

**Dr. Allan MacRae: Isaiah 1-6: Lecture 12**  
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**Higher Critical Approaches to Isaiah**

**Smoking Flax and Broken Reed (Isa 42:3) [0:0]**

I had a very intelligent question asked at the end of the last part of the last hour. It relates to the section of the book that I ran over rapidly because it was not what we had in mind for our main emphasis this time. So I won't take long at it. But it is one I think is well worth looking at. The Question is: Could you comment on what is a smoking flax (or wick) and broken reed in Isaiah 42:3. Now Isaiah 42:3, taken just by itself, let's say the first 2/3's of it, you wouldn't have any idea what he means. "A bruised reed shall he not break and a smoking flax shall he not quench." That could mean any one of a hundred different things when you just take that alone. When you read the rest of the verse, "he shall bring forth judgment into truth" you see you are speaking about one who is doing a task. One who is going forward to accomplish something. And when you look at the preceding and following verses it is quite clear that is what it is. Someone is undertaking a great task. He is going forward to fulfill this task, and in the course of it, he will not break a bruised reed and he won't quench a smoking flax. And so you have a picture of one who is heading for a task, a very vital task and you might think that whatever gets in his way he's apt to just throw out of the way and be done with it. But he's not going to do that.

And what is he not going to break? A broken reed. What would a reed be? A reed would be like a cane. It would be something that you lean on or something you use for some purpose. Here you take a hold of something and it just doesn't accomplish the work. And you say, "ah throw it away and let's get a new one." No he's not going to do that. A bruised reed he is not going to break.

And a smoking flax, this refers to the wick of a lamp--of course in our day, we just turn the button and the electricity comes on, but in those days they didn't have electricity or even kerosene lamps. And so they had to have a little wick. And here is the little wick that gives you light. Maybe the oil is underneath and comes up through the wick that gives you light. Some wicks don't work very well. Instead of giving light, all it gives only smoke. And you say throw it away, that one, and get us a new one.

But the picture here, I believe, refers to those who are trying to serve the Lord: sincerely trying to do the best of their ability to understand what the Lord's will is and to accomplish it. And as they try to do it, they just do not have the particular abilities they need, or perhaps they have made bad mistakes and they have fallen back and they have injured themselves. They have failed to do what the Lord wanted, but they have repented, and they have come to Him and sought his forgiveness. He has granted it through the blood of Christ. They are cleansed from their sin but they still are a broken reed or a smoking flax. The bird with a broken wing never flies as high again. And under those circumstances it is very easy to give way to despair.

But the true servant of the Lord is one who has the great task of bringing light to all the nations, the one who is interested in every one of them. But in spite of our failures and weaknesses, he is not going to just toss us out of the way if we sincerely look to him and sincerely try to do his will and bring our faults and our sins before him for his cleansing. He doesn't promise he will make us a great evangelists or great accomplishers necessarily. He will use us in proportion to our abilities and in proportion to his particular desires for us in his plan, but He won't toss us out of the way saying, "that one is no good let's get a new one." And so in light of the context, this is undoubtedly what this particular statement means. It shows the gentleness in the servant and his confidence. He's not one who is struggling to get results.

For example, when you are in ordinary circumstances, you are very careful not to break things. And you would feel very bad if you upset your table and broke your china or broke your glasses. But if there was a fire started there, and you had the chance to rush over and to crush out that fire before your house burned down, you wouldn't worry about how much china you broke or how many glasses you broke. Anything that got in your way would be very secondary. Like when I hear somebody who's been in a bad auto accident and they've come through it without much injury. The car perhaps is ruined but we say "isn't it wonderful you weren't hurt"; we don't feel so bad about the car; we feel happy that the person wasn't injured. Well, that's not the way the servant is going to have to work. He doesn't have to just struggle to accomplish his work; he goes forward with confidence and certainty to accomplish the task to which he has set himself. And so that, I think, and I believe, you would find as to the meaning of this verse. All commentaries would agree. I don't think that it is a questionable thing at all. But it is something that is not apparent when we first look at this verse. And so I think that it was worth taking a minute or two to explain it.

