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Isaiah Overview (Part 2)



Bible Book Overviews - Steve Gregg

In this overview, Steve Gregg discusses the authorship and themes of the Book of Isaiah, as well as some controversies surrounding it. While some scholars debate whether Isaiah wrote the entire book, the Dead Sea Scrolls and New Testament suggest otherwise. He also touches on the significance of the Babylonian exile, the location of Mount Sinai, and the use of different biblical texts. Gregg encourages readers to study the Word and understand it in the context of Jesus' teachings.

Transcript

What we're going to talk about now won't be equally of interest to everybody. It's only interesting to people who are perhaps interested in defending the authorship of the Book of Isaiah. Now you might say, why would that matter to me? Well, recently I've been reading a lot of books about the Bible.

Remember I said, for example, that Isaiah prophesied the activities of King Cyrus 200 years before the guy was born? Unless, of course, Isaiah didn't. If he didn't write the last 27 chapters where that prophecy is found, then Isaiah didn't predict that. And maybe it was written by some anonymous person later on whose name has never been preserved for us.

And it's not really miraculous at all. It's just somebody living in the time that science wrote about it. That's at least what liberals would say.

And of course that's the only thing they can say and retain their own bias against the supernatural. Now, I personally think that the prediction of what Cyrus would do is one of the more striking cases in the Bible. Of prophets being amazingly able to tell future things a long time before they happen.

Of course, virtually all the prophets make predictions about Christ. And no one could reasonably say they made those in the time of Christ or later. Because, of course, the Old Testament was complete and in use by the Jewish community before Jesus was born.

But still, Cyrus, that's a pretty big one. But you can get rid of that one from your

apologetics toolkit if Isaiah didn't write those chapters. And frankly, if Isaiah didn't write them, Jesus was wrong because he said Isaiah did.

That's kind of an important thing too. So let's just look into this. I gave you some of the reasons why people have for a very long time suggested Isaiah did not write the second segment of the book after chapter 39.

And those reasons included the fact that there was the provenance of the section was the Babylonian venue. The people are in Babylon as slaves and God releases them through Cyrus and so forth. We know that these things actually did happen, but they were a long time after Isaiah's own death.

And the assumption that there is no such thing as genuine supernatural prediction inspired by God would be the main reason for saying, well, Isaiah couldn't write such things because they're too exact, too accurate, and too far in advance of his... He lived too far in advance of those events. The other thing, as I said, is that there's no actual reference to Isaiah by name in these latter chapters, which leaves open perhaps a possibility that they could have been written by somebody else. At least internally, they don't claim that it was Isaiah.

And therefore, if you say, well, I don't think it was Isaiah, you're not necessarily going against what it says. You're just assuming that what has happened is that Isaiah did write some chapters, probably the first 39. And then someone else much later wrote 27 more chapters and no one knows who wrote them.

But they accidentally somehow in the process of preserving the documents got wedded together with the 39 chapters that Isaiah wrote. And ever after were referred to as the works of Isaiah. But Isaiah didn't really write the last 27 chapters.

That's what the liberal position is. I want to say there's some excellent reasons to deny that. In the notes I've given you, sort of a history of how this denial came about.

As early as 110 AD, which is just after the time of the apostles, there was a rabbi named Moses ben Samuel ibn Geketillah, who said that chapters 1 through 39 were written in the time of Hezekiah, therefore probably by Isaiah himself. But that chapters 40 through 66 were written sometime during the second temple period, which would be after Cyrus. And therefore this particular Jewish writer, though he's writing about their own scriptures, is basically debunking the idea that the last 27 chapters were written by Isaiah.

J.B. Copp in 1780 questioned Isaiah's authorship of chapter 50. Now chapter 50 is a prophecy about the doom of Babylon. So obviously Isaiah didn't live at a time when Babylon was even significant to even prophesy about its doom.

And so one scholar in 1789, or 1780, excuse me, questioned whether Isaiah actually

wrote that one chapter. But a few years later, 1789, Doberlein, or Doderlein, excuse me, denied that Isaiah wrote chapters 40 through 66. And other people began to follow that.

So this idea that Isaiah did not write those chapters kind of originated among Western scholarship in 1789, which has been a long time ago now. In the 1800s, scholars of the Old Testament were divided between the idea that Isaiah 40 through 66 was written by some later writer on the one hand, and scholars who have the view that Isaiah wrote the whole book, which is the more conservative view. So liberal scholarship in the 1800s, which is when liberal scholarship really flourished, made a lot of converts to the idea that Isaiah did not write the latter part of the book.

In 1892, at the end of that period, Bernard Duhme believed in a second Isaiah who wrote chapters 40 through 55, and thought there was a Trito Isaiah, a third Isaiah, who wrote chapters 56 through 66. And since that time, other scholars have kind of divided it up and chopped it up and said, well, maybe chapter 13, which also talks about the fall of Babylon, maybe that was written by a later Isaiah too. And so you've got more Isaiahs than you can shake a stick at.

And you need only one. You only need the one who wrote it to account for the whole book, as long as you're not biased against supernatural phenomena. But in the age of rationalism, where miracles and supernatural things are thought not to occur, this is the dilemma that scholars get themselves into.

They've got to find some way to argue away all the evidence for inspiration. And none of them can really come to a point they all agree on. So then, liberal critics have sought to attribute other passages, since then I mentioned chapter 13, to additional Isaiahs.

And I mentioned earlier what their arguments are, which we've covered and we won't look at right now. Now, what about the traditional biblical opinion, that Isaiah wrote the whole book? This is pretty important if you're trying to basically defend Jesus, since Jesus thought Isaiah wrote the whole book. And also the apostles believed it.

And traditionally the Jews did too. I mentioned a Jew who had a different opinion about it back in 110 AD, but he was not representing the consensus of Jewish scholarship at the time. About 200 years before Christ, there was a book written called Ecclesiasticus.

Now, it's not the same as our book of Ecclesiastes. Ecclesiastes was written by Solomon. Ecclesiasticus was, well, no one knows who wrote it, but I think it was Ben Sirach.

The Wisdom of Ben Sirach is, I think, another name for this book. And there's a section of this book that says that the second section of Isaiah was written by the same author as the first section. So, Jewish opinion expressed in this book was that Isaiah wrote the whole book of Isaiah, and it's expressed 200 years before the time of Christ.

