

Allan MacRae, Isaiah 40-56, Lecture 1

This is lecture 1 delivered by Dr. Allan MacRae at Biblical Theological Seminary on Isaiah 40-56:

A few of you had a course in the section chapters 7-12 and 28-35 of Isaiah last year. In that course, we looked at the part of Isaiah that tells about the coming of the great king, of the wonderful king who is the promised Emanuel and who is to be virgin born. Now, this semester we are looking at a very different section. In fact, I believe there is no section of the Bible, outside of the New Testament, which has as much to say about the work of Jesus Christ as Savior as the section we are going to look at this year. It is a tremendous section of the Bible, and our desire is to learn something about the meaning of this section.

Now, in a way, this is a simpler course than the one we had last year because last year we were looking at a section of Isaiah where there are two parallel sections, and each of them explains the other. The result was that we had to look at one section a bit, then the other a bit, and go back and forth between chapters 7-12 and 28-35 to get a fuller understanding of what was happening. Section 7-12 is a rather well known section and the other is a section that is very little known to most Christians. The result was that, I think, some found it a bit confusing at first as we compared these two sections, but we gradually saw the picture that emerged from bringing the two together. I believe it was cleared up by the end of the semester. But that is a problem we do not have this semester. This semester we are in an entirely different sort of section, a section in which we will proceed pretty definitely straight forward through this section that begins in Isaiah 40.

Now, as you look at the book of Isaiah, if you look at any Bible book, the first thing to do is to get an idea of the general arrangement of the book. Anyone who looks at the book of Isaiah for this purpose finds it quite simple to note the main arrangement of the book, because as you look into it, you find that the first chapter is very different from the books of Kings or Chronicles or almost any section of the Pentateuch. It is a different type of material all together; it is a type that we call "prophetic." It is a prophet speaking

in a rather prophetic way and dealing with the needs of the people of his day and looking forward to the future. As you look at almost any section of Isaiah, you find that it is made up of that sort of prophetic material. Isaiah is also different from the other books of the prophets, in that Isaiah seems to have a much larger vocabulary and perhaps more beautiful poetry than any of the other prophetic writers. But as you look at the book of Isaiah, you find chapters 1-35 are all marked by this type of prophetic content as is chapter 40 to the end of the book. But in chapters 36-39 we have 4 chapters that are more like Kings or Chronicles. They are historical narrative rather than prophetic. They include prophetic sections, but the general impression these chapters give, and the content of a good bit of them, is historical narrative. The result is that you have a natural division of the book. A section of prophecy (Isa. 1-35) and then a section of history (Isa. 36-39), which is closely related to the previous prophecy and then another section of prophecy (Isa. 40-66).

Now, there are many who say that there are two different Isaiahs; that is, many scholarly people today say that there are two different Isaiahs. There were scholars one hundred and fifty years ago who said there were two Isaiahs. Most of the scholars who do not believe that Isaiah wrote the whole book today believe that there were numerous different people who wrote some part or other of it. But in general, they think there were three Isaiahs. They think there was the Isaiah who lived in the time of Hezekiah. Then at about one hundred and fifty years later there was a great prophet at the time of the Exile whom they called Deutro-Isaiah, or Second Isaiah. And then a hundred years later another one they called a third Isaiah, or Trito-Isaiah. But this question of unity of Isaiah is settled for us I believe is settled by the fact that the New Testament quotes from all three sections as the work of Isaiah and attributes all these quotes to the prophet Isaiah.

I don't think that Christians who accept the Bible as God's word need to go further than that. It is good to know that the individual arguments advance can all be easily answered except for one. That one argument, which cannot possibly be answered to the person who does not believe in the God who can predict the future is very easily answered if you believe in a God who can predict the future. That is the argument that

from Isaiah 40 on Isaiah speaks directly and personally to people who will live one hundred and fifty years after his day. Not merely that he gives statements that they could find blessings from, but he speaks right to their heart and deals with these people.

