

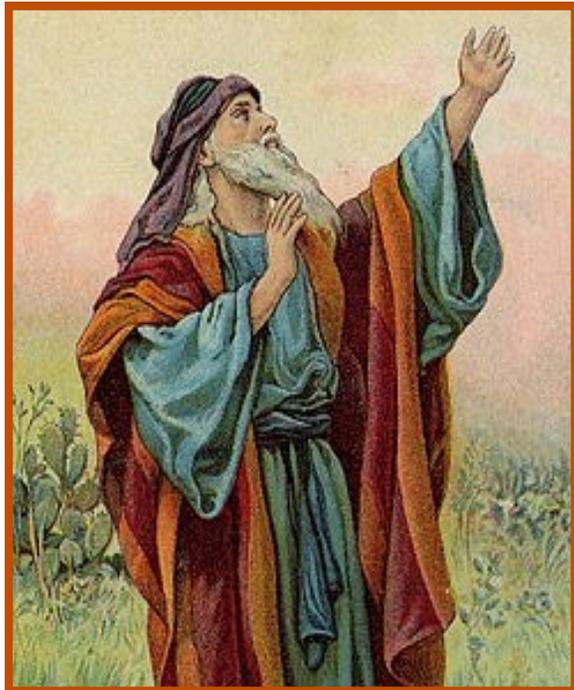
differences of style found in Isaiah, or between early and later Epistles of St. Paul, are much smaller.

b) <Positive arguments for unity>: The ancient Jews accepted the whole as the work of Isaiah, well before the coming of Christ. Ecclesiastics (Sirach) in 48:24 says that "By the spirit of power, Isaiah saw the last things and comforted those who mourned in Zion". The last clause points easily to Isaiah 61:3. But Sirach was probably written in the second century B. C.

The Isaiah scroll from Qumran has the complete text of Isaiah. A few lines of chapter 40 actually begin at the foot of a column in that scroll. Also, Josephus (<Antiquities> 11. 1. 1-2) says Cyrus read the prophecies about himself in Isaiah, and intended to fulfill them.

The arguments on both sides are really inconclusive, but we must say that those against unity are much too weak to make us certain that there were several Isaiah's.

End of Prologue-Part II



"THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME"
ISAIAH 61:1

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THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

PROLOGUE—PART II

AND HIS NAME
WILL BE CALLED
WONDERFUL COUNSELOR,
MIGHTY GOD,
EVERLASTING FATHER,
PRINCE OF
PEACE.
ISAIAH 9:6

Isaiah is called "The Book of Salvation." The name *Isaiah* means "the salvation of the Lord" or "the Lord is salvation." Isaiah is the first book containing the writings of the prophets of the Bible. And the author, Isaiah, who is called the Prince of Prophets, shines above all the other writers and prophets of Scripture. His mastery of the language, his rich and vast vocabulary, and his poetic skill have earned him the title, "Shakespeare of the Bible." He was educated, distinguished, and privileged, yet remained a deeply spiritual man. He was committed to obedience over the long haul of his 55-60 year ministry as a prophet of God. He was a true patriot who loved his country and his people. Strong tradition suggests that he died a martyr's death under the reign of King Manasseh by being placed within the hollow of a tree trunk and sawed in two.

Isaiah's calling as a prophet was primarily to the nation of Judah (the southern kingdom) and to Jerusalem, urging the people to repent from their sins and return to God. He also foretold the coming of the Messiah and the salvation of the Lord. Many of his prophecies predicted events that occurred in Isaiah's near future, yet at the same time they foretold the events of the distant future (such as the coming of the Messiah), and even some events still to come in the last days (such as the second coming of Christ).

In summary, the message of Isaiah is that salvation comes from God—not man. God alone is Savior, Ruler and King.

Commentary on the book of Isaiah is by noted theologian Rev. William G. Most (1914-1999). His contributions to theology have been recognized all over the world. He published 12 books and a host of articles on topics ranging from biblical studies to Mariology and Latin grammar.

Book of Isaiah

Prologue-Part II

Introduction to the Second Part of Isaiah

At the end of Chapter 39 we have come to what many consider a break point in Isaiah. They call the rest of the work Second Isaiah, and many even speak of a Third Isaiah (chapters 56-66). This tendency to split Isaiah first appeared in the 18th century, in the work of commentators like Koppe and Döderlein.

The fact that the whole book is inspired does not tell us anything about authorship. In ancient times it was not unusual to use a pen name, and to pick the name of a famous person. Also, rights of authorship were not respected as they are today: a later author might change or add to an existing work, leaving it under the name of the original author.

<Arguments against unity> are chiefly these: chapters 40-66 deal with a period later than the lifetime of Isaiah, including the time after the return from the great exile, in 539 B. C. There is even a mention by name of Cyrus of Persia who allowed them to return.

It is said too that First Isaiah is a prophet of judgment and punishment, while the rest of the book offers comfort to the exiles, and then advice for living in their land after the return.

We do not know the date of the death of Isaiah himself. One old tradition says he was sawed apart by order of the wicked King Manasseh (687-42), but this is uncertain.

There is a difference in style after the end of chapter 39. The first chapters were strongly illustrative, now the style becomes lofty with a lot of rhetorical questions and even passages in which God argues His own case with His people.

<Arguments for unity>:

a) <We can easily answer the above arguments>. The fact that the later chapters deal with a time after the death of Isaiah are a problem only for those who deny on principle the possibility of supernatural prophecy. The only really specific point is the mention of the name of Cyrus.

Really the whole picture is the same as the so called Deuteronomistic pattern: threats of punishment, arrival of punishment, repentance and deliverance. Any author following that could have confidently written the whole, except for the one point, the name of Cyrus. That would require revelation.

As for style: No one who has read the works of Tacitus, the great Roman historian, in the original Latin would think much of any argument from differences in style. The style of Tacitus in his four historical works is highly distinctive and pungent -- one needs to read the original language to get most of the flavor. But there is still another work by Tacitus, the <Dialogue on Orators>. There the style is day and night different, and really much like that of Quintilian, who also wrote on the same topic, but his work is lost. There is of course a temptation to say the manuscripts confused two works, and we really have that of Quintilian, that of Tacitus on orators is lost. Yet there are enough arguments of a different nature to convince almost everyone that the Dialogue we have is really by Tacitus. The