

## **Allan MacRae: Isaiah 1-6: Lecture 2**

### **Biblical Theological Seminary, 1976**

Now some of you did some study in commentaries and that is good. Commentaries often have helpful ideas, and sometimes have very misleading ideas. But for this class, I am anxious that before you do anything in these commentaries, you study the text yourself. And, in fact, in this course, since we are not requiring any language for this course--it is possible to take this as a first year student--I am not requiring for this class, unless specifically posted, any study in a commentary. But even if I believed a commentary will be valuable for you, I'd like you to study the text first yourself.

I remember about 20 years ago, I had 2 students who had graduated with all my work for 3 years. And then they went to another seminary, which at that time was quite a conservative seminary. And they worked there for a TH.D. degree. And I saw them when they had been there about 2 years and they said to me, "We have a tremendous advantage over the students here in this seminary who did their undergraduate work here." They said these students are accustomed on every question to look up commentaries and say these commentaries say this and these commentaries say that, and play them off one against the other to see what the different opinions are. But they said none of those students go right to the Scripture to see what it says.

It's amazing how many things that are quite obvious in the Scripture are overlooked by most of the commentaries. The commentaries often have a habit of copying from one another and sometimes when some very great student has written a commentary that has a lot of excellent material in it he will get careless in some fact that he cannot investigate thoroughly and make some rather foolish mistakes in those passages. It's amazing how many later commentaries will copy this mistake. So my great interest in this course is that you learn to go direct to the

scriptures yourself to see what is there. And then as I say after that, if you want to do some studying in commentaries that's all very good, of course.

Now, today I gave you an assignment which involves a comparison of Micah 4 and Isaiah 2. And in this comparison, I was interested to see what you would get. And as you compare the verses, just as a rough comparison at first, you see that in Isaiah verse 2 of chapter 2 is almost identical of Micah 4:1. And in Isaiah, the 3rd verse is almost identical with the second verse of Micah. And the fourth verse in Isaiah is almost identical with the third verse in Micah. But then the 4th verse in Micah, the first part of it has nothing corresponding to it in Isaiah, and yet as you look at that 4th verse, the first  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the verse, you see that it is actually a development of what is already in the previous verse. And so by not having those verses in Isaiah, you don't have that expressed quite as clearly and fully as you do in Micah. But you might say that it is inferred in what Isaiah has in the previous verse. "They will not learn war anymore." There will be no violence. There will be no external danger. Now Micah makes this more specific, I don't think he adds anything to it but he makes it more specific in that fourth verse where he says that "they shall sit every man under his vine, under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid." He has in mind a time when the Assyrian army is spread all over the land of Eden and the people are safe behind the great walls of Jerusalem and they don't dare go out, they are protected from the army as long as those walls stand. They don't dare go out where those walls don't stand, men can combine and injure them.

Even within our present generation, the condition was somewhat similar in Palestine. In 1929, I traveled to a part of the backcountry of Palestine on horseback. There were four of us there, born in four different continents. And then we had some Arabs with us, taking care of carrying the stuff and so on. We would camp at night, I don't know if you can do that in that area now, but at that time it was very interesting. Conditions were much more like they had been for a couple of thousand of years than they are today. And Dr. Albright who was leading the

party, was one who spoke Arabic very fluently, and had been in Palestine many years, was very familiar with the customs and social standing and every time when we were in the backcountry when night would approach, he would find an Arab village, and there he would come to that village, and the headmaster, or the leader of the village would come out, Dr. Albright would greet him, and he would welcome him to the village, and we were under their protection. And then we would camp on the edge of the village. We would hire someone from the village to sit out in front of our tents overnight, just to watch for sneak thieves and that sort of thing. But as far as any real danger was concerned, we were perfectly safe because we were under the protection of that village.

Now we heard how just a year before a young couple from Czechoslovakia had begun to make a walking trip, carrying most of their provisions and their tents. And they had gone from Czechoslovakia, westward across Europe, down into Spain, and had come along the northern section of Africa, and had come to Palestine, and they had no injuries or real difficulties until they got into Palestine. But there they were not aware of the customs in the country. And so one night they camped in a place where the nearest village was over a mile away. There were three villages, in three different directions, so they weren't under the protection of any one of them. You might say they were out in the open, under their vine, under their fig tree. And then during the night, the son of the head of one of the villages, and two of his friends came down, began to seize their property, and when they objected, they were both killed. Later on the British government found who the criminals were and hanged them. But it illustrated the fact that even within the present generation, it was not safe in Palestine out in the open to camp overnight. In the protection of a town, you were safe, hospitality they called it. But out there under your vine and fig tree, there was constant danger that someone would come along, of whom you had every reason to be afraid.

