

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 217

Authorship and Dates of the Book of Isaiah

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Episode Summary

When it comes to debates over biblical inspiration, the authorship and the book of Isaiah is one of the more contentious topics. Traditionally, the book in its entirety (66 chapters) was considered to have been entirely written by the prophet Isaiah, who lived in the late 8th century – early 7th century BC. From the 19th century onward, modern critical scholars argued that the book was actually three separate books (chs 1-39, 40-55, 56-66) composed in different eras (the latter sections being written during and after the exile). Consequently, scholarly talk about the book of Isaiah speaks of First, Second (“Deutero”), and Third (“Trito”) Isaiah(s). Many evangelical scholars continue to reject this academic consensus, charging that it’s acceptance undermines inspiration, scriptural consistency, and predictive prophecy? Are those charges accurate? On what basis is multiple authorship argued? How do traditional single-author proponents defend their case? We discuss all these issues in this episode of the podcast.

Transcript

Trey Stricklin: Welcome to the Naked Bible podcast, episode 217: Authorship and Dates of the Book of Isaiah. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike! Welcome back. We made it.

Dr. Michael Heiser: It is so good to be back. I just... again and again, I'm just so glad to be back.

TS: There's nothing like your own bed. But the Israel trip was absolutely amazing.

MH: Yep, that's true.

TS: I already miss all the people we met on there. I'll give a quick shout-out to Philip, Keith... Actually our friend, Keith, on the bus. He's still...

MH: A whole grocery list right there.

TS: Yeah, he's backpacking right now on his own through Israel. So that's amazing. And a shout out to Rhonda. We made lots of good friends there... and Philip and Ron.

MH: Yeah, it was fun. It was really fun.

TS: And then Danny, of course. So real quick, Mike. We recorded you... Thank goodness for the help of Danny from West Virginia (Big 12 guy... I gotta give him a shout-out). But we're going to take a video from all the people that recorded you talking in these locations, and my hope is to make a video of you speaking at these different locations. I'll put it up on YouTube eventually. So, just know hopefully that'll come out. And we could not have done that without the help of everybody there, especially Danny. So just want to give them a big shout-out.

MH: Yeah. Absolutely. Like I put in my post, the best part is always meeting people and hearing their stories. And their stories naturally include, why in the world are you here? You know, how did you come across the podcast, the books, and all that stuff. So it's fun to hear that, but just the personalities are a lot of fun.

TS: Can you give everybody who didn't go just a quick rundown of what we did? Some of the things we saw?

MH: Yeah, we were in Nazareth for a couple of evenings and we did things in Nazareth. They have a Nazareth Village there, for instance, where they have people in character and you go around and you talk about what life would have been like in the first century. We went to a couple disputed areas. "Disputed area" refers to the fact that the Palestinian Authority and the state of Israel argue about who should have jurisdiction over that piece of turf. Bethel is in a disputed area. We went to Shiloh. That's another one in the disputed area. So I'd say about half the places that we went I had not been to 30, 32 years ago. So it's kind of nice to get into some of these places.

Sea of Galilee, Capernaum... those are kind of staples for any tour. But I just personally like the Sea of Galilee stuff. Just to take a little ride out on the Sea of Galilee is always great. And that was kind of a planned worship time, as well, which I thought was really uplifting. It was a blessing.

We went to the Golan, which I had been there briefly before—again, 32 years ago. That was where we actually heard the fighter jets (laughs) overhead during lunch time. We didn't really know what was going on until the next day. And we found out that they had bombed, you know, taken out some sites. Just another day in Israel, you know. I can imagine the kids getting up in the morning and hearing news about how something happened with the army and the parents

saying, "That's all right. We bombed our enemies again, but you still got to go to school." Like a snow day is over here. I'm speaking for myself here, but I don't think we were ever in a situation that would have given us any worry or consternation. I didn't feel that at all. It was just sort of business as usual.

And we wound up in the street party for the moving of the embassy and the anniversary date. In our case, it just kind of happened. It wasn't on the schedule to wind up in the street party, but we did and there's video of that online, too. Every day was packed. It was full of things to see, and again the people sort of make the difference—the groups that you meet and go around to this and that with and have dinner with or have lunch with. For me, that all was the highlight—the best part. Because I have my head in this stuff a lot and, again, I had been there once before, so who you're with really makes a lot of difference, at least for me.

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So it was good. It was good even despite the fact there were places that we couldn't get to. You can't go to Bethlehem anymore. You can't go to Jerichom because those are areas that are under Palestinian Authority and whatnot. But we did get to go to the Mount of Olives, which was kind of nice. It was actually removed from the itinerary once we got there because it's high ground over the Old City and so they were afraid that there might be a presence up there trying to disrupt the proceedings—the celebration—and so they had that area blocked off. But they lifted that the day after and we got to go. So it was just a good time. It was an interesting, good time. And I would certainly highly recommend if you've never gone over to Israel, you should go over. Just be prepared for full days. Long days. Lots of walking.

TS: Yeah, it was pretty exhausting. Sun up to sun down, we always had something and were always moving. But it was pretty interesting that you just walk among the ruins. I mean, you've got clay pottery from the Roman Empire scattered just literally on the ground under your feet. You're just walking around it and nothing's really quarantined off. I mean, it's just crazy that everywhere you turned, every rock you walked on is ancient. There's just so much...

MH: It was really... I was gonna say, you mentioned pottery. It was really strange. You know, one of the places that I hadn't been before was the Valley of Elah, which is where David killed Goliath. And there's pottery laying all over the place up there.

TS: Yeah.

MH: I mean, it's almost everywhere you walked. There's a little piece of pottery. It's like, what's up with that? That really surprised me that that hasn't been sort of combed through. But there it is, you know.

TS: Everywhere—I mean everywhere—you looked, there's so much history. It's just mind-blowing. It's hard to wrap your mind around it when you're physically there—just the lushness of it. Our guide, he loved the agriculture piece of Israel. So we got a lot of information about all of that, which is interesting because I was expecting more of a desert. I know in the south it is, but the north end... I didn't realize how lush and green and rolling hills it was. It was very pretty.

MH: Yeah, yeah, it was, and that's the contrast of the north to the south. Definitely. I guess for me the highlight... a highlight would have been Mount Hermon. I had never been to Banias before—the Grotto of Pan. “Upon this rock,” you know, “the Gates of Hell” scene. This was the first time that I'd been there. But yeah, it is staggering to be at these places. And sure, there's some kind of commercial sorts of things going on. And there are places where, “Well, is this the authentic spot or not?” But there are plenty of places that, “Yep, this is it. This is the place where this happened. This is the place where so-and-so lived, like Peter's house at Capernaum. “There it is.” And so if you get a chance to go, you really should go at least once. But again, be prepared. (laughs) Be prepared. The days are full and it can be exhausting. But it's worth the experience, at least once in your life.

TS: Yeah, and again, I cannot stress how much fun it was to get to know some of these people. And I gotta give Susan a shout-out in Alaska and I gotta give her Alaskan crew shot out. And Dwayne and Monica and Arizona, and just all the people, you know. Several Mikes on the trip.

MH: Yep, several Mikes.

TS: Everybody, once they realized who I was, it was funny. Like, “Oh my gosh, I didn't realize how big you were!” Or, “You don't match your voice.”

