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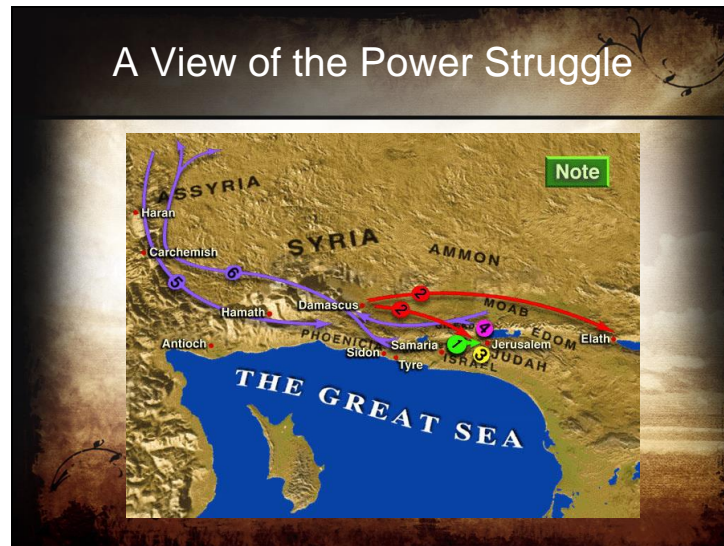
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"The preaching of Isaiah represents the theological high water mark of the whole Old Testament ... Not one of the other prophets approaches Isaiah in intellectual vigor, or, more particularly, in the magnificent sweep of his ideas." Gerhard Von Rad, *The Message of the Prophets*, (118)

Isaiah: The Historical Setting

- Divided Kingdom
- Assyrian Expansion
- Israel and Damascus (Syria)
- Judah



Map and notes adapted from: Logos Deluxe Map Set, Logos Bible Software

1. King Pekah of Israel turns to the south to increase his holdings
 - King Rezin of Damascus (Syria) also expanded to the south, menacing Judah (2 Kings 15:5-6)
 - God sends Isaiah to encourage Judah when threatened by Israel and Syria (Isaiah 6)
 - Threatened by both enemies, King Ahaz of Judah rejects the Word of God through the prophet (Isaiah 7-8)
 - Assyria conquers Syria and Israel (2 Kings 16)
 - Assyria resettles the captives (2 Kings 15:29; 1 Chronicles 5:26; cf. Isaiah 9:1)

Isaiah's Ministry: A Time Chart

c. 740 – 685 BC

Judah	Israel	Assyria
Uzziah (792 -740)	Pekah (740-722)	Tiglath-pileser III (744-727)
Jotham (750-732)	Hoshea (732-722)	Shalmaneser V (726-722)
Ahaz (743-715)	Israel Conquered (722)	Sargon II (721-705)
Hezekiah (728-686)		Sennacherib (704-681)
Manasseh (697-642)		Esarhaddon (680-669)
		Ashurbanipal (668-626)