### **In God's Sight No "Little People" [7:10]**

In connection with this, Francis Schaeffer (who was a student of Allan MacRae) has written a book, *No Little People*. That's just the name of the first of a series of talks he gave. But in God's sight, there are no little people. He had a student who was, well he was right at the top of the lowest third of the class in just about every regard, academically and personally and every other way. But he got a letter from his mother and she said, "What does Billy Graham have that you don't have? Why can't you accomplish everything that Billy Graham did? Just get busy and work!" Well, that's no way to help a fellow. If he did the best he could with the ability he had, I'm sure God would use him and bless him. But to make one of us think that *we* have got to have particular abilities that only few people perhaps have, is not, I repeat, is not helpful. But on the other hand, every one of us

probably can accomplish much more than we do if we really try to the very best we can with what we have. And Jesus is the one who gives us our gifts, and He will use them. But He doesn't want us to become discouraged or think because of our failure he's going to throw us out of the way. If we sincerely trust in him and rest in him, we can depend upon Him for accomplishment of His will. And there's many a person whom I've seen, who has worked hard and has had great effect for a time and then things have come along and derailed their efforts. And they look back on their life and think it was a waste and a ruin, when actually they accomplished much in God's sight. God didn't cast him aside.

### **Assignment [9:19]**

Now getting back to the matter at hand. By the next lesson I hope to be discussing the section after the first part of it that I gave you, i.e., chapter 59, and then going on to the latter part of 59 and 60 and chapters beyond, thru chapter 63. Now there's four chapters, or three and a fraction chapter if you wish, that I'd like you just to look over in the English, or you could use the Hebrew to confirm if you prefer, but look it over rapidly just in order to see the main divisions in subject matter. Don't take any division you find in the Bible or a commentary or anything. I don't object to your looking at all things like that, but I prefer that first you do the work yourself. And this is a number of chapters, so I'm not asking anything but a rather superficial subdivision of them. Just what are the main subjects, and what are the points of division.

How far does what we discussed last time go through 59? We talked about 59:20 to the last part of 59. I want you to take what we said from there and run on through 63, but you don't need to look at 63 more than just to note the general subject and where the important divisions occur. And as a hint there are no more than three divisions at the most.

### **Relation of the Latter Parts of Isaiah to its Earlier Parts [10:52]**

Now having laid out the assignment for next time, I believe we are ready to continue with our discussion and so I will go on to section 10. e.g. Roman numeral ten. "The relation of the latter parts of Isaiah to its earlier parts." That's Roman numeral ten. And we are now going to start this last section, but here I am speaking at the moment about the part from chapter forty on.

### **“Higher Criticism” of Isaiah [11:20]**

So under that capital A, "Higher Criticism of Isaiah." And notice that I put the “higher criticism” in quotes. Forty years ago there was wide-spread discussion, “Is the higher criticism right?” And among Christians the term, “higher criticism,” came to mean the attitude of those who would divide the Bible books up into all sorts of sections, and say they were written by different authors than what they seemed to be, and also written at different times. And the term “higher criticism” came to mean, to most Christians, destructive criticism of the Bible. But in most classes forty years ago, even if they were classes taught by thoroughly orthodox people, they would say the term "higher criticism" should not be thought of as having a bad connotation”. “Higher” criticism simply is a term for investigation. They would say, “who is the author of the book, when was it written, what is its unity?” And they would say, “that term is used with all literature!” And there’s nothing wrong with higher criticism, it’s just what we also call "lower criticism" trying to get the exact text, and to study the meaning of particular words. So higher criticism studies authorship, unity, and questions like that. Well that’s what they would have told you forty years ago in any class in Old Testament study.

But today I fear many orthodox teachers, in orthodox schools, will say the same thing. But for me it wasn’t long ago that I thought this description of higher criticism wasn’t true. So I went to the public library and checked out all of the books I could get on literary criticism: books which were not particularly concerned with the Bible, but were dealing with literature in general. And I looked up the term “higher criticism” in their indexes and I found that practically all of

them didn't mention the term at all. It is never referred to it in their book. It is not a term used in literary study today, outside of us. But I found in a few books of that type that when they used the term, they used it only in relation to the Bible. The term "higher criticism" has now been given up in literary study in general. Not only the term, but the things that it stood for have been abandoned. Forty years ago, fifty years ago, literary critics would take almost any work of literature and divide it up into all kinds of sections and claim they were written by different authors at different times. Today, that is just about, or entirely, given up regarding all literature except the Bible. But Bible students, many of them, are way behind the times in this regard. And in most any university that you would take a course in religion, and in almost any theological seminary that is over forty years old, you will find that they are dividing up the Bible according to these higher critical theories. And so, we still use the term "higher criticism" because it's come to be a term for that sort of division.