Now, the Dead Sea Scrolls, which were probably written at the beginning of the first

century, there's an interesting find, because they were found in the 1940s, at a time when most modern scholarship had assumed that Isaiah did not write the whole book, and that the writer of the first 39 chapters was someone different than the writer of the last 27 chapters. So, when the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, and they discovered that this was going to contain very early manuscripts of the Old Testament, including Isaiah, there's an Isaiah scroll as the complete book of Isaiah, as the scholars were examining the Dead Sea Scrolls version of Isaiah, they realized that if these two books had not originally been one book, perhaps that would show up in this early manuscript. Maybe they'd be treated as separate books.

But what they found was that chapter 39 in the Dead Sea Scrolls ended at the bottom of a page where there's only room for one more line. And it was very natural, would have been very natural to start chapter 40 at the top of the next page. Instead, they started chapter 40 immediately after 39 and continued on to the next page, which means that whoever wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls did not apparently have any idea that some people would think that these are two different books.

If they wanted to treat them as two different books, they would have at least started chapter 40 at the top of the next page, since there was only one line below the bottom of chapter 39 available. But they used it as if they had no concept of these being two books. Now, more important than any of that, what those details tell us is that the Jewish people believed that Isaiah wrote the book.

But what did Jesus and the apostles believe? Well, the New Testament quotes Isaiah by name 20 times, and even more times without mentioning his name. That is, the name Isaiah attached to a quotation from Isaiah is found 20 times in the New Testament. But there's more quotes from Isaiah in the New Testament than that, where they don't particularly mention his name.

So Isaiah is quoted a great deal in the New Testament. But what's interesting is Matthew, for example, quotes Isaiah six times by name. And three of the times that he quotes are from the first segment, the first 39 chapters.

And three of them are from the last 27 chapters, which means that Matthew didn't have any idea that one of these was not written by Isaiah. He quoted from both sections equally and referred to Isaiah as the author in every case. So the New Testament confirms that, unless the New Testament writers were not to be trusted, that Isaiah did write the whole book.

John chapter 12 is an interesting case because we have two quotes from Isaiah, both of them mentioning Isaiah by name, and one of them from the first segment and one from the second segment of Isaiah. In John 12, verse 38 through 41, it says that the word of Isaiah, the prophet, might be fulfilled, which he spoke, Lord, who has believed our report and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore, they could not believe

because Isaiah said again, he has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart. Lest they should see with their eyes, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn so that I should heal them.

Now, he quotes Isaiah 53, one, which obviously is in the second section of Isaiah. And he quotes Isaiah chapter 6, which clearly is in the first section. Both times it says Isaiah said and Isaiah said again.

So again, the New Testament writers were quite convinced that the whole book of Isaiah was written by Isaiah. They didn't have any, they didn't see any of these arguments that modern scholars use against it. They didn't see them as having any relevance at all because it's clear the New Testament writers had no problem with the phenomenon of real prophecy.

That God really could inspire a man living in the time of Hezekiah to prophesy specifically as it would happen in the time of the end of the Babylonian exile, much later than his time. But that's a given to people who believe in the inspiration of Scripture. But obviously, the understanding of the New Testament writers was much more like that of conservative Christian scholars than it was like that of the liberal Christian scholars.

Now, there's a lot of internal evidence besides this fact that the New Testament writers think this. There's a lot of reasons to think they were right. There are 25 words or word forms that are found only in Isaiah and nowhere else in the Bible, but they're found in both sections of Isaiah.

In other words, they are unique, what we might call, Isaianic words found in no other writer in the Old Testament than Isaiah, and both sections of Isaiah use these words. That's significant. A term for God, and there are many terms for God in the Old Testament, but the term, the Holy One of Israel, is largely an Isaianic passage.

Not entirely, but for the most part. It is found 12 times in the first 39 chapters. It is found 14 times in the last 27 chapters, and elsewhere in the Old Testament, it's only found 5 times.

God is not generally called the Holy One of Israel in the Old Testament, except in Isaiah. Five times outside of Isaiah, so it's not like Isaiah was the only person who used the expression, but in the whole 38 chapters, I mean 38 books of the Old Testament that are not Isaiah, there's only 5 times. In Isaiah, the first section, 12 times.

The second section, 14 times. Very clearly an Isaianic expression, more than any other writer that we know of. Also, there's certain themes, recurring themes in Isaiah, which are found in both segments, as if they're written by the same author.

Now, if you listen to my lecture series called Topical Isaiah, at the website, you'll find that there's dozens of motifs that recur over and over again in Isaiah. I mentioned earlier

that of a sick man needing healing. It comes up in chapter 1, the nation is sick.

As you go through the book of Isaiah, many references to this condition as needing a healer, needing a physician, and so forth. And then finally, we find the Messiah is the physician. He has been anointed to bind them up.

He is the one through whose stripes we are healed. And this idea is one of these, what I call, motifs that Isaiah, it's a thread that runs through the book. There are several others.

A very common one that's found is the idea of unquenchable fire as a reference to God's judgment. And although we think of unquenchable fire as referring to hell, in these passages, it's not talking about hell. It's talking about God's judgment on the nation through invaders.

By the way, Jeremiah does use that expression too. But Isaiah uses it repeatedly, and it's in both segments of the book. The sickness of the nation I mentioned is in both segments of the book.

The idea of all the nations flowing into the holy mountain of Jerusalem, an Isaac idea that comes up in chapter 2 initially, and it recurs elsewhere. It's found in both sections of the book. The idea of God's highway.

Now, as you read through Isaiah, you'll find many references to the highway. In chapter 35, it's called the highway of holiness. But there are quite a few references in different chapters to this highway that God would make.

And on the surface, it sounds like it's talking about a reference to God making a way for Israel or Judah to come back from the Babylonian exile to Israel. They're coming back to Mount Zion. There's a highway to Zion.

But the highway is spiritualized in the latter part of Isaiah so that it refers to John the Baptist making a highway in the wilderness to prepare the way for our God, the voice of one crowned with thorns, to create a highway. Now, this highway image is found from very early on, as early as chapter 11, and it's found all the way through the book repeatedly. What I'm saying is there are some themes introduced in the first part of the book that continue without a break through the end of the book, which suggests a unity of the two sections of the book rather than being separate compositions.

