

Alan MacRae: Isaiah1-6: Lecture 01:
Biblical Theological Seminary, 1976

Prayer: We thank you that we can study the word of light, we pray that as we study it, it will enable us to understand it and to see your purposes and your fires in our lives. We ask in Jesus name, Amen.

The course this year is covering a portion of Isaiah different than what we covered last year, and yet there is necessarily in the first lecture a certain amount of overlapping, so those of you who had the course last year will pardon the fact that there will be a third of this morning's lecture will overlap. An introduction to the book as a whole,-- and it will overlap some of what you had last year. I don't think that there will be anything else this semester, that will overlap because it is a very different part of the book of Isaiah with a whole different subject matter from that which we dealt with last year.

I don't think we need to start with the text of Isaiah, I'll simply start with an outline of what we want to cover. And under that, you'll notice I said part one, you'll notice this year that we are dealing with two separate and rather unrelated sections of Isaiah, the first part and the last part. They are unrelated, but each is tremendously important and very interesting and so I am going to call it part one, as long as we are dealing with part one, and under that roman numeral one there is: "Introductory," and under that I have listed as A: "The supreme excellence of the book". All literary scholars agree, that one of the great masterpieces of the worlds literature is the book of Isaiah. To the Christian it is even greater importance, for this book contains more pictures of Christ than any other part of the Old Testament. Many different aspects of Christ's life, primarily of course, the story of his death and its importance for us, his resurrection, and his future activity, are carefully described in the book of Isaiah. Naturally there are those

who have different opinions as to how much of this Isaiah understood. Well, Peter tells us that the prophets were “searching what manner of time, the spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify, when he testified before hand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.” (I Peter 1:11) So we have it on the authority of the apostle Peter that the prophets looked forward to the activities of Christ. They probably understood a great deal about these activities, but there was probably a good deal they did not understand, but the Holy Spirit so led them in what they wrote, that it could be later read and understood in the light of our fuller knowledge of Christ, and we could see how very, very much of the important facts about Christ and the meaning of these facts is already contained in the book of Isaiah.

The book of Isaiah is quoted in the New Testament, probably more than any other section of the Old Testament. There are a great many times when the New Testament quotes Isaiah by name and there are many other times where it quotes “as the scripture says” And so for the real understanding of the New Testament, you need to know the book of Isaiah.

The book of Isaiah has a Hebrew style that is perhaps the finest that ever was written. It has a great deal of alliteration. It has many distinctive literary features. We will not deal with these in this class except in so far as they pass over into English. But the remarkable thing about Hebrew is that so much can be translated into other languages. The Mohammadans boast that the Koran is such a great literary masterpiece that it cannot possibly be translated you must read it in the Arabic. All translations only give a feeble idea of it. The great thing about the Bible is that while no translation exactly represents it, a tremendous part of its literary excellence can be passed over into another languages. One reason for this is the nature of Hebrew poetry. Isaiah’s poetry is not so much a matter of a particular length of syllables or of rhyme though these we do enter into in some extent, but it is a matter of parallelism of thought. It is a matter of arranging

thoughts in certain order it is a matter of uses of metaphor and similes, and interrogation. Practically every rhetorical figure you will ever find is found somewhere in the book of Isaiah. And so it is one of the great literary masterpieces of the world and one of the most important books in the Bible for the Christian. And yet, unfortunately, there is comparatively little or no amount understood by Christians.

Most Christians are familiar with a number of isolated verses in Isaiah. They may have memorized the 53rd chapter of Isaiah. And some of the great verses earlier in the book that we use at Christmas. But of the great flow of thought in the book, the interrelations of the parts, the sections that do not immediately bear on the life of Christ, most Christians have a little idea. I have here a book in which a statement is made about the first chapter in Isaiah. It says “the first chapter is a marvel of condensation. It is a complete manual of religion, setting forth the relationship of God and of people. The duties growing out of that relation the error to be avoided and the results of obedience and disobedience to the divine will. And this not in the dry abstract terms of a theological system but in concrete pictures which the simplest souls can understand and appreciate.” But how many people have much realization of what there is in Isaiah, in the first chapter? We will not spend a great deal of time on the first chapter because we have many other matters that I think are intrinsically more important, and we will move on to them, but this statement gives an idea of the greatness of this work and of the amount that can be gained by careful studies of even that one chapter.

Now section 3 is “The importance of the Old Testament.” And this I believe needs emphasizing among Christians “The importance of the Old Testament.” It’s all too often forgotten. I have occasionally passed a church in which I’ve seen a sign “no creed but the New Testament” that is not a Christian statement. To the Christian the source is not the New Testament, it is the Bible. And the Bible is one. The New Testament constantly refers to the Old Testament.