I met a man teaching in a seminary in the city long ago, who told me he was meeting with others from other seminaries and they were discussing the boundaries of the so-called Q source [A presumed document containing sayings of Jesus shared by Matthew and Luke but not Mark]. That is, they were discussing what parts of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are from the Q source, and what parts are from the other sorts. They are tremendously interested in subdividing the text and saying this half verse goes here, and this verse goes there. They don't do that today with other literature, at least hardly anybody does. But it still is taught in all of the older schools as established fact. Well now we're interested here in something about the higher criticism of Isaiah, but we are not going to take much time on that.

There is no question that anyone, no evidence that anyone questioned Isaiah's authorship or any part of the book until the 18<sup>th</sup> century. There were people in ancient times who said, "Daniel didn't write the book of Daniel". There were beginnings of the denial, of the authorship of biblical books in ancient times.

But we have no evidence that before the 18<sup>th</sup> century that anybody questioned that the book of Isaiah was one continuous unit, written by one man. And of course, the book says that his name was “Isaiah”.

### **“Two Isaiah Theory” [16:55]**

This brings us to number two, the “Two Isaiah theory”. About two hundred years ago one of the higher critics advanced a very simple theory; of “apparent simplicity.” If you will look at Isaiah chapters one through thirty-nine you will find many mentions of Isaiah, well I shouldn’t say “many”, not over ten, but there are quite a few. But if you look at Isaiah forty to sixty-six, the name “Isaiah” never occurs; never from forty to sixty-six. You look at Isaiah one to thirty-nine; you have occasional mentions of the civic Israelite kings, particularly in the chapters from thirty-six to thirty nine. You have no Israelite king mentioned by name after that; i.e., after chapter forty. In the sections one to thirty-nine you have many statements that the land is going to be taken into exile if the people there don’t repent from their sins. In the section from forty on, you find it presupposed, or assumed, that exile is already here. In the first part there are many references to the backgrounds of situations in Palestine. In the section from forty on you get the feeling he is talking to people way across the desert in Babylonia. So it’s a very simple theory: here’s Isaiah’s book, chapters one through thirty-nine. Somebody, the critics say a great unknown, a greater writer than Isaiah--they call him “Deutero-Isaiah”, or the “second Isaiah”--wrote a book, more or less in the Spirit of Isaiah, but it was 150 years later. And some way, since it was so similar, it got written on the same scroll, and it didn’t have any title so people forgot that it was by a different writer. Well you might say, “What’s the great difference? God inspired it all. Whether it is the first book Isaiah wrote, or the other by a great unknown 150 years later.”

You might say that at this point. It is a very apparently simple theory. But hardly any conservative scholar holds that view today. Even among modernist scholars, hardly anybody holds any more to the “Two Isaiah” theory today.

### **“Deutero- and Trito- Isaiah” [19:37]**

Looking at more recent higher critical attitudes, we find that it was not long after the "Deutero-Isaiah" theory was advanced, that people began to look at Isaiah forty on, and look back at one to thirty-nine, and find parts of *it* that they said were similar. And so, they said, the same evidences that show us that much of forty on wasn't written by Isaiah also shows many sections of chapters one through thirty-nine weren't written by Isaiah. So they broke one to thirty-nine all up into little sections. And then, while a "Trito-Isaiah" or "Third-Isaiah," was noticed, a great argument and discussion was carried on between those who said the book has a Palestinian background, is written by Isaiah in the time of Hezekiah, and those who said, "no, the last part from forty to sixty-six has a background of Babylonia, when the exile is all ready in progress." It was noted that those who said the background is Babylonian were presenting most of their evidence from chapters forty to fifty-five. And those who said the background is Palestine were presenting most of their evidence from the last ten chapters. And so they said, "No, there is a third Isaiah!" Trito-Isaiah. And so they said the last ten chapters or so differ according to the relationship we made with the other chapters, so they were written 100 years after "second Isaiah." So now you have three Isaiahs. And if there are any critical scholars who hold the "Two Isaiahs" theory, you will probably find six for every one of them who will hold the "Three Isaiahs" theory. But they don't merely hold to three different books written by three different authors; if you pick up almost any critical commentaries today, they will say the question is not "Is this by Isaiah or not?"; the question is "examine these verses here and decide what is the time at which they probably were written". And so they will say, "Here's six and a half verses that were written probably a hundred years before Isaiah. Here's a hundred or so verses that were probably written 300