There is also the idea of the wolf and the lamb lying down together, and the lion eating straw like an ox. By the way, from time to time, I hear either good emails or good callers on the air from people telling me that this has changed. Have you ever heard that theory, what they call the Mandela effect? It's a kooky conspiracy demonic theory.

The idea is somehow some technology of man has tapped into hell and released a bunch of demons, and they are doing some very strange things in the world, including changing

some of the words in the King James Version of the Bible. And not new copies, but old copies. They say that the copy of the King James Version that you've had on your shelf for 50 years has magically changed.

And the proof they give, the primary proof they give, is that it used to say the lion shall lie down with the lamb. But now if you look in your King James Version, it says the wolf will lie down with the lamb. So obviously something demonic has happened to change the King James Version of the Bible.

Well, the truth is the King James Version never said the lion will lay down with the lamb. It's a popular Christmas image from Christmas cards. And it is certainly a colloquialism that has passed into Christian speech of the ultimate peaceable situation, the lion and the lamb lying down together.

But there's no reference in the Bible, and never was, to the lion laying down with the lamb. It always said, and I know because I read it when I was a kid too, and I remember what it said. It always said the wolf shall lie down with the lamb.

The point is it hasn't changed, but it's just a crazy, kooky conspiracy theory. And I just bring this up because Isaiah has that imagery twice. Once in chapter 11, and it's repeated in chapter 65.

Chapter 11 is obviously in the first 39 chapters, and chapter 65 is in the latter section of the book. So it's a repeated motif in Isaiah in both sections. And then of course there's another really important repeated thing, and that is the idea of God raising up a banner to the nations.

It first comes up in chapter 11, and Paul quotes it. Paul quotes chapter 11 in Romans, and talks about how God predicted the Gentiles would come to Christ. And he quotes this passage about the Lord shall raise up a banner for the Gentiles, and they will rally around it, and so forth.

So Isaiah 11 is seen by Paul as a reference to Gentiles coming to Christ. But this banner idea, God raising up a banner to draw the Gentiles to himself, is a recurring theme through the whole book of Isaiah. And again, it's in both sections.

In addition to chapter 11, you find it after the break. You find it in chapter 49, you find it in chapter 62, and other places. So the point here is there's a lot of these kinds of themes.

As I said in my series called Topical Isaiah, I don't know how many I identify, probably a couple dozen themes that run like threads through the book of Isaiah. And you don't see any change as you pass from chapter 39 into chapter 40, and the chapters that follow. You don't find the discontinuation of any of these themes.

It's as if one author, with one way of expressing himself in these favorite motifs, has written the whole book. And certainly there's every reason to believe that he did. Now, what's interesting too, is that even though it's talking about the Babylonian exile, it's not speaking from the Babylonian exile.

The writer is not a later writer who was in Babylon and saw Cyrus, Conrad, and so forth, and wrote 27 chapters. Rather, it's written by somebody who's not in Babylon about the Babylonian exile. And Isaiah, of course, was not in Babylon.

And we can see that, for example, in chapter 43, in verse 14. This is in the second segment, where it says, Send to Babylon this message. To Babylon? If the writer's in Babylon, the message should be sent from Babylon, or in Babylon.

But he's not in Babylon. He's sending a message to Babylon, is the idea. Cyrus also said, in chapter 46, verse 11, Cyrus is said to come from the east.

Well, Persia was not necessarily the east, compared to Babylon, but it was east of Israel. From the standpoint of the author in Israel, Persia was east. And Cyrus was a man of the east, but would not be thought so from the viewpoint of someone in Babylon.

Also, when it talks about, in chapter 52, verse 11, speaking about what comes from Babylon, let me read this for the context here. Isaiah 52, verse 11. It says, Depart, depart, go out from there.

Touch no unclean thing. Now, in the context, it's talking about telling the exiles to leave Babylon. The author, from wherever he's standing, says, go out from there.

He's not there. He wouldn't say, go out from here. If he is writing from Babylon, if he's in Babylon, telling exiles to leave Babylon, go out from here.

That is, here where I'm standing, writing, here in Babylon. But he's not in Babylon. He's calling out to people who are in Babylon, to go out from there.

That is, to come back to Israel. So, obviously, the frame of reference of the writer is of one who is himself not in Babylon. Now, one of the best arguments, frankly, that Isaiah chapters 40 through 66 were not written by some anonymous, unknown Jewish writer and accidentally attached to Isaiah, is because they are some of the very most eloquent, most poetic, most beautiful, most lofty predictions and prophecies in the entire Bible.

And the idea that whoever wrote the best prophecies in the Bible, that no one would remember who he was. When we've got really insignificant people like Obadiah, who wrote one chapter against the Edomites, we don't forget, his name was remembered, you know. The minor prophets were not forgotten, and they didn't write such magnificent prophecies, as are found in the last 27 chapters of Isaiah.

The idea that the Jews would somehow retain the book, but not remember who wrote it, the last 27 chapters, is very unthinkable, in view of the fact that they kept track of the authorship of their prophets, even some that were very insignificant. Whoever wrote those last 27 chapters would be anything but insignificant. He would be equal to, if not superior, to Isaiah himself.

Of course, the idea that it is Isaiah is the best theory, and certainly the most natural, and obviously the one the New Testament writers believe. Now, I'm not going to keep you much longer. I just want to point this out to you, and some of you may have heard this before.

You might have even heard it from me, or you might have heard it somewhere else, because I'm certainly not the only one who brings it up. Some people have suggested that the book of Isaiah is a microcosm of the Bible itself. Now, there's no particular virtue in believing this, or not believing it.

If you find this unpersuasive, no problem. You're under no moral obligation to see it this way. This is just an observation that has been made that I find very interesting.

And that is that Isaiah, indisputably, has two major sections. The first is 39 chapters. The second is 27 chapters.

The total number is 66. This is also, of course, the number of books in the Bible. The Bible has 66 books.

The Old Testament has 39 books. The New Testament has 27. Which is maybe just a coincidence, but rather interesting, because the first 39 chapters of Isaiah are sometimes called by scholars the book of judgment.