Constantly quotes from the Old Testament. The apostles and the New Testament writers over and over build their argument upon quotation from the Old Testament. To the Christian the Old Testament is of tremendous importance and when you think of the fact that in one particular Bible I looked into, the New Testament covered 396 pages and the Old Testament 1333 pages; in other words more than three times as long. More than three fourths of the Bible is the Old Testament. The New Testament brings out the great Christian truths. Very very clearly it's tremendously important to study the Old Testament, and to neglect it would be utterly wrong. I've often said it's far better to know Greek thoroughly than to have a slight knowledge of Greek and Hebrew. But even a slight knowledge of Hebrew is a great value enabling one to read commentaries and to understand discussions but of course, a good thorough knowledge of both is better, but above all get a good thorough knowledge and ability to interpret the statements of the New Testament in the original.

Well, Capital C we'll move on to, which is "The importance of the prophetic books." In the OT the average person who has attended Sunday school is familiar with some of the stories in Genesis and Exodus and Joshua and Kings and perhaps a very few stories from the prophetic books. But the average Christian never gets into the inside of these books, to understand them, and there are principles you have to have in mind in order to understand them. This same Bible that I spoke of that has the New Testament of 396 pages, devotes 378 pages to the books from Isaiah to Malachi, to those 17 books of the Old Testament. Almost as long, they are, as the whole New Testament.

I must confess that in my second year of teaching in theological seminary I started at the beginning of Isaiah and every day read a chapter or two until I got to the end of Malachi and when I got through I had practically no recollection of anything I had read. It was just words, I did not *then* understand the principles of interpretation of it to have it really meaningful to me. Since then I've devoted

thousands of hours to studying these books and they are absolutely endless in the amount of vital truth that they contain that is very important for the Christian. The importance of the prophetic books, C, then we see is something that cannot be over emphasized.

But we look at D. "The difficulty of the prophetic books." I noticed the difficulties very vividly, as I said at that time when I read them through continuously without any understanding, really, and I was then already teaching my second year in seminary. In my seminary course that I had taken, there had been much discussion of the minute points of some of the prophetic books. But to really get into them and to understand their meaning and their relationship and how to go at them, I had never really gotten until I got busy studying them and comparing them and finding the principles which open them up and make them living and vital.

But I'm just going to mention three difficulties. Number 1) - the poetic lineage. The prophetic books are very largely composed of poetic lineage. And until one recognizes this fact and learns a little bit about the nature of Hebrew poetry he is not apt to get into the beauty of them or to have any great understanding of the real meaning. And of course, these poetic features are carried over into English and unfortunately many of the translators have failed to recognize and understand some of these principles. As a result they have made translations which while verbally, they may be quite accurate, do not give a proper idea of the interrelation of the parts. One big reason for that is the fact that in Hebrew you have one common conjunction. The letter *waw* is the common conjunction which we would say means 'and'. But it is much broader than our English 'and'. Though our English 'and' is much broader than most other would think. We say, "I looked for Him and He was not there," we might say that. It would be more accurate for us to say, "I looked for Him but He was not there." Our 'and' in English sometimes carries the meaning of 'but'. Now in Hebrew the

waw which in half the cases, at least, is best translated by ‘and’, in many many cases can be represented by ‘but’ or ‘yet’ or ‘moreover’ or ‘then’. I came across one verse in Daniel in which it was translated four different ways in the course of one work in the King James Version. It simply is a broader word than our English “and”, though our English “and” is a broader word than the average speaker of English recognizes even though he does use it in the broader way, which is part of the language. So the poetic language is one cause of difficulty.

A second is the local situation. The prophets were not men who sat in an ivory tower somewhere and looked up at the sky and wrote down visions that they saw (occasionally they did have visions like this). But as a rule, they were out among the people, dealing with situations of their time. And God was giving them messages and related to these situations. And then out of the many messages that God gave His people that had vital relation to the situations of their time, God selected certain ones to be written down in the books that were to have great meaning for people of all subsequent times. But all of these messages have certain relationships to the local situations. These local situations are explained in the books of Kings and Chronicles—some of them later in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. The local background is often referred to and implied without being fully explained in the prophetic book. And until we find what it is, sometimes we fail to get the full meaning.

