I. TITLE AND AUTHOR

A. Title:


2. Presupposed that all the following prophecies are from this Isaiah

B. Author:

1. No other author is mentioned.

2. Isaiah is specifically named again:

   a. 1:1: The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

   b. 7:3: And the LORD said to Isaiah..., 

   c. 13:1: The oracle concerning Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.

   d. 20:2: At that time the LORD had spoken by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying....

   e. 37:2, 6, 21: And he sent Eliakim...to the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz. 6 Isaiah said to them.... 21 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah....

   f. 38:1, 4, 21: 1 In those days Hezekiah became sick and was at the point of death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came to him.... 4 Then the word of the LORD came to Isaiah.... 21 Now Isaiah had said....

   g. 39:3, 5, 8: 3 Then Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezekiah. 5 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah.... 8 Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah....


4. Isaiah thought to be the greatest of the writing prophets.
a. He was contemporary with Amos, Hosea, and Micah

b. Moved in all social circles

c. Statesman who had insight into the political affairs of his day

(1) Pro-Egyptian party—look to Egypt for help
(2) Pro-Assyrian party—look to Assyria for help
(3) Nationalist party—follow God

d. According to The Ascension of Isaiah he was sawed in half during the reign of Manasseh (cf. Heb 11:37).

II. BACKGROUND

A. The book addresses three distinct historical settings.

1. 739-701: Isaiah’s lifetime—chapters 1-39

2. 605-539: The Exile—chapters 40-55


B. 739-701: Isaiah’s lifetime—Expansion of Assyria—chapters 1-39

1. Israel and Judah:

a. Jeroboam’s reign (782-753) over Israel was characterized by prosperity,
   \textit{2 Kgs 14:23-29}.

(1) On becoming king, he not only repelled the Syrian invaders, but also took their capital city of Damascus.

(2) He also recovered the whole of the ancient dominion from Hamath to the Dead Sea

(3) This was only partial restoration.

   (a) The sanctuary at Bethel was kept in royal estate (Amos 7:13).
(b) Drunkenness, licentiousness and oppression prevailed (Amos 2:6-8; 4:1; 6:6).


(1) He subdued the restless Edomites and Philistines.
(2) He reduced the Ammonites to subjection.
(3) He raised a powerful army.
(4) He built fortified towers in Jerusalem and the wilderness.
(5) He built cisterns in the wilderness.
(6) He raised much cattle in the lowland and the plain.
(7) He encouraged agriculture by maintaining husbandmen.
(8) He had a powerful army with all sorts of military hardware.

c. Thus both nations were at peace and enjoyed a period of prosperity.

(1) Excavations at Tell el-Farah (ancient Tirzah) reveal that "While the city's houses in the tenth century had been of uniform size, in the eighth century by contrast there was a quarter of large expensive houses, and one of small huddled structures" (Mays, 2; cf. de Vaux, Ancient Israel).

(2) This illustrates the contrast between rich and poor about which Amos is concerned (Mays, 3).

(3) It also bore its all too common fruits—pride, luxury, and selfishness.

d. While Israel and Judah enjoyed such prosperity there were rumblings of an invasion from the east.

(1) Amos had warned:

(a) "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: An adversary shall surround the land, and strip you of your defense; and your strongholds shall be plundered,” Amos 3:11

(b) “Indeed, I am raising up against you a nation, O house of Israel, says the LORD, the God of hosts,"
and they shall oppress you from Lebo-hamath to the Wadi Arabah,” Amos 6:14

(2) Hosea had warned:

(a) “They shall not remain in the land of the LORD; but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and in Assyria they shall eat unclean food,” Hosea 9:3

(b) “They shall return to the land of Egypt, and Assyria shall be their king, because they have refused to return to me,” Hosea 11:5

(3) From 810 to 750 both Israel and Judah enjoyed relative peace.

e. Judah, somewhat less corrupted than Israel, but lured into complacency it viewed itself as “better” than “godless” Israel.

f. Israel, as Hosea defined it, was guilty of spiritual adultery

2. Assyria: 1500-1000 BC several strong rulers contributed to the rise of Assyria.

a. **Tiglath-pileser III (744- 727):** With the rise of Tiglath-pileser III in 745, the tranquility of the two nations was shattered.

