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OT651/751 Isaiah
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Essay 2

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

- **What, if anything, troubled you about what you studied this week?**
- **Hebrew language students only – discuss an interesting feature of the text.**

Isaiah 6 is to me one of the most powerful and striking chapters in all of the New Testament. The image of utter hopelessness is first prescribed in the opening verses “In the year that King Uzziah died.” It is amplified in Isaiah’s reaction to the vision of the throne. It is finally sealed in the commission to preach to a people that will remain rebellious and whose hearts will remain hardened. The interesting feature comes in the final verse, where a glimmer of hope comes through “the holy seed [in] the stump in the land.” The messianic interpretation here is the more popular one - with the analogy of tree often applied to the Messiah figure can be read into this text. But Oswalt notes the differing Hebrew words in 11:1 referring to the *stump of Jesse*, a clearly Messianic figure, versus the word used here. In the former, *seres* is used whereas here the Hebrew word *massebah* is used (128). This makes the Messianic connection less certain, while still possible. The more clear interpretation is that there will still be a remaining faithful people to God, and the connection with the *seed* of Abraham invites a more general interpretation applied to God’s people (128). This conundrum seems to be commonplace with many prophetic texts where a Messianic interpretation is seemingly imposed on a text with less support from the text itself. I find this to be a particular danger in today’s church and one of the reasons why understanding the language and better approaching the text on its own terms is my preferred method of exegesis.