

BANNED

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BIBLE



The Rev. Dr. Carl Gregg

Mondays, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm,

September 29 – November 3

Housekeeping

- Slides: frederickuu.org/fcc
- **Attendance** for FCC
- Add to **email** list?
- **Other?**

Covenant

- Use **“I” statements**: *Speak from your own experience.*
- **Ask permission before sharing** other participants’ stories outside the group.
- **Step-up, step-back**: be conscious of the level of participation that you bring to the conversation. Allow everyone a chance to speak before you speak again.
- You always have **permission to “pass.”**



Upcoming Classes

- *Session 7: Introduction (to Prophetic Literature)*
- Session 8: Isaiah; Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the Twelve
- Session 9: Psalms & Proverbs
- Session 10: Job
- Session 11: Five Scrolls
- Session 12: Daniel and “After the Hebrew Bible”
- Spring 2015: 6-weeks on Jesus, the Gospels, and Acts
- Fall 2015: 6-weeks on Paul & the rest of the NT

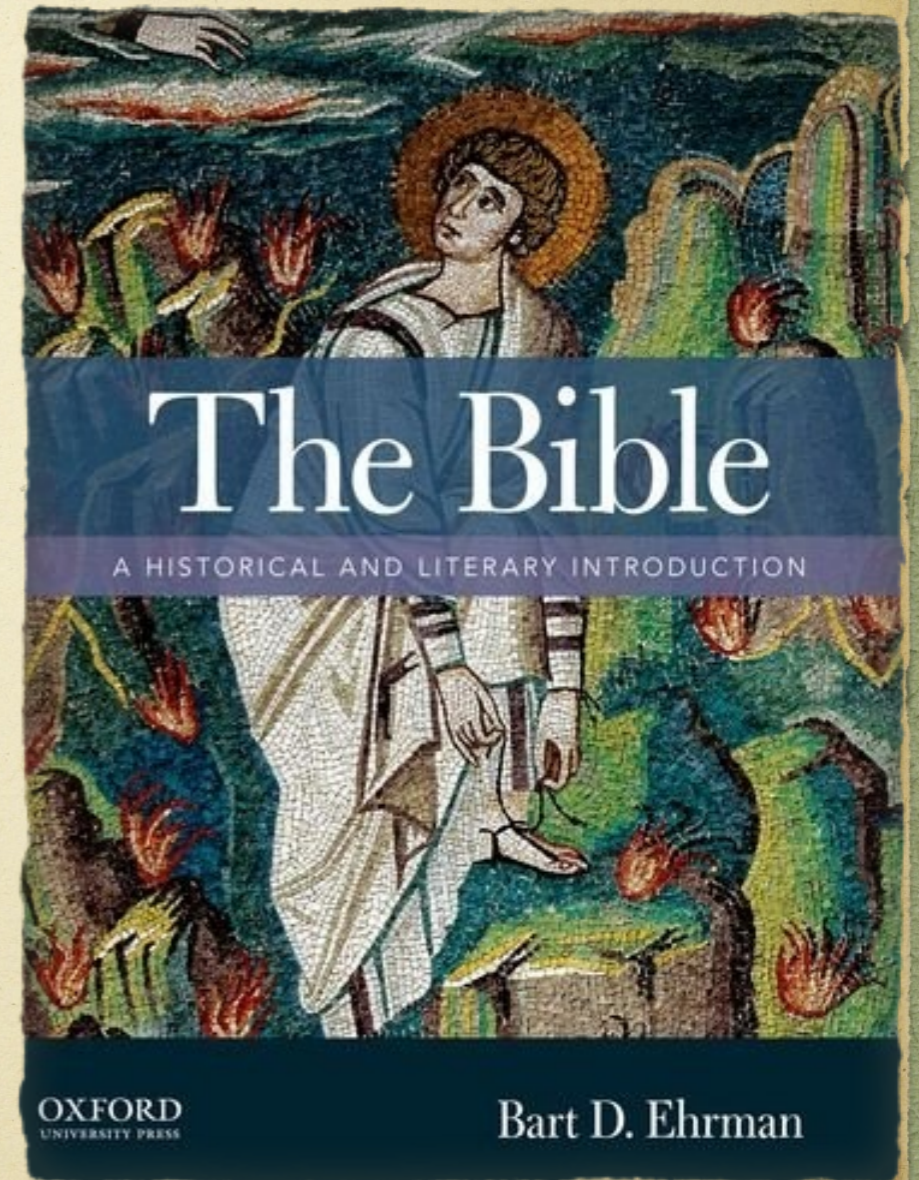
Alternately: Read primary text...*and* annotations
...*or just come to class*