39 chapters in Isaiah, 39 books in the Old Testament about the judgment of God. The latter 27 chapters of Isaiah are usually, almost universally by scholars, referred to as the book of comfort. Because, as I say, the first words in that section are comfort, comfort ye my people.

So, it's called the book of comfort. And it's largely the book that has the most in it about the Messiah. And so you've got the 27 chapters, so do we have 27 books in the New Testament.

Now, I already made the observation that the New Testament begins with the prophecy of John the Baptist, and ends with the prophecy of the new heaven's new earth. Isaiah 40 begins with the prophecy of John the Baptist. Isaiah 65-66, the prophecy of the new heaven's new earth.

And again, the central chapter in the latter 27 is chapter 53, which is about the Messiah. Which, it's very tempting to see the 27 chapters at the end of Isaiah as being a little

corresponding section that corresponds to the entire New Testament. Now, what would be really cool is if I go through all 27 chapters and see how each one parallels one of the 27 books of the New Testament.

Can't be done, sorry. It won't work. So, as I say, this is not anything that's a canonical necessity for you to believe.

It's not an article of faith to see Isaiah as a sort of a microcosm of the whole Bible. But, it is amazingly coincidental, it would seem. And especially in view of the fact that Isaiah did not divide his book into chapters.

That was done much later, but not by somebody trying to make it correspond to the Bible. The chapters are divided into quite natural divisions. Where probably most people would, if they were taking a book like Isaiah and breaking it into individual chapters, they'd probably put the chapter divisions pretty much in the same places.

So, it's not arbitrary, the places where the chapters are. And so you still have the fact that there seem to be 39 separate chapters in the first segment and 27 in the latter. But what's also interesting is in Isaiah's day, when he wrote it, there was not a complete canon of the Old Testament.

And none of the books of the New Testament had been written yet. So, there's no way that an author in Isaiah's day would have put together his book in order to deliberately mimic the canons of the Old and New Testament, respectively. Because, frankly, there was no Old Testament canon yet.

Most of the books, maybe not most, but a great number of the books of the Old Testament were not written yet in Isaiah's day. Most of the prophets were not. And, of course, none of the New Testament.

So, this is either just a huge coincidence, and that is certainly something a person would be welcome to believe, or else it is another mark of divine intervention in the writing of the book of Isaiah. That God kind of subtly made the book a microcosm of what would eventually be the whole Bible much later than Isaiah's own time. And that would make it another kind of prediction, in a way, a prediction of the canon of Scripture.

Now, once again, that's a big if. The other possibility, and the only other possibility, is it's a huge coincidence. But there are huge coincidences.

This isn't as possible, but I think it's less likely that it's a coincidence, given the fact that there's so many marks of divine inspiration in the book of Isaiah. It seems more likely to me that this, too, is a mark of God's design of the book. Now, before we dismiss, are there questions about the book of Isaiah or anything in it that you have? Ron? Okay, there are many burdens against many nations here in the book of Isaiah.

One of them is Babylon in the first section. And then I pointed out here something I've never seen before, that Babylon is primarily the only nation mentioned from chapter 40 on. And when we read that section, that historical section in 36 through 39, describing what's happened with Hezekiah, the last couple of verses in 39 point out to the fact that the emissaries had come from Babylon and, of course, Hezekiah had shown them everything he had, and then the prophet Isaiah was sent to him to point out that that was a mistake he made, of course, and that Babylon would come and basically conquer them.

So is Babylon the primary enemy of - I know they had many enemies, but does Babylon become the primary enemy of Israel? Is that what's being perhaps indicated? Babylon is definitely the most significant enemy of Israel in their national history, until Rome. Of course, we could say Rome brought an end to Israel's national history, and Egypt was there at the beginning. But during the hundreds of years between the escape from Egypt and the fall to the Romans, Babylon's the only nation that succeeded in destroying Israel, burning down the temple, taking them into captivity, and so forth, and therefore triggering a second exodus through Cyrus.

You know, sure, the Edomites, sometimes they attacked them, the Moabites, sometimes did, the Syrians, sometimes the Philistines in David's time, certainly. There were a lot of nations that pestered or did serious harm to the Israelites, but no nation except Babylon destroyed their nation completely and removed them from the face of the earth, and then God restored them from scratch. So, yeah, Babylon was definitely the most significant enemy in all of Israel's history, and certainly justifies a whole section of Isaiah 2 discussing that period, and chapters 13 and 14 also discuss the fall of Babylon.

Which, by the way, is where you find the proselyte Lucifer, too, who is described as the king of Babylon. Okay, any other questions? Yes? How many people left Egypt? The census that was taken when they came out of Egypt was 603,000 men over 20. So the assumption is there would be a significant number of women, probably equal, and then children under 20, both men and females and males.

So there's a good chance there were 2 million to 3 million people. We don't ever have the total number of people because the women and children are not in the census, but judging from the demographics of an ordinary population, if there's 600,000 men, there's going to be a similar number of women. And that brings up to 1.2 million.

And then if you have an equal number of children to adults, then you've got another 1.2, you've got 2.4, 2.5 million people, and there may be more children than adults. So who knows? I mean, it could have been 3 million. Many times Bible teachers refer to the number as 3 million, but no one knows the exact number.

But certainly 3 million is not an unrealistic estimate. To be less than 2 million would be almost impossible. Have to be at least 2 million, I think.

So Steve, I always wonder, such a tremendous exodus of people went through a small region. Have archaeologists found any remnants of this huge company of people passing through Sinai Peninsula? Not where they've looked. There's good reason to believe they've been looking in the wrong place.

The traditional route of the exodus, which you'll find if you look on a map in the back of your Bible, it'll have a little dotted line, the traditional route of the exodus. They placed Mount Sinai smack dab in the middle of the Sinai Peninsula. Now you might say, well, it only follows that Sinai would be in the Sinai Peninsula, but Mount Sinai was named before the peninsula was named.

The Sinai Peninsula, which is a triangular piece of land between Egypt and Arabia, and has fingers of the Red Sea on either side of this triangular thing. And then you've got the Gulf of Aqaba and the Gulf of Suez, whichever one is that one. But this peninsula has traditionally been called the Sinai Peninsula because the traditional site of Mount Sinai is in that peninsula.