(1) Began ambitious imperial expansion, 2 Kgs 15:27-31, penetrating Israel's costal plain in 734.

(2) Marched through Philistia and reached the Wadi el-'Arish in Sinai, 2 Kgs 16; 2 Chron 28; Isa 7-8

(3) Defeated Damascus in 732, occupied Galilee and Transjordan, confirmed Hoshea as king in Israel.

b. **Shalmaneser V (726- 722):**

(1) Attacked Samaria (725-722), **Sargon II** (722-705) finally taking it in 721, 2 Kgs 17; Micah 1:2-7
c. **Sennacherib (704-681):**

1. Periodic rebellions kept Assyria on Guard

2. Upon Senn’s accession, Hezekiah joined a coalition of several states, which included Merodach-baladan of Babylon

3. Senn responded in 701, rushing through Syria, Phoenicia, and Joppa, he took 46 cities, including those mentioned in Micah 1: 10-15, and the city of Lachish where excavations reveal 1500 bodies among the Assyrian Garbage dump.

4. While there he sent part of his army to surround Jerusalem (2 Kgs 18:17; 2 Chron 32:9).

5. Hezekiah repented and prayed for God’s intervention and deliverance, which had been predicted by both Isaiah and Micah, 2 Kgs 18:17-19:34; 2 Chron 32:1-23; Micah 2:13.

6. “Because of Hezekiah’s folly in joining Merodach-baladan, his succumbing to the blandishments of the of the Babylonians, and showing off his military might and wealth, Isaiah predicted that Judah would one day fall to the Babylonians," (Bruce Waltke, “Micah,” *The Minor Prophets, 2:593*)

3. **Summary–Three significant historical events:**

   a. **734-732 BC, Tiglth-Pileser II’s military campaign:**

      1. Against Aram (Syria), Philistia, and parts of Israel and Judah.

      2. Ashkelon and Gaza were defeated.

      3. Judah, Ammon, Edom and Moab paid tribute to the Assyrian king, but Israel did not fare as well.
(a) 2 Kgs 15:29 records that the Northern Kingdom lost most of its territory, including all of Gilead and much of Galilee.

(b) Damascus fell in 732 and was annexed to the Assyrian empire.

b. **722-721 Samaria fell**, and the northern kingdom of Israel was conquered by Assyria.

c. **701 Judah joined a revolt** against Assyria and was overrun by King Sennacherib and his army, though Jerusalem was spared.

4. **Significant facts/events from the above:**

a. As Syria and Israel felt the pressure of this Assyrian expansion, they put pressure on Judah to join their anti-Assyrian coalition.

   (1) Judah would respond by asking help from Assyria.

   (2) Assyria would respond by placing pressure on Syria and Israel.

b. This was the continual situation for all Judah’s kings.

   (1) Should Judah join these two or be pro-Assyrian?

   (2) Ahaz’s accession to throne brought an intensifying of these forces, thus illustrating the process.

   (a) Ahaz rejected the coalition and asked Tiglath-Pileser for help (2 Kgs16:7ff), a decision which was condemned by Isaiah (7:1ff)

   (b) Assyria assisted Judah, conquered the Northern Kingdom (722-721), exiled the inhabitants, and moved other people into the newly conquered territory (2 Kgs 17)

c. These events made Judah more vulnerable, when in 701 Sennacherib threatened Jerusalem (2 Kgs 19; Isa 36)
d. Hezekiah, in contrast to his father Ahaz, “laid the matter before the Lord,” and Isaiah predicted that God would force Assyria to withdraw (2 Kgs 19:14ff; Isa 37:6-7)

C. 605-539: The Exile–chapters 40-55

1. These chapters are not tied to any specific events.
   a. The general time frame seemed to be addressed by these chapters is that of the exile
   b. Isaiah also warned Judah that sin would send the nation into Babylonian captivity.
   c. The visit of the Babylonian king’s envoys set the stage for this (Isa 39:1; cf. 2 Kgs 20:12ff.)