MH: We were more than halfway through and then one evening... I asked them first, obviously, but Fern and Audrey and Beth were on this trip. And so I asked them, “Hey, has anybody heard you guys talk and then sort of done the math, like, ‘Oh your voice sounds familiar. Are you Fern from these podcast episodes?’” And they said that a couple people had. But we let people know that a little over halfway through the trip during an evening session. And I think most people were surprised by that, you know, and had heard it. But that was just an added element, to get to meet people who are sort of “personalities” now on the podcast. And people were not expecting that. And then for us, it's listeners—people I get email from. People who've sent me things and then you get to actually meet them. I'm not being patronizing here. To me, that is the best part of trips like this or any events that we would do throughout the year. Far and away, that's the best part for me.

TS: Absolutely, me as well. And we're gonna have another opportunity to meet our listeners, Mike, because we're gonna have our first annual Naked Bible

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Conference in August in Dallas, Texas.

MH: Oh, yeah. Yeah, and I'm hoping listeners have read some of what I put on the website about this. I have no trouble being blunt here: this is the conference event to go to if you care about biblical content, if you follow this podcast, if you like the things that I write. This is the kind of kind of conference you're gonna enjoy and, frankly, everybody really needs (anybody who's interested in biblical stuff). I don't want to poo-poo anybody else's conference unnecessarily or anything like that. But like I put on the website, you're not going to get to hear "amateur enthusiasts" who love scripture and have spent a lot of time studying it, but they're laypeople. They're not specialists, but they're tenacious researchers. That's all good, but these are real scholars in one place, and I've hand-picked these people because they care about communicating content to people outside the academy. They're in stride with what we're trying to do here. Their content is good. Some of them are leading scholars in their fields— well-known among their own peer group. They're all bonafide scholars, published under peer review. Again, I don't want to be harsh... or it's gonna sound harsh but that's not my intention. But this is not "amateur hour." This is the real deal. For me as a scholar and even Trey now, we've gone to SBL, AAR, and ETS for three or four years now. Trey is sort of now the layperson who gets to look at what scholars do every year. And we're used to it. I've been going to academic conferences since the early 90s. But for a lot of people in this audience, these are the people that I just talked about, or I reference their books. Well, we're trying to bring them to you. And again, we're hand-picking these people because of the stuff that they're into, that we know will be of high interest to people who attend. And because they want to do it. I mean, they want to communicate outside the academy. So that's not the norm within the academy, but we know the people out there who want to try to contribute to what we're doing here. And they are the top of the line in their field. And you gotta go hear 'em. You gotta experience it. This is not your average Bible conference. It's not preachy, it's nothing like that. This is solid content and you get to meet these people and ask them questions. And what can I say? We're just trying to do more of the kind of thing we do in the podcast in this event. So please, please register. Seating is limited. You're going to hear us talk about this from here to August. And we're serious about it: seating is limited. So we hope to see you there, make it an event, a good event to the summer. It's just going to be a good time.

TS: Yes, and I can't stress that if you want more of this type of event, then you need to come out and support these scholars and this event so we can do more of 'em, because that's what we're about. And you can go register at www.nakedbibleconference.com. You can go on there and see the speakers and the schedule. It's going to be August 18th. That's all-day Saturday, starting at 8 in the morning all the way to probably seven or eight at night. So it's going to be an all-day event. All of the scholars will be accessible. So if you want to get their books signed, take pictures, or just mingle and network with local people, you can feel free to do that. Hopefully that's what this event will start.

15:00 **MH:** I should add one more thing: that the people that I've asked to participate in this first conference are all new in terms of the podcast audience. None of them have been on the podcast. That's going to change because in the next few weeks we're going to have two of them. We're going to do interviews with two of them. But they have not been on the podcast before, so I wanted... In the future, we'll have Dave Burnett. Dave might even show up to this, I don't know. But we'll have Dave, we'll have Ron Johnson, we'll have some of the people we've already had on. But I'm trying to find anybody that I can to widen the content appeal to people who listen to the podcast regularly. So these are all newcomers to you as listeners. And again, we're gonna have a couple of them on anyway right before the conference. This is intentional. We're trying to ferret out scholars who want to do this kind of thing—appreciate what we're trying to do with the podcast and have real, high-level material but can communicate it, as well.

TS: This conference is not going to be live-streamed, and I can't promise that there will be video of it. We're working on it and everything, but I am not going to promise anything. So if you really want to come and get your hands on these papers and hear these scholars first-hand, I would really encourage you to register at NakedBibleConference.com so you won't miss out because again, we only have 300 seats. It is limited. These seats are super-comfortable, Mike, rather than...

MH: I saw a picture. We're gonna keep people awake.

TS: I know, right? I'm all about being comfortable, look. You know, I go to these conferences and they got these tiny little chairs and they're hard, you're sitting there all day long, listening to these scholars. I mean, you got to pump yourself full of caffeine and you got to sit there on these uncomfortable chairs, and that's just not how I roll, Mike.

MH: We might have to run an electrical current in the seats, man. They're cushy.

TS: So the Omni Hotel has a classroom called the Texas Learning Center and it's got these nice big plush... I don't know if they're leather or not, but these big oversized cushiony chairs, with tables in front of you in a stadium seating style. So it's really nice. It's going to be really comfortable. Plenty of room to bring paper, notebooks, a computer or whatever you want. So there will be plenty of room to stretch out, which, you know, Mike, unlike the plane... This is much better than the flights to and from Israel, let me tell you.

MH: I know, I know.

TS: I managed to get back all right. So I'm telling you this conference is going to be super comfortable. So NakedBibleConference.com. Please register and don't

wait. Hopefully we'll have some more things to talk about as the summer goes on, as the date approaches. But until then, that's pretty much it. We hope to see everybody there. Please bring your books for Mike to sign and your cameras to take pictures and your questions, most of all, because there's going to be a two-hour Q&A session with all of the scholars. So, please, please, please bring your questions. And hopefully it's just going to be a great learning experience for everybody.

MH: Last note here: I'm going to be blogging about each of the speakers and their topics. So you'll begin to see those things appear and reappear on my website and Facebook and whatnot. So when you see one of those, give it a read-through. That'll give you some context and probably generate some questions already. So what Trey is telling you, that's good advice. Be thinking about the topics, come with questions, and ask the scholars.

TS: All right, Mike. Switching gears, today is all about the book of Isaiah.

MH: Yep, yep—something long fought about and fought over. So I've gotten a number of emails about this topic. A few things have sort of surfaced in Q&A that that kind of touches on the periphery of some of this. I think we've had questions about Daniel and maybe Job. We're going to cover some of those books in other episodes. But this one's related. I've gotten a couple emails with something about the authorship and date of Isaiah, so I figured that's the one we're going to start with and we'll pick up the others as we proceed through the summer.

But by virtue of kind of jumping into this with an overview, I want to overview the two sides of this question. When was Isaiah written and who wrote it? Is it one author (the prophet that we know as Isaiah) or more than one author (the prophet plus some other people at different times)? So that's sort of the fundamental topic. And you say, "Well, why does it matter? Who cares?" Well, keep listening and you'll realize why this has been a fight and a debate. And then we'll wind up and I'll sort of give my two cents on the topic, as well.

