Robert Vannoy, Major Prophets, Lecture 12
Arguments Pro and Con for Second Isaiah (Isaiah 40-66)

1. Deutero-Isaiah (Isaiah 40-66) Concepts and Ideas Differ

2. Difference in Language and Style

We're talking about the arguments for Deutero-Isaiah. The first was that "Concepts and ideas differ." This is hardly a convincing argument. The second argument: "Difference in language and style." I think that's a more important argument. In Driver's introduction, for example, on pages 238 and 239, he lists a lot of words that occur in Isaiah 40 to 66 but do not occur in 1 to 39. And then he lists words that occur frequently in 40 to 66 but only rarely in 1 to 39. So you get these long lists of words that either occur not at all in the first part, or very infrequently in the first part but do occur in the second part. It's on that kind of analysis that a lot of this argument rests. I think in response it can be said that it's not too surprising that you would find words in Isaiah 40 to 66 that don't occur in the earlier part of the book because the word usage depends to a large degree on the subject matter. If you have different subject matter, it's not so surprising that you're going to have different terminology. So I don't think in itself listing of words that occur in one part and not the other part is terribly convincing.

a. 'Ani Instead of 'Anoki [2 forms of "I"]

I think the strongest part of the argument from style is that certain linguistic oddities are pointed out that are said to belong to a usage of later time. Linguistic oddities belonging to a usage of a later time are found in Isaiah 40 to 66. Now Driver speaks of that on page 240. To get into that becomes very technically involved. I'm not going to do a lot with that but I will say that even here the argument is not something that is conclusive. G. C. H. Aalders in his *Introduction of the Old Testament*—that's a Dutch work--but Aalders says, for example, to take one illustration of it, an argument has been made that difference in style is seen in the strong preference in Deutero-Isaiah for the first person singular pronoun *'ani*

instead of the 'anoki. So Deutero-Isaiah prefers 'ani instead of 'anoki, and that is said to indicate linguistic usage of a later time. Now, the way that works out is in Isaiah 40-66; its heavy use of 'ani instead of 'anoki reflects the usage of a later time. They propose that kind of argument. Now what Aalders does is to look at the usage of that elsewhere. For example, in Haggai you have 'ani 5 times and 'anoki no times. Now you see Haggai is post-exilic, so you're in post-exilic times with Haggai and you don't have 'anoki used at all. In Zechariah: 'ani 9 times, 'anoki no times. Now Haggai and Zechariah are both post-exilic. If you go to Ezekiel, you have 'ani 162 times and 'anoki a few times. He doesn't enumerate it, but it is used just a few times. In other words it does occur. That's in Ezekiel. Now Ezekiel is not post-exilic, so you're moving back towards earlier times. You're in exilic times with Ezekiel. Now what Aalders says is that it's clear that the tendency not to use 'anoki in the time of Isaiah of 40-66 had not progressed as far as the time of Ezekiel because you've got it 21 times there in Isaiah 40-66. In other words, it would seem to indicate that these chapters are earlier than Ezekiel. So they're not in the time of the exile but some time prior to the exile, if you look at that kind of a usage. So if you get into matters of linguistic oddities, you get into that kind of discussion; and here with the use of 'ani and 'anoki, it certainly is not something that is conclusive.

b. Thus Says the Lord [perfect / imperfect]

     Then, on the other hand, you have studies made which demonstrate points of linguistic agreement between the two sections of the book. So if you get into language and style you get some unique kinds of linguistic things that you find in both parts of the book that would tend to utilize this kind of analysis for unity rather than for disunity. For example, you're familiar with the expression "Thus saith the Lord." And that is *kol 'amar Adonai*. Now that expression is very common in almost all the prophetic books. There is a variant to that expression in Isaiah where you have *kol yomer Adonai* with an imperfect tense instead of a

perfect. The perfect is replaced by an imperfect, and that variant appears only in Isaiah, and it appears in both sections of Isaiah. In other words, it appears in chapter 1 verse 11 and verse 18. It appears in chapter 33 verse 10. It appears in 40 verse 1 and also in 40:25, 41:21, and 66:9. So you see it's kind of spread through the whole book. It's in the first section of the book and in the second section of the book. It is a variant from a very common expression and occurs only in Isaiah and occurs in both sections of Isaiah.