And then number 3: “there are partial glimpses of the future.” No prophet, so far as I know, ever sat down to write a full history of the situation that would be ahead. He was not writing a history book for the future. People sometimes say that “prophecy is history written in advance.” Well, there is a sense in which this is true. There is a sense in which it is history written in advance but we don’t understand what history is. We think, often, that by “history” we mean just events, one after another, occurred. Now if you take a history of the last fifty years and in that history you tell what happened in January 1, 1926 in San Francisco and in

Siam and in Hong Kong and what happened the next day in Paris and in Madrid and in Dayton, Ohio and so on, you would never call it a history book. It would just be a list of events. A history book gives something of an idea of the interrelation of events and when you come to do that, you've got to take one of those regions and trace it through. And then take another and trace it through. If you don't, that's just back and forth all the time. You just can't do that it wouldn't be a book of history. And so the prophets, when they looked to the future, they looked with particular ideas in mind and God let them see what relates to these ideas. And so a prophet might speak about something, he might rebuke the people for their sins, and then he might look forward to God's judgment that is coming. And then he might comfort the godly with blessing that God has for them, and then look forward to a different area, to a particular blessing ahead for them. And thus, in one of the glimpses of the future are complete. Of course you couldn't see all the future or all the past possibly anyway, but they are particular vistas for different times and we have to see the interrelationship of them. So these three specific difficulties are important in understanding this book: 1. Poetic lineage; 2. Local situation; and 3. Glimpses of the future.

Now capital E, "The purposes of prophecy and their relation to prediction." There are many purposes of prophecy. The word prophet has come to mean somebody who foretells the future but that's not what it means in the Bible. It means a man who speaks on behalf of someone else. A prophet is one who represents God and gives God's message. So that is truly what prophecy is. And some would say that and stress it in such a way as to make you think that they never predicted the future. Actually, prophecy is full of predictions of the future because it is very definitely related to the specific purposes of prophecy.

I'm listing these very briefly under three main headings. First, "To call men to repentance." The prophet is there to call people to repent of their sin and turn to God and he's also there to call God's people, the true believers, to turn away from

the sin that so easily besets them and to turn back to a fuller obedience to God. And so this does not cover simply the unfaith of the ungodly, it covers all of those to whom the prophet speaks. Probably two-thirds of what the prophet spoke was for this specific purpose: To call people to turn away from their sins and to look to the Lord's provision and be saved; to call people who are already believers to turn away from the sin that so easily leads them astray and to devote themselves more fully to doing the Lord's will. Now prediction has a great deal to do with this because the prophet tells what the future is, of those who fail to follow the Lord. He tells of the suffering and misery that are ahead for them. He also tells what God is going to do upon his own nation in the comparatively near future, say within ten years, or within one hundred, or within five hundred. He tells of the future in this life and the future in later times in relation to this call to repentance.

The second great purpose of prophecy can be summarized in the words "To comfort and reassure believers," or "To comfort believers and give them assurance." When the prophet speaks of the terrible things that God is going to do, such as punishing his people for their sins; when he stresses them--and some of them stress it a tremendous amount--these are not passages we should pass over lightly in our study, although we will have to pass over many of them quickly in this class because we want to get to some of those that are of most immediate relevance to us. But I would urge you, if you study these passages yourself in the coming years, that they reflect on your life in part and your activity for Christ. But Isaiah greatly stressed the way that God was going to deal with those that turned against his Holy law, true believers were apt to give way to despair. They knew they were part of the nation; as such they were implicated in its sin. They knew the terrible things the prophet said would come, were definitely going to come, they knew judgments were ahead for them, and therefore they might tend to become terribly disturbed. As so while perhaps two-thirds of the prophetic books are devoted to the purpose of leading men to repentance, leading unbelievers to

turn to God, leading believers to clean up their lives and follow Him more closely, perhaps a third of the content of the prophetic book is devoted to the purpose of comforting and reassuring those who truly believe. And often the prophet does not say, "now I have quit talking to those people, now I am going to talk to these." It does not introduce a sharp indication of the change. He just, in cold print as it stands, just goes straight on, and you have to recognize that the prophet either turns his head away from one group to another, he thinks of individuals scattered among the group particularly rather than the whole group, he makes a change in his manner perhaps which is not indicated in the writing. And so as you read it often there is a very sharp and sudden transition from the purpose of calling men to repentance, to the purpose of comforting and reassuring believers.