Now, I believe that we can show that that is not as great a miracle as it appears at first sight, though it is a very good miracle, but not as great as it appears at first sight, because at the time of the first Isaiah, the Northern Kingdom was also taken into exile. So for the matter of exile, all the details were well known in the time of Isaiah, except one. But in the section from chapter 40 on Isaiah assumes an exile in the first part, for he tells the people if you don't obey God, you will be sent into exile. From chapter 40 on, he says to the people who were thought of as being in exile, God is going to deliver you. That could only be done by Isaiah if God supernaturally led him to write what would be of real blessing to the people of his day, but would have an even greater blessing for the people of a later time who are in exile, and to whom he directly addressed his message. Now to go into this fully, of course, takes two or three hours and is not the purpose of this course.

I merely mention it in introducing the general division of the book. It is easy not to see immediately many of the important divisions of Isaiah. But these two I've just mentioned are absolutely clear because of the change in the type of materials. The changes are from 35 to 36 and then from 39 to 40. The next important division after 40, one that is extremely important, is not at all obvious and the people who made the chapter divisions completely missed it, but we won't discuss that for some time. So, I say we deal with the section starting with chapter 40, but I'm not saying now exactly where our section ends. I think it is easy to prove where it does end, but it is not obvious.

Now, there are five purposes that we have in mind. I want to speak of these fairly rapidly because I don't want to take a great deal of time, on them and I want to get on to our purpose of the course. Our first purpose is to become acquainted with the meaning of this passage, which contains more predictions of redemption through Christ than any passage of similar length in the Old Testament. We want to become acquainted with the meaning of those passages. That, of course, is the great purpose of Bible study in general--to become acquainted with the meaning that God has put there and for us to

understand its meaning.

But we have a second purpose: to see the relation of these Messianic predictions to the context in which they are embedded. The Bible is not simply a book of isolated sentences, as is much of the book of Proverbs. There are very few other sections in the Bible like Proverbs where verses are unrelated to context. Usually, to really understand a verse, you have to know something about the context and see the verse's relation to it. Very often a verse of Scripture summarizes what is in the context. But to prove something by simply taking a verse by itself out of context is generally a wrong approach. We have to see how it fits the context and decide whether it summarizes the context or whether it is, perhaps, leading up to something else. So concerning these messianic predictions the prophet didn't talk along about something else and all the sudden look forward to Christ and then talk a lot about other things and then all of the sudden say something about Christ again. There is an inter-relation. There is an inter-connected progress of thought, and we want to see what that is. I fear comparably few people of the many who love many parts of this section have much idea of the relation of the messianic prophecies to their context.

Number three, we want to gain some of the blessings that Isaiah's contemporaries derived from this section over the next two centuries. There are many tremendous verses in this section. There are many passages that must have meant a tremendous amount to people reading them then. Not only because they look forward to Christ, and not only because of their relation to the immediate historical situation but because there is verse after verse in this section that can be a great blessing to God's people at any time in all history, and we want to gain some of that blessing in this course.

Purpose number four is one of the most important purposes of the course, and that is to gain an experience in inductive study of the Scripture. And so, this course is taught in a way in which I doubt any course at any Bible college is taught. In fact, there are comparably few courses taught like this particular course. My purpose in this course is to give you some experience in inductive study of a passage in order that you can get experience in approaching sections of the Bible, learning how to get into them and seeing

what is there. Therefore, almost every week of the course I will give an assignment for the next week. These assignments will not be tests of your knowledge and they will not be intended for you to go to commentaries and see what various people say about verses you read. If you want to do that after you have done the assignment, I have no objection to your doing it, but I don't want you to do it before you do the assignment. But the assignments are assignments for you to look at passages and note certain things in them, and these assignments will vary from week to week. And I will announce when we have such assignments; I will announce such assignments each Monday, and then I want the papers turned in by the following Friday, so that I can look them over prior to the next class. When I see that all of you have gotten a whole understanding of what I wanted you to find in this Scripture, then I won't have to spend time on it in class; I can go right on. When I find that most of you have missed the main point, then I can take a good bit of time in the class to discuss it. So, it will be very important for our getting the most out of the class that you get the assignments in on time by Friday noon so that I have a chance to see just what you have done with them before the next class. They are not something you are graded on, but I will mark very definitely if you have turned them in and whether they give evidence that you have done some work, for I am interested in your working on these passages. But if you want to look up the commentaries and get their ideas after you've done that, I'd be interested if you let me know what you'd done, but that is not part of the assignment. This is not a class in studying commentaries; it is a class in getting right to the Bible and seeing what it says directly and inductively.