To start off here, we have to realize that in scripture itself, Isaiah is never actually said to have written the whole book. That's never said in the book of Isaiah. There are a few passages (really just a handful) where he writes anything. Isaiah 8:1 for instance:

Then the LORD said to me, "Take a large tablet and write on it in common characters, 'Belonging to Maher-shalal-hash-baz.'"

You know, this name. So it's a reference to Isaiah writing something. Isaiah 30:8:

**⁸ And now, go, write it before them on a tablet
and inscribe it in a book,**

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**that it may be for the time to come
as a witness forever.**

And so that has its context. There's something being referred to there specifically and written down. But even that verse doesn't really credit the whole book with or to Isaiah, unlike some other biblical books where that idea is telegraphed a bit more clearly or there's some authorship attribution kind of at the beginning. It's not so much the case with Isaiah, which has sort of fed into this whole controversy.

Now again, by way of the sort of “elevator explanation”—the real shorthand explanation of both sides of this, here it is. The traditional view (one that you probably have heard of at some point in biblical study in church or on your own) is that the entirety of Isaiah—all 66 chapters—was written by the eighth century prophet Isaiah. Now, Isaiah's own lifetime date and his own chronology is secure by virtue of his contact with specific kings. You have mentions of Uzziah, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. And so it's easy to situate Isaiah, and therefore the book, in the traditional view that he's the author of the entire thing. It's easy to situate that in the late eighth century BC (which would be the lower 700 BC numbers) on into the early seventh century BC. (That would be the upper 600 numbers, like 690 BC, as the early seventh century BC.) So somewhere in that date range—late eighth century to early seventh century BC—is when Isaiah lived. And that would put the entire book in that period—and therefore, a century before the exile of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. All right, simple enough.

Now the other side of this is what we'll call the “modern critical consensus.” This is where virtually all critical scholars are, “critical” being defined as scholars who are non-confessional. I mean, they're not evangelicals. They don't have a particular faith commitment or they don't have a particular attachment to the idea of inspiration. That's what I mean by critical. I don't want to say that conservative theologically-minded confessional scholars aren't critical thinkers. That isn't the point at all. But “critical” is being used in terms of higher critical methodology, which is typically associated with a non-confessional, non-evangelical, non-theological context.

So modern critical consensus is that the book of Isaiah can be nicely broken into three sections, each of which had its own author. So there are three Isaiahs. That's why you get language like “First Isaiah,” “Second Isaiah” (also known as Deutero-Isaiah), and “Third Isaiah” (“Trito-Isaiah,” you'll read in different books). So the breakdown is: the first thirty nine chapters (Isaiah 1 through 39) would be First Isaiah. That would be the prophet as we know him. And again, we just talked about his dates. So, the first 39 chapters would be associated with the prophet Isaiah. And then from that point on, chapters 40 through 55 and then chapters 56 through 66, that would be Second and Third Isaiah. You've got two more books, two more sections. And the latter two of those sections (chapters 40

through 55 and 56 to 66) are dated to the time of the Exile or the end of the Exile—even after the Exile. So right away you have a significant chronological difference and you have a pretty clear authorial difference in the modern critical view.

So that's in a nutshell what the two views are. For our purposes, I'm going to refer to them as the “single author view” (one Isaiah—the prophet himself) versus “multiple authorship.” So single versus multiple authorship. Those are the two fundamental views.

25:00 I should point out before we get into how each of those views is sort of argued (or why each of those views is taken) that we have to realize that the multiple-authorship view is not merely a modern idea. That's contrary to what some fundamentalists (very conservative evangelicals) want to say or want to lead you to believe. It's actually an old view. For instance, the *Bava Batra*, one of the tractates of the Talmud (which dates to around 200 AD) notes that:

Hezekiah and his colleagues wrote Isaiah, Proverbs, Song of Songs, and Cohelet.

That's another name for Ecclesiastes. So even as old as the Talmud, you have multiple authors or multiple hands being considered responsible for the book that we know as Isaiah. So it's not a recent view. It's not like this has never been heard of until the 19th century, with that being sort of the heyday of higher criticism. That just isn't true. And a lot of times the single-authorship view will want to sort of color its opponent (the other side) as being a modern invention. And that's just really not the case. Denial of single authorship was around in the medieval period, as well. You see it referred to. By that time it was considered a heresy within the Jewish community, even though the Talmud suggests it. So it's kind of weird, but that's just the way it is.

So how is each view argued? I'm going to start with the traditional view—single authorship. How is this primarily defended? Now, it's going to be sort of a positive and negative thing. There's going to be ways that this is articulated and defended and there's also going to be at the same time arguments against any other idea— namely, more than one author.

So first of all, the first defense of the traditional view is that New Testament writers frequently quote from chapters in all of the sections of Isaiah—all the presumed sections of Isaiah—and they connect what they quote to the prophet Isaiah himself. Now, there's a list of these that I could go through. I'm not going to go through the whole list here, but just by way of some examples... For instance, the ones that really matter for our discussion would be anything after chapter 39. Because when you hit that chapter 39/chapter 40 breaking point—that hinge point from chapter 40 onward—that's what the multiple-authorship view considers non-Isaiah (that it's not the prophet himself, it's some later person— later date,

later person).

So if you look at Matthew 3:3, we read:

**³ For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said,
“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:
‘Prepare the way of the Lord;
make his paths straight.’”**

That's a quote by Matthew of Isaiah 40:3-5. And again, look at the formulaic language: “This is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah.” So it really sounds like Matthew's quoting Isaiah 40 and he's considering the author to be Isaiah.

You have the same thing in Mark 1:3. He quotes the same passage as Matthew 12:18-21. We have a quotation there from Isaiah 42 and it is again attributed to Isaiah. Romans 10:16:

¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?”

That's a quotation of Isaiah 53:1. Matthew 8:17:

¹⁷ This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: “He took our illnesses and bore our diseases.”

That's a quote of Isaiah 53:4. So on and so forth. So you've got basically half a dozen passages. The more famous one is Jesus' sermon at Nazareth. In Luke chapter 4, he quotes Isaiah 61. Paul quotes Isaiah 65 somewhere else. You've got about half a dozen passages that come from Isaiah 40 onward. For our purposes, the section of Isaiah 40 through 66 is purported to come from different hands other than the prophet himself and at a date that is long after Isaiah's own lifetime. So the first argument is, “Hey, New Testament writers thought that this was all Isaiah.” So that's kind of the initial argument to defend the traditional view—the single author view.

Second, there's also the charge by single author proponents that multiple authorship undermines predictive prophecy, or that the multiple-authorship approach was invented specifically to deny predictive prophecy. The big example is Cyrus. So we have Isaiah 44:8 and Isaiah 45:1, which specifically mentions Cyrus. He's the King of Persia. Cyrus, of course, allowed the Jews to return from exile right around 539/538 BC.

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So, if you're a multiple-authorship person, you're attributing that content— those references to Cyrus—as being something that the original prophet Isaiah never wrote, but somebody living later at the end of the Exile or after the Exile. You're saying that's when those two verses (Isaiah 44:8; Isaiah 45:1) that mention Cyrus got written. And there are people who look at that and say, "Well, if you're going to say that, then that takes away the notion that Isaiah living in the 18th century predicted the coming of Cyrus." And so the idea is that this undermines predictive prophecy. If you attribute all this to a later author, it allows you to deny that Isaiah predicted the future. And then that conclusion gets extended to Isaiah 53. And so proponents of single authorship charge that any other view (other than single authorship) disallows Isaiah the reality of having predicted the future, including the prediction of the Suffering Servant—the suffering messiah. So you can see that this would be sort of a powerful rhetorical argument in favor of single authorship, or at least this is how it's presented.