Now the third purpose does not affect us today so directly, that is "The purpose of giving *specific* guidance." That was the great purpose of the prophets in ancient times. Isaiah said, when Sennacherib came with his army and he threatened the people of Jerusalem and demanded that they surrender, and told the terrible things that he would do to them if they didn't, and gave them promises that he would be good to them if they would, Isaiah said "don't surrender don't give into him, God is going to protect you, God is going to deliver you." And he made them these wonderful promises. He said just like birds flying, God will protect Jerusalem. About a hundred years later Jeremiah spoke and the people said, if we just fight and stand here, since this is God's city God will protect it. We are safe. Jeremiah said, "God is going to turn this city over to the Babylonians. They are going to come in and destroy everything." He said, "surrender to the Babylonians. That is God's will." And of course there were those who called Jeremiah a false prophet. And it is not always easy for people to decide who was the true prophet and who was the false prophet. God did in that case give specific evidence. Jeremiah turned to the false prophet who said within a year we are going to be delivered from the Babylonians. And Jeremiah said "within a year you will be

dead.” And within a year he was dead. And there was an evidence God gave that Jeremiah was the one that who he was speaking through.

Now this purpose is very important in Old Testament times that is the purpose of giving specific guidelines. It is not particularly important in the parts of Isaiah we are going to study this semester. It just doesn't have to enter in as other portions. But the sections in which this is a vital purpose while not directly of importance for us today are never the less of great value as showing the manner of God's dealings and giving us principles which we can apply in situations that confront us in the present time. And so this matter of giving specific guidance in your general study of prophecy is a great future importance, not so much a connection with this particular semester. But this is vital to recognize, that God gave that specific guidance before his whole word was available. And now we have the whole Scripture and he wants us to study it and get are principles of guidance from it. And while he may choose at certain times and certain ways to give us definite personal guidance, his great desire for us is that we learn to understand his word so that we can apply its principles. And he says in one hymn he can guide us with his eye not having to give us direct words but leading us to know that our steps are towards him and that he is working in our lives if we take these principles and apply them.

Now capital F “The perspective of prophecy.” In other words, we have in these prophecies glimpses of the future. How are we going to relate them to each other? Do they proceed right in chronological order? How are they arranged?

Well, number one under this category I said that it is not simply that we listen in advance. I have already referred to that fact, so we won't have to go into that further right now. So now we go onto number two the order is often logical other than chronological. The prophet is dealing with God's punishment for sin then he tells what God's going to do. Then he is dealing with God's blessing on

his people; he looks forward to a particular occasion of blessing that has relevance to the particular matter he is dealing with. And thus the order is often logical rather than chronological and we are doing wrong to assume that there must be a chronological relationship.

I am going to give an illustration of this from the history books, an illustration that brings out I think in a very interesting and difficult way the fact that the order is often logical rather than chronological. I am going to turn to a passage in the history books that at first sight you would not say was prediction. In fact, I have had theological professors say to me that's not prediction those are commands. And yet on the little examination it's obvious that they are not commands. This is the story of Elijah. I trust all of you are familiar with it. In 1 Kings 19 where the Lord spoke to Elijah, Elijah was so terrified with Jezebel's vain threats that he had fled clear down to Sinai. And there God showed himself in power to Elijah in order to comfort him and to strengthen him and to encourage him. And then we read in verse fifteen "The Lord said go and return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus and when you have arrived you shall anoint Hazeal king over Syria." Now if this is a command, Elijah was a disobedient prophet, because Elijah never anointed Hazeal king over Syria. But to take it as a command would be utter nonsense, because how could Elijah, this Israelite prophet, who was hated by the king of Israel, how could he go over into another country larger and more powerful than Israel – the country of Syria – and take a man there in subordinate position, unrelated to the king and anoint him to be king of Syria? That would sound rather preposterous unless God were to work a miracle, and he did not. The Lord gave this word to Elijah, but what he's really doing is giving him a prediction. He is saying, "Elijah, you're afraid of your life of King Ahab, and Queen Jezebel, but I am going to make a change in the control of this great land of Syria, much larger and more powerful area than the region of Israel, where you're so afraid of the ruler. This greater kingdom, I am going to make a change

there. I am going to cause a man to become king there who has no relation to the royal family at all, a man who calls himself “a son of a nobody”. So he gives it in the form of a command, “you anoint him king over Syria”. Actually, many years later, Elijah’s successor Elisha, went over to Syria. And there he met this man Hazael and Elisha began to weep and Hazael said, “Why are you weeping?” And Elisha said, “I’m weeping because I’m thinking of the terrible way you are going to treat the people of Israel as you attack and destroy” and so on and Hazael said, “Why I’m just a servant. Who am I? I am the son of a nobody. I’m just like a dog. I’m just the servant of the king, how could I do anything like this. I simply carry out the king’s orders.” And Elisha looked at him and said, “The LORD has shown me that you are going to be king of Syria.” And then Hazael went back to the king’s palace where the king was ill, and he took a wet cloth and put it over the king’s face and suffocated him. And Hazael made himself king. Syrian records referred to him that, “Hazael, son of a nobody, seized the throne.” Elijah never anointed Hazael. But God predicted that this was going to happen.

