possibility that the references to Cyrus were later glosses by maintaining that if the few direct and indirect allusions to him could be eliminated, almost all of chs 40–66 could be relegated to a Palestinian origin. The suggestion that *l'kôreš* has been miscopied from *hōreš*, “workman,” is improbable, if only as a totally inadequate description of the “anointed one” of 45:1.

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