Yim Chun-ning (116647)

OT751 Isaiah
Dr. Russell Mack

Essay 1: What is one new thing you learned or idea to which you were exposed?

Before this lesson, I had a vague idea about the different sections of Isaiah, but I was never exposed to the idea of "Deutero-Isaiah", "Trito-Isaiah" and the "Isaianic school" in such a clear manner. The theory of "Deutero-Isaiah" emerged during the Enlightenment. It proposed that Isaiah is the conflation of the works of two different authors, one responsible for Chapters 1-39, and the other Chapters 40-66. The theory further developed and some believed that a "Trito-Isaiah", or an "Isaianic school" (postexilic community), is responsible for Chapters 56-66. (Oswalt, 33-35)

The main arguments for multi-authorship are as follows. Firstly, the different portions of Isaiah refer to different historical contexts spanning from Isaiah's own times (740-700BC, pre-exilic) to the time when Judeans returned from exile (540-500BC). The later parts of Isaiah contain future names and events, such as the Persian emperor Cyrus, and therefore could not have been written by Isaiah. (Oswalt, 33) Secondly, there is a difference in writing style and emphasis that indicates the presence of multiple authors. (Constable, 3)

Both Oswalt and Constable are supporters of single-authorship and they have similar arguments. First of all, there is no reason why Isaiah could not prophesize to future generations under the inspiration of God's Spirit. Unless one does not believe in God's ability to predict the future (which is an attribute of God that Isaiah emphasizes (Constable, 3-4)), there is no objective evidence to support the theory of multi-authorship, especially when the book itself claims that it is written by Isaiah. (Oswalt, 35-8) Ancient Scrolls such as the Dead Sea Scrolls from about 100 BC also demonstrate that Isaiah was regarded as one unified work since ancient times. (Constable, 7) In addition, while there is notable change in linguistic style after Chapter 40, there is also distinctive continuity, such as the title of God, "Holy One of Israel", occurring 12 and 14 times in Chapters 1-39 and 40-66 respectively, and only 7 times elsewhere in the Old Testament. (Constable, 8) Constable suggests that the change in style and content could be due to new revelations from God which Isaiah received after he completed Chapters 1-39. (Constable, 18)

I find Oswalt and Constable's arguments to be generally persuasive, and I look

forward to exploring more on the differences in style and content of the text in the coming lessons.