The third way single-authorship is defended is through the great Isaiah Scroll of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The great Isaiah Scroll contains all 66 chapters. And so the argument goes, "Well, look, here you've got the oldest manuscript of the book of Isaiah and all 66 chapters are there. And there's no breaks in the chapters; there's no divisions into books. There's no indication by the scribe that, "Here's where one book ends and here's where another began and we just sort of put them together." If there's a 66-chapter flow just like you would expect, it was single authorship. So that's the third argument.

The fourth and last argument to defend the traditional view is that there are pre-exilic elements (pre-exilic things, pre-exilic references, stuff that happens before the Exile) that can actually be found in the allegedly later section in Isaiah 40 through 66. So you get the later stuff that's supposed to be written well after Isaiah's lifetime, after the Exile. But there will be stuff in there that refers to conditions that were true before the Exile—for instance, the references to idolatry. Okay, idolatry was wiped out of the Israelite experience after the Exile. They were cured of their idolatry, because the idolatry was why they went into exile and so it's a very well-known historical fact that once the Jews return from Babylon (after the Exile in Babylon) they're not doing idolatry anymore. In fact, they're just going like crazy in the other direction. The Torah actually becomes sort of an object of worship at this point. "Because the law is the thing that protects us, following the law and having fence laws and just really being tenacious about the Torah—that's going to keep us from idolatry. Because idolatry's the last thing in the world were interested in doing because we all know what happened. We experienced what happened, and our ancestors did because of it." Well, you get references to the practice of idolatry in Isaiah 40 through 66. And so the single author view says "Well, how can that be? I mean, that's proof that those chapters (40 through 66) have a pre-exilic writer—because he's still talking about idolatry."

So in summary, that's how the single-authorship view is articulated and

defended. Those are the underpinnings of the view. But what about the other view? The primary arguments for multiple authors (again, two or three Isaiahs, so to speak)...

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The first argument made to articulate that view is that the historical outlook of the book of Isaiah differs fairly dramatically between chapters 1 through 39 and chapters 40 through 66. The historical setting of Isaiah 1 through 39 is primarily the 8th Century BC. The big, bad enemy is Assyria because in the 700's they were a threat. The northern 10 tribes—the Northern Kingdom—are going to get conquered by Assyria, and you have these episodes with Sennacherib and all this kind of stuff going on. Assyria is the focus. Well, those are 8th Century BC conditions. After chapter 40 you don't hear anything about Assyria. It's Cyrus and the Persians or references to Babylon. So it just doesn't look like the same setting for the content. And the multiple-author view says that of course it's not, because after chapter 40... Isaiah 40 through 66 was written at a later time. It's written beyond the Assyrian period, into the Babylonian and the Persian period—the Exile and then after the Exile. This is why the scenery, so to speak—the setting of the material—is so different than the first 39 chapters. Different author, different time.

Number two, there are different themes, therefore, and subject matter between chapters 1 through 39 and 40 through 66. Again, chapters 1 through 39 have Assyria in view as the dominant power and the subject of judgment. When there's judgment language going on you're going to have two targets in Isaiah 1 through 39. It's going to be Israel and the Northern Kingdom, then they're going to serve as a warning to the Southern Kingdom and Assyria.

Now there are two outliers here that we're going to return to briefly. Isaiah 13 and 14 is about Babylon. It's kind of interesting. Babylon was not a power though in the 8th century. And so the multiple-authorship view would have an explanation, and we'll get to what their explanation is, for why Isaiah 13 and 14 are where they are. Because it doesn't make any sense to have them as a bad guy in the 8th Century because they were a Podunk city. They were not a threat. Assyria was dominant in the ancient Near East. Babylon would have been a speck on the map, just really not even in the picture. And historically we know this is the case, so they're gonna say it's just a different focus. It's only after chapter 39 when you get chapters 40 through 66 that Babylon sort of becomes more in view than the Persians. And then you have deliverance of Judah by the Persians. You have these mentions of Cyrus and the judgment language is directed toward Babylon. And you have this language of deliverance: "Your captivity is over." (Isaiah 40) You have that kind of language happen through chapters 40 through 66, but you don't get it in the first 39 chapters. So thematically there's difference.

The third defense of multiple authorship, or at least the third indication according to this view (and this is a I think a pretty substantial one): there are references to the kingdom of Judah as desolated and to Jerusalem as desolated, and the

temple as destroyed in the second half of the book. Well, that would seemingly have to indicate that the second half of the book is later than the first half. Because in the first half of the book, in the 8th century when Isaiah is alive Jerusalem isn't destroyed. The temple isn't destroyed. But yet you've got... I'll just read you a few.

Isaiah 44:26:

²⁶ **who confirms the word of his servant
and fulfills the counsel of his messengers,
who says of Jerusalem, 'She shall be inhabited,'
and of the cities of Judah, 'They shall be built,
and I will raise up their ruins';**

Isaiah 58:12.

¹² **And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to dwell in.**

Isaiah 61:4:

⁴ **They shall build up the ancient ruins;
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.**

Isaiah 63:18:

¹⁸ **Your holy people held possession for a little while;
our adversaries have trampled down your sanctuary.**

Isaiah 64:10:

¹⁰ **Your holy cities have become a wilderness;
Zion has become a wilderness,
Jerusalem a desolation.**

**¹¹ Our holy and beautiful house,
where our fathers praised you,
has been burned by fire,
and all our pleasant places have become ruins.**

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Now that's a picture of a destroyed Jerusalem and a destroyed temple. That was not the case in the 8th century. It's just wasn't, even by the biblical account. And so people will look at these passages and say, "Well, in what we read there, these aren't predictions of conditions to come. These are present realities that the readers of these chapters in Isaiah from chapter 44 through 64 (the stuff I just read)... this second part of the book, this is their reality. Jerusalem's destroyed. The temple's destroyed. This is post-exilic material." I just read them to you. They're not worded as prophecies. It doesn't say "this is going to happen." It's described actually as, "What you see here is going to get reversed. They're going to get rebuilt and you're gonna you know..." That kind of thing. So it's cast as a present condition. And so the argument is made that there's just no way an 8th century guy could have written that.

So those are the three arguments for single authorship and then multiple authorship. So we've sort of got the lay of the land now between the two views. Now, how do we evaluate this? That's another way of asking, "How does each view respond to the other view?" My focus here is really going to be how evangelicals talk about this. And the reason for that is that critics who are hostile or apathetic to the internal integrity of scripture or a particular doctrine of inspiration are just going to say, "Well, the author of this or that passage just made mistakes." Yeah, that's simple for them.

For those who have a high view of scripture, how do they talk about this? Because you have evangelicals who predominantly take the traditional view. But you still have evangelicals (and I know some of these people personally) who take the multiple-authorship view of Isaiah. But they're evangelicals. They're followers of Jesus Christ. They're believers, and they believe in inspiration. They have a high view of scripture, but nevertheless, they take the multiple-authorship view against the traditional view. So how do the people who have a high view of scripture and who are on both sides of this... If you put them all in the same room, how do they respond to each other? That's what we want to focus on here.

