

Dr. Elaine Phillips, OT History, Lit., and Theology, Lecture 31

© 2011, Dr. Elaine Phillips and Ted Hildebrandt

This is Dr. Elaine Phillips in her Old Testament History, Literature and Theology, course Lecture 31

Let's pray together as we start.

Our Father in Heaven, our precious redeemer most Holy Spirit of truth, as we bow help us to be mindful of who you are. Of the astonishing privilege it is to be your children. Of the amazing grace you have granted to each one of us in our need. Father we confess that we do need you. Especially when we are feeling overwhelmed by, burdens that may be academic or otherwise, we pray for your tender care, and guidance and protection. Father, we'd also ask that you would be present with us as we study today. May we worship you as we study, may our hearts burn with a desire to know you better. May we prepare to be prophets to our own generation to the people around us, and may that preparation be out of love for them, and deep concern. Father, we do continue to pray for those who struggle, with very very difficult things and we ask that you would care for them. Bless us this day, bless each one here and we ask these things in Christ's name with thanksgiving. Amen.

We are going to review just a bit, because as I said before, as you start thinking about the prophets particularly in conjunction to the exam. There are some things that I think would be helpful that you know, that kind of encapsulate what each prophetic message is all about. Now let me just remind you, go back to that list on Blackboard. Which prophet did this? Which prophet was that? Use that to review even for the ones that are forthcoming for the Friday exam. But let's try this one, which prophet condemned the nations round about before addressing Israel. Somebody, we talked about last time...Amos, right? Good. Not more you want to know about him but that is kind of critical as well, isn't it?

How about this one, which prophet gave his children symbolic names Jezreel, not loved, not my people. Hosea. Right. Then what was the purpose of the book of Jonah? Kind of an overarching purpose that we described. Yeah, convey this message about the sovereignty of God in every sphere. His intention to save people even if they were not Israelites, his mercy to Nineveh in other words and his sovereignty over the natural realm as well. That is just a little bit by of way of review.

We've got lots to do to day in terms of our prophets of the south. We are going to spend most of our time obviously on Isaiah. But we want to talk about Micah as well, because Micah is a contemporary of Isaiah. He lives in a little bit different part of the southern kingdom, Isaiah is located in Jerusalem, Micah is going to be out in the Shephelah, isn't that fun to know that knowing that Shephelah is kind of interesting in terms of understanding a prophet. And then we will talk about Joel. I think is said when we were locating what sort of prophet spoke to whom. We are not entirely sure when Joel prophesied but, it is a good guess that it might be some time just prior to the fall of the southern kingdom. So we are going to put him here today as well.

First of all Isaiah, you know Isaiah is wonderful for lots of lots of reasons that I hope to unpack a little of that for you today. But it is significant too just from the perspective that of all the prophets, that are quoted in the New Testament, guess who's got the highest rate? Isaiah is quoted more frequently in the New Testament than any of the other prophets. Interestingly enough, Isaiah is high profile as well in the Dead Sea scrolls, for those of you who know anything about the Dead Sea Scrolls. They are a very important discovery of manuscripts just about twelve miles east of Jerusalem right along the edge of the Dead Sea at a place called Qumran. And among those scrolls are a fair number of biblical texts or at least portions of biblical texts. Isaiah shows up there in multiple copies, that is not true of all of the others whole scrolls and also there are some commentary materials that are left over from the Dead Sea community talking about Isaiah. So

you get the impression that Isaiah is really really important. Of course, we will try and understand why that might be as we work our way through it today.

The first thing we have to do with regard to Isaiah is talk about the historical contexts and I have that in plural. Let me read for you chapter one verse one. I trust you have read this already. “The vision”, notice we’ve got another instance where Isaiah is seeing. He is seeing rather remarkably, “the *hazon*”, remember a *hoseh* was someone who saw what was on the other side of your computer screen, if I am in this perspective. At any rate, “the vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem that Isaiah saw during the reigns of,” here are the kings right here; “Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. And I suggested to you when we studied the historical period that it seems according to the Jewish tradition that Isaiah was martyred during this horrible purge of God’s people under Manasah. So Isaiah is prophesying for a long time.

Now we need to talk a little about this Uzziah. We have got some dates for Jotham Ahaz, Hezekiah, Hezekiah down to about 685. That is all well and good, and again just keep in mind the amount of time we are going to come back to that a little later on.