And then the word of the Lord to Elijah continues and the next verse: “And Jehu the son of Nimshe you shall anoint king over Israel.” And here was another man who was not related to the royal family, and in this case there was a real anointing, but it wasn’t done by Elijah. In fact it was some years after Elijah’s death that Elisha sent someone else. Elisha didn’t anoint him but Elisha sent one of his men from the group of prophets with him, and he went out where they were fighting against the Syrians, and he went over there and he poured oil over Jehu’s head and thus Jehu was anointed. And Jehu immediately made a rebellion against the son of Ahab and made himself king. God is not here giving a command but a prediction that Jehu will become king and there will be a complete change in the dynasty of Israel.

After the Lord said this in verse 16 He continues, “And Elisha the son of Shaphat, the son of Abel-meholah, you shall anoint as prophet in your place.” And

Elijah couldn't pick out a man and anoint him to be prophet in his place and as far as the Scripture goes, he never anointed Elisha. In fact when Elijah died, or was taken up to heaven rather, He looked on Elisha as one who poured water onto his hands when he washed them, (his menial servant). And he tried to get away from him but Elisha stayed with him, and finally Elijah said, "What would you like me to do for you when I'm taken up?" And Elisha said, "I would like to have a double portion of your spirit." That means a duplicate portion or perhaps the portion of an elder son, the double portion an elder son would seek. "I'd like to be your successor in other words!" And Elijah didn't say, "Well I'm ready to anoint you to be prophet in my place." Elijah said, "You've asked a hard question." And he said, "Only if you see me as I'm taken up will you know that you can be my successor."

So these were not commands, they were not given as commands, that is the verse we read in 1 Kings 19:15-18. 2 Kings 8:8-15 tells how Hazael became king of Syria; 2 Kings 9:1-13 tells how Jehu will be king of Israel; and 1 Kings 19:19-21 tells how Elijah threw his mantle over Elisha as Elisha was ploughing; and when Elisha said, "Wait a minute till I go and say goodbye to my family and I'll follow you," Elijah says, "What have I got to do with you?" That's pretty far from anointing him as his successor. They are predictions of who the successors will be and the changes God is going to make. But you notice the order of them? Elisha was called to be Elijah's successor before either of the other two was fulfilled. The order is logical rather than chronological. It starts with the great kingdom of Syria. God is going to make a change there. Then it goes to the kingdom of which Elijah was so terrified. God's going to make a change there, and then he says, "Elijah, You've done a great work. You've done a great work and you deserve great credit, but now you've gotten frightened from this wicked woman and fled into the wilderness here. Your work has got to be carried on by someone else. You're not able now to go ahead and do the great work that's needed to

follow up the wonderful things you've done. We have to train a new man. Hire a new man that can do that, and that man will be Elisha. But that one was fulfilled long before either of the other two. The order is chronologically not one, two, three; but it's two, three, one. The order of prophecy is often that way. It is logical, rather than chronological.

An illustration that often occurs to me is the illustration of a mountain range. If you look at a range of hills off in the distance, you see the near hill and it'll be higher in some places, lower in others, and then behind there may be another range and there may be another and there may be three or four ranges. When you look at the near one, you can't tell, often, whether the one you see back of it is right back of it or whether there's a big space in between. And you'll look at one range and you'll see, behind a certain part of it, you'll see the third range. The second doesn't show at that point. Then you'll look a little further along and you will see the first and the second. And then you'll look a little further on and you'll see the first and the third and the fourth. It varies. And you might say "logical" is the particular place you look and the "chronology" is obviously what's back of it. But you look at one and then another and so in the order is logical, rather than chronological.

Now, instead of giving the next point right now, I'm going to do something that I should do at the end of class, but usually forget when I leave it to the end of class. So I'm going to do it right now instead. And that is to assign the lesson for next week, the assignment for September 20. Number one is to note all correspondences as to thought between the early verses of Isaiah 2 and those of Micah 4. Now this, I'll say a word or two more about, but for the moment just get it in mind. That is the first part of the assignment for next time. I shouldn't say the first part. I hope the first part will be to review today's lecture because it's far easier to review it right now than just before exam time. But then, note these

correspondences. That I want you to write out, but we'll discuss that after a minute.