years after Isaiah. Then here's six verses maybe written by the second Isaiah. Then here's ten verses written by an unknown author." And so the book came to be completely fragmented. Now that was the practice of critics, let's say 20 years ago, whereby Isaiah was completely fragmented. We see the absurdity of going to such extremes today, so there is not quite as much fragmentation of Isaiah going on as there was. But you will find books entitled *The Second Isaiah*. And you will find that most of the books, even some written by fairly conservative authors, will adopt part of this theory.

### **Argument for Two Isaiahs [22:54]**

Now number 4 of the outline— "A Glance of the Argument for two Isaiahs". Number one —"The Historical Background"— this is a very strong argument. The section from forty on, passage after passage, talks as if the Babylonian exile were already in progress. This is a very strong argument. As I see it, Isaiah talked in great parts of chapters one through thirty-nine to the nation as a whole, and he told them, "if you do not turn from your sins, God is going to send you into exile. You are having these terrible problems with the Sennacherib and Assyrian armies, but worse things are ahead for you if you do not turn from your sin." And He even, at the end of chapter 39, specifically predicted that they would be taken into exile, not into Assyria, but into Babylonia, which seemed to them at that time to be a rather insignificant nation that was subject to Assyria. But from chapter forty on, He says, "Comfort you, comfort you my people. Call on to Jerusalem that her iniquity is pardoned and her warfare is ended" and so on. You have a tone which is very different. I explain it by saying that from chapter forty on, Isaiah turn his attention away from the ungodly mass of the nation, to the very sizeable group of believing people who were knowing what he said was true, knowing that exile was certain to come, and God was giving them comfort. They were already familiar with what God would do--The Northern Kingdom had already been taken into exile and they knew what it meant. And they knew that the sin of their own nation

of Judah was just as Isaiah said it was. Exile was sure to come, and they tended to give way to despair. And Isaiah said, "No, God is not through with Israel. God has a great work for Israel to do. There's the work of the servant of the Lord that must be accomplished." And so from forty on, which sometimes is called the "The Book of Consolation," God was speaking to the godly remnant and comforting them. And from chapter forty to fifty six, that is His principle emphasis,--comfort--and so the argument for a Second Isaiah is from historical background. If you do not believe in a God who could enable his prophet to predict the future, then a "Second Isaiah" makes sense. But to those who do not believe in such a God, it is clear that Isaiah could have written chapter forty and following.

### **Other Arguments for Two Isaiahs [26:15]**

There are two other main arguments to handle. Critics say that there are differences in the style, and they say that the theology is different. For instance, in chapters one to thirty nine, God is majestic. In forty to sixty six, God is universal. From one to thirty nine he is speaking to the nation of Israel, with occasional glimpses of the outreach to the whole world with the message of salvation. But from forty to sixty six he is looking at the world and at the salvation God is going to bring thru the servant of the Lord. And so the style naturally varies a little bit with the subject matter. You write on two different subjects and your styles are going to be somewhat different. And your emphasis in theology will naturally be different in two different situations, but there's no contradiction whatever between the theology of Isaiah chapters one to thirty nine and in Isaiah forty to sixty six. And as far as the style is concerned, some of the critics say it is amazing that Deutero-Isaiah is so much like Isaiah in style, you would think it was "Isaiah raised from the dead." You can find differences in style with differences in subject matter. But the similarity in style for Isaiah as a whole is so great that I'm ready to say let almost anybody hear three chapters picked at random in Isaiah, and then read them in conjunction with chapters from almost any other part of the Bible,

and they'll be able to tell you whether it's from Isaiah or not because Isaiah has a very distinctive style. He uses all through his book far larger vocabulary than anywhere else in the Old Testament. He has a poetic flavor and an approach that is found throughout the book, and that is different from any other book. The only one that is fairly close is Micah, but there are still differences between Micah and Isaiah, but not nearly as great between Isaiah and any other part of the Old Testament. So there is one argument that really matters, and that is the argument from historical background. The other two can be looked at in detail and thoroughly answered. But unless you believe in a God who can predict the future, and not only predict the future but enable his prophets to be so carried along that he actually imagines himself in the future, in that situation, and talks to people who know that exile is coming and who are tending to give way to despair, unless you believe in that kind of a God, you can't believe in the unity of Isaiah.