But the other thing I want you to notice is that we’ve got a change over as you are looking forward. When Isaiah is living i.e these dates that are right here the major foreign threat is Assyria. We saw that with Hezekiah. Hezekiah is building a tunnel and restructuring the walls and defending Jerusalem and worrying that Sennacherib was going to take over. Assyria is the major threat during his lifetime however, during the second part, or in the second part of Isaiah the major threat is Babylon, and beyond that we have the mention of someone named Cyrus. He is mentioned by name, in the book of Isaiah the end of chapter 44 and the beginning of chapter 45. God speaking through Isaiah refers to Cyrus, as is “my anointed,” who is going to restore Jerusalem. All right. So our historical contexts are very important here. Isaiah is speaking in this time frame that I have got up there for dates but he is looking way ahead. Not only to Babylon and the

return from captivity but also naming a name. And that name happens to be Cyrus, king of Persia who gives the decree and we are going to be talking about that later on next week. Cyrus who gives the decree that the people are to come back to Jerusalem. Now of course, what exactly is this doing then, Isaiah is very specifically prophesying isn't he, he is not just generally saying, "well you are probably going to come back from exile that you might go into." He is saying someone named Cyrus. It is 539 B.C. when this decree happens, that is a far piece down the line chronologically from when Isaiah is living. And of course, if you are someone that does not necessarily believe in miraculous events such as predictive prophecy and the fact that God can indeed do that and reveal these things through his prophets then you might say, "well somebody else wrote it."

And that brings us to a map, I forgot this was in here this is just to remind you where Assyria is located but you know all of that. By the time Isaiah comes along we have got the Assyrians very clearly taking over the Northern Kingdom which was Israel and then laying siege to Jerusalem and so this whole area is going to be existing tenuously by that time.

Now let's go on, to what I wanted to do. You know there is a number of instances in which, biblical scholarship, has looked at things in the Old Testament and they have said, "You know I am not so sure that this person authored this book." We confronted it just a little bit when we talked about the Pentateuch and who might have written it. Was it Moses or someone else? And there are a number of instances where these questions are raised. Isaiah is probably the parade example there are probably others, but Isaiah is the parade example. And the reason is, scholars read the texts and see what I just pointed out to you. Isaiah in their minds could not have written those two verses at the end of chapter 44 and the beginning of chapter 45 that specifically name Cyrus. In their minds, Isaiah could not have written those because how on earth could someone living back in the 700's or early 600's look all the way ahead and name somebody by name that didn't even show up on the scene and make his decree until 539 B.C.

All right, that is the problem for them. And so let me give you a little illustration of this, book entitled *Understanding the Bible*. Used throughout campuses in this country. I happen to have it right here in my hands--a second edition. It is already up through its seventh edition. So this is a fairly well used text and it is an introduction to the Bible. It is a readers introduction. Let me read to you a couple of paragraphs in terms of what this author reflecting the common opinion, says about Isaiah. "Prominent among the prophetic books is Isaiah," I just tried to illustrate that to you as well. "Isaiah preserved some of the most loftiest thoughts and most memorable poetic literature." I would agree with that. "It is not a single unified work however, but an anthology, of many prophetic oracles produced over many years." Oh okay, well you know Isaiah's writing I would say over 40 years. So if produced over many years it is not a problem. "Scholars who have analyzed Isaiah's 66 chapters have generally agreed that the book can be divided into at least three distinct parts. Each portion." Now here comes a place where I will probably part company with this author. "Each portion representing a different time period and a different author. The first 39 chapters except 24-27, 33-35, 36-39." Did you catch that we are leaving out eleven chapters right away because unfortunately they happen to mention Babylon and a few other things? Alright but at any rate, the first thirty-nine chapters with those exceptions are thought to be largely the work of Isaiah of Jerusalem who prophesied between about 742 and 700." He has compressed that a little bit here. "When the Assyrian empire engulfed Israel and threatened Judah as well." Okay so that is section one. "Chapters 40-55 present a historical situation in which Babylon, not Assyria, dominates." That and the common parlance is second Isaiah. So if you are ever reading something about the book of Isaiah and it reads second Isaiah you know where that author is coming from. He has bought into this whole thing that it is written later. "The figure of Isaiah does not appear after chapter 39 striking differences in style." Hold on to that, I am going to talk about that in a moment. "Style, vocabulary and theological perspective indicate a new author at work. And

then chapters 56-66 seem to represent oracles from eighth to early fifth centuries BCE.” Almost the whole age of prophecy scholars customarily treat each of Isaiah’s three major divisions as separate literary units. He goes on and talks a little more about that.

So you got the point right. The deal with this thing about mentioning Cyrus now notice he never said anything about that. But that is the underlying problem. You deal with that by saying okay, divisions of the texts, presumed authors and dates. I’ve just told you what those are and are key section chapter 40-55 is coming somewhere along the area of sixth century as opposed to eighth century in other words, when any dodo in the world could look at Cyrus and say yeah I bet he is going to do something like issue a decree, lets write it all down and call it a prophesy. I’m sorry I have sort of caricatured that but you get the point.

Let’s talk a little bit about this, and let me just say this right from the get go. I am dealing with Isaiah in 40 minutes today. Take Doctor Wilson’s Prophetic Literature class where he really does dig into some of these things at much greater depth than I can ever do in this particular context. Old Testament is for the purpose of giving you an overview. But there are all of these other classes that you can dig into and Doctor Wilson’s Prophetic Literature class is a class not to be missed even if you are not a Bible major. It is a class to take for lots of reasons. At any rate, he will deal with Isaiah.