The tendency is that with '*anoki,* the later you go, it tends to be used less and less. So you get closer to post-exilic times; it's not used at all and in exilic times except just a little bit. But in Isaiah it's used about a third or fourth of the time. This is Aalders representation of it. In other words, Aalders is saying that '*anoki* is used less in the post-exilic period. If you analyze the post-exilic and exilic books it tend, to be used less than it tends to be in pre-exilic times. In other words, this is not a strong argument for a late, post-exilic date for Deutero-Isaiah. Many allege that Deutero-Isaiah is late, post-exilic when Cyrus is ready to let Israel return from exile. They say that's the historical setting; and usually critical scholars say Cyrus is already on the scene, thus his name could be used and the writer was someone living in the time of the rise of Cyrus around 539 B.C. But this is more than two times post-exilic usage, so what you see on this line--if you're going to say the usage of '*anoki* moves along this line from more to less--it means you can't place Deutero-Isaiah late because you'll have to place him in pre-exilic times.

Unity of Isaiah Based on Language and Style [Margalioth]

Alright, now go back to that book by Rachel Margalioth. When you get to the study of language and style, her book is really significant. She presents a very well argued case for the unity of the book based largely on agreement in language and style between the two parts. Look at page 26 of your citations. And this is taken from pages 5 and 6 of her book. She says, "Kraus enumerates eighteen

words in expressions peculiar to Isaiah the Second. Several of them he admits are to be found"—notice this—"also in Isaiah the First. But in chapters that Kraus ascribes to Isaiah the second." So if you list these things as unique to 2nd Isaiah, but then if you find it in the first part, you just say, "Well that part was from second Isaiah as well." Margalioth continues, "But even if such expressions were to be found in far greater number, what proof can be deduced therefrom? Do special words or expressions in one or another chapter prove anything? Does that fact give ground for separating this chapter or any other from the body of the book?

"In the prophets it is not unusual for one word or more to appear several times in certain chapters, although they are not found even once in any of the preceding chapters. Take the expression 'The vengeance of the Lord,' which appears several times in Jeremiah 50 and 51, but is not to be found again in the whole book. Is that sufficient reason for separating these two chapters from the book? Or again the expression 'slain by the sword' is found no fewer than 10 times in Ezekiel 31 and 32 but does not appear even once in the preceding chapters. Does Ezekiel 31 start a Second Ezekiel? In every prophetic book it is possible to point to numerous words, phrases, and expressions appearing several times in only one chapter, or in a group of chapters and not elsewhere in the book.

"We are left to conclude, then, that such words or phrases are favored in terms of the context--the specific message of the prophecy given in the particular chapter. As regards to the arguments that the two sections of the book of Isaiah differ in language and style, which according to Ben Zeev is the thing that cannot be proven by example, we shall demonstrate in this book by hundreds of examples that the opposite is true. Not only are the two sections similar both in language and style, but they are remarkable for their unity in that the similarities between them cannot be ascribed to any influence whatever."

Then what she does in her book is this, notice the next statement: "The system here employed to demonstrate the unity of both parts is as follows. After

classifying the entire book of Isaiah by subject, we have shown that in regard to each subject both parts employ enumerable like expressions, which are peculiar only to this book. It has also been proved that the specific expressions reveal the same usage in both parts. Some even common expressions are distinguished by a particular use of identical terms. The second section inverts the words of the first; passages in word groups of the first are composed of elements found only in the second, and vice versa."

Classification by Subject Matter [Margalioth]

Now, I have not included further comments in your citations from her book on this, but you see what she does is classify the entire book of Isaiah by subject. Here are some of her subjects: designations of God, designations of the people of Israel, formulas of prophecy, messages of consolation and things of that sort. She has, in fact, 15 subject headings. The way she works that out is this: say the first one, designations of God. She lists divine titles used exclusively in Isaiah—divine titles unique to Isaiah that are common to both parts. Designations of the people of Israel: 11 epithets referring to the Jewish people alike in both parts. Formulas of prophesy: 20 introductory formulas opening, or stressing, prophecies in the earlier chapters with their linguistic parallels in the later section. So you see, she goes through the book like that and just piles evidence on evidence of similarity of linguistic usage in unique kinds of ways that occur in both parts of the book. I think she makes a powerful case by doing that for unity of the book. See words of admonition: 21 different wordings for rebuke peculiar to Isaiah, yet common to both parts.

Now, we get back to the argument. You see the argument is there's a difference in language and style. Margalioth turns that around and says there is a similarity of language and style on the basis of this careful analysis. Now it seems to me, that with this kind of argumentation, no matter which way you're going, the complete proof of authenticity can no more be provided by this method than can

the reverse. I don't think this type of argument is conclusive either way. I mean, you could say with Margalioth's finding these unique expressions in both parts of the book, theoretically you could say, "Well, Deutero-Isaiah granted the construction for a moment. Deutero-Isaiah was so familiar with the first part of the book that he adapted the expressions in his own writing and utilized them in the second section." They could say that.