The second part is to note any important connection between each of these three groups of verses, or each of these two groups of verses, and the latter verses of the preceding chapter. In other words, as you look at Isaiah 2, look back at the last few verses of Isaiah 1 and see what the connection is. How does it tie in with it? Is there a close connection? As you look at Micah 4, look back at Micah 3 and see if there is a close connection or not between these two passages. The chapter divisions in the Bible were put in by an English archbishop in the thirteenth century. And it is amazing in the book of Hebrews how often the first verse of each chapter's a summary of the previous chapter, and could just as well be the last verse of the previous chapter. And many times the chapter divisions are quite wrong. Cambell Morgan, the noted English expositor, said once in my hearing that "in nine cases out of ten the chapter divisions were wrong." Now I think he was quite extreme in that, I think often they are very well placed. But they are badly placed on enough occasions that it is always wise to look back for the connection. So I'd like you to do that and write out next time any important connection (not trivial ones) but really important connections between the first few verses of Isaiah 2 and the last few verses of what precedes, or between particular things in the first few verses Micah 4 and what precedes.

And then number three; explain the purpose of Isaiah 2:1. Look at the first verse of chapter 2 and see what you think the purpose of that is. Please answer each of these questions from your own study without using help. This is what you thought. I find that one can get far more from the Bible than from most help and if you don't, if you need help, you get far more from the help if you first try to do it yourself. Well, this is to done direct from the Bible, and I don't care what Bible version you use. Use any Bible version that you would find, and, if fact, if we have variety in the class so much the better. But I'd like you to state on your

paper what Bible version you're using. And then after you've done this yourself, then, if you wish, look in one or more commentaries and state their answer to question three. I'm not asking you, necessarily, to do this, but if some of you are interested in seeing what commentaries say about the purpose of Isaiah 2:1, it will be interesting to see what they say, but I fear most of them will say something that doesn't add much understanding to it, but it will be interesting to note, perhaps. It is not my purpose to have you look at a lot of books and comparative statements. I find it much better to look at the Scripture and see what you get from it, and then look at other things if you want to. But I'm usually not even assigning you to look at anything.

The King James Version has some very bad slip ups in it, but on the whole it is an excellent translation, probably as good a translation as has ever been made, but it's in the language of three hundred years ago, and a great many of the words just give a different impression today from what they meant to the writer. I got used to it most of my life and I've been using it, mainly. The New American Standard Bible, is on the whole, a good, accurate rather literal translation, and very useful. The New NIV that has just recently come out has got some very fine rendering, but some very terrible ones, too. I think it was done a little too hastily I don't think they were quite ready to publish it. I think they wanted to get something out quickly to arouse interest in the Old Testament, which I hope will be an excellent production. But it has some very fine things in it. Now you can use any of those, or if you would like to use the Jerusalem Bible, or the Revised Standard Version, or the New English Bible or any other for this particular class, but I think the different one uses you may have some points of interest you come across in some you would like to wait on the fact. But those three are the best we have, but in the case of all three, time and again the translators failed to see the interrelations between verses. There were very important things that were just overlooked by the fact that the emphasis was put on the particular sentence rather

than on the meaning of the particular sentence in relation to major sentences. So I don't care which of these you use, if you would like to compare several, of course, it's up to you.

Now the first of these questions should not be correspondences. I would like to give you an idea of how I'd like that done. But you see on this page how I have marked it, that there in Isaiah chapter 2 and verse 2 I put a 1 next to it, and by that I meant that this verse is very very similar to verse 1 of Micah 4. You see. I can't put them next to each other because there is a black space in between; I'll have to cut off part of the page to do that. But you see the two verses are almost identical. So I put a 2 here on Micah to show that it is very close to the first verse of Isaiah 2 and a 1 on that to show that it's like that verse in Micah.

Now if you can look at these first five verses of each of these chapters and you'll find one prophet may say "all," the other may say "many;" you'll find little differences like that, that are of interest, but not related to our present purpose. For our present purpose we will call these 2 verses identical, even though they are not exact they are very very close; the idea is the same. You can just indicate which verses in each are related *in thought* to the other. I am not interested in identical words. But actually among the prophetic books, you will rarely find two passages so similar as these: This is rare. So it's very interesting that we do have this similarity. Now for this particular thing it would be better not to use the NIV, simply because we don't have the NIV of Micah yet. So you need another translation to be able to see the verbal similarities much more closely than if you compare the NIV just for Isaiah with one of the other translations.