So those evangelicals with a high view of scripture who defend multiple authorship (we're gonna start with the multiple authorship), how they would respond to the single authorship. Those people who have a high view of scripture who defend multiple authorship would approach the arguments for single authorship something like this. Here's how they would respond:

In the first regard—on the matter of New Testament citations of all parts of Isaiah as stuff Isaiah said—they would say, "Well, other Old Testament books are cited

by the name of a person (a book that is named after a person) when no claim is made in that book that the person actually wrote the book.” In other words, use of the name (Isaiah, in this case) may just indicate a reference of the book as it exists and not the person himself and it makes no claim on authorship. It's just a citation of the book by title.

I mean, we do this. To put it in present day, we talk about, “Well, Samuel says...” You know, First or Second Samuel. Well the books of First and Second Samuel never claimed that Samuel wrote them, but we still refer to the book by that name. But when we do that, we're using the title of the book as a reference point. We're not making a claim on authorship. So again, those who hold multiple authorship would say, “Look, this is how we need to understand New Testament citations from all parts of Isaiah.” It's not that the New Testament writers are asserting any particular view of authorship. They're just referring to the book as it stands.

Now you get this... I guess it's illustrative this way in Matthew 24:15. For instance:

¹⁵ **“So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place...**

So on and so forth. Well, Jesus is there referring to the book of Daniel. There's no claim in the book of Daniel that Daniel wrote it. So here Jesus is referring to the book. Everybody knows what he's talking about when he says “Daniel the prophet.” Well, that's the book that bears Daniel's name. And so the argument is that we need to look at the citations of Isaiah in these later parts as the same kind of thing. So with multiple authorship, even if Isaiah didn't actually write that, the content that's being quoted is in the book named after Isaiah. And that's why you get the citation language that you do.

We could also throw in citations in the New Testament of the Torah, the law of Moses. I mentioned this before. We actually had a recent one of these in a Q&A. There are parts of the Torah that I think are pretty clear that Moses didn't write that. The easy one is his own death in Deuteronomy 30-34. But we had Deuteronomy 32:17 come up in a Q&A recently:

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¹⁷ **[Israel] sacrificed to demons that were no gods [not the true God],
to gods they had never known,
to new gods that had come recently...**

Well, you read Deuteronomy 32 and it's kind of a rehearsal of Israel's history. When did the Israelites go after other gods? That's really a condition that post-dates the Conquest. It really starts with the failure of the Conquest. In the end of

book of Joshua and the beginning of the book of Judges, it's very clear that Israel failed to complete the Conquest and they started going after other gods, and you've got this problem with idolatry. Then that works its way through Samuel and Kings when people are just sacrificing everywhere. And that can be legit because there's no temple yet. But once Solomon builds the temple and then the kingdom splits, those high places keep being used and they get used for idolatry instead of worshiping at Jerusalem and it becomes an abomination.

These are all conditions well after the time of Moses. And so Deuteronomy 32:17 seems to fairly clearly see something that wasn't the present condition when Moses was still alive. But nevertheless, it's in the Torah; it's Deuteronomy 32. Deuteronomy 16 would be another example where the rules for the Passover change. In Exodus, the rules for the Passover... you observe this in your house. In Deuteronomy 16, that's not the case. You're forbidden from observing Passover in your house. Why? Because you should observe Passover in the place where the Lord has chosen to set his name: the temple. We don't have a temple yet in Moses' day. And Deuteronomy 16 clearly seems to reflect the time when we have a central sanctuary. And that's why Passover rules change—because now we have a spot. We have a temple. We have this place that God told us, "this is where you worship." That wasn't the condition back in the days of Moses.

So you have things like this. That's just a real quick example. I mean, there are a number of these kinds of things in the Torah. But it's still legitimate to call the Torah the law of Moses because again, it's associated with Moses. He's the main character; he's the central figure in the story. Again, my own view of the Torah authorship is that there's a Mosaic core that Moses indeed is responsible for and that gets accrued to over the course of time. Other writers link back into Mosaic legislation. And we have the formation of what we know as the Torah. It gets finally completed after Moses' lifetime, but yet he's still associated with it because of the story—because he is the central figure at this point in Israel's history.

So those who hold to multiple authorship for Isaiah say, "Look, this is how we need to think about these New Testament citations. People are citing books by the name or by the association that was common to them."

Beyer, in his *Encountering Isaiah* textbook puts it this way. He says:

These quotations indicate that people at this time viewed these words as authoritative Scripture spoken by the prophet Isaiah, but none give much insight into the process of the composition of Isaiah's large book.

And that would be representative of how the multiple author view would handle these citations.

Secondly, as to the defense of the traditional view... We're talking about how those evangelicals—those people with a high view of scripture who hold to multiple authorship—answer the arguments for the traditional single-authorship views. So secondly, the single-authorship view defended itself in this matter of predictive prophecy. They would try to cast later authors—later hands, later authorial personalities—in Isaiah 43-66, and if you believe that then that undermines predictive prophecy.

So those who defend multiple authorship, especially if they're evangelical, actually have something to say about that. Because they're not going to be disbelievers in predictive prophecy. So how do they respond to this? Well, they would ask a question like, "Are these references to Cyrus in Isaiah 44 and 45:1 really predictions? They would ask, "Do they sound like predictions?" And I'm going to read you the passage. I'm going to start in Isaiah 44:24 and read through Isaiah 45:4 and we'll hit both of the references to Cyrus here. Just listen. Do these sound like predictions? Or does the text just read very naturally as a present set of conditions? Not predictions, but a present set of conditions. So Isaiah 44:24:

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²⁴ **Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer,
who formed you from the womb:
"I am the LORD, who made all things,
who alone stretched out the heavens,
who spread out the earth by myself,
²⁵ who frustrates the signs of liars
and makes fools of diviners,
who turns wise men back
and makes their knowledge foolish,
²⁶ who confirms the word of his servant
and fulfills the counsel of his messengers,
who says of Jerusalem, 'She shall be inhabited,'**

Now in the 8th Century, Jerusalem's already inhabited. So how can this be a prediction of desolation? It seems to presume desolation, which would be a later time. Going back to start at verse 26 again:

²⁶ **who confirms the word of his servant
and fulfills the counsel of his messengers,
who says of Jerusalem, 'She shall be inhabited,'
and of the cities of Judah, 'They shall be built...**

Again, in the 8th Century, Judah wasn't in ruins. Does this sound like a distant prediction or a current state of affairs? So those who hold to multiple authorship are going to say, "Well this reference to Cyrus that's coming in two verses is set in a time when Jerusalem is destroyed and Judah is destroyed. These things aren't predicted, they just are. And so the references to Cyrus aren't predictions of Cyrus, they're mentions of Cyrus being on the scene, being God's agent of deliverance." So let's go to verse 27:

²⁷ **who says to the deep, 'Be dry;
I will dry up your rivers';**
²⁸ **who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd,
and he shall fulfill all my purpose';
saying of Jerusalem, 'She shall be built,'
and of the temple, 'Your foundation shall be laid.'"**

Now does that verse sound like a prediction? How does it sound like a prediction? In the 8th Century, Jerusalem was intact; the temple was intact. This sounds like a current state of affairs where the prophetic voice declares that Cyrus, the King of Persia, is going to be God's agent of deliverance. In this setting, he's going to deliver Judah where they are. And where they are is Heap Big Trouble because Judah is destroyed. The temple is destroyed. God has raised up Cyrus now to do something about this current existing problem. So they would say these aren't predictions. They reflect a current state of reality, which is in the 6th Century— 539, 538 BC—well after the original author, Isaiah, lived.