➤ Chapter 5: The Early Israelite Prophets: Amos, Isaiah of Jerusalem, Jeremiah, Hosea, Micah, Zephaniah, Habakkuk

➤ Chapter 6: The Historians and Prophets of Exile and Return: Ezra and Nehemiah, Second Isaiah, Joel, Obadiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Third Isaiah, Malachi

➤ Chapter 7: Poets and Story Tellers of Ancient Israel: Psalms, Lamentations, Song of Songs, Ruth, Esther, Jonah, Daniel, 1 and 2 Chronicles

➤ Chapter 8: Wisdom and Apocalyptic Literature: Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, Selections of AL



Fall 2014

Follow-up from Last Week

➤ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dome_of_the_Rock



Fall 2014

1 Isaiah, 2 Isaiah, 3 Isaiah, 4?

Prophecy Historicized
or
History Remembered?:

Reading the “Fifth Gospel”
through
Jewish & Christian eyes



Chapters	Book	Title	Period	B.C.E
1-39	First Isaiah	Isaiah of Jerusalem	Assyrian	742-701
<i>1 5 0 y e a r g a p</i>				
40-55	Second Isaiah	Isaiah of the exile	Babylonian exile	546-538
56-66	Third Isaiah	Isaiah of the Restoration	Restoration of Judah	538-520

- **First Isaiah:** “Isaiah of Jerusalem,” more than a century *before* the exile.
 - Ministry in Jerusalem (c. 742-701 or 689 BCE)
 - Generally, Isaiah 1-39 (few exceptions interspersed)
- **Second Isaiah:** (Deutero-Isaiah) perhaps combined because similar themes to first-Isaiah (“School of Isaiah”)
 - Anonymous prophet during the time of the Babylonian exile (c. 540 B.C.E., about *45 years after* the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem by the Babylonian Empire and the subsequent deportation of many Israelites to Babylon — and *149 years after* the last of First Isaiah’s oracles.
 - Oracles in Isaiah 34-35 and 40-55.
- **Third Isaiah:** (Trito-Isaiah): third prophet OR an older and disillusioned Second Isaiah writing after the return from exile.
 - Oracles in Isaiah 24-27 (“Isaiah Apocalypse”) and 56-66, from Jerusalem and the period after 537BCE when the return from the exile begins.

Isaiah as the “Fifth Gospel”?

- Quoted or alluded to in the NT far more than any other book of Hebrew Scripture (*at least 46 times in the Gospels, 30 times in Paul, and 30 or more times in Revelation*) with the possible exception of Psalms.
- By the 4th century, the Christian Church father and translator Jerome would call Isaiah an “evangelist rather than a prophet.”
- Isaiah was thought to predict the virgin birth and elements of the passion.



Themes

- ❧ Power of God
- ❧ Centrality of Jerusalem
- ❧ Davidic monarchy will continue



Isaiah 1:1

“The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz,
which he saw concerning Judah and
Jerusalem
in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and
Hezekiah, kings of Judah.”



Isaiah's politics *(from his early oracles)*

- Isaiah 1:17, “learn to do good; seek **justice**, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.”
- Isaiah 1:18, “Come now, **let us argue it out**, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.”
- Isaiah 1:21, “How the faithful city has become a **whore!** She that was full of justice, righteousness lodged in her— but now murderers!”
- Isaiah 2:4 “they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” *[later in Micah, too]*

Isaiah 6:1-13

- 20-page exegesis paper
- Dissertation on only verses 9-10
- First Isaiah's inaugural oracle, describing his call to be a prophet.
- Probably placed here (rather than at the book's beginning) because of its close association with the oracles that immediately follow in 7:1-8:18, concerning the Syro-Ephraimite War.