And so Micah adds this, and this is not really an addition to people who were there, it just makes it more specific to their understanding, "they shall not

make war anymore,” they will not even learn how to make war anymore that the previous verse covered. So Micah doesn’t add anything, he simply makes more specific what Isaiah even said in the greater part of this fourth verse. But the last verse, the last line of the fourth verse adds another idea. He says, “For the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.” Here is something which is so important, so tremendous to people living in that area in almost any time in its history. It is so critical. A few years ago, that would have seemed very strange to us in America. Things are getting natural, perhaps more like it is now, like it used to be then.

But it seemed very strange to them at that time I’m sure, that there would be none that make him afraid and in order to give us assurance that this is true, he adds the words “for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.” Now this you might say is the distinct idea found in this fourth verse. Does this idea have any parallel in the passage in Isaiah. That’s an interesting question.

Now we look at the next verse, I asked you to compare verses 1 to 5. And you notice that verse five has considerable general similarities. Verse 5 in speaks about walking. About walking in the name of the Lord or walking in the light of the Lord. There’s considerable similarity and I believe these verses go together. Now in the Bible from which I copied this in the section from Isaiah, you will notice that they put a heading separating verses 4 and 5. I think that’s a mistake. I think it goes with what precedes. It is a parallel to the same exact words in Micah. There is much similarity between Isaiah and Micah as we have seen. I think you can consider them as parallel so the way the next verse starts doesn’t make much sense if it is attached to what follows: “Let us walk in the light of the Lord,” “therefore thou has forsaken thy people.” You can assume that there’s a break really after verse 5 and the break certainly should not come after verse 4. We will speak a little bit more about the relationship between the two passages when we place them side by side as we go through the book. I speak in relation to the assignment now.

The second part of the assignment I asked you to compare each section in Isaiah and Micah with the immediately preceding context. Now most of you said that there was quite a similarity or quite a relationship between these verses and the preceding ones. And that's true with almost anything in the prophetic books. The greater part of the prophetic books is made up of rebuke for sin. The next greatest part is blessings to God's people and promise of the wonderful things that God is going to do in the future. Well now these themes are related and these themes are so closely related that we can find some relation between almost anything in the prophetic books and anything anywhere else in the prophetic books. But in one case here it seems to me that there is a very specific relationship, a very close relationship, and if you can see that on the board, you'll notice that in verse 12 of chapter 3 in Micah (the last verse in chapter 3) I have underlined certain words. Those words that I've underlined in green up there are: Zion, Jerusalem, and The Mountain of the House. Now look at the very next verse: i.e., the first verse of the next chapter, chapter 4 of Micah, and you find that in this and in the next verse, these very same places are spoken of again, these same places.

I will call your attention to the 13th verse of chapter 3 "therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field." Terrible punishment will come upon Zion the place where David's palace was. And Jerusalem will become heaps, just piles of rubble. Terrible punishment God is going to bring to Jerusalem "and the mountain of the house," which I think is more literally translated the "temple hill." The Hebrew word "hill" which means mountain, often can mean almost any hill. It might mean a great mountain or a medium sized hill. "The mountain of the house" or the temple hill "will become just like a high place in the forest." Just a place that has nothing in particular to stand out from the surrounding area. This wonderful temple is going to just disappear and there is going to be a place in the wilderness.

But these three specific statements of the terrible things that God is going to allow to happen to Jerusalem are made in Micah and there is no parallel for them

in the corresponding passages in Isaiah. But when you go on to the next verse, in Micah, he immediately says, “it will come to pass that the mountain of the house of the Lord,” or the temple hill, “will be established in the top of the mountain.” The previous verse says “that the mountain of the house will be like a high place of a fort,” now he says that it will be established in the top of a mountain, and the next verse says that “The law will go forth from Zion.” Verse 12 said: “Zion will be plowed as a field.” And here it says “The word of the Lord will go forth from Jerusalem” and the last verse of the previous chapter said that, “Jerusalem will become a heap.”

Now, there’s a relationship then there between the last verse of the third chapter of Micah, and the first two verses of the fourth chapter. There is a full relationship. There’s a relationship between almost any passage in a prophetic book and a preceding or following passage. But here is a very close relationship. Three specific words that you can indicate important places in or about Jerusalem are said to be utterly destroyed and then said to become great world centers. Now that is a relationship between the previous chapter and the following in Micah that is far, far closer than the relationship between the previous chapter and the following one in Isaiah.