To me, the thing that matters is the New Testament quotes from Isaiah, and here we note especially that New Testament quotes from Isaiah more than any other book in the Old Testament, except for the book of Psalms, which has 150 chapters as opposed to the 66 in Isaiah. But the New Testament quotes many, many times from various passages in Isaiah. About 13 times it quotes from it as the work of Isaiah, and 6 of these are from chapters 1 to 39, that is, the first 39 chapters, and seven of them are from the last 27 chapters. And to me, one of the most interesting things is to look at the book of Romans and see what God led the apostle Paul to say when quoting from the book of Isaiah. We find there that in Romans 9:27 Paul says "Isaiah also cries concerning Israel, though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved." This is quoted from Isaiah 10:22, and then we find that two verses further he says, "And as Isaiah said before, 'except the Lord of Hosts had left us a seed, we should have been like Sodom and like Gomorrah'" and this is a quotation from the first chapter of Isaiah, as you probably recall Isaiah 1:9, so here are two quotations that he makes from the first part of Isaiah. Then in chapter 10, in verse 16, he says, "For

they have not all obeyed the gospel, for Isaiah said, 'Lord who has believed our report.'" Here he quotes from the second part of Isaiah, using the same terminology, exactly, as he used quoting from the first part. And then four verses further on, in verse 20, he says, "but Isaiah is very bold." He says, "I was found by them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me," and here he is quoting from chapter 65, verse 1, which is called "Third Isaiah." So here within two chapters, Paul quotes from the "First-Isaiah," the "Second-Isaiah," and the "Third-Isaiah," introducing them all with the word, "Isaiah says," or "Isaiah is very bold when he says." It's very plain that he's not saying, "the book says," he's saying, "the man says." He could have easily said, "First-Isaiah, or "Second," or "Third," or he could have side-stepped the question he could have simply said, "it's written in the book," or, "the prophet said," or "it's in the book of the prophets" or, "in the book of Isaiah." But the fact that he so specifically refers to all three parts as the work of Isaiah, to my mind, for a Christian, settles the matter that the book of Isaiah is one book written by one man, even though it is a difficult thing humanly speaking to believe that one man, in the time in the Hezekiah, could look forward so specifically to events that would occur, situations that would occur 150 years later. It's as though God knew the question regarding Isaiah that would be raised today, and he inspired the Apostle Paul to write in such a way as to emphasize the fact that Isaiah has one author.

### **An Important Change in Isaiah 40 [33:01]**

Now, Capital B, "An important change in Isaiah chapter forty." I've just been referring to that in number one: "In relation to the exile." We did not, for the purpose of this class, make references to specific passages, but there are a good plenty that say that God is going to deliver Judah. He will take Judah home from Babylon. In the first part of Isaiah 39 he says they will go to Babylon as exiles, but that was a prediction; now he assumed them already there.

Going back to Number two, "the servant of the Lord," Well, we spent our last hours in seeing how the concept was developed. Israel cannot perish, because Israel has responsibility for this great work that must be done, and so Israel is the servant of the Lord. But in the fullest sense, the servant of the Lord is one who is from Israel who can represent Israel, but who is an individual and does the work of the Lord for the whole world and for Israel, also. So we looked at this that last week, the development of this concept, "the servant of the Lord."

### **Possibility of Prediction [34:24]**

But let's look at number three, "the possibility of prediction." When the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament came out, I found many excellent translations. I found a good flowing English, and on the whole, I was really very well pleased with it. The Old Testament RSV did not come out until about five years later, and I said, "the RSV New Testament strikes me in many ways as a wonderful translation, but when the Old Testament comes we're going to have a very harmful book, because," I said, "Is it possible for a group of men who do not believe in a miracle-working God, who do not believe in the necessity of salvation through Christ, who think of these as foolish ideas, to make a good translation?" Nevertheless, they were first class Greek scholars who could say, "here is what the apostles believed," and so they present, objectively on the whole, a good translation of the New Testament which is written in Greek. But when they combine it with the translation of the Old Testament, it is impossible for men with that viewpoint to think that writers in the Old Testament times could look forward five hundred or a thousand years and see Christ and predict His coming; and predict specific things about his birth and about his life; about his death; and his resurrection so therefore, these men, though they can objectively give a pretty decent translation of most of the New Testament, when it comes to the Old, they simply cannot believe that those things could happen. And therefore, they are bound to translate them in ridiculous ways.