Isaiah 6:1

- 6:1, “In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple.”
- Compare: Ezekiel 1:1, “In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the exiles by the river Chebar, the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.”
- Compare: 1 Kings 22:19, “Then Micaiah said, ‘Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, with all the host of heaven standing beside him to the right and to the left of him.’”
- Whereas Ezek and 1 Kgs depict God in the heavens, First Isaiah sees God in the Holy of Holies of the Jerusalem Temple, which is consistent with the theme in Isaiah that Jerusalem (Zion) is the seat of God’s universal dominion.

Isaiah 6

- Many speculate that Isaiah is in the Jerusalem Temple during his vision, and that elements the Temple setting contribute to and are transformed in his vision:
- Words of the **seraphs** could be from a **choral antiphon** that was being sung (v. 2-3): “2 Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. 3 And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.””
- **Smoke** could be from the burning of **incense** or from offerings (v. 4): “4 The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke.”

Isaiah 6

- Incorporating the surrounding environment does *not* necessarily question the authenticity of the theophany.
- Moses saw a **burning bush** as part of his call experience.
- Also, First Isaiah's presence in the Temple's inner sanctum may suggest that he was a priest as well as a prophet, or, at least, a member of the Temple's religious establishment.

Isaiah 6:1, “In the year that King Uzziah died,”

- Uzziah died c. 742 BCE (*with a possible seven year range from 742-735*).
- Because he served a long reign as king of Judah (about 40 years), Isaiah would never have experienced the rule of another king—the choice of the earthly king as a date may also be an intentional contrast with God as king.
- Also, does Isaiah see **God’s image**, or is the **anthropomorphic** image one that Isaiah can comprehend?