And then, of course, in addition to that, Micah brings life smoothly forward. God is going to bring this terrible overflow, but God is going to bring tremendous blessing to these very places previously mentioned, and Micah continues with this theme right straight on a continuous discourse. Whereas in Isaiah he has one chapter, mostly of rebuke for sin, ending and then says “this is the word that the son of Amos saw for Judah and Jerusalem.” It sounds like a heading; it seems a natural place to make a chapter division. In Micah it doesn’t seem like a natural place to make a chapter division. It is just a direct continuation from 3:12 to 4:1, 2. And so I was interested in seeing how many of you would notice that close relationship between the previous chapter and the following

chapter in Micah, a relationship much closer than it is in Isaiah. So I've underlined two places in blue.

Now, the question about chapter 2 verse 1 there, is a very interesting chapter and it's an interesting question. How many chapters of Isaiah have headings that say, "This is the vision that Isaiah saw," "This is the word that God gave to Isaiah." Well, out of 66 chapters, you'll find very, very few cases. Most of the cases where there are headings for specific visions come in connection with the visions about foreign nations between chapters 13 and 22. There are a few there. "The burden of this country, the burden of that country, the burden of the other" that you occasionally find there. Ordinarily you don't find separate headings in Isaiah. You just go straight on and you have to figure out where the break comes.

Now you might think that Isaiah would put a heading at the beginning of his book and he'd put another heading at the middle of the book. Perhaps putting the things from the middle part of his life and in the latter part of his life separate from the first part. But you have no reference of this from Isaiah in the last 27 chapters of the book. His name does not occur there at all. There are very few such headings in the book. Now what a strange thing to have a heading which seems to describe the whole book in Isaiah 1:1 and then you'll have another heading in Isaiah 2, which might just as well describe the whole book as the heading in chapter 1. How strange to have it there. You don't have it in three, you don't have it in four, you don't have it in five. You have it very seldom. You might think somewhere in the middle would be a good place, but he put it right in the beginning of the second chapter. A very strange thing. And I have not come across any commentaries, I may find some in the future, but I have not come across any, that gives what I consider to be the natural explanation of the reason why this particular heading has come here. I believe that the clue to it is found in that last part of the fourth verse of Micah. There he says, "For the mouth of the Lord of Hosts has spoken." In Isaiah 2:1 says, "The words of Isaiah the son of Amoz saw

concerning Judah and Jerusalem.” This term “saw,” frankly, is not the ordinary word for saw, it is the word that is used primarily for the visions that the prophets had. Certainly the meaning of this word is: Here is something that Isaiah received as a revelation from God about the future of Judah and Jerusalem. I do not believe that that is a heading for chapters two to four, or two to twelve as indicated by one commentary. Some may say it's the title of only the second chapter. I don't think it is at all. I think it is a heading to the first five verses of the second chapter. I believe that here Isaiah is saying, "What I'm now going to give you is such a wonderful thing--such a tremendous thing, complete end of violence, complete end of danger of war, Jerusalem will be coming at the very center from which God's word goes out to all the world--it's such a tremendous thing that I am going to assure you that this is a message that I have received from God. And so I believe this is parallel to the latter part of that fourth verse in Micah where he says, "For the mouth of the Lord has spoken." Now the two I think are parallel in idea but Isaiah adds to those things that Micah didn't mention. Micah simply goes right on with what he's been giving and gives you additional material. Isaiah says, "The words that Isaiah saw about Judah and Jerusalem." It is my feeling that in both cases the Lord gave them a vision not in which they saw a word passing along, like they sometimes have in front of the big buildings like a marquee in New York or in other places where you see words passing along the screen. But that he saw a picture. He saw a wonderful picture and he described that picture he saw. And the Holy Spirit, by his inspiration, checked the writer from error. He prevented him from saying anything about the description of the picture in the vision God had given him that was not correct. So we have a statement that is inspired by God and that is free from error. But the statement is not necessarily and entirely a word that God gave the prophet, it is the picture of what God caused the prophet to see. But stated perhaps in the prophet's own words that these words were kept from error as we believe that all the scripture is kept from error. And thus it would seem to be what I described.