Now, there is one more purpose to mention: number five, which is to advance one's ability of studying and understanding the Bible in a way that can be valuable in all Bible study, through working out some of the rather intricate problems of this important section of God's word.

Now, I want to speak a little about certain verses, and rather than having you write them down and maybe my having to repeat what they are, I have some papers here that I would like to pass out. This paper has a list of verses at the beginning of it, and that is the first thing that we will speak of now so I thought it would help just to have the verses

listed there. The rest of the paper deals with the next assignment, but please don't take time to read that now.

The section that we will look at now in this course begins at chapter 40. As you look at chapter 40 verse 1, you find the words, "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins." (Isa 40:1-2) Here we have the idea of forgiveness of sins right at the beginning of this section. We have that idea stressed right here at the beginning. You are familiar with it from Handel's Messiah, with these words which are so beautifully given in that oratorio.

The next verse here chapter in 40, verse 3, is quoted in the New Testament as a description of John the Baptist. "A voice of one calling: In the desert prepare the way for the Lord: make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God." John the Baptist says, "I am the one who is spoken of as a voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare for the way of the Lord.'" So we have New Testament evidence that there is here something that refers to John the Baptist. Does that mean that John the Baptist simply fits the picture which is contained here? Or does it mean that this is a specific prediction of John the Baptist? You certainly can't prove that looking at it here that it is a specific prediction of John the Baptist. So, you would say that there is a possibility that this is a definite prediction looking forward to Christ. But you would not say that it can be a definitely shown, a definite reference to Christ in this verse.

Now the next verse I list on your paper is chapter 42 verses 1 to 2 and 6 to 7. When we look at these, we have no doubt that Christ is in view though he is not specifically mentioned. "Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight. I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations. He will not shout or cry out or raise his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice." This is undoubtedly looking forward to Christ. But it does not specifically say so. It does not use the name of Christ. It does not say here is something that will come 700 years from now.

This passage is quoted in Mathew 12 verses 18-21 as a definite prediction of Christ. So we are justified in saying this is a prediction of Christ. But I wouldn't quite use the word definite. We might say it quite definitely relates to him, but I'm asking you for your next assignment to mark from five down to zero if this passage definitely points to Christ and I would put this at about a four, hardly a five because there is not a specific word referring to it to the Messiah or Christ, but mighty close to it.

The next reference on this list is chapter 43 verses 5 and 14. Verse 5, "Do not be afraid, for I am with you. I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west." This is a promise of a great gathering in of God's people. Surely this is a prediction of what Jesus is going to do.

Now the next one here is chapter 49 verse 6. Here you read, "He says, 'It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept? I will also make you a light to the Gentiles that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.'" Surely, this is a prediction of Christ. We can surely make this a four on our scale. We can't quite make it a five because it doesn't specifically say this is looking forward to the coming of the Messiah. But, it certainly would be at least a four.

Now, the next item I mention on your list is chapter 53. This is one of the most beloved chapters in the Old Testament. Christians have all through the ages been convinced that chapter 53 is the picture of the coming of Christ. But the passage actually starts three verses earlier. There is a mistake in the chapter division here. I trust that most of you know that the chapter divisions are not in the original. They were put in later on, not until the 13th century A.D. by an English archbishop, and they were put in the Latin Bible and then about 9/10 of them transferred back to the Hebrew Bible. The Hebrews felt a little different division would be better. But in most cases the Hebrew agrees with the English and the English follows the Latin Bible with these divisions, but some of them are very bad. G. Campbell Morgan was known 50 years ago as a great expositor and a highly regarded teacher as he traveled around the world talking about the Scripture. I heard him make the statement that he thought in nine cases out of ten the chapter

divisions were wrong. But I think that is too extreme. I believe many of them are very well placed. But I believe that it is important that we recognize that a chapter division, while it is a wonderful thing for finding places, for finding a particular point that you want to find, is not to be allowed to confuse us as to the meaning, or as to where there is a division of thought. I think it is very sad that hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Christians have memorized chapter 53, and probably not one-hundred of them have included the previous three verses, which are just as definitely a picture of Christ as the material is in chapter 53. This is perhaps the greatest argument with Jews today that Jesus is the one predicted in the Old Testament and that, is this chapter 53 here. It is just really sad to see the way some of them squirm to try to get out of the implications of chapter 53. They try to say that the first part of 53 is a picture of a leper, and the last part of it is a picture of Israel's suffering. Why those two should be combined in that way really doesn't make much sense. Actually, there is no evidence for this passage referring to a leper, and the things the subject of chapter 53 is said to do is hard to say that Israel could do, except so far as Israel was God's instrument for bringing the Messiah into the world and preparing a way for him. To that extent Israel deserves some of the credit. But it is certainly Messiah, the predicted one, who fulfills the last part of chapters 52 and 53.