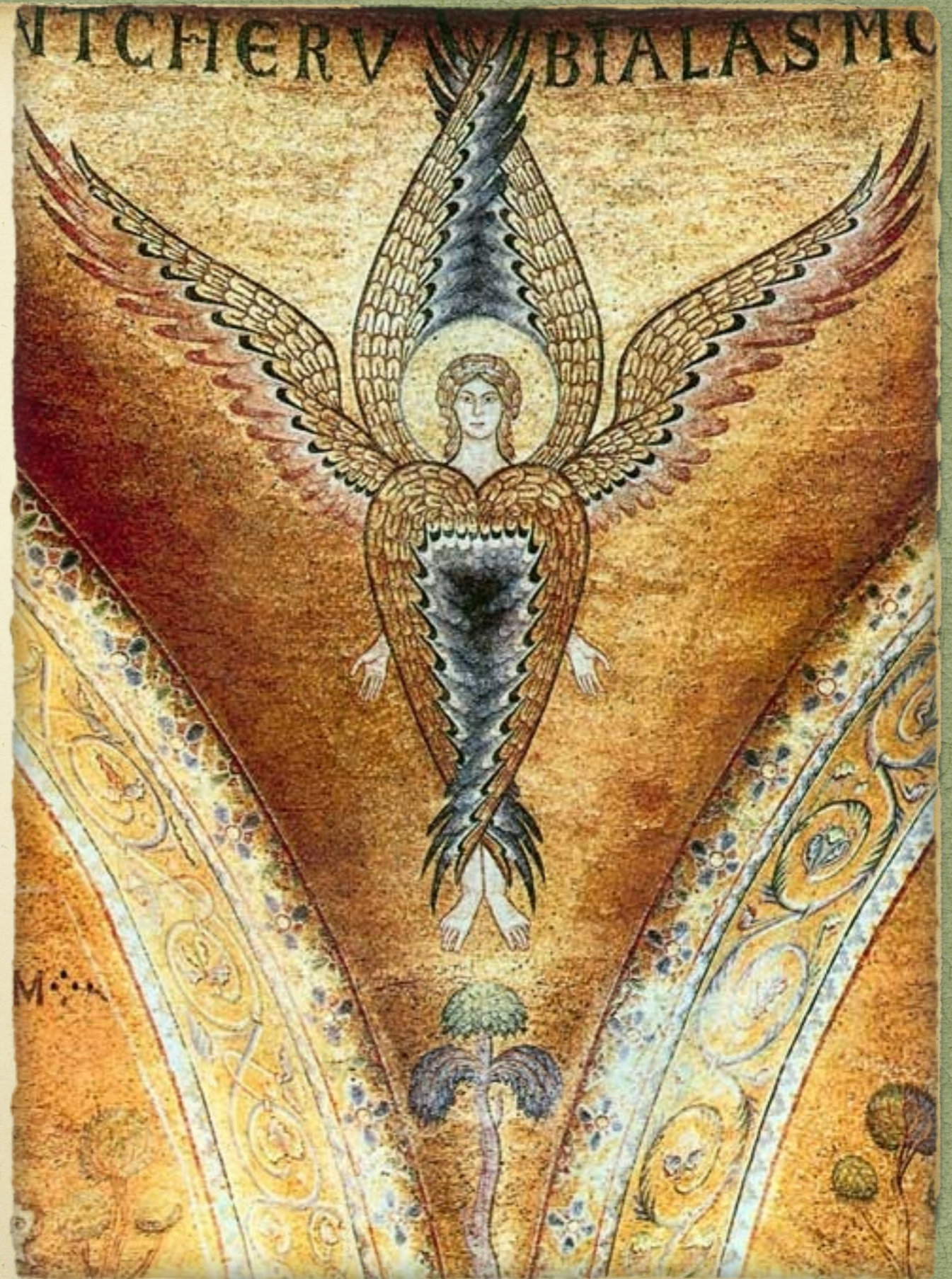
Isaiah 6:2

“Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with

two they covered their faces, and with

two they covered their feet, and

with two they flew.”



Isaiah 6:3, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts”

- reference to God’s heavenly entourage
- favorite epithet of First Isaiah, used 46 times in his oracles.

Isaiah 6:8, “Who will go for us?”

- first-person, plural pronoun is a reference to the **divine assembly**
- Compare: Gen 1:26, “Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness.’”
- Ps 82:1, “God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods he holds judgment.”
- Jer 23:18, “For who has stood in the council of the Lord so as to see and to hear his word?”
- Also, unclear if Isaiah is the only one being asked. Perhaps his plea “Here am I” is because there are others present that could have volunteered.

“Here am I” (*Hineini*)

➤ Compare:

➤ Gen 22:1, “1 After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, ‘Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’” [*Isaac/Akedah*]

➤ Exodus 3:4, “When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, ‘Moses, Moses!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’”

➤ 1 Sam 3:4, “Then the Lord called, ‘Samuel! Samuel!’ and he said, ‘Here I am!’”

Isaiah 6:9-10

- “9 And he said, ‘Go and say to this people: “Keep listening, but do not comprehend; keep looking, but do not understand.” 10 Make the mind of this people dull, and stop their ears, and shut their eyes, so that they may not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and comprehend with their minds, and turn and be healed.””
- Quintuple NT attestation of God hardening hearts: Mt 13:14-15, Mk 4:12; Lk 8:10; John 12:40, and Acts 28:26-27
- There are a number of examples of God hardening Pharaoh’s heart: “The Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt and he pursued the Israelites, who were going out boldly” (Ex 14:8) [*“God made me do it!” ...sovereignty*].
- Isaiah volunteered before knowing the details. Does he regret his promise after hearing these words? [*If this is how you treat your friends...*]

Isaiah 6:11-13

➤ Looking for hope: “11 Then I said, ‘How long, O Lord?’ And he said: ‘Until cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without people, and the land is utterly desolate; 12 until the Lord sends everyone far away, and vast is the emptiness in the midst of the land. 13 Even if a tenth part remain in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak whose stump remains standing when it is felled.’ The holy seed is its stump.”