Now there are some commentaries that speak of Micah as Isaiah's younger contemporary. Now, Micah wrote only seven chapters while Isaiah wrote sixty-six. But as to which of them was older, I know of no evidence anywhere to tell which one of them was older. Each of them names the kings under whom he wrote and they named the same kings. And we have no way to know which was older and which was younger. But it is my personal guess, and I think it's a very good one, that Isaiah read the words of Micah. And Isaiah is indicating that Micah's words describe the vision God had given him, too. And so when he says "the words that Isaiah saw," he's not saying Micah didn't receive his word from God, he is saying, "I have also received this vision from God. This thing that someone may have read in Micah, the words that he gave, describe pretty well what I thought. There is no reason I should make up new words to describe it. I can use pretty generally the same words he does." Isaiah didn't use exactly the same words, but 19 words out of 20 are identical with the words that Micah used.

There is one interesting difference. In the very first verse of this, Micah says that "nations will enter." No, Micah says, "people shall flow onto it," Isaiah says "all shall flow onto it." He stresses this universality a little more than Micah did. There is a place further on where Micah stresses universality a little bit more than Isaiah did. But to my mind that is a satisfactory explanation of the reasons why we have a new heading at the beginning of chapter 2 of Isaiah. I don't think it's the heading for the whole chapter, but just for the first 5 verses. And the heading should say, "I put my authority in back of this thing, too; God gave me this same vision. It doesn't fit right in with what I've just said like it does with Micah. It's part of Micah's *continued* presentation. But it is a vision I saw which can logically come at this point and I Isaiah am certifying that God has caused me to do this."

You cannot tell which prophet got them from the other, but the fact is that Micah's words fit right in with his previous works that were straight along, while in Isaiah's there's a new start. A new start seems to me to be a strong argument in

the direction of it being originally part of Micah, rather than a part of Isaiah. And if that is the case, then the fact that Isaiah put his name to it gives a reason why he put his name to it. In effect, he says "Yes, you've read this in Micah, I'm not just copying something Micah said. I'm telling you what I also saw, the vision God has also given me."

Well, so much then for a summary of the assignment that I gave you for today, unless you're interested in knowing what I think or what any commentary thinks. I'm interested in your learning how to get into the book and see what's there, and that takes practice, it takes time and effort. And I hope that you will in this course not merely learn what certain chapters of Isaiah mean, but learn a message of getting into the scripture that will enable you in any part of Old and New Testament to go further in your understanding than you would otherwise.

Now in our outline we had reached H at the end of the last hour. Under Roman numeral 1 we had reached H. And I had spoken about the fact that the book of Micah naturally divides into 6 divisions though there are 7 chapters. In the book of Micah, the whole of the first chapter and all but the last two verses of the second chapter of Micah is rebuke to the people for their sins. And then there are 2 verses of marvelous blessing. Then in Micah, there is chapter 3 which is rebuke for sin. But chapter 4, the whole chapter is various aspects of future blessings that God is going to give his people. Then chapter 5 again is largely rebuke for sin, although towards the end of it there is some blessing. And then the last part of Micah is dealing more with Micah's relationship to God and God's blessing to him. Now we're not going through Micah now, I'm just interested in pointing out the similarity of organization between the 7 chapters of Micah and the first six chapters of Isaiah, these six chapters being a definite unit separate from chapters 7 to 12, the latter of which is called the Book of Emmanuel, because they deal with a very specific situation and some very wonderful promises. But these first 6 chapters of Isaiah are similar to Micah, in that the first chapter is very largely rebuke and then you have five verses of future blessings, then you have the rest of

chapter 2 and chapter 3 with mostly rebuke for sin and a declaration of God's punishment that is coming. Then chapter four of Isaiah is mostly future blessings. Chapter 2 of Isaiah, as we know, is similar, almost identical, to chapter four of Micah. Then in Isaiah you have rebuke for sin again to chapter 5 and then you have Isaiah's personal experience of coming to know God more intimately in chapter 6.

The greater part of the prophetic books is thus made up of declarations and rebuke and punishment of sin on the one hand, and the promises of specific blessing that God is going to give in the year or distant future. There are also, of course, circumstances in some of the prophetic books in which God gives specific information in what people should do in specific circumstances. But this is a far smaller part of the prophetic book.

Now for next time, I have a rather short assignment for you. I would like you to jump over to Isaiah chapters 56 and 57. I would like you to look at those two chapters and to indicate which sections of them are rebukes and which sections are blessings. Which sections, that is, deal particularly with the people's sin or with God's punishment of sin and which part deals with God's promises and blessings to the people. Look for that purpose in chapter 56 and 57. And then you might just make a brief summary of their context; that is, you might say verses one through 17 deal with such and such in general, verse 18 deals with something else. Just where are the natural breaks in those two chapters 56 and 57? That's the assignment for next time. I thought this was a logical place to give the assignment after I barely touched on it at the end of the last hour and in light of the similarities of the 1st 6 chapters of Isaiah and the 7 chapters of the book of Micah.