When the Old Testament of the RSV came out, I immediately looked up the Messianic passages, and I found that where it says, “kiss the son lest ye be angry (Ps. 2),” they translated it by, if I recall correctly, “kiss the feet,” and then they had a footnote, "Hebrew is obscure," but the very same word they translated in another place as “the son.” It’s not the common word for “son” but in the other place they translated it “son.” And where Peter says that Jesus’ resurrection fulfilled the statement in Psalm 16, “thy holy one shall not see corruption,” the RSV translated it “he will not see the pit.” In the New Testament they translated it "corruption." They have a footnote referring to the Old Testament passage but in the Old Testament they translate it "pit." And where it says in Micah 5:2 "his going forth is from an eternity, from everlasting," they say "his genealogy is from way back." They get away from the Messianic interpretation because, naturally, not believing in a supernatural God, they can’t believe that people back then could predict the wonderful things about Christ; they can’t believe that, so in just about every case I found that the twisting they did was not in line with the actual study of the Hebrew, although Messianic emphasis had plentiful evidence philologically.

### **Two New Testament Passages that Address the Issue [38:21]**

But I was reminded of two clear passages in the New Testament. In I Peter 1:10-12 the apostle explicitly said, speaking about Christ, “of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently who prophesied of the grace that should come to you. Searching what or what manner of time the spirit of Christ, which was in them did signify. When he testified before him the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.” So Peter said that the Old Testament prophets did predict things they didn’t fully understand. They predicted the suffering of Christ and the glory that should follow. Now that doesn’t mean we should be like some who find Christ on every page of the Old Testament and claim that everything in the Old Testament looked forward to the coming of the Savior. There is a great deal in the Old Testament about other subjects. But there

are specific passages in almost every book of the OT in which the prophet looks forward to the coming of the Savior. And how much he understood of it I don't know.

But there are these passages, the second of which is Luke 24:25, when Jesus talks with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, when they thought that Jesus' life was over, he said, "fools and slow of heart to believe all the prophets had spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory." And this shows very literally that God, through the Holy Spirit, enabled the Old Testament writers to see things they didn't fully understand and to predict things in the future. And if this can be true about the coming of Christ, there's no reason this can't be true about the exiled people. And there's no reason, then why God could not enable Isaiah to put himself in the situation of those in exile, say that God would bring them back, and speak to people who were themselves imagining that situation.

Now that was the change in chapter forty, and very interestingly I noticed it once but I never heard it said, that just there are 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament, there's 39 chapters in what the critics call "First-Isaiah" and 27 in what they call "Second-Isaiah". Now that's one of the many coincidences in life, but it makes it easier to remember how Isaiah is divided.

### **Change in Isaiah 56:9 [40:59]**

But now back to our outline. At chapter 56:9 there comes a change, not as important as the one in chapter 40, but let's say second in importance as that. And so I consider chapter 41-56:8 as one section, which I have written a book called "Isaiah sees the Savior," discussing that section and ending at that particular point because it forms a definite unit.

And that is what the archbishop got so confused. He made his chapter division right in the middle of a chapter. But I think we have this important change at 56:9.

First, there is a greater similarity to earlier portions hereafter than before. Now there is a difference between what follows in the early part of Isaiah, but in some ways, from 56 on, it is more like the first 35 chapters of Isaiah than it is 40-56. Forty to fifty-six form a very definite union. And this is somewhat like the earlier setting. One most important reason I say this is because of the alternation of the section between blessings, and rebuke for sin, followed by blessing for those who appeal to God. That's very common in many of the prophetic books, and it's common in the early part of Isaiah. It's common from here on, but practically not found at all between chapters 40-56.

Second, there is likelihood that the emphasis on the future continues for at least come extent. In other words, what do we find from 56:9 on? Does Isaiah, after looking forward to deliverance from exile, look forward to the coming of the servant of the Lord; then come back to his own time and deal entirely with his own time? Does he, to some extent, come back to his own time? No, he still looks forward to the days after the exile. So in my mind there may be a good bit of proof that Isaiah does look forward to the situation of the Israelites after they return from exile. But it is hard to imagine this unless you believe that God led Isaiah to put himself in that future time and write in the first instance for people in his own day, who put themselves into that time because they knew it was true – were bound to be fulfilled – but in a way that would be even more helpful to people at a later date than Isaiah's day, as is certainly the case from Isaiah 40 to 56.

