

Deutero-Isaiah? Gary McDade

The unity of the book of Isaiah has already been sustained from the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. “The Unity Of Isaiah,” by Gary McDade, *Good News From Getwell*, January 21, 2008, p. 2). Jesus attributes both sections of Isaiah, chapters 1-39 and 40-66, to the prophet Isaiah. Not only did he affirm that the second section—and that is the section most disputed—was “*spoken by Isaiah the prophet*” but it is said of him in even more precise language that “*there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah*” (Isa. 42:1-4; Mt. 12:16-21; and Isa. 62:1-2; Lk. 4:16-19).

The ones who are calling for “Deutero-Isaiah” or two Isaiah’s are urged to consider what that would mean if true. (1) Comforting expressions to Judea and Jerusalem at a time of disruption and distress would be missing (Isa. 40:1ff.). (2) The extended strengthening of God’s promise to return a remnant to the land would not have been made as recorded in Isaiah 46:1-13 in the crucial 8th Century B.C. when it was most needed. Recent proponents of this view are seen to contradict themselves on this point. McKenzie and Kaltner wrote, “In other words, a prophetic message is all about context because it is directed to a particular audience at a particular moment in time” (McKenzie, 221). (They said this in their denial of the virgin birth, but if they consider the statement to be true, it must apply throughout the book). (3) Although a condemnation of idolatry is found throughout the book of Isaiah, the special emphasis found in chapters 44-45 would be vacated. (4) The sublime description of how the suffering servant would offer himself as a substitutionary sacrifice on behalf of others and that sacrifice find acceptance with God would not find its way into the hearts and minds of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judah in the 8th Century B.C. (cf. Isa. 53). (5) The Messianic prophecies of the second section would never have been presented to accomplish the completion of Isaiah’s ministry (cf. Isa. 40:1-5; 42:1-4; 49:7-11; 53:1-12; 61:1-3; and 62:1-7).

But, there is more. The concept of the inspiration of the scriptures would be mutilated. All the references from the second section of the book of Isaiah appearing in the New Testament would be in error. The corresponding divorce of the prophecy and the affirmation of its fulfillment in the New Testament would void the key passages supporting scripture as originating from God. For example, John 10:35, “If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken.” Deutero-Isaiah asserts that the scriptures *have been broken!* Inspiration applies to “all scripture” as Paul made certain in II Timothy

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Look at II Peter 1:20-21, “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” How could those men have been “holy” while lying about the source of their prophecies?

And, there is even more. Jesus said, “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me” (Jn. 5:39). If the scriptures that testify of Christ do not really testify of Christ, then the conclusion is irresistible: The Jesus Christ of the Bible is disqualified from serving as the Savior of the world! One of two things would have to be true. One, either Jesus knew Isaiah did not write the chapters he references in the gospel accounts and attributes to Isaiah, or, two, he did not know Isaiah did not write the chapters he references in the gospel accounts. Neither of these options allows Jesus to be the Savior because if he knew Isaiah did not write the chapters he referenced and he said he did, then simply he would have lied! Or, if he did not know, then he is disqualified because he ignorantly assisted in the perpetration of a fraud!

Further, no historical or textual support exists for the erroneous Deutero-Isaiah view. Is there a break in the Masoretic Text (A.D. 895) between Isaiah 39 and 40? Is there a break in the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament (258 B.C.)? Is there a break in the Isaiah Scroll of the Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in 1947 dating back to about 200 B.C.? The simple “no” answer devastates Deutero-Isaiah!

In conclusion, the Rhodes College professors advancing the Deutero-Isaiah view locally placed a space in their textbook between Isaiah 1-39 and 40-66 with forty pages intervening in between in a desperate attempt to convince those who see their book that the book of Isaiah is divided. It does not work, because “the scriptures cannot be broken!”

Attempts to discredit the Bible and the Savior in this way stand as barriers to teaching the people of our day the soul-saving gospel of Christ. Christians must be prepared to answer such challenges as this in order to advance the cause of Christ (I Pet. 3:15). Evil forces are always at work; we must have the sword of the Spirit drawn and ready! (Eph. 6:17).

REFERENCES

McKenzie, Steven L. and John Kaltner (2007) *The Old Testament, Its Background, Growth, and Content* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press).