Now that traditional site of Mount Sinai was identified by a revelation given to Constantine's mother, which means there's no particular reason to believe it. And in my opinion, I don't believe most of the sacred sites that were identified by revelation to Constantine's mother. A lot of the so-called sacred sites in the Holy Land were identified by her receiving revelations, allegedly.

But in Galatians chapter 4, Paul says that Mount Sinai is in Arabia. He very specifically says Mount Sinai is in Arabia. Now Arabia is not in the Sinai Peninsula.

In fact, the Sinai Peninsula was part of Egypt in the days of Moses. So if they escaped from Egypt, they didn't wander around for 40 years in the Sinai Peninsula, which is the traditional idea. Arabia is further east.

You have to get off of the Sinai Peninsula, cross another little, I think it's the Gulf of Aqaba, and you cross over into Arabia. And that's now Saudi Arabia. In Moses' day, that was called Midian.

Now you might remember when Moses fled from Pharaoh. He fled to Midian. He didn't stay in the Sinai Peninsula, which would be part of Egypt.

He left Egypt, went to Midian, and he married a daughter of the priest of Midian. Jethro was the priest and Zipporah was the woman. Now Moses spent 40 years in Midian tending Jethro's sheep.

And it was one day while he was tending those sheep that he met God on Mount Sinai in the burning bush. So where's Mount Sinai? In the middle of the Sinai Peninsula, hundreds of miles from Midian? Why would a shepherd take his sheep across the Red Sea into the Sinai Peninsula, hundreds of miles from home, and run into God on Mount Sinai in this

very distant location? Paul said Mount Sinai is in Arabia, which is Midian. So we should be looking for Mount Sinai in another body of land altogether.

Now it's true archaeologists have not found what they regard to be evidence in the Sinai Peninsula of three million people wandering around there for 40 years. That's true. I think they're looking in the wrong place.

There have been Jewish artifacts found in Midian. There's actually Jebel al-Lawz is the name of a mountain. There's three sites that are thought to be Sinai.

One of them is in Arabia, and it's the one that actually has some credibility. It's a mountain that seems burnt on top. There was fire, after all, on the mountain.

And there are remains of encampments at the foot of the mountain that have certain Jewish symbols and things like that etched there on stones, which makes it seem like very probably it's the right spot to be looking. Now remember, they got there within a month after the Exodus. They got to Mount Sinai, and they stayed there for a year.

And then they wandered around in locations that are named for us in the Book of Numbers, most of which have never been identified by modern scholars. They don't know where these towns were. They had names in Moses' day, and perhaps for a long time after, but those names have been lost to us now.

People are looking for them in the Sinai Peninsula. They should be looking over in Arabia. And so it's true.

I mean, some of you are going, well, we can't find any evidence. There are three million people moving for 40 years around in this area. Where's their dead bodies and all that stuff? Well, I don't know where their dead bodies are.

There were, after all, jackals and vultures and things like that that could have dismembered them and carried off their bones various places. They didn't all die at one time. They died gradually over a period of 40 years, and who knows what became of them.

I don't know, but you may be looking entirely in the wrong place. I will say this, that apart from their bones, there would probably not be very much hard cultural artifacts left behind. They didn't build houses.

They didn't pave roads. They lived in tents. They probably had some pottery and some hard objects like that, which they probably, since they're on the move and couldn't replace them, probably took care of them and carried them with them.

And who knows what became of them. I don't know. It's possible if the search were to be conducted closer to where they actually were, that there might be some artifacts more

found.

But you're right. There is no evidence in the traditional site of their wandering for them having been there. Yes, sir.

Okay. Is it possible, you know, when Paul wrote that Mount Sinai is in Arabia, at that time when Paul was living, he went into Arabia at that, you know, after being in Damascus, he went down to Arabia, and there was a king there named Aretas, I think in 2 Corinthians 11.32, that basically he got in trouble down there in Arabia and went back up to Damascus. And then somehow Damascus was under the rulership of this king that was allowed by the Roman Empire to have his own kingdom down there to the southeast of Israel.

Do we know if the Sinai Peninsula or part of the Sinai Peninsula might have belonged to that king? And that was why Paul was calling it Arabia, perhaps? I'm just speculating that even though... I don't have enough expertise to know if Aretas' domain extended into the Sinai Peninsula or not. Yeah, because he did have influence with them in Damascus because... What you're saying is that if the domain of Aretas, who was ruling over Arabia, if his domain extended into what we now call the Sinai Peninsula, it might... anecdotally be referred to as Arabia. Yeah, Paul might have been correct in saying that it was in Arabia.

Mount Sinai could have been there then. Because he was speaking in contemporary terms to the people who would know where... I mean, I can't say that it's possible or impossible because I don't know what the extent of his reign was. One more question here.

You talk about the... But I will say this, though. I will say this, though. Okay.

Midian was never part of the Sinai Peninsula. And Midian is where Moses tended the sheep of Jethro and ran into the burning bush on Mount Sinai. So, that was... Midian was never part of the Sinai Peninsula.

Yeah, yeah. He was. He was separate.

As far as the... I've heard this before about the 66 books, like this microcosm of the whole Bible. But it's interesting that that scroll of Isaiah that they found in the Dead Sea Scrolls was one continuous scroll 24 feet long. And the chapters and the verses of the Bibles were not really done until, I think it was 1227 A.D. by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Stephen Langdon or something like that.

He's the one that first divided everything up. So, it just seems that it would be very providential maybe that God had allowed... Because actually, not all the chapters don't quite end all this perfectly. They're not exactly at the same length.

And also, like Isaiah 53 should have started with three verses earlier. Yes, but there seems to be close enough to where you could see this. I never saw that Isaiah 53 was in the very center of those... That last section, that's new to me.

Right. So, you're saying that the separation of chapters might have been providential or might not have been? Providential perhaps, just so that we could see that. Well, by the way, the last three chapters of Isaiah 52 really are the introduction to Isaiah 53 and should be part of it.

That's one thing I think anyone can tell by reading it. And so, Langdon... It was close. It was close, but he should have started Isaiah 53, three verses earlier.

But that wouldn't make any difference in the number of chapters or in chapter 53 being the middle one. You see, so, in other words, we don't have to assume that the chapter divisions were infallible. Yes, or perfect.

