

What, if anything, troubled you about what you learned this week?

I was reminded of the complexities of authorship of Isaiah. Though traditionally regarded as a single work, scholarship suggests that Isaiah speaks to future events that the prophet likely did not witness. Therefore Isaiah is both foretelling, but also possibly in multiple settings, which would necessitate multiple authors. According to Oswalt, Isaiah speaks “to” future times beyond the prophets own (Oswalt, *Isaiah*, 18). Scholars appear to disagree on the division of chapters, but there is some indication that as many as three distinct periods can be identified, suggesting differing authors. Oswalt suggests that its not impossible that the book is a composite, but that the book itself does not profess to be (18).

It is somewhat troubling that we are left with this unanswered question of ownership for portions of the book because it feels that a piece of history is potentially lost to us, and we are unaware if that history would bear significance to our interpretations of the book’s sayings. For so many of our authors, including Isaiah himself, an adequate understanding of the author helps to translate the book’s message to our time. Isaiah seems to have taken every opportunity to create unity between its chapters, so perhaps there is less mystery than I’ve imagined. What would change about our viewpoints if the latter chapters were written by separate authors?