Now we go on to Roman numeral two in the syllabus, which is the first chapter of Isaiah. We have, under this Roman numeral two, capital A: Verse one. Verse one says "The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem" and up to there this statement almost identical to chapter 2. He goes on now mentioning. "In the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and

Hezekiah” I have looked up what I wrote in the Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia as the dates for these kings and I’ll dictate them to you, just for your record but I won’t ask you to memorize them. Uzziah, and this is a pretty good guess reigned from 791 to 740 BC. The Scripture says he reigned 52 years. There’s only 51 between these, but if you count each of them, there’s 52, and of course we have no reason to think he died on the same date of the year in which he became king. Jotham probably reigned from 750 to 732 BC. You notice it overlaps. We read in the book of 2nd Kings how Uzziah sinned against the Lord and God made him a leper. So during the latter years of his reign he lived apart, although he was still king, and Jotham was also king, so there were two kings at that time. So Jotham, then, we have 750-732, Ahaz 736-716 BC. Now according to these figures, Ahaz, Jotham's son, was king four years while his father was also king. Uzziah reigned so long that its probable Jotham was along in years when his father died. And Jotham having been co-king with his father for so long, it would be quite natural for him to follow the practice of making his son king while he was still living. It is a good practice for a king anyway to make his successor king while he is still alive. It prevents an upheaval after his death. Whether this actually was the case we don’t know. We have certain dates we can fix, like parallels to the history of the Assyrian kings, and then in between them we have to try to fit other dates in, but a Professor Thiele, who has spent many years of studying the chronology, has suggested the dates I gave you, and they seem to work pretty well with the evidence we have. Hezekiah then would reign from 716-687 BC.

Now capital B of the outline refer to Isaiah, we go back to chapter 1 verses 2-6. I’ve entitled this "The Lord’s Complaint." Now the division between chapter 1 and chapter 2 is a very definite division. The division between chapter 2 vs. 5 and vs. 6 is a very definite division. These divisions within chapter 1 are less definite. Someone might suggest that they be placed at a different place. But I think this is a fairly logical division. Verses 2-6. “Hear O heaven and give ear O earth, for the Lord has spoken. I have nourished and brought up children and they

have rebelled against me.” A terrible denunciation that God makes of Israel when you think of all Israel did, after all that God did for Israel: bringing them up out of Egypt, and caring for them in the wilderness, protecting them as he did. “I have nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against me.” It is something that is repeated over and over in human history. And it is good for parents to realize that it is something that is easy, that often repeats itself I have heard many times someone say “I don’t know what to do with my son, 19 years of age, 18 years of age. He just won’t pay any attention to what I say, he’s doing everything different from what I think he ought to.” I don’t always say what I think, but what I think is “You had your chance. You had him during his formative years.” A child, say before he is fourteen, is tremendously moldable by his parents, but when he gets in his latter teens, he doesn’t like to be pushed. And you can push him a lot in earlier years, as long as you don’t overdo it. You can push him a lot in earlier years, but when he reaches the age of adolescence, what you’ve done before has a tremendous effect on him, but what you do then is not going to have much effect. The main thing you can do then is to pray for him and show forbearance. But think how the heart of God felt and think of how a parent feels. And think of how God felt after all he had done for Israel. He had nourished and brought up children, and they rebelled against him.

Now, verses 3-6: “The ox knows his owner and the donkey his master’s crib, but Israel does not know, my people do not consider. Oh sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupt, they have forsaken the Lord they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger they have gone away backwards (i.e. from him). Why should you be stricken any more? Will you revolt more and more? The whole head is sick, the whole heart is sick, from the sole of the foot even from the head there is no soundness in it, but wounds, bruises and putrefying sores; they’ve not been clothed nor bound up, neither mollified with ointment.” The Lord's complaint begins this book of Isaiah.

Now in that fifth verse, “Why should you be stricken any more? Will you revolt more and more?” The Hebrew there is an imperfect verb; the imperfect is quite commonly translated as a future as the King James has done here. But the imperfect very often expresses what we might call a "frequentative," i.e., an action that occurs and is repeated rather than something at present or even in the past. It is used to express frequent past action as in Genesis 2 where it says that “a mist will come up and water the earth.” It uses there the imperfect tense though it is talking about things way back in the Garden of Eden. It is referring to something that occurred and occurred and occurred again. And so I think that in verse 5 it might express the idea a little better here if we said “why should you be stricken any more? You revolt more and more; the whole head is sick.” The imperfect tense should be translated as a frequentative, rather than a future.