➤ Application: Authentic experiences with God’s holiness seem to induce self-examination and repentance, resulting in **humility**, **not hubris**. [*God is still calling?!*]

Isaiah 7

- Oracles concerning the Syro-Ephramite Crisis
- Date: 735 B.C.E.
- Cast of characters:
 - King Ahaz of Judah
 - King Rezin of Damascus, capital of Syria (or Aram)
 - King Pekah of Israel (or Ephraim) — Ramaliah is Pekah's father.
 - Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria (TP3)

Isaiah 7: “Syro-Ephramite Crisis” (735 BCE)

- Syria and Israel join a coalition against Assyria. Judah does *not* join
- Syria-Israel attack Judah to replace Ahaz with someone they can control (the son of Tabeel). They fail in the coup.
- Syria is conquered by Assyria in 732, and Israel will be destroyed by Assyria in 721.
- Judah becomes dependent on Assyria.

Isaiah 7: “Syro-Ephramite Crisis” (735 BCE)

“1 In the days of Ahaz son of Jotham son of Uzziah, king of Judah, King Rezin of Aram [*Syria*] and King Pekah son of Remaliah of Israel went up to attack Jerusalem, but could not mount an attack against it. 2 When the house of David heard that Aram had allied itself with Ephraim, the heart of Ahaz and the heart of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake before the wind. 3 Then the Lord said to Isaiah, Go out to meet Ahaz, you and your son *Shear-jashub* [*“a remnant shall return”*; *prophetic sign-act meant to reassure king to trust God*]...4 and say to him, Take heed, be quiet, do not fear, and do not let your heart be faint because of these two smoldering stumps of firebrands, because of the fierce anger of Rezin and Aram and the son of Remaliah. 5 Because Aram—with Ephraim and the son of Remaliah—has plotted evil against you, saying, 6 Let us go up against Judah and cut off Jerusalem and conquer it for ourselves and make the son of Tabeel king in it; 7 therefore thus says the Lord God: It shall not stand, and it shall not come to pass. 8 For the head of Aram is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin. (Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be shattered, no longer a people.) 9 The head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is the son of Remaliah. If you do not stand firm in faith, you shall not stand at all.” [*summary: trust God not military advisors...Isaiah as isolationist*]

7:8: far less than the 65 years indicated here before Israel was destroyed in 721.

Isaiah 7:14 (“Syro-Ephramite Crisis”)

- “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.”
- Immanuel: “God is with us” [you don’t need to make a deal with Assyria or Syria-Israel]
- Hebrew: *‘almah* (“young woman”)
- Greek in Septuagint: *parthenos* (“virgin”)
- Latin in Vulgate: *Ecce virgo* (“Behold the virgin”)
- Isaiah becomes the prophet of the annunciation of Jesus; scholarly consensus on this *mistranslation* — but not necessarily a commentary either way on the virgin birth.

Another Sign-Act Example (Isaiah 8:3-4)

- “And I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. Then the Lord said to me, Name him Maher-shalal-hash-baz; 4 for before the child knows how to call ‘My father’ or ‘My mother,’ the wealth of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be carried away by the king of Assyria.”
- Isaiah’s oracles have political relevance in the present and immediate future, not just some distance time.
- Irrespective of first century, Mary, and Jesus; concerned about Isaiah’s present

Reading through Jewish & Christian Eyes

Isaiah 9:1-7, "1 But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. 2 The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness — on them light has shined. 3 You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. 4 For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. 5 For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire. 6 For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this"