If we keep reading, now we hit Isaiah 45. 44:28 is the last verse of chapter 44. Now we go right into chapter 45:

**Thus says the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus,
whose right hand I have grasped,
to subdue nations before him
and to loose the belts of kings,
to open doors before him
that gates may not be closed:**
² **"I will go before you
and level the exalted places,
I will break in pieces the doors of bronze
and cut through the bars of iron,**
³ **I will give you the treasures of darkness
and the hoards in secret places,**

**that you may know that it is I, the LORD,
the God of Israel, who call you by your name.**

**⁴For the sake of my servant Jacob,
and Israel my chosen,
I call you by your name,
I name you, though you do not know me.**

And that's the end of verse 4. Again, all of this can easily be read like a current state of affairs with the prophetic voice declaring Cyrus is going to be God's tool to deliver a desolated Judah and a destroyed Temple. Cyrus is going to be the beginning of a reversal. So the comeback of the multiple-authorship position is, "Look, none of this reads like a prediction. It reads like a current state of affairs. So, we're not undermining predictive prophecy. There are no predictions here."

Now, what's interesting to me and to evangelicals that I know who take this view... They would say, "Look, Isaiah 53 really is a non-factor here, because even if the material is written after the Exile, Jesus, as the fulfillment of Isaiah 53, is 500 years later." It can't possibly... Having Isaiah 53 written in the 530's BC... how can that possibly undermine predictive prophecy? Because we know how that prophecy—how that chapter—gets fulfilled 500 years later.

55:00 So evangelicals who would take the multiple-authorship view would say, "Look, we're over here in the corner waving our hand. We still believe in predictive prophecy. Isaiah 53... Jesus... it's 500 years ahead of its time. We just don't think that these references to Cyrus and Isaiah 40-66 are predictive prophecy. But Isaiah 53 being played out on the cross—that's certainly predictive prophecy. So our view of authorship has nothing to do with denying predictive prophecy. That is just a pejorative argument that has no foundation."

And that's how the multiple-author person—the evangelical, the one who cares about again the integrity of scripture—would respond.

Third, with respect to the matter of the great Isaiah Scroll, the multiple-authorship crowd would say, "Who cares that a copy of Isaiah includes all 66 chapters?" It doesn't say anything about how the original book came together. You'd expect copies of Old Testament books to be, well, copies of Old Testament books—not stages in production. Our Bibles have all 66 chapters. Every copy of the Masoretic Text has 66 chapters. Every copy of the Hebrew text that was used to produce the Septuagint had 66 chapters. None of that answers any question about how the original book came together. So the great Isaiah Scroll... who cares? It's not relevant to the whole question.

Fourth, on the matter of pre-exilic elements in the allegedly later sections of Isaiah 40 through 66, the multiple-authorship view would say that preexist stuff

like all that talk about idolatry in a section that was written when there was no idolatry... those are flashbacks or just sort of rhetorical stuff. I have to be honest with you: I think this is the weakest component of the multiple-authorship review and response. Because what's good for the goose is good for the gander here. Just like you can say that these references to Cyrus aren't worded in predictive language, well, a lot of the references to idolatry in chapters 40 through 66 are not articulated like they're flashbacks, either. I'll just give you a few examples. Isaiah 40, verse 19:

¹⁹ **An idol! A craftsman casts it,
and a goldsmith overlays it with gold
and casts for it silver chains.**

²⁰ **He who is too impoverished for an offering
chooses wood that will not rot;
he seeks out a skillful craftsman
to set up an idol that will not move.**

He's making fun of idols. Isaiah 42:8:

⁸ **I am the LORD; that is my name;
my glory I give to no other,
nor my praise to carved idols.**

They just don't sound like flashbacks. They sound like poking fun at an existing practice—poking fun at idolatry. Isaiah 42:17:

¹⁷ **They are turned back and utterly put to shame,
who trust in carved idols,
who say to metal images,
“You are our gods.”**

They just don't read that way. And so I think this is the weakest link in the multiple-authorship response to the traditional view.

And let's flip the coin again: how about evangelicals who defend single authorship? How do they approach the defense of multiple authorship that we just covered? So, how do they do that?

Well, in the matter of the historical outlook (that the book's historical outlook differs from chapters 1-39 and chapters 40-66), they would say something like, “Well, the prophet Isaiah lived during the height of the Assyrian crisis, so the

Assyrian outlook is understandable in the first 39 chapters. But the prophet had a sense—or he was told by God—that Babylon would become the major player.” The key chapter here is Isaiah 39. This is the episode... again, note the chapters— Isaiah 39. It's still in the first section of the book, but it's right on the cusp. It's at that hinge point going into chapter 40. Isaiah 39 is the episode where Hezekiah entertains envoys from Babylon and shows them a little bit too much. Specifically, in Isaiah 39:5-8, we read this:

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⁵ Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: ⁶ Behold, the days are coming, when all that is in your house, and that which your fathers have stored up till this day, shall be carried to Babylon. Nothing shall be left, says the LORD. ⁷ And some of your own sons, who will come from you, whom you will father, shall be taken away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.” ⁸ Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “The word of the LORD that you have spoken is good.” For he thought, “There will be peace and security in my days.”

That's kind of a cheap consolation there, Hezekiah: "Well, that's going to be okay while I'm alive. Later, well, that's not so good." But you have this sense that Babylon is going to become the villain. And when you get to chapters 40-66, you have more Babylonian material. And of course, then you have Persian material.

And so those who defend the single-authorship view would say, “You know, okay you multiple-author guys. Yeah, there's a different theme or different stuff going on in the two major sections of the book, but that's kind of expected. It's kind of the flow of history. The material about Babylon is mostly later.” They would say, “Now, we know that you guys are going to say, ‘What about Isaiah 13 and 14? That's Babylon. That's misplaced because the villain's Assyria. Why would material about Babylon be here? This just doesn't make any sense.’”

So the single-authorship view would say, “Look, those chapters were inserted...” They would say by Isaiah, I would say by an editor, but we'll get to my view.

“They were inserted in the first half of Isaiah in the section that we now know as the Oracles Against the Nations.” And that's true. You have Babylon included with the rest of the nations. So even though it looks really premature to have Babylon kind of being the focus of prophetic rhetoric because they're just Podunk, it would make sense to put it there because it's the Oracles of the Nations section of the book. And they would say this is why it makes sense, and having Babylonish material in the first part of the book of Isaiah is not anachronistic. It makes sense to put it there because it just goes with the other oracles against the nations. So that's how single authorship would take care of that argument.

Another argument... I'm going to take the second and third here together. If you recall, the multiple-authorship view defended itself on two more arguments. They

would say there were different themes in both sections of the book. And then there are references to Judah as desolated and the temple as destroyed in the second half of the book. So how does a single-author person respond to that—to those two pegs? They would say something like, “Well, chapter 39 marks a transition from Assyria to Babylon as the real worry. God is leading Isaiah to foresee the Babylonian threat and the Exile and deliverance.