Now, chapter one verses seven through nine refer to the desolation of the land. Now, these verses are quite different from the verses that preceded it. “Your country is desolate your cities are burned with fire; your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, it is over thrown by strangers. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in the vineyard as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city. Except the Lord of Hope had left a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, we would have been like unto Gomorrah.”

These verses seem to describe a condition that is actually in existence as Isaiah writes. Now, some take this as a prophetic perfect: they take it as a description of something that God is going to bring. Yet I have looked at five of the most recent translations of the Bible, three by evangelicals two by other scholars. And in all five I found they take it just like the King James does, as a present event, a present situation. And that fits for Isaiah wrote these words while Hezekiah was king of Judah and Sennacherib, was king of Assyria, overran the whole land in 701 BC. At that time the whole land was overcome Lachish the second largest city in Judah was taken prisoner. The city was overcome and

demolished; people were carried into captivity, thousands of people were taken off into captivity by Sennacherib and Jerusalem was left alone. You read the history of that in Isaiah chapter 36 and 37. It also is given in Kings and Chronicles. For nearly 3 years the people of Judah suspected that anytime the Assyrian army would come and attack Jerusalem and it, also, would be demolished. But what Isaiah said to them in later chapters in the book: “No, Jerusalem is not going to be taken, God is going to protect this city. As birds fly He will protect Jerusalem. It won’t be by your strength and your power, but by His actions.” And then we read in Kings and Chronicles and in Isaiah how the Lord destroyed great numbers of the Assyrian army. It was probably by a great plague that He did it, and Sennacherib could do nothing but return to his home in Mesopotamia. And this exactly describes this situation, “The country was desolate, strangers were devouring it, and the people from the walls of Jerusalem could see the horrid truth that they were destroying village after village in their presence. The land was desolate, overthrown by strangers, and the Daughter of Zion left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.” Isaiah says, “Except the Lord of Hope, who has left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been like Sodom. We should have been like unto Gomorrah.”

So we have here three verses which were, I believe, dealing with that particular time. I’m inclined to think the first six chapters were gathered together as an introduction to the whole book of Isaiah, representing materials he gave various times through his long life as God’s prophet. This material makes a good introduction to the whole book: i.e., the first six chapters. But chapter 1 reflects the situation of that particular time. Now, let’s go on to fifteen. By the way, this ninth verse is quoted in Romans 9:29. But in the context in Romans, there is not much specific reference to this situation of Isaiah, simply due to the fact that it was only through God’s mercy that any were left. So it fits very well in the context in Romans, but it does not draw on the whole situation, just on this general aspect of it.

Now, capital D chapter 1 verses 10 to 15, “The futility of empty ceremony.” These are verses that can be very applicable in our own day. We have to transpose some of the words of the verses to fit our own day because we do not have the same type of religion at work now that they had then, but the verses are just as applicable when this transposition is made. Look at verses 10 and 11: “Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom! Give ear to the law of God, you people of Gomorrah! To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me? says the Lord, I am full of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beef, and I delight not in the blood of bulls or of lambs or of a few goats.” There is a large school of Old Testament interpretation that thinks of the prophets as being against the temple servants and the priests; that there was a conflict between priests and prophets. And they quote this passage here. But it’s entirely a misunderstanding. Isaiah is not against the sacrificial system. In fact, he promises elsewhere in the book that everything the sacrificial system stands for will continue. He is not against anything that is taught or described in the Scripture, but he is against putting our faith in such matters. He says, “To what purpose are these things? When you come to appear before me, who has required this of your hands to tread my court? Bring no more vain oblation; incense is an abomination to me. The new moons and Sabbath, the callings of assembly, I cannot, away with it, it’s iniquity, even the solemn meetings” (verses 12 and 13). That’s a strange statement. “I cannot away with” it doesn’t make much sense, to take the four words as they stand in the King James. If you make a break in them like I did it makes more sense, “I cannot; away with...” I think perhaps a better interpretation is the way some modern translations take it. They say, “I cannot bear the new moon, the Sabbath, the callings of assembly. Away with the iniquity, even the solemn meetings.” I’m not sure that it’s better, but it carries the idea that they, the listeners, needed.