2. The Exile produced a serious faith crisis for Judah.
   a. “…Many came to the conclusion that their faith had been a farce, while others, still convinced that God was real enough, concluded that God had abandoned them” (Oswalt, 1:14).
   b. Chapters 40-55 are written to build comfort and trust in God—“…just as God could and should be trusted in the Assyrian crisis, so also he may be trusted in a new age with new problems” (Oswalt, 1:14).

(1) God would redeem his people from Babylon just as he had rescued them from Egypt (35:9; 41:4).
(2) Isaiah predicts the rise of Cyrus, who would unite the Medes and the Persians and conquer Babylon in 539 (44:28; 46:1, 13)
(3) The decree of Cyrus would allow the exiles to return home in 538, a deliverance which prefigured the greater deliverance through Christ (52:7).

D. 539-400: Post Exile–chapters 56-66
1. Following Cyrus’ decree in 539 some 50,000 returned home (Ezra 2-3).

2. The realities of life quickly dashed the visionary hopes of these returnees
   a. They were not welcomed, but were treated with hostility and suspicion.
   b. The work on the temple was quickly abandoned and not resumed until 20 years later through the encouragement of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah

3. Three groups may be identified
   a. Those concerned about God and their relationship to him.
   b. Those concerned about religion
   c. Those not interested in either of the above.

4. “In a general way Isa. 56-66 corresponds to the above picture. The chapters censured the religiously complacent, asserting that a foreigner or a eunuch who serves God faithfully from the heart is a better Jew than one whose bloodlines are perfect but whose relationship to God is perfunctory at best. Another theme . . . is the inability of human beings to bring about the promised salvation but the complete ability of God through his Spirit to do so. Thus, if chs. 40-55 speak to a people who fear themselves cast off, chs. 56-66 call for a realized righteousness from a people who have lapsed into a careless dependence upon position” (Oswalt, 1:17).

III. UNITY OF COMPOSITION

A. Many scholars have challenged that “Isaiah of Jerusalem” wrote the entire book.

1. This multiple authorship theory rivals the multiple authorship of the Pentateuch in popularity.

2. The theory derives from the major differences in the three main sections of the book.

3. **J. C. Döderlein (1775) and J. G. Eichhorn (1780-83)** were the first to
argue that these differences reflected different authors.

4. This theory has evolved in ever more complex (contradictory?) ways
   a. A continual reduction of the “truly Isaianic” portions until we have a corpus not much larger than Amos/Hosea.
   b. “Yet we are asked to believe that of all the prophets, only Isaiah sparked a movement which would continue for some five centuries and eventually produce a book in the ‘founder’s’ name that would be some five to six times the volume of the original input” (Oswalt, 1:20).
   c. Further, there is a remarkable disunity among scholars relative to the compositional nature of the book.

B. *Arguments for the unity.*

1. “Isaiah” is the only name attached to the book, 1:1; 2:1; 13:1

2. *The Holy One of Israel* is one of the strongest arguments.
   a. Occurs 12 times in chs. 1-39
   b. Occurs 14 times in chs. 40-66

3. *Figure of “Fire” as punishment*—1:31; 10:17; 26:11; 33:11-14; 34:9-10; 66:24.
   a. **1:31:** And the strong shall become tow, and his work a spark, and both of them shall burn together, with none to quench them.
   b. **10:17:** The light of Israel will become a fire, and his Holy One a flame; and it will burn and devour his thorns and briers in one day.
   c. **26:11:** O LORD, thy hand is lifted up, but they see it not. Let them see thy zeal for thy people, and be ashamed. Let the fire for thy adversaries consume them.
   d. **33:11-14:** You conceive chaff, you bring forth stubble; your breath is a fire that will consume you. 12 And the peoples will be
as if burned to lime, like thorns cut down, that are burned in the
fire." 13 Hear, you who are far off, what I have done; and you who
are near, acknowledge my might. 14 The sinners in Zion are afraid;
trembling has seized the godless: "Who among us can dwell with
the devouring fire? Who among us can dwell with everlasting
burnings?"