But let’s talk a little bit about that quote that I just sort of read to you from Steven Harris’s book. Where he is saying it is evident we are talking about different authors because of difference in style, content and theological perspective. But noting that he doesn’t raise the real red flag, which is the mention of Cyrus.

The first kind of a simplistic answer but let’s at least talk about it a little bit. Isaiah is prophesying for 40 years. He is writing over that period of time, stop and think about it .The paper that you wrote for this class on proverbs hang on to it and drag it out when you are 60. And see if it reflects the kind of writing you are doing

when you are 60. I am presuming you are still going to be writing something at that point. The stuff I wrote as a college student is just not at all like the kinds of things I am writing right now. I am not saying that Isaiah matures from a crummy writer to a really excellent writer in the last half of the book but I am saying that just from a human perspective there are going to be some changes here. Because remember the Holy Spirit doesn't squelch the person of the prophet or for that matter the age of the prophet. The Holy Spirit instead uses that prophet in the given circumstances and so I'm not surprised that there would be some changes over time in the style of writing, in the vocabulary and in the theological perspective. It is not a surprise at all especially if we have God the Holy Spirit inspiring us for some specific purposes that God the Holy Spirit has.

Which gets us to point two, as we study the history, you can't ever lose sight of the history when you are reading prophetic literature. The major problem is the thing that God against them over and over and over again was their spiritual adultery. Remember Hosea in other words idolatry that is the crisis that is what we are reading as we read 1 and 2 Kings especially. These people kept prostituting themselves after other gods. That is the huge crisis interestingly enough and we are going to look at it in a minute. Isaiah chapters 40-45 more than anything else were a strong, strong, strong, condemnation of idolatry. And if you have read it you know that it is there. Now here is what is fascinating. After the exile, you know it is coming to a close and when they are coming back to the land, idolatry is not that much of a problem yet. Their minds and their hearts have been purged of this, they have had 70 years in exile. They know that that exile was because of some of the things they did. They don't need a big long sermon about idolatry. They have been chastised. So it does not make sense to have chapters 40-55 dated to a time when idolatry is not an issue. Am I speaking English on that? If you get nothing else out of what I am saying right now recognize that this is one of the major ways to counter this claim that Isaiah can be divided up in different sections and that it was written later. If Isaiah is going to spend all this time and look at

some of these passages. He is stingingly rebuking people who worship idols. That doesn't have any weight at all if it is not a problem.

Also, and that leads to point three right at the end of this stinging condemnation to us of idolatry is when Isaiah mentions Cyrus but what he said before that is. "Look the Lord God knows the beginning from the end." If you have read Isaiah chapters 40-45 you know that. He knows the beginning from the end. He is the one that says something will happen and it happens. And Isaiah is saying the sovereign Lord in that way is contrasted with your idols that you are so stupidly making and worshiping. Alright they can't, they are dumb, they are blind, they are deaf, they can't do these things they are objects of wood and metal. God can tell the future. Idols can't and then he says, he doesn't say it like this but here is the parade example. The mention of Cyrus is to illustrate this. So that people who would be reading the book of Isaiah and having that tradition in their minds even 150 years later when it actually comes to pass would say, "Yeah, we had a prophet who said that. Must be something about God."

Alright. And then interestingly enough even though our critics tend to say that the same theological themes don't appear, they do. God is called "the holy one of Israel," throughout the entire text. It is used more than 25 times it is mentioned and it is not in just one part. It is in both parts. There is reference to the temple in both parts, and so some of the same prominent themes that are very important for Israel. For God's people show up throughout the book. Now there is a lot more to say about that so I would encourage you to, take Dr. Wilson's class. Now any questions I really want you to get this idolatry issue. That is the big key here.

Rebecca: Can you just re-say what the themes and expressions were in the book?

The two that is really prominent in terms of the same themes and expressions sort of threading their way throughout all three parts of the book. First of all God is being called the "Holy One of Israel." That never changes. Alright, either you say Isaiah himself was using it in the eight century and then you have

this anonymous school of Isaiah that just picks it up and likes it and then later a bunch of oracles from three centuries also having the same thing. I mean it is possible but at least it makes more sense. And the second idea is “the temple.” The temple shows up in both the first part and that very clear passage that Jesus is going to quote from Isaiah chapter 56 as well as others.

Sarah: Are the people Israel still falling into the Baal and Assyrian worship or are they influenced by Medean worship?

Are you talking about the people when, during Isaiah’s time? Yes. It is all there. If he is living at the same time the Northern Kingdom falls. Do you remember 2 Kings 17. Where everything possible they could worship, they seem to be worshipping. It is all there in that one big synchronized ugly stuff.

Chelsea: Why was idolatry not such a persistent thing.

