

Essay 1

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Hebrew language students: discuss an interesting feature of the text.

Some scholars consider Isaiah as a "miniature Bible." This thought has to do not only with the number of chapters Isaiah has (66 chapters) and the number of books in the Bible (66 books). This statement is related to the richness of topics that the book addresses: God's judgment on sin and His grace (Constable 2021). In addition, the Hebrew text of Isaiah uses various literary figures, key terms, and poetry to communicate its message. On the other hand, scholars have elaborated different hypotheses about the elaboration and authorship of this book. However, the Hebrew text serves as support to affirm its uniqueness.

Like other books of the Bible, Isaiah uses names to give a message beyond a kinship theme. Isaiah gives his sons names with prophetic character. One of his sons was named נְשֹׂאֵר יָשׁוּב (he will return a remnant), and the other מְהֵרָה נִשְׁלָל הָשָׁבֵר (quick to the plunder). Unlike other books of the Bible where names point to a relevant characteristic of a person (as Jacob in Genesis), these names have a prophetic character. It also occurs in Hosea, whose sons received names with prophetic significance (Constable 2021). With these names, Isaiah warned Israel that after God's judgment, there would be no restoration of the way of life they had. The conditions of their return would be very different from what they expected (Oswalt 2003, 19).

The book of Isaiah uses frequent key terms. One of these common expressions is אֱת־קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל (the Holy One of Israel). Isaiah uses this title for God to highlight His Holy character (Constable 2021). These words emphasize God's superiority to His creation. This title also underlines a key theme of the book, holiness. Isaiah sought to make it clear to Israel that God was not just one among the gods of the nations. This title and the possibility of making the future known to the people show that God was not an idol but the only one who rules all creation (Oswalt, 41).

Another key term is יְשׁוּעָה (salvation). This word appears about forty times in the book of Isaiah. Moreover, this word is very similar to the name of the author of the book יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ, Isaiah. Constable points out that the name of יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ (Isaiah) means "The Lord is salvation." Thus, the author's name summarizes his message: The Lord is the source of salvation (Constable 2021). This term ties in with Isaiah's emphasis on the coming of a Savior from God. Constable points out that Isaiah is the author who revealed the most about the coming Messiah in the entire Old Testament. Isaiah 9:1-21 mentions several messianic themes such as the branch, the stone, the light, and the child (Constable 2021). Isaiah 9 talks about "the coming Messiah." It relates to Isaiah 42 and 49, which talk about "the Servant of the Lord." Oswalt notes that what this Messiah-Servant of God will do will be to bring justice and salvation to the nations. He will leave his royal robes and submit to cruelty and abuse. Thus, he will become the Servant of Israel and the world (Oswalt 2003, 45). These terms highlight the relevance of salvation in this book.

Other important terms are צְדָקָה (justice) and מִשְׁפָּט (judgment). Concerning justice, the book uses sixty-one times the root that forms that word. The repetition of this word points to its importance to the author. Oswalt states that

Isaiah's message was one throughout the book: God expects His people to live righteous lives. The result of a life of unrighteousness is judgment. Through this judgment, He will purify them to live righteously (Oswalt 2003, 51). This statement introduces the other important term in the book, judgment. Unlike other books that warned Israel of repentance, Isaiah speaks of a judgment through which Israel would pass to be cleansed and to become a blessing for the nations (as God said to Abraham). Isaiah's idea is that there must be this judgment to have hope for these nations (Oswalt 2003, 43). However, Isaiah did not imply that no more judgment would come to Israel. They were to remain pure and righteous before God, as the nations who enjoy this hope.

This book also addresses a significant theme in the Bible, the uniqueness of God. Isaiah 44:6 states: "Besides God, there are no other gods." However, this statement is not isolated. From the earliest chapters and throughout the book, there is a strong emphasis on making it clear to Israel that Jehovah is not one of many gods. Israel would go through exile in a pagan nation with innumerable gods. Not only would they be in exile, but they would be servants in these nations. However, they were not to go after the gods of these nations but to be faithful to God. In their time, He, as the only Creator, would be the only Redeemer (Oswalt 2003, 50).

Finally, there is much debate regarding the authorship and production of Isaiah. Some scholars divided this book into two or three parts written by a Deutero-Isaiah or a Trito-Isaiah (Constable 2021). Authors who postulate the authorship of more than one author consider that an analysis of the audience, vocabulary, style and theological differences affirm the possibility that Isaiah was composed by multiple authorship at very different times. However, a terms analysis also shows that a single author may have written Isaiah. The term אֶת-קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל (Holy One of Israel) appears in the chapters attributed to Isaiah (1-39) and in those attributed to Deutero-Isaiah (40-55). This term is a characteristic of Isaiah as it appears only in this book (Oswalt 2003, 39). Oswalt also points out that in Isaiah 40-66, there are no specific historical references to the exilic and postexilic periods in which some scholars attribute that this part was written. There are only historical references in Isaiah 6-39. It is possible to assert that Isaiah could have been unaware of this information since he was not in that period. Finally, the oldest manuscripts of Isaiah show unity in the book. No Jewish or Christian scholar of antiquity has questioned the single authorship of Isaiah (Constable 2021). Isaiah's message did not come from a human mind but from God. He can predict the future in detail and guide the author through the book's composition.

Bibliography

Oswalt, John N. *Isaiah. The NIV Application Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2003.

Constable, Thomas L. *Notes on Isaiah, 2021 Edition*. Soniclight: 2021.