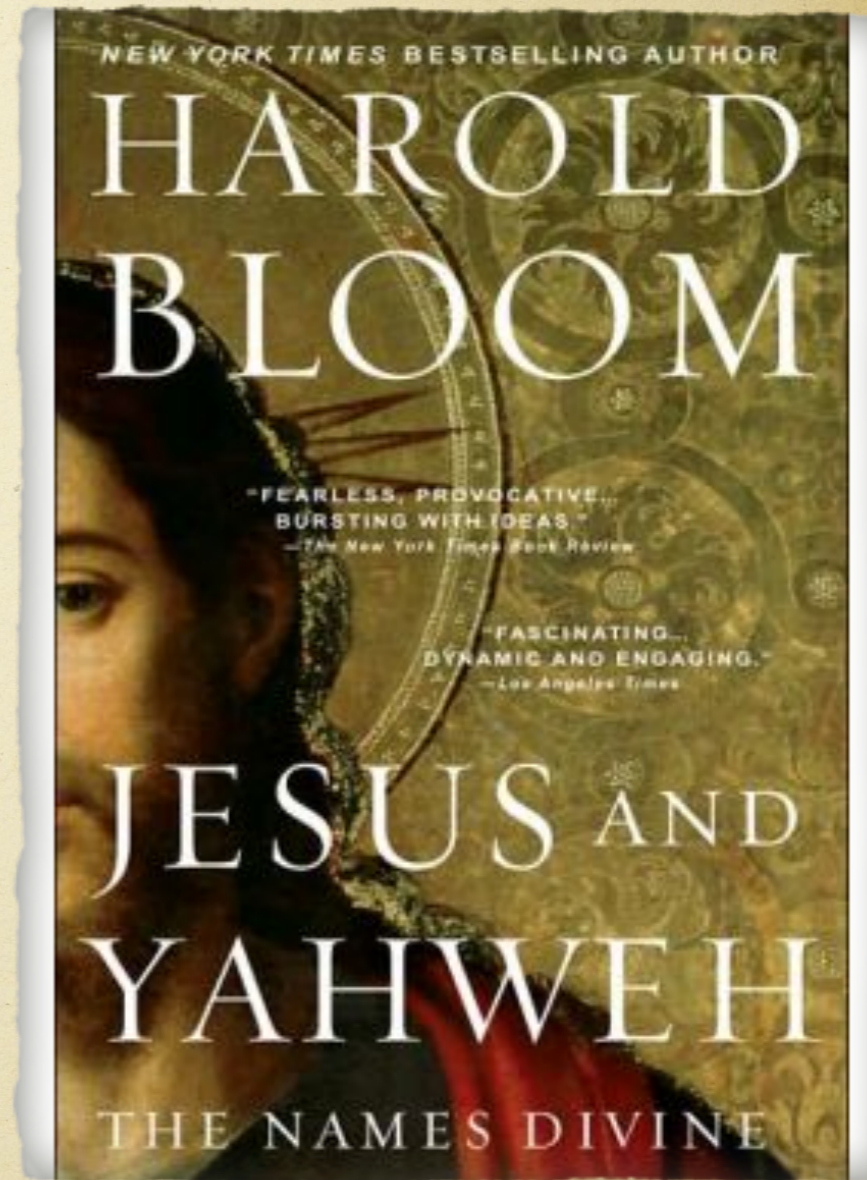
Reading through Jewish & Christian Eyes

- Original Context of Isaiah: Celebrated the coronation of a king of First Isaiah's Day (Isaiah of Jerusalem), probably Hezekiah (who ruled 715-687 BCE).
- Christian Tradition: Oracle of messianic king to come
- The parts of Isaiah most familiar to Christians are from their use in Advent/Christmas liturgies as well as Handel's *Messiah* (Isaiah 9:1-7 and 11:1-9) are not referred to in the NT.
- The only parts of 9:1-7 quotes in the NT are vv. 1-2, quoted in Mt. 4:15-16 to explain why Galilee (*a heavily Gentile region*) became the center of Jesus' ministry.
- The earliest Christian interpreters of Isaiah (the NT authors, writing after Paul in the late first century) were most concerned about authorizing the new movement's mission to the Gentiles.
- Patristic and medieval interpreters, however, were more concerned with Jesus' messianic nature, so they were drawn more to 9:6-7 and 11:1-2 in developing the church's liturgical tradition.