My suggestion is that they have now spent their 70 years in exile. And they know if they are listening at all to the Torah that the reason they were taken into exile is because of their idolatry. That was what the prophetic voice had been saying all along. Over and over they were hammering it home. And so interestingly enough when you read Ezra and Nehemiah you know there are some warnings there. But there is not strong warnings against idolatry not yet. It is going to show up again and Nehemiah is going to warn them against intermarrying unless they fall into these patterns. But you don’t have this steady drumbeat about these idols and idolatry that are so apparent early on.

Trevor: So you are just saying that it makes more sense for them to be condemning idolatry based on the context, leading up to exile as a opposed to coming back?

Yes. It makes a whole lot more sense because that is when the idolatry was such a threat to who they were. And you know the Torah said if you continue to prostitute yourselves the land is going to vomit you out. Leviticus talks about that specifically just as it vomited out its former inhabitants. So, yes that is exactly right. So good, yes. Got it?

Let's carry on a little bit. This fills right in from where we left off. God is very clear here in who he is. We are going to pick up on the supreme and unique nature of God again and we could go on and on and on and looking at passage after passage because this is a hugely important book.

But just let me read to you a bit of this condemnation that I have just been talking about. Because you see Isaiah is pretty sarcastic here. Don't think that the prophets don't have their own ironies and sarcasms. I won't read the whole thing but here the flavor. This is chapter 44 starting with verse 6. "This is what the LORD says—

Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty:" Got the title, now a fairly important discourse, let's see.

"I am the first and I am the last;

apart from me there is no God.

Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it.

Let him declare and lay out before me

What has happened since I established my ancient people,

and what is yet to come?

Yes, let them foretell what will come. "

Are you getting the picture? The Lord is speaking through Isaiah and setting the stage here and saying if somebody is truly God that somebody can tell the future.

"Let him foretell what is to come.

Do not tremble, do not be afraid.

Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago?

You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me?

No, there is no other Rock; I know not one."

Now he goes on with his sarcastic condemnation. Of people who are stupid enough to make idols.

"All who make idols are nothing,

and the things they treasure are worthless.

Those who would speak up for them are blind;
 they are ignorant, to their own shame.

Who shapes a god and casts an idol,
 which can profit him nothing.”

Verse 12 “The blacksmith takes a tool and works with it in the coals;

 he shapes an idol with hammers, he forges it with the might of his arm.”

Are you getting the picture here? Use your mental imaginations, even at 9:30 in the morning. You know what a forge looks like, it is hot in there. You are getting this metal to the point at which you can hammer it. It is malleable you can shape it the way you want it. This guy works really hard. Alright.

“He gets hungry and loses his strength; he drinks no water and grows faint.” All to make a piece of metal. “The carpenter measures with a line and makes an outline with a marker; he roughs it out with chisels and marks it with compasses. He shapes it in human form, human form in all its glory, that it may dwell in a shrine. He cut down cedars... some of it he takes and warms himself, he kindles a fire and bakes bread. But he also fashions a god and worships it; he makes an idol and bows down to it. Half of the wood he burns in the fire; over it he prepares his meal, he roasts his meat and eats his fill. He also warms himself and says, ‘Ah! I am warm; I see the fire.’ From the rest he makes an idol; he bows down to it and worships. He prays to it and says, ‘Save me! You are my god!’”

Are you getting how dumb this is? Verse 18, “They know nothing, they understand nothing; their eyes are plastered over so they cannot see, and their minds closed so they cannot understand. No one stops to think, no one has the knowledge or understanding to say, ‘Half of it I used for fuel.’”

No one is doing it, which shows how blind and deaf these folks are. So there are two things going on in that passage. One is the contrast between God who can tell the future and the idols who are challenged to do so and cannot.

Of course, it is the very end of that chapter where he then says.

“ I am the LORD, the Maker of all things, who stretches out the heavens, who spreads out the earth by myself, who foils the signs of false prophets and makes fools of diviners, who overthrows the learning of the wise and turns it into nonsense, who carries out the words of his servants and fulfills the predictions of his messengers, who says of Jerusalem, ‘It shall be inhabited, of the towns of Judah, ‘They shall be rebuilt.’” That is the closure. That is the challenge to idols. Got it? Sort of?

Let’s go on. It is not surprising the Isaiah will focus on the holiness of God. How is he called? Go back two lessons from today. How was Isaiah called? He is in the temple isn’t he? And he sees God on his throne. And the seraphim are there and they are calling out holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty. And Isaiah says, “I am a ruined person I am a man of unclean lips, what on earth am I going to do.” And then the seraf comes and touches his lips and he is given his commission to go out and speak God’s word. No wonder he has got a sense to the holiness of God that most other folks don’t have. He has seen God in that sanctuary. And remember that sanctuary was specifically there to be God’s presence in their midst. God’s holy presence in their midst. But this expression comes up over and over and over again. Often used in conjunction with redeemer of Israel--so “the Holy One of Israel,” “the Redeemer of Israel,” they go together.