### **Passages of Rebuke and Blessing [44:15 ]**

Now, let's look at Roman numeral 11. There are passages of rebuke and blessing after 56 just like passages of rebuke and blessing we had at many points in the first part of Isaiah. We have practically nothing like that except for a very small extent from forty to 56. But now we have a succession of passages of rebuke and blessing. I gave you an assignment early in the semester to look at chapters



56 and 57, and I believe that all of you know that between 56:8 and 9 there was a very sharp break. But then from 56:8 for quite a distance – is all rebuke of sin – and then there’s a section that is all questions to God’s people. I begin this section with letter A: – "Rebuke against the watchmen and the leaders of the people." This is 56:9 through 57:13. In this section here we have three alternates. We have a rebuke, a blessing; a rebuke, a blessing; and then the rebuke and then a looking forward to the wonderful things God going to do. We have a long section that is made up of this triple alternation. The first part is this rebuke against the watchmen and the leaders of the people from 56:9 to 57:13a. And in my notes here I have indicated a number of comments on individual verses there, which I think will be helpful and edifying, but are, perhaps, not as important to us now as some of the comments I make later on.

I will call your attention to a few of those matters which are in this section. Verse 8 ends the previous section, “The Lord God who gathers the outcasts of Israel says, ‘yet will I gather others besides those that are already gathered to Him.’” That ended that section. The previous verse, verse 7 has "my house shall be called a house of prayer." Now probably the Archbishop was misled in marking the verses by the fact that after saying they’re going to be gathered, the next verse says, “All ye beasts of the field come to devour.” Here there’s a gathering of people and then there’s a coming of animals. But actually there’s such a complete difference between the preceding and following thoughts that I think there should be a complete new start here in verse 9. But then he goes on to inform us why the beasts of the field are called to devour. Why is God calling for vengeance on the people? Because the watchmen are blind; they’re ignorant; they’re all dumb dogs. They cannot bark; they're sleepy, lying down, loving to slumber. Somebody once said that the D.D. for "Doctor of Divinity," often means "dumb dog." And of course that is true in areas where you have modernism coming in and where a man really believes the Bible, but keeps quiet for fear of not getting the D.D.

### **Slothful Watchmen [47:41]**

The Lord goes on to say his watchmen are not calling people's attention to sin. I read a book just a couple of days ago by a great Christian leader who died a couple years ago, and in this book he speaks in most glowing terms of his years in a Christian college, some forty or 50 years ago, and he tells about his wonderful times there and how much this college meant to him, and all that. He is a man who has written books showing the terrible fruit of modernism of our day, but he doesn't give even a suggestion in his book of the fact of that college, which was then a good Christian college, within 20 years after he graduated from it, it became a place that tore down people's faith. I met a young fellow who went to it thoroughly believing in the Bible, wishing to make his life count for Christ, and when he graduated from that so-called Christian college, his mind was full of doubts and he was very much upset and didn't know what he believed in. Then he went to a seminary that was quite modernistic and when he came out of that he didn't believe anything about God; he was completely changed by that previous college. Well now, this man doesn't put a single word in about the danger of it. And there are people who love that man's wonderful preaching. They love some of his great stands for the Lord, but they can read his book and say, "Oh, that's where I want my son to go to college." I would far go to an atheistic college than a college that has all forms of piety and all the right terminology, and yet is destroying people's faith. I would say to that extent he is one described here, "they are blind and ignorant as dumb dogs; they cannot bark, sleeping, lying down, and loving to slumber." And so these watchmen are called slothful, lying down, loving to sleep like slumbering dogs. They are called selfish, greedy dogs who can never have enough. They are called sensual. Note verse 12, "Come all, they say, fetch us wine; we will fetch ourselves strong drinks." Their selfishness is again stressed in the next 2 verses and then verses 3 and 4 again stress their selfishness, and idolatry, and so on. But we better not glance today at the blessing to the men

of faith in 57:13b to 19. And I believe I have given the assignment, so we better close today so you won't be late to your next class.

Edited and read by: Dr. Perry Phillips

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