Now we go on to "the division of the book of Isaiah." I don't want to take much time on this because in this class we are just dealing with the Septuagint division. You will also find that chapters 36 to 39 are different from the rest of the book (history). Isaiah is what we call a book of prophecy. He is exhorting, he is

looking forward to the future, he is comparing things. It is a series of messages. And that is very different from, for instance, the book of Kings or Proverbs. But in this book of Isaiah, which has comparatively few statements of events, what you call historical statements, you have very few in the book, aside from chapters 36 to 39. You have there, four chapters which describe a series of events. In the course of them, Isaiah gives some long messages. But you have that somebody came and said something, somebody answered, certain things happened. It's a historical section. And so the book of Isaiah naturally divides into three parts: Chapters 1 to 27, 35, 36-39 and 40 to 66.

Now there are those who call 1 to 39 "First Isaiah" and call chapter 40 and on "Deutero-Isaiah," and say it was written 150 years later. I don't believe that at all. But it's interesting to note that just as the Bible has 39 books in the Old Testament, 27 in the New, what they call the First Isaiah has 39 chapters and the rest of the book is 27 chapters. Now that's purely coincidental, but it's a help to remember, the divisions. Now, this historical section 36-39, then, is in the middle. There and up to there the chapter divisions are, many of them, quite well made.

You notice that chapters one through six is the section we're going to study as part one of this course. Then, 7 to 12 is the Book of Immanuel, 13 to 23 is largely about other nations, 24 to 27 is called the Isaiah Apocalypse, it's a view of, you might say, the consummation of the ages following the statements largely about other nations. And then 28 to 35 is about Immanuel continued. So last year we studied 7 to 12 and 28 to 35, which makes one unit closely related. Now you notice these divisions could all be made according to chapter. But when you go on after chapter 36, the chapter divisions are very poorly made. There are two main divisions after that: chapters 40:1 to 56:8, I used to call the "Gospel of Isaiah". I've now changed it to "Isaiah sees the Savior" because this is the section which tells about the atonement. And it leads up to the atonement, stresses it, explains it. I gave a course in this section two years ago. But it ends abruptly at 56:8. I

shouldn't say it ends abruptly there, I should say the archbishop didn't notice it there. Because the next three verses of chapter 56 belong with the remaining part of the book. Well, we are going, in this course, to take those as part two, that last half. And that is a section of Isaiah which is comparatively little known, but one of the most thrilling sections of the whole book, when you really get into it and see its real meaning.

Now, a capital H, "The structure of Isaiah 1 to 6 and the comparison to Micah 1 to 7." Isaiah and Micah prophesied at about the same time. Many books refer to Micah as Isaiah's younger, as a man who was younger than Isaiah, but I know of no evidence for that. We don't know which was younger, which was older. But they were about the same time. And each of them starts: i.e., the first six chapters of Isaiah and the first seven chapters of Micah, with rebuke for sin, then go on to deal with God's blessing in the future. Then another passage of rebuke for sin, then a wonderful passage of blessing for the future. The second one, in Micah, corresponds to the first one in Isaiah. Then you will have again a passage of rebuke for sin and then the last chapter of this section of Isaiah and the last chapter of Micah is either a prayer to God or a vision of God. So there was a remarkable similarity of structure between them.

And for next time, I would like you to make this comparison between the beginning of Micah 4 and the beginning of Isaiah 2, noting the relationship of each to the last few verses of the preceding chapter. I see the clock has moved so we better stop for now. Oh, I didn't mean to show you the basic themes yet, but that I'll show you next time...

Edited and read by: Dr. Perry Phillips

Transcribers: Steven Fletcher, Peggy Hennings, Grace Nield, Jared Deame, Micah Wilson, Ben Garvin, Heather Reid, Tim Campbell, Joanna Gallagher, Christine Houlette, Tiffany Savage, Amy Nicols;

Class-Editor: Joshua Bell: Outliner: Holland Stewart

MacRae, Isaiah 1-6: Lecture 1 Outline

- I. Introduction to Isaiah 1-6
 - A. The supreme excellence of the book
 1. Isaiah is one of the great masterpieces of the world's literature
 2. To the Christian more pictures of Christ than any other part of the Old Testament
 - a. How much did Isaiah understand?
 - b. 1 Peter 1:11
The prophets were "searching what manner of time, the spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify, when he testified before hand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."
 - c. Quotes in the New Testament more than any other section of the OT: Isaiah/as the Scripture says
 - d. To understand the NT you have to understand Isaiah
 3. Isaiah as a Literary Masterpiece
 - a. The book of Isaiah has a Hebrew style that is perhaps the finest that ever was written
 - b. Much of the literary style can be translated contra Koran
 - c. Key literary device is parallelism of thought
 - d. Almost every rhetorical figure found in Isaiah
 - B. Key book for Christians
 1. Most Christians unaware
 - a. Most Christians know Isaiah 53 and Christmas stories
 - b. Most Christians unaware of the great flow of thought of the book
 - c. Isaiah ch. 1 itself is called "Complete Manual of Religion"
 2. The importance of the Old Testament
 - a. Sign "No creed but the New Testament" is not Christian
 - b. Whole Bible is our creed
 1. New Testament constantly refers to the Old Testament
 2. 3/4 of the Bible is composed of the Old Testament
 - C. The importance of the prophetic books
 1. Many Christians know stories of Genesis/Exodus...
 2. Prophets often ignored yet Isaiah-Malachi = size of the NT