Well that gets us to our next point, which is simply this. Isaiah is probably quoted so much in the New Testament because it is Isaiah among the prophets who give us this embrace on God’s part of people well beyond the boundaries of Israel. Okay. It is a universal message that is reaching out to Gentiles. Let’s read just a little bit chapter 2 verse 2. Everybody is going to stream to the temple. All the nations will come to the temple and then, think of that. And remember our temple theme that continues right on into chapter 56 a passage I bet you are familiar with verse 6: “The foreigners,” not the Israelites who bind themselves to Israel but the foreigners. “Who bind themselves to the LORD to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, all who keep the Sabbath

without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant. These I will bring to my holy mountain.” These are wonderful promises to people who at least were then considered on the outside the other. God is saying, “No, they are going to be part of this. I am going to give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.”

Where do you hear that again? Who says it? The right answer is Jesus. Remember when he is cleansing the temple and he says, “You have made this a den of robbers. It is supposed to be a house of prayer for all nations.” He is putting together Jeremiah 7 that accusation about den of robbers. We are going to do that next week and this promise. The temple in Jesus day had a huge courtyard around the temple, a huge courtyard called “the court of the Gentiles,” and they could come there.

All right, so there was an invitation to people. Isaiah got a message of as I said reaching out. And then we have a third thing. This third thing is going to actually lead us into the next other bullet but if you have your Bibles I am going to read for you sections of chapter 49. Verse 6, second half of verse 6, talking about the servant of the Lord who we are going to come back and flesh that out in just a little bit. But the second half of verse 6 says: “I will also make you a light for the Gentiles.” Now, who the servant, is a whole other issue, “that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.” No wonder the gospel writers, are inspired to draw Isaiah’s message. No wonder Jesus refers to Isaiah so much. “My salvation,” God speaking, “to the ends of the earth” that brings us to the whole idea of the servant.

And this is another key thing that I want you to get. There are all sorts of just splendid theology in Isaiah. The servant of the Lord shows up in Isaiah, we all are probably very familiar with the suffering servant, the one Isaiah portrays, the one about to be slaughtered. And we are going to read parts of that in a moment but starting with chapter 42 we have been building up towards that. It doesn’t just jump out of anywhere in fact this whole section of Isaiah is kind of a cycle. A

cycle of songs and they are called, “The Servant Songs.” Let me just dip in a couple of places the tasks the servant. Well I will read to you one of the servant songs. Well one of the tasks of the servant is to be a light to the gentiles but you know what else he is supposed to do? He is to bring justice to the nations too. Justice is a real issue. Chapter 42, I need to get to chapter 42. “Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight,” By the way those of you, well you have all been in the New Testament at some point. When Jesus is transfigured that voice from heaven says, “this is my servant with whom I delight. Listen to him” is quoting this section, or eluding to this section of Isaiah. “Here is my servant I will put my spirit on him. “He will bring justice to the nations” Justice, justice, justice, that is one of the things the Servant is supposed to do and he goes on a fleshes some of that out and says that he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth.” But then it goes on middle of verse 6. “I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison.” So light is part of this, justice and light that is part of the servant. And they are fairly important.

Now unfortunately the servant was designated as Israel. Israel is called to be the servant that is their role but they fail. Verse 18 in the same chapter. “Hear, you deaf; look, you blind, and see! Who is blind but my servant, and deaf like the messenger I sent? Blind like the servant of the LORD?” Something is wrong here; the servant Israel isn’t doing what the servant was called to do because the servant is made up of fallen sinful rebellious things like us who need to be redeemed like everything else and that is what is interesting.

Now go to chapter 49. Where it says, I am going to jump in with verse 3. He said to me, “You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will display my splendor.” Then it goes on a little bit, but here is the key thing I want you to catch. Starting at verse 5 “Now the LORD says he who formed me in the womb to be his servant,” Go to the next line, listen carefully. ”To bring Jacob back to him and gather Israel to himself.” Somebody is now being appointed servant to bring back Israel who

was blind and deaf who we have read about in chapter 42 verses 18 and 19. So the servant is now going to be a person from Israel.

And then it says, “I am honored in the eyes of the LORD and my God has been my strength he says: ‘It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob.’” That is the initial thing. Jesus came first and what did he say? “I am here to restore the lost tribes of Israel.” But Isaiah is already saying too small a thing to just do that, I will also you and now I am going to do what I just read a moment ago. “I will make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth. This is what the LORD says the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel.” So in these chapters we see a need of Israel who is originally the servant. God’s choosing to meet that need through somebody who he is going to designate, to restore and gather Israel and Jacob. Then of course, we pick up on the suffering servant which is the means by which this is done.

The end of chapter 52, “my servant will act wisely; he will be raised up and lifted up, and highly exalted.” Then of course, it goes on in chapter 53 with stuff that is really familiar to us, but would have probably been a little bit shocking to folks back then because they wouldn’t think of a messianic figure who is going to rescue them as rescuing in this particular way.