Now I marked this on the sheet: some predictions of the Savior. They certainly are not all of the prophecies by any means; there are many more predictions of the Savior in this passage. But if we would take this passage and simply say we are going to read from chapters 40-56 in order to find out about the Savior, we would find many passages that would be hard to fit into it. There is much context that, at first sight at least, in fact on third and fourth examination, do not seem to have much direct correlation to the Savior.

I call your attention to the historical section that I mentioned a few minutes ago; that that section ends with in verse 7 of chapter 39 with the prediction that Isaiah makes that the people of Judah are going to be carried away to Babylon. We speak of chapter 39 verse 5 and following. "Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, 'Hear the word of the Lord Almighty. The time will surely come when everything in your palace and all that your fathers have stored up until this day will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left,'

says the Lord, ‘and some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood, born to you will be taken away and they will become eunuchs in Babylon.’”

Now, there is a definite prediction given to Isaiah in the day of Hezekiah that was not fulfilled for a period of over a century with the Babylonian exile of 586 B.C. The marvelous thing about the prediction is that he says they would be taken to Babylon because all the earlier chapters are talking about the great nation called Assyria. Isaiah threatens Judah with exile if they don’t obey God and tells how the Northern Kingdom was taken into exile by the Assyrians. But just here at the end of that section we have the prediction, that Judah is going to go to Babylon. When you try to arrange the history of these chapters it seems most likely that what is described in chapter 39 actually happened before the previous three chapters. But I believe it was put this way in the Bible in order to give an introduction to the chapters that follow. In the chapters before, Assyria is constantly mentioned. After this Assyria is practically never mentioned; it is all Babylon. In the day of Isaiah, it would have seemed a strange thing to think Judah would be taken prisoner to Babylon because the Babylonians were subject to Assyria at this time. That is the one of the great predictions about exile in these first 39 chapters. The exile, which it coming, is abundantly predicted before. But the fact of the exile will be to Babylonia rather than to Assyria is the great prediction.

Now from chapter 40 on, we have much about deliverance from exile, and in the course of it there are many references to Babylon and to the Babylonians. That, of course, leads those who do not believe in predictive prophesy to claim that could not have been written by Isaiah. It must have been written about 150 years later near the end of the Babylonian exile. That is very natural and necessary to say if you don’t believe in a God who can predict the future. But if you believe in a God who can enable Isaiah to say Judah would be taken into exile to Babylon, then there is no problem in believing that God gave Isaiah words of comfort to his people who knew that they were going to be taken to Babylonia someday. Strange as that would seem in their day, but they knew the facts about exile from having talked with refugees from the Northern Kingdom who had gone into exile right during Isaiah’s lifetime in 722 B.C. The people of Judah were very

familiar with the general subject of exile and knew from Isaiah's statements that it would be to Babylon, not Assyria.

Now, there are many Christians who know a great deal about the wonderful messianic predictions that we find in chapters 40-53. But there are a great many who know so little about the predictions of deliverance from the exile that they might even question that there are such predictions. So I want to take a few minutes now to look at some of them that I have listed on the paper that I gave you. These are verses that involve the Babylonian exile, as I have said. These verses do not say they're going into Babylon exile, they do say they are going to be delivered from Babylonian exile.

Look at chapter 42: we notice that chapter 42 begins with a wonderful prediction of Christ. But look at verse 24, "Who handed Jacob over to become loot and Israel to the plunderers? Was it not the Lord, against whom we have sinned?" Of course, that could apply to any time of suffering for Israel. But it very definitely implies the exile.