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So I don't think that Margalioth can prove without any question the unity of the book by this kind of a method. But I think the reverse is true as well. You can't prove that there are two different authors because you find some evidences of difference in language and style. What constitutes such a difference in language and style that would force you to the conclusion that you must have two different writers? I'm sure if you took your own writing from 15 years ago and compared it with something you were writing today, you would find some differences; and yet, you wrote both. So from this type of argument, I don't think that you can prove conclusively either the unity of the book or the disunity. I think that what Margalioth has done though is in answer to the kind of argument that the critics have accepted is that you can equally well produce a very solid argument for the unity of the book as you can for difference between the two sections. So, the book is complex, and the language is complex, and the usages are complex.

Radday's Statistical Linguistic Approach & Oswalt's Response

Now look at page 27 of your citations. There is another thing that we're probably going to hear more and more about: that is the use of computer linguistic assessment of biblical material as it relates to questions of authorship. In Oswalt's book on Isaiah, his commentary on chapters 1-39, he alludes to that in connection with this issue of Deutero-Isaiah. Notice what he says, "The nearest thing to objective proof of a lack of unity and a composition that appears in Y. Radday's

impressive investigation, *The Unity of Isaiah in the Light of Statistical Linguistics*. Radday did a computerized study of numerous linguistic features of the book of Isaiah and compared these in the various sections of the book. As a control, he studied other pieces of literature, both biblical and extra-biblical, which were reputed to have come from one author. As a result of these researches, he concluded that the linguistic variations were so severe that one author could not have produced the whole book of Isaiah. As might be expected, these conclusions were greeted with approbation by critical scholars who saw their position as being vindicated. But in fact Radday's conclusions call into question some scholarly views. A number of questions may be raised concerning Radday's methodology. The very infancy of the field of statistical linguistics raises some questions. Do we yet know enough to speak with confidence about the possible limits of variation in a given person's usage?" I think that's a very real question.

Continuing with Oswalt, "Note that another sort of computerized study of the book's characteristics led to the conclusion that it is a unitary composition: L.L. Adams and A.C. Rincher, 'The Popular Critical View of the Isaiah Problem in the Light of Statistical Style Analysis,' in *Computer Studies,* 1973. There you have two studies come out with opposite conclusions. Again Oswalt: "While yet another, A. Kasher, 'The Book of Isaiah: Characterization of Authors by Morphological Data Processing,' in a French journal, concluded that the composition is not a unity, but his results pointed to different divisions of the book than did Radday's. For a review of the difficulties inherent in the statistical approach, see Posner 'The Use and Abuse of Stylistic Statistics.'"

Now I don't know where that field of study is going to go; I think it's just beginning, and I doubt it's going to be pursued. What Oswalt says is certainly something at this point that is appropriate: we do not know enough to speak with confidence about the possible limits of variation of a particular person's usage. In the studies at this point they're conflicting, although it is Radday's analysis that many people have grabbed onto. Just claim, "Computer analysis"--all you have to

do is say that and to many people that settles it; the computer knows. But what kind of things do you feed into the computer, and how do you make those judgments?

Get back to footnote 5 there. "None of this is to question the integrity with which Radday's study was undertaken and performed, but it is to point out that the evidence is still not as objective as a manuscript in which only chapters 1-39 (or some such) would appear." There is no manuscript evidence for two Isaiah's. In fact, you have the Dead Sea scroll material that is a single book. That's the earliest manuscript we have. Notice footnote 6. "It is ironic that those who lauded the reliability of Radday's methodology as it applied to Isaiah were much less convinced of its reliability when he recently reported that same methodology established the unity of the book of Genesis."

Argument from Historical Background Isaiah 1-39 [Assyria] Isaiah 40-66 [Babylon/Persia]

Let's go on to the argument from historical background. That argument from language and style, it seems to me, is not a conclusive argument, but I think you have to look at it both ways. The very nature of the argumentation means that it is very difficult to construct a cohesive argument on that kind of a basis.

Let's move on to: "The argument derived from historical background." I think that probably this is the most important argument. Not that it is one that is convincing necessarily, but I think of the three arguments it's undoubtedly the most important argument. It's undeniable that Isaiah 40-52 has a very different historical background than the earlier part of the book. As we've noticed so far, in the early part of the book, there's a lot of rebuke, announcement of coming judgments, and prediction of the exile because of Israel's sin. Then you come to Isaiah 40 and following, you don't have that kind of material. In fact, the situation is that the people seem already to be in exile. The emphasis now is on the promise that God will deliver from the captivity, so instead of an announcement of

judgment, there is consolation, comfort, and hope along with the promise of God's intervention on their behalf.

In the first part of the book there are many references to the Assyrians as the great enemy. But you get to the latter part of the book, and it's not the Assyrians who are in view but the Babylonians, and the rise of Cyrus, the Persian. The people are in bondage to the Babylonians, but soon to be rescued by the hand of God through the instrument of Cyrus the Persian. So there are very different historical backgrounds for the first and second parts of the book.