“He was despised and rejected man of sorrows familiar with suffering. He took our infirmities carried our sorrows stricken by God, pierced for our transgressions, crushed with our iniquities, the punishment that brought us peace was on him and by his wounds we are healed. We all like sheep have gone astray, the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” That is the suffering servant. That is how it gets done. You all know that if you have grown up in church because we hear it all the time. But think of what that would mean to the audience in that particular time frame.

Caitlin: “Do the Jews see it as Messianic?”

Response: They tend to read it as, still referring to Israel or King Hezekiah that is another one that is often seen as the person who it is about. They struggle

with it. They really struggle with it.

Sarah: “How are the tribal amenities, the twelve tribes, are those kept alive during the exile, and the kingdom?”

Response: Good question. Tradition, the fact that they know this and we often refer to the ten lost tribes. It really isn't that easy because there are still people in the northern kingdom living. They are not all ripped out of there and there are still references after the Assyrian empire. To tribes from Asher, Zebulun, Issachar. So I would suggest it is just tradition, and fairly good tradition. Those of you who know any stories about Jews who have, within the last century, come to the United States, they have a kind of a good sense of their lineage that goes back a long long way. That is pretty interesting, if they are religious. If they are not, it probably does not make a whole lot of difference. We need to carry on because if we want to talk that leads us very much into a quick look at what Isaiah says about the messianic figure. Suffering servant is obviously the big picture here but there are a couple of other places that are equally important. Isaiah does use the term “servant;” he does use the term “branch.” He uses the term “descendant of David,” David's son and then also “the righteous king.” And here are a few key passages and I am going to talk through the first two and then the very last one since we have already done that one on the servant.

Now to understand the first two we have to, believe it or not, go back and pick up a little history. Don't you love it. Isaiah chapter 7. Ahaz is king. Is he good or bad? Thumbs down. Right. Now one of the things Ahaz struggles with at one point in his reign is a really serious threat from a political alliance between the Northern Kingdom that is still there and Syria. Do you remember when we were reading 2 Kings 16 and I said “remember this!” Alright here we are the northern kingdom and Syria have ganged up on Ahaz that is the context for chapter 7. The Lord says to Isaiah, “you go on out and you confront Ahaz. Chapter 7 verse 3, “Go out, you and your son Shear-Jashub, to meet Ahaz,” chat with him a little bit and basically tell him this isn't going to happen. It won't take place. Verse 7 and 8:

“Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be too shattered to be a people. The head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is only Remaliah’s son.” In other words, don’t worry about it so much. Now 65 years, you know that is kind of a long time. You guys are going to be eighty-five at that point, sixty-five years from now, so you know maybe Ahaz wants to see something a little bit more here and now. Isaiah goes on and says to him, “If you don’t stand firm in your faith you are not going to stand at all.” And then he says, “Ask the Lord for a sign,” do you remember this sign business we’ve talked about it. When a prophecy was given that was long ranged like that one given about Josiah for example, there was a short-term sign that the people could see, hear and now know that the long term one was going to happen. Well, “ask the Lord for a sign,” and Ahaz says “I don’t want to do that, I do not want to put God to the test.” And Isaiah says to Ahaz “do not try the patience of God.” Verse 14: “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Emmanuel.” Have you heard that before? Where does it show up? Gospel of Matthew right. And we know that the name “Emmanuel” means “God with us.” But what is all this business about a sign. I thought I just said, that a sign was supposed to be something to give them the assurance that sixty-five years from now thing is going to come true.

What is going on if this doesn’t come true until Jesus is born by the virgin Mary, to the virgin Mary? Let me explain it this way and we can argue about it later if you want. I think what is going on here is that God in his absolute astonishing sovereignty as he inspires the scriptures has got just the right word chosen to describe not only this situation but the one that would take place some 700 years later with Jesus being the one conceived and born of the virgin. And here is how I would suggest it works, the word that is translated “virgin” in your NIV, if you read a different translation you may see “young woman” and it can mean both. It is not your common garden-variety word for “virgin.” In the Old Testament that is *betula*. If you really wanted to say only virgin *alma*, is the word

that is used here and it can mean both. It is a much less frequently used word. It is properly chosen, I would say exquisitely chosen so that it covers this situation and it covers the situation that will take place when Jesus is conceived and born.

Isaiah's wife already has a kid we know it, his name is Shear-Jashub which by the way happens to mean "a remnant shall return." She conceives again she has another child.

Notice what the passage goes on to say "before that boy," I am in verse 16 "before that boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste." In other words, your wife is going to have a son. Name him "Emmanuel" meaning "God with us" and before he is three or four or whatever those kings you were worried about they are going to be gone. That's the sign. Now I am not in any way undercutting the fact that it also, as I said looks way ahead to its complete fulfillment, because Matthew cites it and he is citing at that point the Greek translation of the Old Testament which uses the Greek word for virgin *parthenos*.