Next, I listed chapter 43, verse 5, where he says, "Do not be afraid, for I am with you. I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west." We notice that might be taken as a promise that the word of God will go out to the east and into the west, and the message of salvation will be carried all over the world. But you know that it is also not impossible to take it as meaning that they are going to be brought back from the exile no matter how far they have been taken away. So you might perhaps give this passage, if this were in the assignment next time, a three on both possible predictions. It could fit either interpretation of the spread of the Gospel or the return from exile.

The next verse listed here is verse 14, I believe, of chapter 43. "This is what the Lord says, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. 'For your sake I will send to Babylon and bring down the fugitives all the Babylonians in the ships in which they took pride.'" Here there is surely a positive prediction of deliverance from Babylon. Babylon is mentioned, and the fugitives are mentioned. God is going to send for them. So this I should think would have a five, or at least a four and a half on the scale. That was 43:14.

Now, chapter 44 is a tremendous passage. Chapter 44:28 to 45:1. In chapter 44:28, the Lord is speaking before this of himself as the one who makes marvelous predictions

of the future. And the passage looks forward to the time when Jerusalem will have been destroyed. And he says of himself in verse 28, "Who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please.' He will say of Jerusalem, "Let it be rebuilt," and of the temple, "Let its foundations be laid." This is what the Lord says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armor, to open doors before him so the gates will not be shut." Cyrus was the great Persian conqueror who conquered Babylon and who gave the Jews freedom to return to their homeland. This is described in the book of Ezra very fully and Cyrus's decree that they could go back was given twice there. The book of Daniel tells about it, as Daniel was one who was exiled in Babylon. Here is Isaiah predicting it 150 years in advance, specifically mentioning Cyrus twice by name.

Now those who do not believe that Isaiah wrote the last part of the book, one of their big arguments was how would Isaiah know the name of Cyrus. Of course he wouldn't. But God could reveal it to him. It is the marvelous evidence that God was truly speaking through Isaiah that he gave him the name of Cyrus 150 years in advance in this way.

Then in chapter 46, verse 1, he deals with the gods of Babylon. "Bell bows down; Nebo stoops low; their idols are born by beasts of burden. The images that are carried about are burdensome, a burden for the weary." There are many verses through here, and I've only selected a few to show you the clear evidence that deliverance from the Babylonian exile is one of the two major subjects through these chapters. Of course, the thing we are interested in is how the two fit together. We can get great lessons for ourselves for the way God delivered his people from the exile: the way he was with them through all of their sufferings and all their oppression, and the way he promised to deliver them 150 years ahead of time. There is great blessing for us in that. There is also great blessing in the marvelous pictures of the coming of the Messiah who will bear our sins on the cross. But how do you put the two subjects together and go from one to another? If you see how you do, I think it increases your understanding of both. That is what we hope to do during this course. That was 40:1.

Look at 51:17. In chapter 51, verse 17, we read, “Awake, awake. Rise up, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk from the hand of the Lord, the cup of his wrath, you who have drained to its dregs the goblet that makes men stagger.” He is calling on Jerusalem to be rebuilt, to be delivered from the Babylonian exile.

When you get to chapter to chapter 52, the end of 52, it begins the greatest prediction of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that will follow to be found anywhere in the Old Testament. But look at the two verses immediately before it. Look at chapter 52, verse 9, “Burst into songs of joy together you ruins of Jerusalem.” Verse 10, “The Lord will bare his holy arm in sight of all the nations and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God. Depart, depart, go out from there. Touch no unclean thing. Come out from it and be pure you who carry the vessels of the Lord.” Cyrus gave orders that the various vessels of the temple that had been carried off by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon were to be given to Ezra and his people to carry back to Jerusalem. "He says you will not," in the last verse, verse 12, “you will not leave in haste or go in flight; for the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard.” They were to have safe passage back from Babylon to Jerusalem, and Ezra tells us how Cyrus made that possible, as God had predicted 150 years before.

So here now you have these two great themes. The theme of the deliverance from exile, which God promised his people, and the theme of deliverance from sin to be brought about through the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is wonderfully described in so many passages in this section. Now we are interested in seeing just these two themes fit together. That is what the assignment for next time deals with. The assignment is to look through chapter 40, and I have listed on the bottom of the sheet all the 31 verses in chapter 40. I am not asking for this assignment to study each verse carefully, but simply to make a judgment. Does a verse deal with the Babylonian exile? Does it deal with Christ? If you think that it very clearly deals with one of them you put a five on one side and a zero on the other. But if you should think that it could apply to either one, but you could not be sure which without a great deal of study, you put a three on both sides. You are to give an idea of what you think is the direct application of each verse.