e. 34:9-10: And the streams of Edom shall be turned into pitch, and
her soil into brimstone; her land shall become burning pitch. 10
Night and day it shall not be quenched; its smoke shall go up for
ever. From generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall
pass through it for ever and ever.

f. 66:24: "And they shall go forth and look on the dead bodies of the
men that have rebelled against me; for their worm shall not die,
their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to
all flesh."

4. “Holy Mountain” (2:2-4) and the mention of “highway” (11:16) are
themes that occur throughout the book.

a. 2:2-4: It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of
the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the
mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; and all the nations
shall flow to it, 3 and many peoples shall come, and say: "Come,
let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God
of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in
his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of
the LORD from Jerusalem. 4 He shall judge between the nations,
and shall decide for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords
into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall
not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any
more.

b. 11:16: And there will be a highway from Assyria for the remnant
which is left of his people, as there was for Israel when they came
up from the land of Egypt.

5. The Structure of the book argues for unity

a. 1-35–Isaiah’s prophecies to pre-exiles
b. 36-39—Historical interlude introducing 40-66

c. 40-66—Prophecies to the exiles

6. **Other similar phrases compared:**

**Chapters 1-39**

Isaiah 1:2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the LORD has spoken: "Sons have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me.

Isaiah 1:5 Why will you still be smitten, that you continue to rebel? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. 6 From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but bruises and sores and bleeding wounds; they are not pressed out, or bound up, or softened with oil.

Isaiah 5:27 None is weary, none stumbles, none slumbers or sleeps, not a waistcloth is loose, not a sandal-thong broken;

Isaiah 6:1 In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple.

**Chapters 40-66**

Isaiah 66:24 "And they shall go forth and look on the dead bodies of the men that have rebelled against me; for their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh."

Isaiah 53:4 Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed.

Isaiah 40:30 Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted;

Isaiah 52:13 Behold, my servant shall prosper, he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high.

Isaiah 57:15 For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the
Isaiah 6:11 Then I said, "How long, O Lord?" And he said: "Until cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without men, and the land is utterly desolate, 12 and the LORD removes men far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.

Isaiah 11:1 There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

Isaiah 11:6 The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. 7 The cow and the bear shall feed; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. 8 The sucking child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. 9 They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

Isaiah 11:12 He will raise an ensign for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

Isaiah 35:10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon

humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite.

Isaiah 62:4 You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called My delight is in her, and your land Married; for the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be married.

Isaiah 51:11 And the ransomed of
their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.


8. **Function of chs. 1-6:**

   a. The book seeks to answer question, “How can sinful people become servants of God?”

   b. This question is answered as follows:

      (1) 1-5 sets forth the problem—sinful yet called.

      (2) 6 sets forth the answer—vision of the Holy One—“Here am I.”

      (3) The rest of the book works out this problem:

         (a) 1-39—trust in God

         (b) 40-55—becoming servant involves trust in God

         (c) 56-66—becoming a servant and trusting God involves recognizing human inability and divine ability.

IV. DATE AND AUTHORSHIP

A. **1-39:** Most of these events occurred during Isaiah’s early ministry.

1. He began his ministry in the year of Uzziah’s death, 740 BCE.

2. These chapters had to be completed not long after 701, the year the
Assyrian Army was destroyed (2 Kgs 19:35ff).

3. They portray God as superior to the Assyrian threat

B. **40-66:** Isaiah must have written these chapters to prepare Israel for the exile.

1. These chapters had to be written for the sake of completeness and for the validity of Isaiah’s message.

2. “Thus there is a logical necessity for the address to the future communities. . . . One probable reason for the survival of the Judean exiles as a community may well have been the existence of Isa. 40-66 in advance of the Exile, both predicting that event and pointing beyond it to a return” (Oswalt, 1:27-8).