Here is the other interesting thing and then we need to go on. It doesn't stop here. What do I say up there note: "The continuity from this one to the next one," when you read chapter 8 "God with us, Emmanuel," there is a theme that keeps coming back. Chapter 8 verse 8 "Your land O, Emmanuel." Verse 10, "Devise your strategy, but it will be thwarted; propose your plan, but it will not stand, for God is with us" that is Emmanuel. And then when you read verses 18 and following, "Here am I," Isaiah speaking "I and the children the LORD has given me. We are signs and symbols in Israel from the LORD Almighty, who dwells on Mount Zion." Get the picture that whole idea of Emmanuel is being knit throughout this chapter referring to that child and by the way.

As you continue to read through chapter 10, there is that theme a remnant shall return, a remnant shall return, a remnant shall return. That is the translation of Isaiah's first child's name Shear-Jashub. So he is saying my children, they are signs and symbols, listen to what is going on. Now not only are they signs and

symbols in verse 20 it says, “To the line and the testimony of warning. If anyone does not speak according to this word, they have no light in them.” Light, Light, Light.

Now we start chapter 9 with “The people walking in darkness.” Verse 2 “have seen a great light.” This is always read in advent right. “On those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.” And then it goes on and talks about warrior’s boots being burned and all implements of war being destroyed. Then, “for unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Those are divine titles, this child that has been talked about in chapter 7, “Emmanuel,” one of Isaiah’s children I will suggest initially but looking way ahead to the child in chapter 9 who is also Emmanuel. Who is going to have all of these titles of deity. The child who is God, the theme all winds together there, you have got to put it together from all three chapters, really to make it work. Is that making sense? Sort of.

Well we need to keep moving. Peace is part of it as well, we have talked about chapter 53. In chapter 61, I won’t say much about this other than to say that God is speaking, “the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, to preach good news, release for captives” etc. And that is the passage that Jesus quotes when he is in the synagogue in Nazareth and he stands up and reads the prophets reading, Luke chapter 4 and you have been through that in your New Testament class. That is all I am going to say about Isaiah because we still have to do Micah and Joel.

So here you go, “what does the Lord require of you?” What is the answer to that? I am hearing little bits and pieces, let’s start with do justice, and you got to mercy, you got to memorize this one. “Do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God.” Yes, know that just for your own sake. That is just what God requires of us. “Do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with our God.” Shows up in chapter 6. Micah’s background of historically fits Isaiah’s as I said Isaiah lives in Jerusalem Micah is actually in a little more of a tenuous situation because it is

out in the Shephelah that your enemies starting for invasion into the hill country and up into Jerusalem. So life is a little more tenuous there.

When you read Micah you will notice in chapter 4 sounds just like chapter 2 in Isaiah. They are sharing the same oracle at that particular point. Well here is the messages of Micah and I am going to run through these fast because I want to get to Joel. There are some important things in Joel that we need to talk about.

If you think of nothing else, now here is our little test. How do we remember Micah? How am I going to remember Micah amidst all of those other minor prophets look at the bottom line. Micah is the one who prophesies that the Messiah is going to be born in Bethlehem. Remember when the wise men come and they are trying to figure out where the star is leading and they get to Herod's court and Herod calls all the wise persons there. The people that know the Torah and they say, "O it is Bethlehem" and they quote Micah chapter 5 and of course, they don't go interestingly, but Micah does. Remember Micah that way. Okay. Messiah's birthplace. "Bethlehem, Ephrathah though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come one who was going forth from old to everlasting." Micah chapter 5 goes on a little later on saying "he will be our peace" a passage that Paul is going to quote in Ephesians chapter 2. So remember Micah that way and obviously these things are equally important, and they are themes that we see in all of the prophetic literature. God will come and give judgment, human sin, our sin, sin of God's people. Remember that is who Micah is talking to, that is who is going to be judged and you know the same tragic litany that we read in all of the prophets because they are written about people like us. Hypocrisy, lies, falsehood, injustice, etc. but the hope is there as well.

Should we go on to Joel? I know I did Micah really fast.

Kailin: Is that a Messianic prophecy for the Jews?

Yes it is. You mean do they think of it that way now? Not really, other than to say that David, their idea of a messianic figure whoever that happens to be in Judaism is kind of defeated even in Jesus time. In terms of how many Messiahs

they thought they were expecting. But it is still going to be David's son. It was going to be David's son so it was going to be Bethlehem the city of David.

Question: So as long as they were expecting a Messiah, it kind of looks like?

You are talking about the question is: Are the Jews still expecting a Messiah?

Response: We have to be careful not to think of Jews, being monolithic in terms of how they think and believe. They are as fractured as we are with Christianity. In terms of doctrinal issues, and so forth. There is a group of Jews in Jerusalem right now that are planning to rebuild the temple, they are gathering all the material to do it and waiting for the Messiah to come. Other say, "No, the Messiah will do it when he comes." There are lots of other ways of looking at it too.