There’s no punctuation in the Hebrew, in the original Hebrew. The punctuation of the verses was put in many years after the Bible was originally

written. The chapters weren't there originally, the chapters were recent, in the thirteenth century AD. And in the 10th century AD, the Massorettes, a group of Hebrew scribes, put in certain accent marks that show where they thought words and phrases should be merged and where they thought they should be divided. But these merely represent the tradition handed down by word of mouth and it's pretty hard to hand down such tradition as that. Now the vowel marks distinct from the accent marks also represent tradition handed down by word of mouth but it's much easier to preserve the vowels, as you read them over and over through the ages. Much easier to preserve the vowels than to preserve these accent marks. Even so, some scholars say "Forget the vowels, just focus on the consonants and what they imply." But most scholars say that vowels represent a very well-preserved tradition, but not quite as well preserved as the consonants. But the accents, well most of us don't pay much attention to them. Some of them we don't know for sure what they mean anyway. But in your Hebrew Bible, there are a great many of these little accent marks which most Christian scholars simply disregard, except once in a while, when someone has a big argument and wants to debate on the basis of one of them. But when he does, I think he should be consistent and try to interpret them all consistently, but I don't know any Protestant scholar who does that.

Well, back to our theme. This is a very vital idea in our own day. It continues, "Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates. They are trouble to me, I am weary. And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide my eyes from you. Yes, when you make many prayers I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood." This is a criticism of hypocrisy and a criticism of putting your trust in observances, or form or ceremony, or regularity. I know a man who used to teach here in this seminary whose father was a very pious Jew and he could quote from memory all his father's sermons, which included great parts of the Old Testament in Hebrew, but he didn't have any idea what a word of it meant. He didn't know a word of Hebrew to understand its meaning, but he said these words

of form, and some of our Protestant churches are almost exactly like that. And certainly a lot of the Roman Catholic churches are that way. They speak Latin words which the bulk of the people have no idea what they're talking about. Empty forms and ceremonies, they may have much meaning when you understand them, when you put your thoughts on what they stand for. What they stand for that is right. We won't have time to look at "E, F, G," today. That won't take us a long time. Please review the material on Isaiah, on the next chapter, for next time a little bit too because we will spend much more time on the next chapter than on the rest of this chapter.

Edited and read by: Dr. Perry Phillips

Class Edited by Jarin Foster

Chelsea Jones: Outline;

Transcribers: Leah Carlucci, Abby Smith, Julia Mitchell, Abigail Sawyer, Marcel Hejzlavova, Mary Cote, Martha Bartlett, Megan Spurgin, Tyler Gagnon, Jocelyn Rioux, Alice Anderson; [Editor said he did not hear back from Nicole Kabrel]

## Alan MacRae: Isaiah 1-6: Lecture 2 Outline

### 1. Opening comments on the assignment

#### A. Comments on methodology

1. Exam the text yourself before going to commentaries
2. Story of students who knew how to examine the text versus those who only compare commentaries
3. Commentary mistakes being copied from one to the next

#### B. Observations on Micah 4 // Isaiah 2 comparison

Isaiah 2:2 almost identical to Micah 4:1

In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. (Isa. 2:2)

In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and peoples will stream to it. (Mic. 4:1)

Isaiah 2:3: Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Micah 4:2: Many nations will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Isaiah 2:4: He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they

train for war anymore.

Micah 4:3: He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.

Isa. 2:5 Come, O house of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the LORD.

Micah 4:4: Every man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the LORD Almighty has spoken.

Illustration of traveling safely with Dr. W.F. Albright in Palestine, hospitality customs in 1929.

C. Micah 4 and its relationship with the end of Micah 3

Micah 3:12 Therefore because of you, *Zion* will be plowed like a field, *Jerusalem* will become a heap of rubble, the *temple hill a mount* overgrown with thickets.

Micah 4:1f: mountain of the LORD's temple...law out of Zion and word of the LORD from Jerusalem...

Micah 3:12, destruction of Jerusalem, not found in Isaiah parallel

D. Isaiah 2:1 "This is what Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem." Title comments

1) This is a title and hence a good break between Isaiah 1 and 2 with no parallel in Micah where 3:12 and 4:1, 2 flow continuously.

2) How many chapters in Isaiah have a heading like Isa. 2:1?

very few, usually only for specific visions (cf. chs. 13-22)

3) Normally you have to figure out where the break comes yourself

- 4) Heading in Isaiah 1 and then again in chapter 2 yet rarely elsewhere and never in the last 27 chapters (Isa. 40-66).
- 5) Reason may be found in relation to Micah 4.
- a. Isa. 2:1 "The words of Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jeruslaem."  
Word for saw = prophetic vision.
  - b. Is it the title for all of chapter 2?
  - c. Title is for Isa. 2:1-5. Micah relationship, Isaiah saying he too had the same vision as Micah.
  - d. Difference Micah says "peoples will enter" where Isaiah more universal "all nations will stream to it"
  - e. Isaiah saying he is putting his authority behind it as he too saw the same thing.
  - f. Seems like Micah first because he fits it right in with what he was saying in ch. 3 so Isaiah gives a title saying I'm not just copying Micah I also had the same vision...