V. OCCASION.

A. The Assyrian Crisis, which brought about the destruction of the Northern Kingdom, produced a theological crisis of the greatest magnitude.

B. Raised all sorts of questions relative to the sovereignty of God, the legitimacy of other gods, place of divine judgment in the chosenness of a people, the future of the monarchy.

C. These questions could not be resolved with the Assyrian Crisis.

1. It merely raised them, for Judah was not exiled.

2. Only when Judah was exiled could these questions be fully explored.

3. Thus Isaiah had to deal with Judah’s past, present, and future in order to answer adequately these questions.

VI. THEMES AND THEOLOGY

A. **God:**

1. God is the “Holy one of Israel,” “high and lifted up,” “the earth is full of his glory,” 6:1ff

   a. The nations are but a drop in a bucket compared to him, 14:22-23;
b. This is the “otherness” of God, the “I, thou.”

2. God is more than ethical perfection.
   a. To come into contact with God is to recognize one’s uncleanness, 6:5
   b. Lying, stealing, oppression, murder, mere obedience, etc., are a direct affront to his nature.
   c. God’s desire is that his people share his character, 35:8

3. These characteristics illustrate the folly of worshiping other gods, 44:9-20:

4. God’s purpose, as Lord of history (14:24-27), is much larger than any short-termed victories; it is the “outworking of the interaction between the single divine purpose and human obedience and rebellion” (Oswalt, 1:36).

B. **Humanity and the World:**

1. Humanity is the “ultimate,” “the measure of all things,” the logical center of all thought,” and “nothing.”

2. The world is “god itself,” from which all life springs and forces operating at random. (Oswalt, 1:36).

C. **Sin:**

1. Sin is rebellion—the book begins and ends of this note, 1:2; 66:24

2. Such rebellion is stupid, 1:2-3

D. **Judgment and Redemption:**

1. Are in tension.
   a. God is “the Holy One of Israel” (1:4:61) who must punish (1:2)
b. Israel is a blind and deaf nation (6:9-10; 42:7)

c. Israel is a vineyard that will be trampled (5:1-7)

d. Israel is a people devoid of justice or righteousness (5:7; 10:1-2)

e. The judgment, or “the day of the Lord,” will be unleashed on Israel and all people who defy God.

2. God as judge sends punishments of all kinds, natural disaster (24:4-5), military defeat (5:26-30), or disease (1:5-6)

a. These may be seen as the mere outworking of sin’s consequences

b. There is no separation between the sin and the sinner, 5:24-25; 65:6-7

3. God is also the “Redeemer” of Israel (41:14,16)

a. He will have compassion on his people (14:1-2), rescuing them from political and spiritual oppression

b. This new restoration is like a new Exodus (43:2,16-19; 52:10-12) in which God redeems (35:9; 41:14) and saves them (43:3; 49:8)

c. But such redemption does not come at the expense of justice, 52:13-53:12

d. Redemption has a price, someone/thing must pay

e. While sin results in the devaluation of the sinner, redemption means renewed significance.

f. The redemption of Israel means becoming a servant.

E. **Peace and Safety** mark this new Messianic Age (11:6-9).

1. A descendent of David will reign in righteousness (9:7; 32:1)

2. All nations will flow to the holy mountain of Jerusalem (2:2-4)
3. God’s people will no longer be oppressed (11:14; 45:14)

4. Jerusalem will truly be a “City of the Lord” (60:14)

F. “My Servant” is the name of the Messianic King in chs. 42-53.
   1. It is applied to Israel as a nation (41:8-9; 42:1)
   2. Through the suffering of this servant is salvation, in the fullest sense, achieved.
   3. Cyrus was God’s instrument to deliver Israel (41:2), but Christ delivered mankind from the prison of sin (52:13-53:12).
   4. Christ became a light to the Gentiles (42:6), so nations facing judgment (13-23) could find salvation (55:4-5)
   5. In this way the Gentiles also became “servants of the Lord” (54:17)