3. Need to understand principles of prophetic interpretation:
 - personal confession
- D. The difficulty of the prophetic books--finding principles to open them up
 1. Poetic lineage: much of the prophets is Hebrew poetry therefore one must understand poetic features
 - a. For example: waw "and" translated many ways including "but" "then" "moreover" and "yet" so it is much broader than our English word "and"
 - b. Translating and understanding poetry is difficult
 2. Local situation
 - a. God is giving messages related to local situations
 - b. Historical situations described in Kings/Chronicles/Ezra/Nehemiah
 3. Partial glimpses of the future
 - a. Nature of history writing. Not just a list of events but the interrelation of events and their meaning
 - b. Brief vistas of the future not complete and not totally understood and function in relation to the message being given at that time: rebuke or comfort
- E. The purposes of prophecy and their relation to prediction
 1. A prophet is one who represents God and gives God's message not just one who tells the future
 2. Purposes of prophecy
 - a. The prophet is there to call people to repent of their sin and turn in obedience to God
 - 1) 2/3's of the prophets manifest this purpose
 - 2) Future tells suffering of those who fail to repent
 - b. To comfort and reassure believers giving them assurance
 - 1) With all the predictions of coming judgment, believers comforted not to despair
 - 2) Perhaps 1/3 of the prophetic book is devoted to the purpose
 - 3) Prophet's unannounced switch between purposes results in sudden/abrupt transitions in their texts
 - c. Giving specific guidance

- a. Vital to recognize that God gave that specific guidance when before His whole Word was available
- b. Isaiah's specific guidance resist Sennacherib when he attacks Jerusalem, God will protect
- c. Jeremiah specific guidance do not resist the Babylonians for God has delivered you into their hands...true/false prophets
- d. Discovering principles for our times

F. The perspective of prophecy

1) How are we going to relate them to each other? How are they arranged?

- a) It is not simply this that we listen in advance
- b) Does it proceed right in chronological order?

1) Often logical not chronological

a. The story of Elijah meeting God at Sinai (I Kgs. 19)--3 predictions not commands

1) Hazael, son of nobody to be the king of Syria

--Elijah doesn't do this, Elisha does

2) Jehu to be anointed king of Israel

--Elijah doesn't do it, Elisha sends someone to do it

3) Anoint Elisha as Elijah's replacement

--Elijah doesn't do that although Elisha asked for a double portion of his spirit

4) Order predictions given: 1, 2, 3 order actually happen 2, 3, 1

Logical not chronological arrangement

c) Mountain range illustration: distance the near and far hills look close but miss the valleys in between. Similar to prophecy logical not chronological arrangement

Aside on the assignment for next time: three things:

- 1) Note all the correspondences between the early verses in Isaiah 2 and Micah 4.

- 2) Look at connections between the beginning of Isaiah 2 and the end of chapter 1
- 3) Look at the connections between the beginning of Micah 4 and the end of Micah 3.

Guidelines:

What do you think of the chapter divisions?

Do not use commentaries, look at it for yourself

Focus on the thought flow not the minute details

Use a good translation: KJV, NASB, NIV

II. Divisions of Isaiah

A. Historical events section 36-39 unique in the book

B. 3 Divisions: 1-27, 28-39, and 40-66

- 1) Chapters 7-12 and 28-35 make up the "Book of Immanuel"
- 2) Chapters 13-23 mostly describe other nations
- 3) Chapters 24-27 referred to as "Isaiah's Apocalypse"
- 4) Chapters 40:1-56:8 called "Isaiah sees the Savior"

H. The structure of Isaiah 1-6 and the comparison to Micah 1-7

1. Isaiah and Micah prophesied at about the same time

We don't know which was younger and which was older

2. The parallel structure: Isaiah 1-6 and Micah 1-7

a) start with rebuke for sin,

b) God's blessing in the future.

a') Another passage of rebuke for sin

b') A wonderful blessing for the future.

a'') Then you will have again a passage of rebuke for sin

c) Last chapter Isaiah 6 and Micah 7 is either a prayer to God or a vision of God