But they were just more or less logical. And still, the phenomena that I mentioned would be observable. Yes.

Chapter 65, 17-26. Yeah, New Heavens, New Earth. I know it has a title, but I don't remember.

Well, the title doesn't mean anything, but the verse itself says, I'll make a new heaven and a new earth. Right. But then, you know, there's... A child shall die at a hundred years, and the sinner at a hundred years old be accursed.

Yeah. That is one of the most difficult verses in Isaiah. And I'm glad you brought it up because it's... If we're going to talk about only a few verses, we should probably talk about some of the ones that people have the most problem with.

And that is one. When Jesus comes back and establishes the new heavens, new earth, there will be no death. Because the only people who will be living there will be Christians who have been raised from the dead, immortal.

This body, when we die, will be buried in mortality, be raised in immortality when Jesus comes back. So the new heavens and the new earth that he will establish will be people by immortals. Populated by immortals, not people who die.

So why does it talk about a child will die at a hundred years? Of course, what we're talking about is verse 19 or... No, where is it? Verse 20. It's a bizarre, bizarre statement. You know, pre-millennialists believe that this is talking about the millennium.

In fact, Scofield, in his Scofield Bible, over verse 17, he has a title, the new heavens, the new earth. Over verse 18, he has the title, the millennium. Now, it's interesting that Scofield does not believe the new heavens and new earth are the millennium.

He believes, as all pre-millennials do, that Jesus is going to set up a millennium. And at the end of the millennium, there's going to be a new heavens, new earth. But he has the new heavens, new earth in verse 17, and everything that follows is the millennium, which is before the new heavens, new earth according to his scheme.

Now, what's interesting, he can't see 17 differently. Because 17 says, behold, I make a new heavens and a new earth. You really can't get away from that.

But verse 18 and following describe the situation where people are dying, which could not be literally true in the new heavens, new earth, but could conceivably be true in the millennium, if there's unbelievers there who are not in immortal bodies. Of course, Christians, if there's a millennium, would be in their immortal bodies from the time Jesus comes and raises us from the dead. But the non-Christians would not if they're there.

So Schofield and other premillennialists sometimes believe the millennium will be peopled by Christians and non-Christians, and the Christians will be mortal and they'll die. And by saying that a child should die at 100 years old, what it's saying is, if someone dies in that age at 100 years old, they'd still be essentially a child, suggesting, of course, that longevity will be very much greater than what we think of it. If someone's 100 years old, we don't think of them as a child at all.

They're extremely ancient. But in an age where people live much, much, much longer than a child who dies at 100 years old, a person who dies at 100 years old will be a veritable child still, an infant. So that this is a kind of a figurative way of saying people will live a lot longer there.

Now, if we don't press for literalism, and you can see it is written in poetry, and when things are in poetry, you know, they may be more or less literal, but you can't count on poetry being literal. Poetry uses metaphors and figures of speech and impressionistic images and things like that. In my opinion, this is simply talking about the phenomenon of having eternal life.

People aren't really dying at all. But if someone did die at 100 years, it'd be in their mere infancy, which is merely saying that 100 years is like nothing compared to how long people live. A person, if they were to die at 100 years old, they wouldn't have even gotten beyond infancy, given the extensive longevity of people at that time.

Now, in my understanding, that longevity means forever. They live forever. And a way of imaging people living forever would be to say, there's still babies at 100 years old, you know.

But there's still problems with the passage, because it still talks about a wicked person being 100 years old being accursed. I'm not sure what that means. It may mean that wicked people don't have eternal life.

That, you know, a wicked person at 100 years old, he's still under a curse. But righteous people at 100 years old will not even be out of infancy yet. They won't even be out of their diapers yet, so to speak.

Not literally, but just a manner, an impressionistic way of communicating the idea that life is going to be really, really long by any measure that we would be comparing it with, you know. Now, a person is certainly entitled to say that my view isn't persuasive. I'm not sure how persuasive it is myself.

But the problem is someone who isn't persuasive in my view either has to live with no view or come up with a better one. And I'm not aware of a better one. But I would be willing to live without any view at all, except people ask me about it.

So having a view is helpful. Yeah. So you look at these passages here in Isaiah 65, the heavens and the new earth as from the amillennial view.

Yeah. So from an amillennialist view, if that isn't the future that's going to happen, then there'll be infants, we'll continue to have children. No.

There will be no infants. No. There will no more be infants than there will be people dying at 100 years old.

Okay. Yeah, the imagery is simply to make the impression of longevity. By the way, there's another school of thought, and that is that the new heavens and new earth is not even talking about what Jesus brings about when he comes back, but it's talking about it's a figure of speech for the new covenant era during which people have eternal life.

The era we live in, we now have eternal life. But if we live to be 100 years old and die, our life is still just beginning. We're like infants.

We have eternal life. And that's an alternative way of seeing it, too. I will say one thing that I find interesting, and that is that chapters 60 through 66 of Isaiah, the section, has, I believe there's, I think I've identified eight different times that New Testament writers either quote from this section of Isaiah or allude to something in it.

Now, this is a passage of seven chapters, and it's all talking about something. And it's interesting that I believe there's eight times New Testament writers quote from or allude to this chapter in their writings and apply it to their own age. By the way, in my book on hell, I have a footnote about that where I give those exact cases.

I show the passage in Isaiah and the quotation in the New Testament. And that many of them come from this segment. Chapter 60 through 66.

So there's some, there's definitely some ambiguity and some reason for being open to more than one possibility in this section, I think. Yes, Paul? The, any comments about the

Dead Sea Scrolls and I'm asking about the Septuagint, any, any more Aramaic comments that you might reveal at the same time? Well, the Dead Sea Scrolls did not contain the Septuagint, to my knowledge. They contain the Hebrew text of the Bible.

The Septuagint was a Greek translation of the Hebrew text made 285 years earlier. In Jesus' day, it would appear that the Jews, Palestinian Jews and Jews in the Diaspora were using the Septuagint perhaps even more than the Hebrew text. It's possible that Palestinian Jews were using the Hebrew text more, but Hebrew was an ancient Hebrew that the Old Testament was written.

It was kind of a language that was being phased out by Aramaic. Aramaic was a similar language to Hebrew. And in the region of the Middle East, very few were speaking ancient Hebrew and Aramaic had kind of phased in in its place.