G. The Lord’s Kingdom, Righteous Ruler, and Righteous Subjects is the goal toward which the book steadily moves.

VII. INTERPRETATIVE PROBLEMS

A. Unity of the book:
   1. The major trend among scholars is an atomization of the text which results in which contextual elements are ignored in favor of supposed historical references.
   2. This does damage to the overall interpretative value to book.
   3. The book is best considered as an anthology of differing materials coming from different periods in the prophet’s life.
   4. Regardless of how a particular scholar views the book, a unified whole, or three smaller books, a holistic approach is needed in order to interpret properly the book—something most radical scholars have not done.

B. Prediction:
1. This is the most divisive issue among students of prophecy.

2. Traditionally, the church has attempted to assign all oracles a predictive status.

3. In the past several centuries many scholars have reacted to this denying to the prophets any predictive oracles
   a. They try to shorten the time frame of the prediction.
   b. Make the prediction very general in nature, relegating it to something most any astute individual could understand.
   c. Attempt to interpret the oracle as being written “after the fact.”

4. These processes are difficult to understand, when the prophets themselves made the test of validity for their statements the proof of their predictions, Deut 18.

5. Further, such an approach, in the final analysis, interprets the prophets as “falsifying the evidence,” and/or their followers “doctoring” it to bring it in line with the master prophet’s prediction (Oswalt, 1:47)

6. “Thus it must be argued that while prediction of the future is not the primary function of biblical prophecy, it is a legitimate element whereby the ethical pronouncements are validated and whereby God’s ability to shape history according to his purposes and human responses is demonstrated. If specific predictions are always suspect then the whole prophetic message, as far as it is supposed to convey eternal verities, is suspect” (Oswalt, 1:48).
   a. In Isaiah, this is especially true.
   b. Too much of the interpretation of the book rests the idea that he could not have predicted events in the Babylonian exile.
   c. Once this is accepted as a possibility the arguments relating to style, etc., become nebulous.
   d. Furthermore, much of the book is related to prediction, since even “Isaiah of Jerusalem” possessed special revelation to predict
Assyria’s downfall, 10:16-19, 33-34.

e. Similar arguments can be made for the oracles against the nations (14:26-27), Babylon (13-14; 41:22)

C. **The Servant of the Lord:** dominant theme in 40-55

1. May be divided into four interpretative groups: historical individual, mythological, messianic, and collective

2. **Historical individual** and **mythological** have fatal flaws:
   a. Historical individual cannot be identified
   b. Mythological was never used in this way by biblical, though ANE authors did.

3. **Messianic** and **collective** have much more going for it.
   a. Undoubtedly, ultimately the statements refer to the Messiah.
   b. Collectively, it can refer to the nation also.
   c. The nation, as it learns to become a servant of God, through the process of suffering points to the ultimate suffering servant of God.

D. **Function in the Canon:**

1. Covers the whole biblical theology better than any other book.

2. Encompasses both OT and NT religion

3. The book has much to say to the people of God in terms of “already,” as well as in terms of “not now.”

4. This is the only interpretation that will allow the book to function as it was meant to function.

VIII. **LITERARY FEATURES.**

A. **Prose and Poetry:**
1. Main prose material is found in 36-39, the historical interlude uniting both parts of the book.

2. Poetry is unsurpassed among OT writings. Contains:
   a. **Oracles**, 13-23
   b. **Song** against the king of Babylon, 14:4-23
   c. **Apocalyptic** section stressing the last days, 24-27
   d. **Wisdom Poem**, 28:23-29
   e. **The Song of the Vineyard**, 5:1-7
   f. **Hymns of Praise**, 12:1-6; 38:10-20
   g. **Hymn of Lament**, 63:7-64:12

3. Poetry is rich and varied—uses 2,200 different Hebrew words—more than any OT writer.

B. **Personification**: a favorite technique of Isaiah’s

1. The sun and moon are ashamed (24:23), while the desert and parched land rejoice (35:1)

2. The mountains and forests burst into song, 44:23

3. The trees “clap their hands,” 55:12

4. Vineyard terminology includes:
   a. Treading the winepress, a figure of judgment, 63:3
   b. Those judged drink God’s “cup of wrath,” and stagger under punishment, 51:17

5. God is described as a “Rock” (17:10) and the animals represent nations (27:1; 30:7; 51:9)
C. **Imagery:**

1. **30:27-30** is a good example.