Well there have been false messiah's throughout history, and as you look at the history of Judaism especially in Europe there are some very tragic things that show up in terms of people following false Messiah's. Now one quick note in response to that, interestingly enough in Jesus's day, Josephus tells us this. There were lots, and lots of false Messiahs, messianic pretenders coming up. It was not an accident they had been reading the book of Daniel. And Daniel gives some chronological stuff that makes them start thinking that there must be one coming about right then. And there was, Jesus shows up at that point we will do that more, when we do Daniel, Okay? In Daniel chapter 9 we have some very helpful suggestions in terms of chronology and that is probably one of the reasons there is such an uptick in people claiming to be Messiahs in those first centuries BCE.

Well, I have got some pictures for you as we move on to Joel, those of you who love archived image. Let me encourage you to find a 1915 edition of *National Geographic* that magazine has been around a long time, it is a great one, because at that particular point in time if you can't read it from way back there this is somebody who lived through a locust plague in Jerusalem photographed it, with

all of the equipment that they had back then and wrote a marvelous article for *National Geographic* on what it was like to exist through a locust plague. We do not know what this is like. It is probably the worst thing that we can imagine are those little moths that eat the tree and the leaves but that is nothing like what happens in a locust plague. So at any rate let me encourage you to the recent locust reflux into Palestine and comparing it to ancient invasions as narrated in the Bible. Here is a locust aren't they cute. Okay let's go on. Again this person, is photograph this event and here come the locusts being swept in by the breezes. Here they are all over the trunk of a palm tree that probably at one point had bananas or dates on it. Yes.

Question: How big are they?

Response: Like this, yeah, that is a little difficult there are four different kinds of locusts. There are four different Hebrew words for "locust" that show up just in the book of Joel. Let's keep going. Chapter 1 verse 7 talks about laying waste my vines and ruining my fig trees. Here is one tree and here it is after the locusts hit and it was not very long in between. Right. They're there on the walls of a house, yummy. Climbing up all over the place and I have even got a picture of it. The next thing I am going to tell you, he also described what it was like for women, who back then probably wore long dresses with lots of petty coats under them. Right, that is how you had to dress back in Jerusalem in the 1950's 1920's and he talks about how these poor women would have these just everything they were wearing infested with the locusts. Hundreds of them you would shake out of what you were wearing when you took them off at night. Good stuff.

Now I showed you that just to give you the sense that locust's plague. We see those words and we don't think too much of what it really meant. This is a terrifying time for the people because it was indeed a symbol of God's judgment. Now I want to make three points more. As Joel is writing, he is not only talking about a literal locust plague, which is bad enough because it is going to take out the grain, new wine and oil. Which are those three key crops of the land and are

demonstrative of God's judgment. But he is also going to liken it to an army invading. Okay? The locusts are not only locusts they are going to be symbolic of an invading army and all that wound together is representative of the Day of the Lord. We talked about the Day of the Lord in Amos, chapter 5; for Joel also the Day of the Lord is a day of reckoning.

In light of that, in chapter 2 the people are called to repent, turn to the Lord, rend your hearts and not your garments. In other words, don't just do this symbolic thing of rendering your garments, rend your hearts, tear your hearts, repent-- chapter 2 verse 13.

But then he does something else very interesting, and here is where we are going to land and again I have to find the thing. In Joel chapter 2 verse 28. "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams; your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days. I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and billows of smoke" etc. Verse 32, "everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance." As I note for you. Peter cites that. Now what happens in Acts chapter 2. What is going on in Acts chapter 2? Right. You have got all of the people gathered there and we know they are gathered to the far reaches of the Eastern Roman Empire and as far away as Rome, as a matter of fact and beyond and to the Eastern portions that are in Persia and so forth. They are all there. Why are they there? Why are all these people from foreign countries sitting in Jerusalem at this particular event? What is Pentecost? It is a Jewish festival isn't it? Feast of Weeks, that is what they are there for. It is the feast of weeks. That is why they are there, the three pilgrim festivals when all of the Jews were supposed to come. That is why all of these people are there. And in that context you have the coming of the Holy Spirit descending on the apostles who then speak in sufficient languages sons and daughters prophesying and therefore the Gospel is going to get out to all of those

people in their own language. Peter cites this passage, “All who call in the name of the Lord shall be saved.” That is the punch line and notice in between those who are prophesying dreams and visions.

In between that and all of those who call in the name of the Lord shall be saved are some other things that aren’t going to happen till Jesus comes again. Those astronomical signs that are associated with the second coming so this afterwards is this hope along with afterwards really encompassing the entirety of what you might call the age to come.

Okay we need to stop. Again you can start as early as what is it. 8:45 for the exam. Study hard.

Transcribed by Zoey Meyer-Jens

Rough edited by Ted Hildebrandt