But the New Testament, except for Matthew, were written in Greek because they were written outside of Palestine. Only Matthew, as far as we know, was written inside Palestine to Palestinian Jews. And Papias, in the first century, a church father, said that Matthew wrote his first draft of his gospel in Aramaic, but it was translated later into Greek.

But the other writers didn't write to Jews. They wrote to Gentiles. They wrote to Romans and Corinthians and Philippians and Galatians and others.

And they certainly didn't write in Hebrew. It wouldn't do any good. These people didn't speak that language.

Everyone spoke Greek and the original manuscripts, the closest that we have to the original, are in Greek. And they always quoted from the Greek Old Testament, which wouldn't be necessary if they were writing in Hebrew. If they were writing in Hebrew, they wouldn't translate the Septuagint back into Hebrew.

I mean, the quotations in the Greek New Testament are mostly from the Septuagint. That's even to the ones that are written to the Jews, like the Book of Hebrews. The Book of Hebrews is clearly written to a Jewish audience, and yet all of the quotations of the Old Testament in Hebrews are from the Septuagint.

Now, there are people who would argue that the Septuagint there is the version we should be using. If the early church did, if Jesus did, if the apostles did, maybe we should. And the Septuagint differs from the Hebrew text at various places.

Not usually in any significant way. Some of the changes are different enough to make you scratch your head, but they're not really, certainly no doctrine is affected by a difference in the Hebrew from the Greek. But there are some people who think that the citation of the Septuagint by the apostles makes it a good case for us to be using the Septuagint.

But our Bibles, our Old Testaments and our English Bibles are translated from the Hebrew, because, of course, that's the original language. The thing is, the Hebrew manuscripts that are being used by our English translations are late manuscripts. We don't have the originals.

And the Septuagint translated into Greek, older Hebrew manuscripts that are no longer available to us. So, some would argue that the Septuagint is actually closer to the original Hebrew than our late Hebrew manuscripts are, because they could have changed. So, there's some question.

Now, for people who are very anal about wanting to make sure they have a perfect text that's got no changes in it, this could be something to tear your hair out over. But if what you're looking for is for the message of the Bible to be preserved, you've got it in the Septuagint, you've got it in the Hebrew text, you've got it in all the manuscripts. And this is true even of the different New Testament manuscripts.

Some people are all about the Textus Receptus, which was used by the King James. Others are, the modern translations follow the Alexandrine. There's some little differences between them, but not enough to be alarmed with.

You get the same message no matter what manuscripts you use. There just have not been enough significant changes in the manuscripts to alarm anybody who believes in the Bible. Only somebody who wants to make sure they have every word exactly as it was written, well then there's something to stay awake at night about.

But you don't have to have that attitude. Yes, Ron. You mentioned the book of Ecclesiastes this morning.

Ecclesiasticus. I've heard ministers preach on that, and I didn't really catch it until maybe a couple of years ago. How accurate is that? Well, it is not the same book as Ecclesiastes.

Yeah, I know, it's a different book. Yeah, our Bible contains Ecclesiastes. The Catholic Bible has several additional books, including Ecclesiasticus in what's called the Apocrypha.

The Apocrypha books were written in the Intertestamental Period. That is, when the New Testament had not yet come and the Old Testament was complete. There's a 400-year gap between Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament, and any of the New Testament books.

There's a 400-year period called the Intertestamental Period. And during that time, the Jews wrote a lot of books, but Protestants don't believe they were inspired books. None of them were written in Hebrew.

All the Intertestamental books were written in Greek, Ecclesiasticus among them. And as far as how accurate it is, it's not really a book that you could call accurate or inaccurate. It's more like wisdom, like Proverbs.

And it's edifying. I mean, even Martin Luther, who was obviously a Protestant and did not accept the Apocrypha books as inspired, he did believe that they were edifying for Christians to read. And so the fact that the Catholics put them in their Bible and we don't, doesn't mean that we should regard them as heretical or something like that.

It's like I don't consider the books by A.W. Tozer heretical, but they're not in the Bible. They don't belong in the Bible. So I think Ecclesiasticus would be like that.

The original 1611 King James Version, they did put those books in there for a period of time. And I think it was because they were transitioning over from the Catholics, you see, so they kind of left them in there. But later editions in our current Bibles, we don't have it.

But I have a 1611 facsimile and it has all those Apocrypha books in it. Yeah, I have some Bibles with the Apocrypha in it too. Yeah, the very earliest King James Versions were often printed with the Apocrypha in them.

That's true. Lewis? On what he was talking about, I understood Ezra actually eliminated a lot of books. I sometimes wonder if maybe 1st and 2nd Chronicles didn't come from him.

Traditionally, Ezra is the most likely author of the Books of Chronicles. For one, Ezra, the Book of Ezra, chapter 1, verse 1, is almost a duplication of the last words of 2nd Chronicles and continues on from there. Ezra is described in Ezra 7 as a ready scribe.

And as a scribe, he may very well have created books like Chronicles. Chronicles are somewhat different than the Books of Kings. The Books of Kings are written from a prophetic point of view and some Jews believe Jeremiah wrote the Books of Kings.

The Books of Chronicles were written later from a very priestly point of view and Ezra was a priest. And Ezra and Nehemiah were also originally one book. So there's a strong Jewish tradition that has credibility that Ezra wrote the Books of Chronicles and the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

What about the fact that it has been said that maybe two-thirds of what was written was available in Ezra's day and he basically did not include in what we use as a canon today? I have not really seen evidence of that. I mean, people say things in that sort of like people often say the same thing about New Testament books. They say Constantine eliminated a whole bunch of Gospels that should have been included.

That I know to be false. Irenaeus wrote 150 years before Constantine and he said that the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are the only four Gospels that all

churches throughout the world recognize as genuine. And so the Da Vinci Code claimed that, you know, 150 years later there were hundreds of Gospels that the church accepted and Constantine burned all the ones except for Matthew, Mark, Luke and John as just made up out of whole cloth.