On Christian readings of Jewish scripture

“Christian stole our watch...

and for the last two thousand years have been trying to tell us what time it is.”



Prophetic Sign-Act (Isaiah 20:3-4)

“Then the Lord said, ‘Just as my servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot for three years as a sign and a portent against Egypt and Ethiopia, so shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians as captives and the Ethiopians as exiles, both the young and the old, naked and barefoot, with buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.’”

[Nonviolent direct action]



Déjà vu

➤ Isaiah 36:1-39:8 is likely borrowed directly from from 2 Kings 18:13 - 20:19.



from Henotheism to Monotheism (Is 44:6-8)

“6 Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god. 7 Who is like me? Let them proclaim it, let them declare and set it forth before me. Who has announced from of old the things to come? Let them tell us what is yet to be. 8 Do not fear, or be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? You are my witnesses! Is there any god besides me? There is no other rock; I know not one.”

from Henotheism to Monotheism (Is 44:6-8)

- Exodus 20:2-3, “2 I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; 3 you shall have **no other gods before me.**”
- Deut 32:8-9, “8 When the Most High apportioned the nations, when he divided humankind, he **fixed the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the gods;** 9 the Lord's own portion was his people, Jacob his allotted share.”
- Joshua 24:2, 15, “And Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Long ago your ancestors — Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor — lived beyond the Euphrates and **served other gods....** Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, **we will serve the Lord.**”

Servant Song #1 (Isaiah 42:1-4)

“1 Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. 2 He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street [*“Away in a Manger”*]; 3 a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. 4 He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching.”

Original context of “servant,” before Jesus:

➤ Cyrus (of Persia)

➤ Prophet himself

➤ Messiah

➤ Israelite nation as a whole

Cyrus II of Persia as Messiah (Isaiah 44:28 - 45:1)

- ❧ “says of Cyrus, "He is my shepherd, and he shall carry out all my purpose"; and who says of Jerusalem, "It shall be rebuilt," and of the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid." Thus says the Lord to his **anointed**, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped to subdue nations before him and strip kings of their robes, to open doors before him — and the gates shall not be closed.”
- ❧ Cyrus II as God’s agent: founder of Persian empire, ends the exile, begins the restoration.
- ❧ “Messiah,” anointed by God...the Christ in Greek.

Servant Song #2 (Isaiah 49:1-6)

1 Listen to me, O coastlands, pay attention, you peoples from far away! The Lord called me before I was born, while I was in my mother's womb he named me. 2 He made my mouth like a sharp sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow, in his quiver he hid me away. 3 And he said to me, "You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified." 4 But I said, "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity; yet surely my cause is with the Lord, and my reward with my God." 5 And now the Lord says, who formed me in the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him, and that Israel might be gathered to him, for I am honored in the sight of the Lord, and my God has become my strength— 6 he says, "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

Original context of "servant," before Jesus:

➤ Majority: Isaiah speaking in first person about his own mission

➤ Others: (1) whole nation with Israel as the servant, (2) An idealized Israel, (3) Faithful subset of the nation is the servant

Servant Song #3 (Isaiah 50:4-9)

➤ “4 The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he wakens — wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. 5 The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. 6 I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. 7 The Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; 8 he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. 9 It is the Lord God who helps me; who will declare me guilty? All of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up.”

➤ Original context of “servant,” before Jesus:

➤ Prophet speaking in first person as the model

➤ Servant as the idealized Israel

Servant Song #4 (Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12)

“13 See, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. 14 Just as there were many who were astonished at him —so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of mortals— 15 so he shall startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate. 1 Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? 2 For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. 3 He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account. 4 Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed.