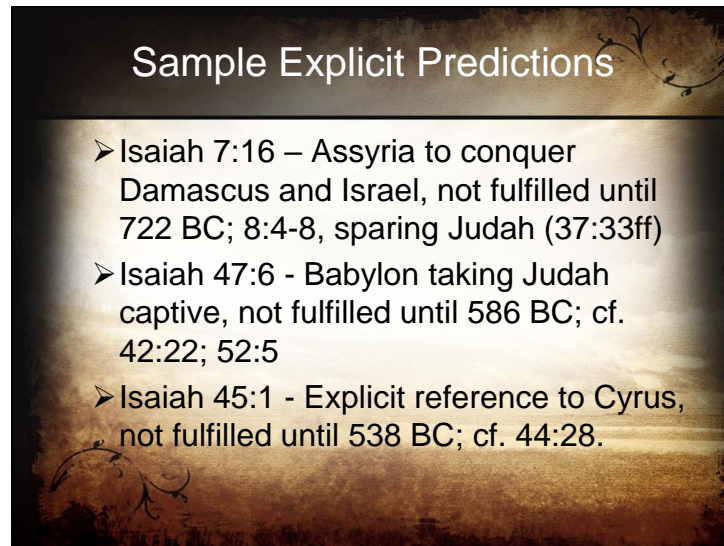
Isaiah's Ministry: Key Dates

740 BC	Isaiah Called To Ministry
722 BC	Israel Falls to Assyria
685 BC	Isaiah Dies
586 BC*	Judah Falls to Babylon; Captives taken into exile
538 BC*	Cyrus of Persia decrees that Exiles can return

*Fulfilling Isaiah's Prophecies

Isaiah's Writings: An Overview

- Chapters 1-39: Admonitions while in Judah
- Chapters 40-55: Reflections while in exile
- Chapters 56-66: Perspectives after returning from exile



Isaiah 7:16-17

“But before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste. ¹⁷The Lord will bring on you and on your people and on the house of your father a time unlike any since Ephraim broke away from Judah—he will bring the king of Assyria.” *The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996, c1984 (electronic ed.) (Is 7:16-17). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Isaiah 37:33-35

³³ “Therefore this is what the Lord says concerning the king of Assyria: ‘He will not enter this city or shoot an arrow here. He will not come before it with shield or build a siege ramp against it. ³⁴ By the way that he came he will return; he will not enter this city,’ declares the Lord. ³⁵ ‘I will defend this city and save it, for my sake and for the sake of David my servant!’” *The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996, c1984 (electronic ed.) (Is 37:33-35). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Isaiah 47:6

“I was angry with my people and desecrated my inheritance; I gave them into your hand, and you showed them no mercy. Even on the aged you laid a very heavy yoke.” *The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996, c1984 (electronic ed.) (Is 47:6). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Isaiah 45:1

“This is what the Lord says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armor, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut.”

The Holy Bible : New International Version. 1996, c1984 (electronic ed.) (Is 45:1). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

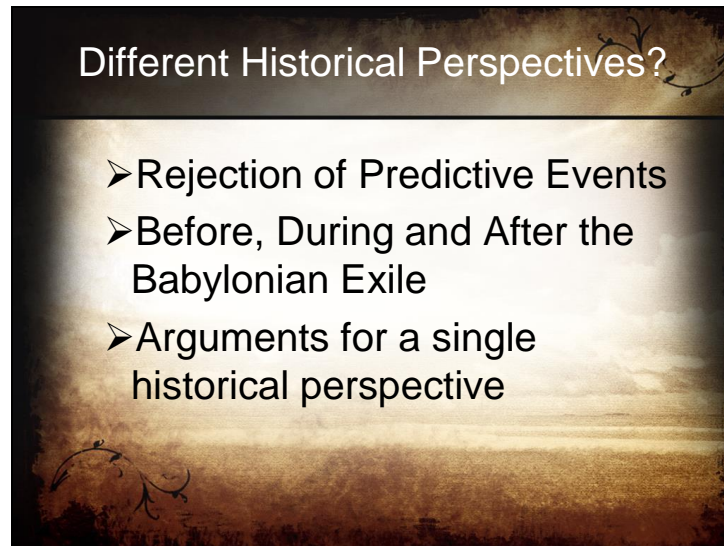
See also Isaiah 13:17-20 , where Babylon is predicted to fall to the Medes;

Modern Critical Challenges

- Older Questions: (Moses ben Samuel, Ibn Gekatila c. 110 AD; Ibn Ezra, 1167 AD)
- 18th & 19th Century Origins
- Three or more “Isaiah’s”
 - Chapters 1-39
 - Chapters 40-55
 - Chapters 56-66

Basis for Critical Challenges

- Different Historical Perspectives
- Different Linguistic Styles
- Different Theological Emphases



A Reason for Prediction:

“Remember this, fix it in mind, take it to heart, you rebels. Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.” (Isaiah 46:8-10)