Now the idea that Ezra, you know, eliminated a whole bunch of books that were otherwise received strikes me as a similar kind of claim because I don't think we have, I could be wrong, but from what I've read, I don't think we have any manuscripts of books older than Ezra that were seemingly. We might think of the book of Jasher or, you know, the books of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah and the books of the Chronicles of Kings of Israel, which are actually mentioned in Chronicles as books that we don't have that they had. But I don't know of any suggestion that Ezra, you know, eliminated.

Was Jasher found in the Dead Sea Scrolls? Jasher? No, it is not. There is a book of Jasher that you can buy at the store now, but it arose in the late 19th century, I believe. In other words, they don't have any ancient books of Jasher from ancient times.

There is a book of Jasher. If you look it up in Encyclopedia, it'll call it Pseudo-Jasher. Of course, Jasher is mentioned in the book of Joshua.

And also, I think in Sandals, if I'm not mistaken, but in passing, it says it's also this story is also found in the book of Jasher, which has raised the intrigue of many readers. Oh, that's interesting. A book of Jasher.

I wonder where that is. So someone decided to write one apparently a few centuries ago and published it. It's called the book of Jasher.

And it tells those same stories, too, amazingly. It only sounded like it might be true if he then wrote the book of Chronicles to kind of make up for some of the things that he may be got rid of. All I can say, I'm not aware of that particular claim.

I mean, it may be, in fact, something out there. But I neither am familiar with the claim, nor can I think of any evidence from my knowledge of the historic preservation of the Old Testament that would make up for that. I mean, I think it's got a likelihood, but I haven't read anything on it.

All right. Well, it's it's got laid up. Go ahead.

No, it's not too late for you. How did Jews who reject Jesus as Messiah, how do they explain Isaiah 53? Well, the rabbis have an answer. The average Jew on the street would have a different answer.

I remember a friend of mine was witnessing to a Jewish girl. This is back in the 70s. He said, well, just let me read you something from the Bible.

You tell me who this is talking about. And without telling her what he was reading, he turned Isaiah 53 and read the passage. She said, well, that's she said, that's obviously Jesus.

But we Jews don't accept the New Testament. She she assumed it must be the New Testament because it's so plainly a prophecy about Jesus. But he said, well, that's Isaiah.

She didn't know it. I mean, the average Jewish person who isn't trained otherwise would recognize that that is talking about Jesus. They just don't know it's in their Bible because they don't read it.

But the rabbis know it's there. And what they have done is they've said all the servant of Yahweh passages, including that one. There's four major sections.

Isaiah called the servant of Yahweh passages. And Isaiah 53 belongs to the fourth of those. They say that Israel is the servant of Yahweh in all the passages.

Now, in favor of their view, Israel is identified as a servant of Yahweh in some of the early passages. But there seems to be a transition from Israel collectively as the servant of Yahweh to an individual who is the servant of Yahweh. And Isaiah 53 doesn't fit at all in the idea that Israel is the servant of Yahweh.

Because it says, all we like sheep have gone astray. Who's we? Isaiah. His people.

He and his people. All we like sheep have gone astray. And the Lord laid on him, the servant, the iniquity of us all.

So there's a distinction between us who have sinned and him who bears our iniquities. It also says that, you know, he did no violence. Neither was any guile found in his mouth.

But he was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. Clearly, we are Israel to Isaiah.

And he is somebody other than Israel. He is the one who was bruised instead of us for our iniquities. There was no guile found in his mouth.

There was no transgression on his part. He was pure. And so what's happened in Isaiah 53 is that the servant of Yahweh now is a substitute for Israel.

Israel was the servant of Yahweh, but they failed God. And they rebelled against God. And they had to be rejected so that he has to come and bear their iniquities himself.

And so Isaiah in chapter 53 distinguishes between the servant, on the one hand, and my people. For the iniquities of my people he was bruised. So obviously the Messiah is not Isaiah's people.

He's someone distinguished from him who is in fact innocent, whereas his people are not innocent. So the Jews don't have a good answer to that. They just have an answer.

Now, by the way, the apostles, when they preached to the Sanhedrin, and when they preached to the Jews in Jerusalem in their day, they quoted from Isaiah 53 fairly regularly on the assumption that this was a prediction about the Messiah and that Jesus had fulfilled it. We don't have any record of any of the Jewish scholars saying, wait a minute, that's not about the Messiah. There's a good reason to believe that that was recognized as a Messianic passage until the time of Jesus.

And when Jesus fulfilled it, the Jews wishing to reject Jesus, not wishing to acknowledge that he fulfilled Isaiah 53, would therefore no doubt have come up with the alternative theory, oh, that's not really about the Messiah. So what the Jewish disciples all assumed that their Jewish audience would all agree about, namely that Isaiah 53 is about the Messiah, modern Jews don't accept that because it's too damaging to their commitment to reject Christ as the Messiah. All right, well, Lewis.

One more question, and that is, my understanding is that in Psalms 96, verse 10, that the word wood was blotted out from the Hebrew text, but it may still be in the Septuagint. That's possible. I understand the call that it says wood of the cross.

Wait, Psalm? It's part of the part that makes a comment on that. Psalm 96, 10? Psalms 96, verse 10. It says, say among the nations, the Lord reigns.

The world also is firmly established. It shall not be moved. He shall judge the peoples righteously.

Is that the verse you're thinking of? Yes, and it would have been, he judges the people from. Oh, from the wood, instead of righteously? Yeah, so they blotted that out because it was. Because it speaks of the cross.

I see. Again, I haven't heard that. I haven't read very many books devoted to the comparison of the Septuagint and the Hebrew text.

I mean, when I study a passage, often the scholars will mention a difference in a passage from the Septuagint and so forth. But as far as a systematic description of all the changes. Adam Clark.

Adam Clark. Commentary. I've got it.

I haven't read it on that. All right, well, thank you. Why don't we close? Thank you, Father, for this evening and the good turnout we've had here.

Good chance to fellowship with so many people. I pray, Father, that if anything of value has been said in this introduction, that it will stick in the mind of those who now read the

book of Isaiah on their own, and that they'll have some frame of reference to understand it better. And especially that we will see Jesus as Isaiah was used by you to reveal him.

And as the disciples certainly recognized him in these passages. I pray for these people as they study your word and meditate on it day and night, that new insights and correct insights will come to their minds and they'll understand and be fed by your word, which is bread indeed and drink indeed. And we ask it in Jesus name.

Amen.