

Authorship of Isaiah

A Paper

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By:

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My Views on the Authorship of Isaiah In Light of the Schultz' Essay

Schultz essay contributes greatly to the debate about the authorship of Isaiah, as it criticizes scholars that have maintained that the book of Isaiah was solely written by Isaiah. In my views, I support Schultz that available evidence best supports the traditional view that the book of Isaiah was not written by Isaiah alone. This is because though Biblical book titles aims at communicating the author, the traditional Biblical book titles talks nothing about the book's authorship. Implying that carrying the title "Isaiah" does not mean that Isaiah wrote it all. Other Biblical books like Jonah, Ruth, and Job carry such titles but were not written by them, it is just that they contain their stories.¹

Biblical books also contain several instances where a section of a book is duplicated in other Biblical Book titles. For instance, Isaiah 36-39 is duplicated in 2 Kings 18:13-20: 19, Isaiah 2:2-4 is duplicated in Micah 4:1-3. This illustrates that Biblical texts are not arranged based on authorship, but a composite of materials from different authors at different times. The New Testament references Isaiah as a Biblical book with sacred writings, not as the Authorship. For instance, there are incorrect citations of passages in the New Testament. For instance, while Mark introduces the quotation of the Old Testament by "as it is written in the prophet Isaiah," Mark 1:2 but the quoted passage in real sense if from Malachi 3:1, not Isaiah as stated.

Nevertheless, nowhere in the scripture that is written that Isaiah is the author of the entire book of Isaiah. This can be explained by the fact that the mention of Isaiah stops in

¹ L. Richard, Schultz. *How Many Isaiahs Were There and What Does It Matter? Prophetic Inspiration in Recent Evangelical Scholarship*. (Wheaton: IVP Academic, 2012), 154.

Chapter 39 and the rest remains anonymous. When this sudden sop is related to historical situation, it proves that the author of Isaiah 1-39, 40-55 and 556-66 is different.

Bearing of This Issue on the Inspiration and Inerrancy of the Book of Isaiah

I believe this issue has no significant effect on the inspiration and inerrancy of the Book of Isaiah. This is because the arguments are not on the content and predictive elements of the book, but just the authorship. This implies that, debate on multi-authorship is not about authors' inspiration from God and revelations through prophecies. In addition, Webb states that the argument is not based on the evidence from the book-itself, but just assumptions about authorship.²

In addition, the arguments are just on historical and literal unity, but no one has argued on the theological unity of the book. The unity emphasized in the book is having faith in God in the changing times and circumstances. As a result, the theological witness of Isaiah is consistent and unrelenting. Central themes have also not been argued about, meaning that they are still consistent though they take center stage at different times. For instance, no one has argued about the judgment in the first section, grace in the second and faithful response to God in the last section. This implies that there is theological cohesion in the message delivered in the book.

² G. Barry, Webb. *The Message of Isaiah: On Eagles' Wings. The Bible Speaks Today.* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1996), 178.

³ L. Darrell, Bock, and Glaser, Mitch, (eds). *The Gospel According to Isaiah 53: Encountering the Suffering Servant in Jewish and Christian Theology.* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2012), 234.

According to Webb, understanding multi-authorship does not change the theological unity of the book, but just historical unity. As a result, if the debate will stop using putting forward views that do not emerge from the Biblical text, there will no influence on inspiration and inerrancy of the book. In fact, understanding theological unity and historical dynamics in the book is more important for the current generation other than viewing the book as a prediction of what to expect in future but see it as what is happening now.⁴

Evangelical View of Inspiration on the Traditional View of Isaiah Authorship

The evangelical view of inspiration does not require anyone to affirm the traditional view of Isaiah as the single author of the book. According to Schultz, the most important thing required is that we should believe that the writings were inspired by God, and the content is true.⁵ This is because, even if they are different authors, they are consistent with the theology of Isaiah, especially on the issues of God's sovereignty and holiness, and the remnants together with the messiah. In addition, the evangelical views emphasize that the Bible is an authoritative scripture from God for the church, but cares less on the authorship of any particular book. This is because it is believed that every author of the Biblical text was inspired by God. As a result, principles of evangelical views are guided by the fact that the authority of any Biblical book is not based on historical details about its authorship, but in the message about God that is conveyed in the book.

⁴ Habib, *The Message of Isaiah: On Eagles' Wings. The Bible Speaks Today*, 178.

⁵ Habib, *How Many Isaiahs Were There and What Does It Matter? Prophetic Inspiration in Recent Evangelical Scholarship*, 167.

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