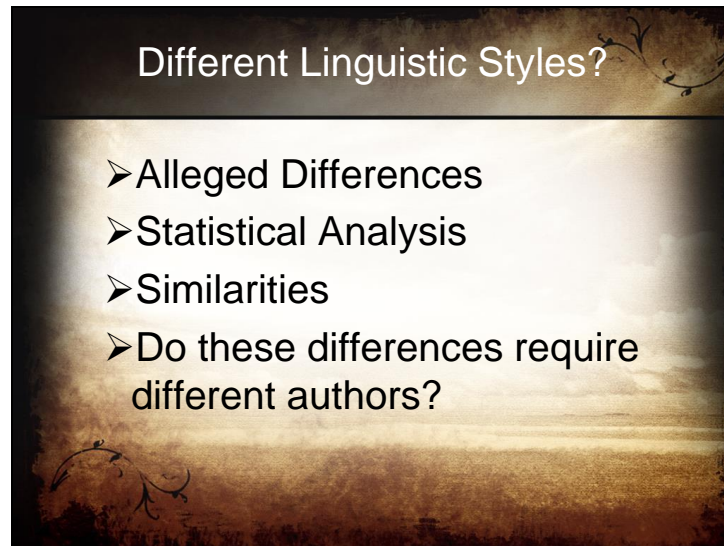
By the way, we see predictive elements in Chapters 1-39 as well (See the slide #7)

Arguments for a Single Historical Perspective:

- Though speaking to those in captivity, the land of captivity seems distant:
 - “This is what the Lord says—your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: ‘For your sake I will send to Babylon and bring down as fugitives all the Babylonians, in the ships in which they took pride.’” (Isaiah 43:14)
 - “From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do. (Isaiah 46:11)
- The speaker in the latter section of Isaiah reflects an intimate knowledge of Palestinian geography and culture:
 - “I will put in the desert the cedar and the acacia, the myrtle and the olive. I will set pines in the wasteland, the fir and the cypress together....” (Isaiah 41:19)

“He cut down cedars, or perhaps took a cypress or oak. He let it grow among the trees of the forest, or planted a pine, and the rain made it grow. It is man’s fuel for burning; some of it he takes and warms himself, he kindles a fire and bakes bread. But he also fashions a god and worships it; he makes an idol and bows down to it. Half of the wood he burns in the fire; over it he prepares his meal, he roasts his meat and eats his fill. He also warms himself and says, ‘Ah! I am warm; I see the fire.’” (Isaiah 44:14-16)

- By contrast, references to specifically Babylonian geographical or cultural details are conspicuously absent.



Alleged Differences include:

1. Absence prose in chapters 40-66
2. In 1-39, Jerusalem and Judah mentioned frequently together, but are only combined once in 40-66
3. No mention of in 1-39 of phrases occurring frequently in 40-66: e.g.; “suffering servant” (19 times), “God as Father” (6 times)
 - Certain phrases used more in one section than the other: “God of Hosts” (56 times in 1-39, 6 times in 40-66), ; “Spirit of God” (1 time in 1-39, 20 times in 40-66.
 - Many historical, geographical and cultural reference in 1-39, few (with the exception of Cyrus) in 40-66.

Statistical Analysis:

Best known examples are Radday and Kasher; that argued for multiple authors. However, see L. La Mar Adams, a Mormon scholar who has done an independent study that supports a single author theory. He points to invalid assumptions in the earlier studies, and says: “To demonstrate the invalidity of his method, we applied Radday’s procedures to a text known to have been written by Thomas Carlisle. The result was a false conclusion that part of Carlisle’s text was written by another author.” (<http://rsc.byu.edu/archived/isaiah-and-prophets-inspired-voices-old-testament/9-scientific-analysis-isaiah-authorship>)

Similarities:

The phrase “The Holy One of Israel” used in both sections (12 times in 1-39 and 14 times in 40-66, but only 7 times in the rest of the OT)