Servant Song #4 (Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12)

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. 8 By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. 9 They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. 10 Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain. When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days; through him the will of the Lord shall prosper. 11 Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

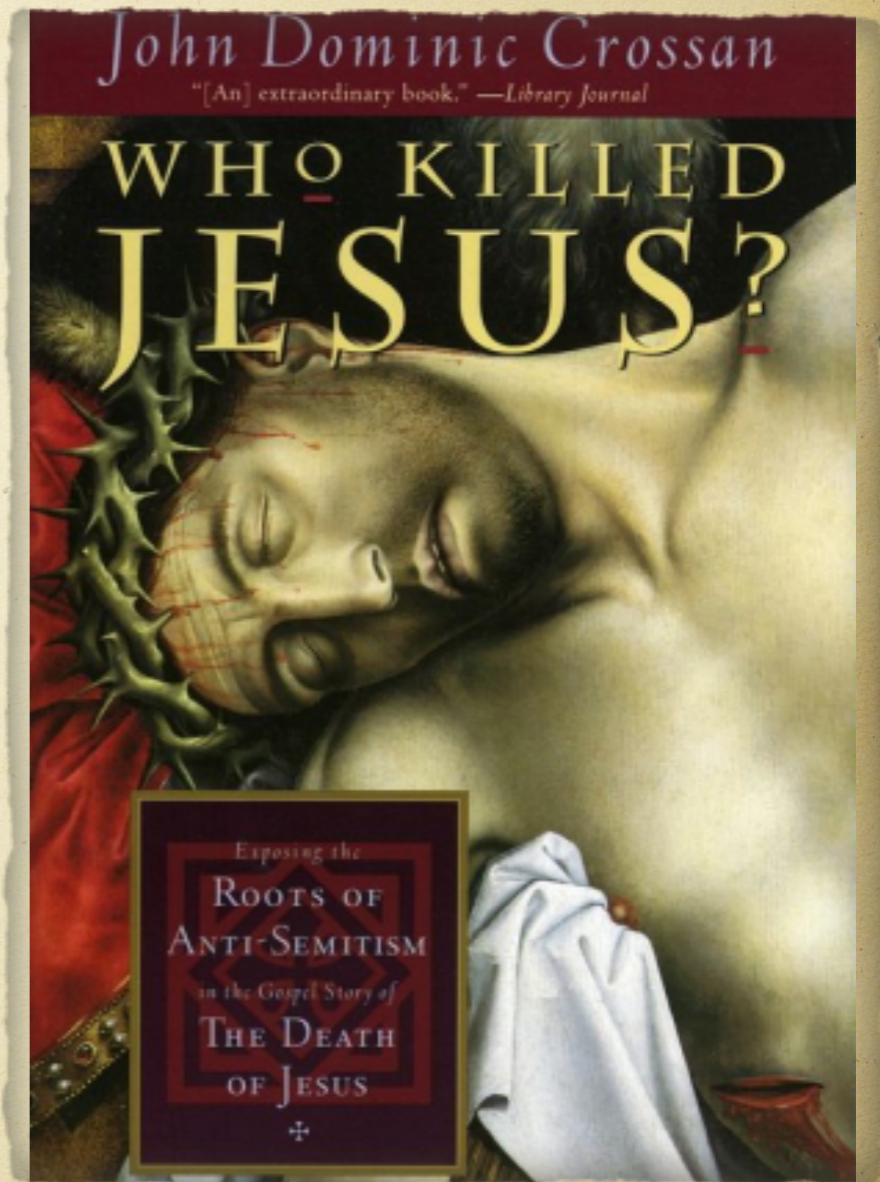
Servant Song #4: “Vicarious suffering”

nation’s unjust exile in Babylon is suffered by Israel on behalf of the world

“The issue is whether the passion accounts are prophecy historicized or history remembered. Raymond Brown [*Death of the Messiah*] is 80% in the direction of history remembered. I’m 80% in the opposite direction.”

Prophecy historicized: Christians searching their Scriptures to understand events in their present, found these ancient descriptions and weaved them theologically into their writings. Take prophecy and weave it theologically into history.

History remembered: memory of events



Parallel with Luke 4 (Isaiah 61:1-2)

“1 The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; 2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;”

Portion of Isaiah scroll that Jesus reads in the synagogue

Parallel with Matthew 25 (Isaiah 58:6-7)

“6 Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? 7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?”



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