#### H. Micah 1-7 and Isaiah 1-6 comparison

1. Micah 7 chapters really 6 divisions
  - chs. 1-2 Rebuke people for their sins
  - Ch. 2 few verses of marvelous blessing
  - Ch. 3 Rebuke for sin
  - Ch. 4 Aspects of future blessing
  - Ch. 5 Rebuke for sin
  - Ch. 6-7 Micah's relationship to God
2. Isaiah 1-6
  - Ch. 1 Rebuke for sin
  - Ch. 2 few verses of marvelous blessing
  - Chs. 2-3 Rebuke for sin and coming punishment
  - Ch. 4 Future blessing

Ch. 5 Rebuke for sin

Ch. 6 Isaiah's experience of God

3. General prophetic message: rebuke and punishment of sin, promise and comfort of future blessing

Assignment for next time:

- 1) Isaiah 56-57 note sections on rebuke and punishment for sin and sections where God promises blessing to his people

## II. Isaiah chapter 1

### A. Verse 1:

"The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem."

1. Almost exactly the same as we saw in chapter 2:1

"In the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah"

2. Uzziah 791-740 BC reigned 52 years, sinned and got leprosy
3. Jotham 750-732 co-reigned with his father
4. Ahaz 736-716 co-reigned with his father, co-regency made for more stable transition
5. Hezekiah 716-687 BC

### B. Verses 2-6: The LORD's Complaint

1. "Hear O heaven and give ear O earth, for the Lord has spoken. I have nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against me."
2. Terrible denunciation that God makes against Israel especially for all God had done from them in bringing them out of Egypt and care for them in the wilderness
3. Parent raising child who rebels... God feels that heartbreak
4. Verses 3-6 The LORD's complaint:

"The ox knows his owner and the donkey his master's crib, but Isaiah does not know, my people do not consider. Oh sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupt, they have forsaken the LORD they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger they have gone away backwards. Why should you be stricken any more? Will you revolt more and more? The whole head is sick, the whole heart is sick, from the sole of the foot even from the head there is no soundness in it, but wounds, bruises and putrefying sores; they've not been clothed nor bound up, neither mollified with ointment."

5. Verse 5 "Why should you be stricken any more?"

a) Hebrew Imperfect verse tense: frequentative=action that occurs repeatedly and not future as some take it

#### C. Verses 7-9

1. Desolation of the land

"Your country is desolate your cities are burned with fire; you land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, it is overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in the vineyard as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city. Except the Lord of Hope had left a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, we would have been like unto Gomorrah. "

2. These seem to described the actual historical situation.

3. Perfect tense verbs are used: not prophetic perfects but actual

4. Hezekiah facing Sennacherib king of Assyria 701 BC.

5. Sennacherib had captured Lachish the second largest city of Judah. Now Jerusalem is worried they were next. See chs. 36-37 and Kings and Chronicles for the background

6. Lord destroyed the army of Sennacherib with a plague saving Jerusalem

7. So these verses deal with a particular time.
8. Chapters 1-6 gathered as an introduction to the book of Isaiah, but chapter 1 reflects the situation of a particular time.
9. Verse 9 quoted in Rom. 9:29--only through God's mercy a remnant left.

D. Isaiah 1:10-15: The futility of empty ceremony

1. Verses 10-11: "Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom! Give ear to the law of God, you people of Gomorrah! To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me? says the Lord, I am full of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beef, and I delight not in the blood of bulls or of lambs or of a few goats."
2. School of thought: suggests there was a conflict between the prophets and priests--this is a complete misunderstanding
3. Isaiah not against sacrificial system but against putting our faith in such matters
4. Verses 12-13 "I cannot away with" in King James version doesn't make much sense. Better: "I cannot bear the new moon.."
5. There's no punctuation in the Hebrew. The chapter divisions were added in the 13th century AD. The Massoretes in the 10th century added a series of accents indicating how they thought the text was divided. Vowels represent a long established tradition and shouldn't be simply discarded
6. "Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates. They are trouble to me, I am weary. And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide my eyes from you. Yes, when you make many prayers I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood."
  - a. This criticism is of hypocrisy of putting one's trust in form and ceremony.

b. Many churches recite empty liturgies from memory that  
mean next to nothing  
Don't have time for E, F, G, today...