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OT651/751 Isaiah  
Prof. Russell Mack  
Essay 1

**Respond to one of the following essay questions (include parenthetical citations in your response):**

- **What is one new thing you learned or idea to which you were exposed?**
- **What, if anything, troubled you about what you studied this week?**
- **Hebrew language students only – discuss an interesting feature of the text.**

The contrasting ideas of God and the gods that the prophets, in general, and the book of Isaiah, in particular, provide is striking. The fall of Jerusalem and resulting “logical” conclusions that both the people of Israel as well as the Babylonians would have taken is a new idea that helps shape many narratives in the OT. The thought was that God “could not let Jerusalem fall, and when he did, they were sure that it was because he had been defeated and therefore the ancient promises were nullified” (27). But the refreshing and new vision of God and the supernatural that the prophets provide is in many ways controversial as well as unreasonable. In spite of His people’s defeat, God remains on the throne and has a greater purpose that none of them can see yet. The pagan system of divinity which allows for gods to be defeated is nullified and rebuked in the prophets’ vision of YHWH. Even in the face of defeat, He remains faithful and He has a greater plan. The idea that many Israelites may have become disheartened and/or believed the defeat of God shows their lack of understanding and belief in the Scriptures. In fact, it was the exposure and belief in the promises of the ancient Scriptures that kept Daniel consistent in His seeking of God even in the midst of a hostile pagan culture.

**Respond to one of the following DB prompts by Thursday, 11:59 pm and one classmate’s thread by Sunday, 11:59 pm.**

- **What did you learn that will be beneficial for ministry?**
- **What can the church learn from Isaiah?**
- **What challenges present themselves for the pastor wanting to preach on this portion of Isaiah?**

The book of Isaiah has a lot to teach the church and is incredibly beneficial for ministry. The beautiful vision Isaiah provides is that of a wholly transcendent God who is above all and in control of all. His justice is perfect and in Him all that is claimed to be real is fully made perfect or exposed. As a result, even in the face of defeat or in pain or suffering, God remains in control. This should provide every believer with an assurance of God’s active involvement in every detail of our life, provided we allow Him access to them. I recently heard of the death of a childhood friend’s brother - he tragically passed away from a heart attack while playing the pool with his children. He was young, in his mid 40’s. While my heart aches and mourns his passing, especially with the family he left behind, I cannot look at this tragedy and conclude that God either was absent or is evil. I must trust there is something greater at work here, and He in fact

will make all things work together for the good of those who love Him. In the moment the pain seems confusing and daunting, but the assurance we have is that even in the face of defeat and exile, God remains seated on the throne.