If you're thinking, “Well, that doesn't sound terribly substantial,” I agree with you. I think this part of the response is the weakest point of rebuttal from the traditional view. So I pointed out earlier what I thought was the weak point of the multiple authorship response. And I think *this* is the weak point of the single author response to their opponent. This just sounds weak because the language of much of this material about the Exile, about Babylonian, about deliverance, is not cast as a prediction. It's really not cast as something foreseen. It's really cast as a current situation. So I think to appeal to the idea of foreshadowing (God's just dripping out this information to the original prophet Isaiah), that would be stronger if those kinds of things like the destruction of Judah and the destruction of the temple... if they were cast as impending realities like they are in Ezekiel. We went through the whole book of Ezekiel and Ezekiel's constantly saying, “Hey, this is going to happen. This is going to happen in Jerusalem. This is going to happen in the temple.” It's cast very clearly as an impending event. Here, the stuff that Isaiah is not. It's just there; we've got to deal with this now. It's cast as a present circumstance. So I think this is a really weak rebuttal point for the traditional view.

Now, in defense of the traditional view, it's gotten some traction in light of more recent (and “more recent” defined as 20 years old) linguistic treatments. I'm going to reference an article here by Mark Rooker entitled “Dating Isaiah 40-66: What Does the Linguistic Evidence Say?” This is from *Westminster Theological Journal*, 1996 volume. I've inserted this article in the protected folder for newsletter subscribers. So if you have a little bit of Hebrew and you're interested in what we're going to talk about from this point on, you'll be able to access this article by virtue of subscribing to the newsletter.

So Rooker argues this way: he argues from what scholars called “diachronic analysis.” That is, analysis of the textual data through time. Diachronic: “through time, over time.” And what that means is that Hebrew, like any other language, changes in its vocabulary and grammatical features over the course of time. There are indisputably late Hebrew texts that have certain features in them—certain vocab words, certain grammatical forms—that earlier Hebrew texts do not because the language changes. Now this is an issue for the Isaiah question. Rooker writes the following on pages 303 and 304:

The diachronic study of language is based upon the finding, universally acknowledged among linguists today, that languages are subject to change over

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time. It would seem reasonable, therefore, to expect that the Hebrew language reflected in the Old Testament experienced change from its earliest appearance in the second millennium B.C.

The diachronic analysis of Biblical Hebrew was developed primarily through the work of Arno Kropat in his work on the syntax of Chronicles early in the twentieth century. Kropat carefully analyzed the language of the Books of Chronicles and compared his findings with the synoptic texts of Samuel/Kings. The language of the Chronicles exhibited changes that were consistent with other books of the post-exilic period specifically Esther, Ezra, and Nehemiah."

Now what he means by this is... You're all enough Bible students to realize that subject matter between the books of Samuel and the books of Kings is repeated—is covered again—in the books of Chronicles. So Chronicles and the books of Samuel and Kings are synoptic. It's like the Old Testament version of the synoptic gospels: Matthew, Mark and Luke. They cover a lot of the same territory, and often in the same order. So what this guy (Kropat) did was he compared the Hebrew text of both versions of various events in Chronicles versus Samuel and Kings. And he noticed that there were patterns of vocabulary—patterns of usage, patterns of grammatical forms—that were in Chronicles, but not in Samuel and Kings, even when the same material was being covered. Words changed. Features changed. And the stuff in Chronicles aligned with books that we know were late: Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther. And so this helped him to create sort of a pattern typology of how Biblical Hebrew changed over the course of centuries.

Now in Rooker's article, he gives several examples of this. I'm going to pull his first one out here. He writes about the Hebrew. There are two Hebrew words that get translated "kingdom." To set it up, here's his quote:

To illustrate how diachronic analysis works observe the occurrence and frequency of the two Hebrew words translated "kingdom," מַמְלָכָה and מְלָכוּת. The first indication that there may be a historical relationship between the terms may be observed from the Chronicler's preference [Chronicles is the later stuff] for מְלָכוּת in texts where the parallel text of Samuel employed the term מַמְלָכָה.

So he zeroes in on this vocab word and says, "You know, it's kind of funny that even though they're describing the same thing, the Chronicler will use one word and the books of Samuel and the Kings would use another word. And they're consistent with each other in their divergence. Rooker goes on. He says:

Later biblical writers and post-biblical writers clearly preferred מְלָכוּת. Most notably in the book of Esther, in the nine references to "kingdom," only מְלָכוּת is

used. This trend continues in the Dead Sea Scrolls where מְלָכוֹת occurs fourteen times while the earlier term מַמְלָכָה occurs only once. In the writings of Mishnaic Hebrew, only מְלָכוֹת is used. The usage and distribution of the terms מַמְלָכָה and מְלָכוֹת illustrate how diachronic analysis operates.

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Now, that's the end of Rooker. Again, in light of this phenomena it's interesting to note... You could just look this up, because I did. It's interesting to note that the early term for "kingdom," *mamlakah*, occurs in both sections of Isaiah. So both Isaiah 1-39 and Isaiah 43-66 used the pre-exilic term. Now the late term, *malkut*, doesn't appear anywhere. And so Rooker seizes upon that, then he goes into other examples to say, "Look, there's linguistic evidence that the so-called later chapters of Isaiah 40-66 bear the marks of pre-exilic Hebrew.

One more example, just to make the point. He zeroes in on the name "David." And this one is well-known in biblical Hebrew scholarship. Rooker goes on to put forth four more instances of how the early term's appearances in the second half of Isaiah reinforce the single authorship. With respect to *David*, he writes this:

It has long been recognized that one characteristic feature of the orthography [an academic word for spelling] of the Chronicler, in contrast to the orthography of Samuel/Kings, is the Chronicler's insistence in writing [David] with the plene spelling.

"Plene" is a word that means longer or full spelling. There's actually two ways that the Hebrew Bible spells the name David. If you have a little Hebrew here this would help, but I'm going to go through this anyway. The long version, the full version, the plene version: is *dalet-vav-yod-dalet*: דָּוִיד (with four consonants). A short version is *dalet-vav-dalet*. Then the scribe had to add a little "i" vowel underneath *vav* so that we would know that he's writing *David* even though he skips that other letter. The *yod* there helps to mark the vowel. So you've got a four-consonant spelling and a three-consonant spelling. And what Rooker is saying here is that the Chronicler (the late stuff) always spells it with four consonants. It's a consistent pattern.

The plene spelling is completely absent from Samuel, and occurs in Kings only on three occasions (1 Kgs 3.14; 11.4, 36). Thus of the 671 cases of the occurrence of the name "David" in Samuel/Kings, only three are written plene [longer/full] while the remainder are defective [short form]. By contrast, in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles, the name "David" occurs 271 times, all of which have the plene spelling.

The same trend of late Biblical Hebrew toward the plene spelling [longer/full] of the personal name David is evident in the Dead Sea Scrolls. This tendency can best be demonstrated by looking at occurrences of David in the biblical manuscripts of Samuel and Isaiah from Qumran which are always plene, against the corresponding passages in Isaiah and Samuel from the MT which are always defective...