Now, I have already mentioned to you the fact that we have a type of material in the Bible that we call “narrative,” and the narrative, or historical material, is what characterizes most of the books of Kings and Chronicles, and this is what is characteristic of Isaiah 36-39, though these chapters contain some passages of prophesy. Then we have the type of material we call “prophesy,” which is the type we find in most of the book of Isaiah and also in Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Minor Prophets.

Now when we use the label "prophecy," we don't necessarily mean prediction. I like to use the two words separately because sometimes today if we say “prophecy” we mean “prediction.” Prediction may be a part of prophecy but doesn't have to be. The prophets were not simply fortune tellers sent to tell the people what was going to happen in the future. The prophets were people who came as God's spokesmen or messengers. They were “forth-tellers” as someone has said rather than necessarily “foretellers” of the future. Now, God knows all the futures so it is not at all unnatural to expect that prophets will also tell us some things about the future. That is certainly not unexpected but it is not the greater part of the prophetic writing. The greater part of their writings are giving God's message to his people. The message that God gives to his people in the books of Isaiah and Jeremiah, particularly those two prophets but also to some extent in most of the other prophetic books, are largely made up of two types of material. One type is the type, which is perhaps half or more, maybe two thirds of the material in the prophetic books; that can be roughly called "rebuke." That is pointing out people's sin and telling them that God will punish them for it and telling them also that they should turn away from their sin. That is the commonest type of material within the prophetic books. Now that may include prediction, of course; like God will take you in to exile; God will send you to Babylon to exile. God will cause certain things to happen. But it can be a passage which is primarily rebuke.

But there is another type of material that has maybe half as much written as the first kind. That kind makes a very large portion of the prophetic books, and that I generally call this writing by the name of "comfort." And that is what we have in chapter 40, “Comfort my people, comfort my people, says your God.” This is material that is

given in order to comfort God's people, in order to assure them of his blessing. It is meant to assure them that he will forgive their sins, to assure them that he will deliver them from exile. I have found it most helpful in the study of the prophetic books to divide the material into these two categories. To look at a verse and say, "Is this a verse of rebuke? Is it a verse of comfort? Or does it have some other purpose all together?" Parts of the prophetic books have other purposes. But most of the prophetic books can be put under one of these two purposes: rebuke or comfort. The remarkable thing is how quickly the prophets sometimes shift from one purpose to the other. They will be giving rebuke and all of the sudden they start telling of God's wonderful blessings. I like to think of it as if the prophets were talking about the whole people of the land and looking at them as sunk in sin and misery because of their forsaking God's law and telling them how God must punish them for this. And then it is as if he sees down here nearer him a group of people who are faithful followers of the prophet. These people are doing their best to be true to the Lord and to do the Lord's will. And these people know they are part of a nation, and they see the sin of the nation. They know they are implicated in the sin necessarily as part of the nation. So they know the terrible things that Isaiah says must come, and will indeed come. They know that that is a fact. They would tend to give way to despair, therefore, and Isaiah suddenly sometimes just turns his attention away from the nation as a whole and devotes his message to the smaller group of those who are true to God. And he gives them wonderful words of comfort.

Well you have the rebuke in chapter 39, that God is going to send the people to Babylon into exile as punishment for their sins. Then chapter 40 starts with comfort, but I'm not asking you to divide chapter 40 between rebuke and comfort because chapter 40 is all comfort or blessing. So that is not part of the next assignment, but we will keep it in mind as we go to subsequent chapters. But in chapter 40 I would like you to give me an idea in the papers you turn in by Friday noon regarding each verse, does this verse very clearly and definitely speak of Christ? Does it say the Messiah is coming? Is the Messiah going to do this? Is it so specific there is no question about it? Does it give such a context so definitely relating to Christ that there is no question about it even though it doesn't

specifically say it? Does it fit with what we know about Christ? Does it perhaps have a slight suggestion referring to Christ, or is it very definitely not related to Christ? And the same about the exile. So I believe most of you can do that rather quickly.

We'll begin there next time.

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