   Behold, the name of the LORD comes from far, burning with his anger, and in thick rising smoke; his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue is like a devouring fire; 28 his breath is like an overflowing stream that reaches up to the neck; to sift the nations with the sieve of destruction, and to place on the jaws of the peoples a bridle that leads astray. 29 You shall have a song as in the night when a holy feast is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one sets out to the sound of the flute to go to the mountain of the LORD, to the Rock of Israel. 30 And the LORD will cause his majestic voice to be heard and the descending blow of his arm to be seen, in furious anger and a flame of devouring fire, with a cloudburst and tempest and hailstones. 31 The Assyrians will be terror-stricken at the voice of the LORD, when he smites with his rod. 32 And every stroke of the staff of punishment which the LORD lays upon them will be to the sound of timbrels and lyres; battling with brandished arm he will fight with them. 33 For a burning place has long been prepared; yea, for the king it is made ready, its pyre made deep and wide, with fire and wood in abundance; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, kindles it.

2. **Makes full use of sarcasm, 44:9-20**

   All who make idols are nothing, and the things they delight in do not profit; their witnesses neither see nor know, that they may be put to shame. 10 Who fashions a god or casts an image, that is profitable for nothing? 11 Behold, all his fellows shall be put to shame, and the craftsmen are but men; let them all assemble, let them stand forth, they shall be terrified, they shall be put to shame together. 12 The ironsmith fashions it and works it over the coals; he shapes it with hammers, and forges it with his strong arm; he becomes hungry and his strength fails, he drinks no water and is faint. 13 The carpenter stretches a line, he marks it out with a pencil; he fashions it with planes, and marks it with a compass; he shapes it into the figure of a man, with the beauty of a man, to dwell in a house. 14 He cuts down cedars; or he chooses a holm tree or an oak and lets it grow strong among the trees of the forest; he plants a cedar and the rain nourishes it. 15 Then it becomes fuel for a man; he takes a part of it and warms himself, he kindles a fire and bakes bread; also he makes a god and worships it, he makes it a graven image and falls down before it. 16 Half
of it he burns in the fire; over the half he eats flesh, he roasts meat and is satisfied; also he warms himself and says, "Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire!" 17 And the rest of it he makes into a god, his idol; and falls down to it and worships it; he prays to it and says, "Deliver me, for thou art my god!" 18 They know not, nor do they discern; for he has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see, and their minds, so that they cannot understand. 19 No one considers, nor is there knowledge or discernment to say, "Half of it I burned in the fire, I also baked bread on its coals, I roasted flesh and have eaten; and shall I make the residue of it an abomination? Shall I fall down before a block of wood?" 20 He feeds on ashes; a deluded mind has led him astray, and he cannot deliver himself or say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?"

D. **History:** Often alludes to other historical events, especially the Exodus

1. Crossing of the Red Sea forms the background for 11:15; 43:2, 16-17

   **11:15** And the LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the sea of Egypt; and will wave his hand over the River with his scorching wind, and smite it into seven channels that men may cross dry shod.

   **43:2** When you pass through the waters I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. 16 Thus says the LORD, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters, 17 who brings forth chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick:

2. Others include:
   a. The overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, 1:9

IX. **OUTLINE.**

A. Introduction to the book–the Present and Future of God’s people, 1-6

B. Whom shall we trust, 7-39

1. God or Assyria? 7-12
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C. Vocation of Servanthood, 40-55

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