Because the scrolls are about 300 to 200 BC, they're later. Those scribes there are living in a later period than the biblical period. And so by the time those scribes lived and grew up and learned their art form—their science, their discipline as scribes—you always spelled *David* with the four consonants, never with the three. That was just the way you were taught to do it. So texts that show up with the four-consonant spelling of *David*... That's just that's a later text. It's just a signpost that everybody knows. And here's the kicker: Rooker writes:

In Isaiah 40-66, the name "David" occurs only one time, in Isaiah 55:3 where we find the defective [short] spelling which is more harmonious with the pre-exilic period.

So this is what Rooker does in his article. He takes examples like these to show that in the allegedly late section (Isaiah 40-66), you actually have linguistic evidence that somebody living during the prophet's lifetime—before the Exile—is writing that material, because of these kinds of things: the spelling of David and the preference for one particular word for “kingdom.” Again, you can read Rooker's article if you want more information. But there's actually a linguistic argument to be made that connects the first 39 chapters to Isaiah 40-66 and sort of situates them in a pre-exilic context. So the traditional view has gotten a little help from linguistic data.

We'll wrap this up here. My take on all this is that with the multiple-authorship view, someone who would just say, “Look there are three Isaiahs. They never met each other. They're all responsible for their own section. There's no cross-fertilization here. There's no repurposing of older content in the newer stuff. There are three distinct compositions, three distinct writers, three different periods...” Sort of the multiple-authorship view on steroids here.

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The multiple authorship view, even if you take that view, does not require a denial of predictive prophecy. It just doesn't. Because when you get to Isaiah 53... If that's written in 500 BC... we'll just call it after the Exile. That's still 500 years before Jesus. So *do not* in your debates with people online or at home or whatever (like you're going to get into you know)... diachronic analysis here and the authorship of Isaiah. But who knows? You might. It is just wrong to caricature a person who believes in more than one Isaiah as a denier of predictive prophecy. That's just wrong-headed. It's unfair. It's an unfair criticism.

Second part of my take: I think single authorship has some significant problems. I think its explanation for different subject matter between chapters 1-39 and 40-66, especially the portrayals of Judah as desolated and the temple is destroyed... Single-authorship view rebuttals to finding that stuff in the second half of the book, I think, is really weak. So single authorship has some significant problems in handling that data.

Third, I would say there are strong and at least very suggestive linguistic data in favor of a pre-exilic hand in the second half of the book. So I think both views have validity. I mean, there's clear evidence of a later context and a later hand in the second half of the book. Namely, again, the destruction of the temple and destruction of Judah. That's good evidence for a later hand. But then you also have good evidence in that later stuff of a pre-exilic hand by virtue of this linguistic data.

So I think both views have some legitimacy here. My view is I would say that the book of Isaiah was substantially—not completely, but substantially—written in the late 8th or early 7th Century BC by the prophet we know as Isaiah. And then Isaiah's material was later edited and/or adapted to present circumstances by scribes as a means of showing the prophet's predictions were coming to fruition in the present time or would be in the near future. You know, folks... editing happens. Editing happens. It happens elsewhere. And the book of Isaiah is no exception. Here on the podcast we've talked about a number of examples. I have videos online of me talking about inspiration and showing examples of this. I would say there are multiple hands in the book of Isaiah. But I think it's going a bit too far to say that requires multiple authors. I think the data as we have it, the strengths of both sides as we have the argument made... All of the data, I think, is best accommodated by the idea that Isaiah the prophet himself in the 8th Century is responsible substantially for what's in this book, and then later hands came along and repurposed the content, as opposed to the idea that you have brand-new guys being born and growing up and then writing a second and a third part to Isaiah independently. Okay, I think that goes too far. I think the typical critical consensus view sort of takes the ball and runs with it a bit too far. But there are points of the view that have legitimacy, and the best way to account for that is an editorial model, not a new composition model. So that's where I differ.

So I differ with both the traditional view and the critical consensus view. I think editorial activity's the best way to take all the data into consideration. And honestly, the way inspiration is taught today (and hence the way most pastors were taught about inspiration or the way they've read about it) really doesn't take editorial activity into consideration. That's why people are troubled by discussion of this particular book and things like it like the Torah. We're taught that inspiration means a mind-dump of information. We're taught this paranormal view of inspiration where God just downloads information that the prophet/writer really isn't a significant part of what's going on. They're more or less a flesh puppet to

just start waving the hand and the arm and out comes a biblical book without really any choices on the part of the writer—and certainly without editorial activity.

1:20:00

I've got news for you. If that's your view of inspiration (and there's a reasonable chance that somewhere along the line you've read that or been taught it), abandon that view. Because the phenomenon of scripture itself—the nuts and bolts stuff that you find in the text itself—will not conform to that view. It just doesn't reflect what you actually find in the text itself—a close reading of the text. We've had some examples here about if this was written in the 8th Century, what's this talk about Jerusalem being destroyed? "Well, that's a prediction." Really? Does it sound like a prediction? Where's the predictive language? It seems to me you're making it a prediction so that your view of the authorship of Isaiah can stand. You're just making it say that. You're articulating things that way because you've been taught a certain view of inspiration that doesn't account for any kind of editorial activity, and so your argument is just sort of contrived at that point. You view it as a necessity because of what you were taught about how scriptural books came to be. And again, this is the tip of a very large iceberg. A close reading of the text (especially if you can do it in Hebrew, but even in English) often will produce things—you'll see things—that just don't conform to the flesh-puppet view of inspiration.

So I would suggest to you that the problem isn't the Bible. The problem is the way you're thinking about the Bible. The Bible doesn't need to be adjusted and changed or said to be in error or whatever. The problem is that we need to think better about what we're actually encountering in the text. That would help. I mean, honestly, that would help.

So ultimately, what is the takeaway of the authorship and date of the book of Isaiah? This is not a hill to die on. There's a lot of overblown rhetoric on both sides that shows simplistic exposure to the issue—to the phenomenon of the text. And unfortunately, it can amount to the defense of an unnecessary view of inspiration that stems from a faulty view of how the whole thing worked. The way we think about how we got scripture needs to align with what we actually see in scripture.

Now that might sound silly or like I'm intentionally saying kind of a dumb thing to draw your attention, but I'm serious about it. How you think about the inspiration of the Bible really needs to jive with what you find in the Bible. And a lot of the traditional ways that we're taught to think about these things really creates disconnections between those two things.

So again, our lesson for the day is to try to think more carefully about inspiration. And if we do, there are ways to approach an issue (like in this case, the authorship of a book and the date of a book) that don't have to end in either crazy rhetoric, where we portray someone like they're a prophecy-denier. And it also

doesn't have to end in pretending that outliers to our particular view don't exist, because they do. So we need to be honest with the data and try to think better about it.

TS: Okay, Mike. Well next week, we're going to be tackling the book of Job.

MH: Yep. Yep, another one of these that always seems to come up. So we're picking them off one at a time. Again, they're not hills to die on. In the case of Job, the problem there is drawing certain theological conclusions based on the assumption of the date of the book, which may or may not work very well at all.

TS: All right. Well, I'm looking forward to that and again, we had a ton of fun in Israel. I want to thank everybody that came out on that tour and I hope to see everybody again, especially at our first Naked Bible Conference on August 18th. That's a Saturday. It's all day. It's in Dallas, Texas. So, please, please, please go to NakedBibleConference.com. Get your tickets. And we look forward to seeing everybody there.

And with that I just want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible podcast! God bless.