Now, given that, it can be explained only in two ways. The way the critics suggest is that the latter part of the book is written by a different author who lived after the exile had begun, and was in progress, and the historical background is the background of that writer who lived at a much later time than Isaiah. That's one way to explain the difference.

The other way is to say that Isaiah wrote it. In his doing that, he was led by the Spirit of God to bring these words of comfort and hope to his people after they would have gone into exile: that the exile would not be forever, but that God would intervene and deliver. Now those are the only two ways you can explain it. If you take the latter view, the view that Isaiah is the writer, you can still ask the question--and this is a question that's often asked: Would there be any purpose in Isaiah's writing something that would have reference to events that were not going to happen to them but were going to happen in the rather distant future?

Look at page 28 of your citations under Whybray's little study guide, second paragraph. This comes from page 4 of his Second Isaiah booklet. He says, "It is clearly addressed to a group of people who have been exiled from their homeland by a conquering power which also is referred to by name: Babylon. In 4 passages (43:14, 47; 48:14, 20) Babylon is spoken of by name in these terms, and this historical situation is confirmed by numerous other passages. Chapters 40-55 then would have made"—notice what he says—"no sense in the 8th century when the people of Jerusalem and Judah were still living at home under the rule of their

own kings; when Babylon, far from being a great power, was—and remained until the fall of Assyria in the late seventh century B.C., long after the death of Isaiah— merely one of the cities of the Assyrian empire; and when Cyrus had not yet been born and the Persian Empire did not yet exist. On the other hand, everything in these chapters makes good sense as the message of a sixth-century prophet to Jewish exiles in Babylon."

Purpose of Isaiah 40-66 to People of Isaiah's Day

The question is raised there about the relevance of Isaiah 40-66 to Isaiah's own contemporaries—does it have any relevance for them? Look what Freedman says to that question, page 25 of your citations. This is from Freedman's *Introduction of the Old Testament Prophets*. He says, "Not every prophecy needs to be traced to a definite contemporary historical situation nor directly applicable to the generation to whom it is spoken. It cannot be maintained, as Driver contends, that the prophet speaks always to a person who is his own contemporary. The message which he brings is intimately related with the circumstances of his time; his promises and predictions correspond to the needs which are then felt. Obvious contradictions to this concept of prophecy are: Zechariah 9-14, speaking of things way beyond the time of Zechariah's contemporaries; Daniel 11-12, to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (ca. 165 B.C.); Isaiah 24-27--that's Isaiah's apocalypse, he's talking about the end times--in addition to those already mentioned. This is not to overlook, of course, a general relationship of prophecy to the historical situations that's called forth with prophetic utterance." I think what Freedman is saying is, it's quite clear that not all prophecy has direct and immediate application to the contemporaries the prophets were speaking to; I think that's taken for granted.

When you get to Isaiah 40-66, even though Freedman is correct in pointing that out, I think that you still can say that Isaiah 40-66 does serve a purpose in relation to people's of Isaiah's own day. In the early part of the book, Isaiah

seemed to have two objectives. First was to declare to the nation its sin and its duty to repent; he does that repeatedly. Then secondly, to tell Judah that God was going to punish them for their sin by sending them into exile. That also was quite clear. There were those who listened to Isaiah and responded to his message, although they were the exception. For the most part, the people turned away from what he said; they didn't want to hear it.

The prediction of Isaiah chapter six was being fulfilled. Remember in that vision of Isaiah's call the Lord said in Isaiah 6:9 and following, "Go tell this people: 'Hear indeed, but understand not; see indeed, but perceive not.' Make their ears heavy, shut their eyes lest they see," and so the people were not going to respond to this message, and for the most part they didn't. That was being fulfilled.

It was also clear that the exile predicted in 6:11 and 12 was inevitable. See verses 11 and 12 of chapter 6 says, "Then I said, 'For how long, O Lord?' And he answered: 'Until the cities lie ruined and without inhabitant, until the houses are left deserted and the fields ruined and ravaged, until the LORD has sent everyone far away and the land is utterly forsaken.'" He was speaking of the exile already in chapter 6. He then gave those people hope that the exile was not going to be forever. There is going to be deliverance, but this was not a judgment that was going to end the nation and the people. God was going to intervene and they would come back. I think that would have been a comfort to the godly remnant— the people who did listen to Isaiah. Because, you see, if you trace this is subsequent to Hezekiah, you get into the reign of Manasseh where things get worse, and where if we look at Kings it becomes very clear that the exile is inevitable; and I think this second part of Isaiah was probably written during that dark period of time of Manasseh.

So let's pick up at that point at the beginning of the next hour and conclude our discussion of this third line of argumentation: "The difference in historical background."

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