Isaiah 56–66

BERIT OLAM
Studies in Hebrew Narrative & Poetry

Isaiah 56–66

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A Michael Glazier Book

LITURGICAL PRESS
Collegeville, Minnesota

www.litpress.org

A Michael Glazier Book published by Liturgical Press

Cover design by Ann Blattner.

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Niskanen, Paul.
Isaiah 56–66 / Paul V. Niskanen.
pages cm. — (BERIT OLAM: studies in Hebrew narrative & poetry)
"A Michael Glazier book."
ISBN 978-0-8146-5068-4 — ISBN 978-0-8146-8256-2 (ebook)
1. Bible. Isaiah, LVI–LXVI—Commentaries. I. Title.

BS1520.5.N57 2014
224'.107—dc23 2014008292

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	*Anchor Bible Dictionary.* Edited by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York, 1992.
ANET	*Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament.* Edited by J. B. Pritchard. Princeton, 1954.
BDB	Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Oxford, 1907.
BHS	*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Edited by K. Elliger and W. Rudolph. Stuttgart, 1983.
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CD	Cairo Genizah copy of the *Damascus Document*
EBib	Etudes Bibliques
HeyJ	*Heythrop Journal*
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
IDBSup	*Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: Supplementary Volume.* Edited by K. Crim. Nashville, 1976.
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplement
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NAB	New American Bible

NABRE	New American Bible Revised Edition
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NIB	*The New Interpreter's Bible*
NIV	New International Version
NJPS	New Jewish Publication Society translation of the Tanakh
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTM	Old Testament Message
PIBA	Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association
RB	*Revue biblique*
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
Syr	Syriac
Tg	Targum
Vg	Vulgate
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament

INTRODUCTION

It is a somewhat peculiar enterprise to write a literarily focused commentary on Third Isaiah. There are, after all, no manuscripts of an independent literary composition known as Trito-Isaiah which one may examine, and the very recognition of Trito-Isaiah as a distinct unit within the book of Isaiah was not evident to anyone until the publication of Bernhard Duhm's commentary in 1892. Furthermore, the appearance of Third Isaiah in the world of scholarship with Duhm's commentary was the result of historical-critical as well as (or perhaps more than) literary considerations.[1] Duhm began by considering the different subject matter of chapters 56–66 compared to chapters 40–55. He found in the later chapters of Isaiah an interest in sacrifice and Sabbath observance that is absent in 40–55.[2] His initial observation, which can justly be called literary, quickly evolved into a historical argument for a later date (the middle of the fifth century BCE) and a different location (Palestine rather than Babylon) for chapters 56–66. So just as Isaiah 40–66 was first distinguished from Isaiah 1–39 by its easily discernible sixth-century historical context, so too, chapters 56–66 were further distinguished from chapters 40–55 as the postexilic Judean context of the former became

[1] Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja übersetzt und erklärt* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1892).

[2] With the passage of time, it has also become more clear that the initial distinction between Second and Third Isaiah was made based on an unfortunate bias that saw an irreconcilable difference between "prophetic" and "priestly" concerns. The prophets were idealized by early modern scholars as representing the authentic religion of Israel over and against the cultic and legal concerns of priests and theocrats, which led to the devolution of prophetic religion into legalistic Judaism. This anti-Semitic reading of biblical history has had an unfortunate impact on biblical studies.

more clearly perceptible over and against the late exilic, Babylonian context of the latter.[3]

There is a very real danger of a type of circular argumentation here. If a work within a work (such as Trito-Isaiah within the book of Isaiah) is identified on the basis of subject matter and/or a plausible historical location for the composition of such subject matter, the very presuppositions behind the identification have a tendency to become the conclusive results of research. One can see this, for example, in the analysis of Isaiah 56–66 where passages that do not have an interest in sacrifice or Sabbath (e.g., 56:9–57:13) might be thought to be preexilic and therefore pre-Trito-Isaian.[4] One must be cautious when one knows an author only through that author's work, and yet that author's work is defined precisely according to what we believe we know about its author.

All of this does not mean, of course, that one cannot write a literary commentary on Third Isaiah. After all, the author(s) of each historically distinct part of the book of Isaiah would naturally have their own literary style and theological themes. What it does mean is that historical and literary studies of Scripture are more intimately linked than many practitioners of either would sometimes like to believe. It also means that I, at least, cannot undertake this commentary without acknowledging such connections and the necessary debt owed to scholars both historical and literary who have preceded me.

A second consideration that should be mentioned at the beginning of a commentary on Third Isaiah is the near-universal recognition that "it ain't that simple." That is to say, while commentaries continue to proceed along the now-traditional divisions of Isaiah 1–39, 40–55, and 56–66, few would actually maintain that these divisions are as clear as the volume titles would indicate. There is ample material in Isaiah 1–39 that shows evidence of composition or redaction by one or more of the

[3] Such distinctions are sometimes called into question today, especially with regard to the alleged Babylonian provenance of Second Isaiah. Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer has given an extensive argument for the Judean location of Isaiah 40–55 in *For the Comfort of Zion: The Geographical and Theological Location of Isaiah 40–55* (Leiden: Brill, 2011). I remain of the opinion, however, that such a geographical distinction is warranted at the very least by the location of the implied audience, but probably by the actual location as well, especially with respect to Isa 40–48. Since we are dealing here with Third rather than Second Isaiah, we need not enter into the debate concerning the latter's provenance. It is worth noting, however, that the implied geographical location of Trito-Isaiah is Zion and that its implied audience is the children of Zion who have returned (or are in the process of returning) there.

[4] So, e.g., Paul Volz, *Jesaia II, Kommentar zum alten Testament* (Leipzig: D. Werner Scholl, 1932), 207.

latter Isaiahs.[5] I myself have written concerning some of the "overlap" between Second and Third Isaiah.[6] And there are still champions of the authorial unity of Isaiah 40–66 today, over a century after Duhm's hypothesis was introduced.[7] So, on the one hand, biblical scholarship since Duhm has identified and distinguished a Trito-Isaiah within the book of Isaiah such that one may focus an analysis on the language, rhetoric, imagery, and theology of Isaiah 56–66 as the present work intends to do. Yet on the other hand, one is wise to recognize the connections as well as the distinctions. We are dealing not with an independent "book" but with a part of a larger work and so should keep this in sight as well while proceeding through chapters 56–66.

Looking within Isaiah 56–66 one sees another tendency in recent scholarship. Even while the unity of the book of Isaiah is sometimes reasserted, the disunity of Trito-Isaiah is often raised. As Joseph Blenkinsopp has summed up much of the current scholarship and debate over questions of authorship: "It will be clear by now that *chs. 56–66 do not come from one hand or from one time period*."[8] If Blenkinsopp is correct—and I believe

[5] See Marvin Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–4 and the Post-Exilic Understanding of the Isaianic Tradition*, BZAW 171 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1988). Summing up the findings of a number of redaction-critical studies on Isaiah, Sweeney writes: "Not only do their studies indicate that chapters 40–66 build upon themes, concepts, and language from chapters 1–39, but that the first part of the book is presented in such a way as to anticipate the concerns of the second. In other words, the two parts of the book cannot be properly understood in isolation from each other, they must be understood as two interrelated components of a redactionally unified whole" (p. 5). Odil H. Steck ("Tritojesaja im Jesajabuch," in *The Book of Isaiah / Le Livre D'Isaïe : Les Oracles Et Leurs Relectures Unité Et Complexité De L'Ouvrage*, ed. J. Vermeylen [Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1989], 361–406) also makes a compelling case that Trito-Isaiah cannot be simply separated from the book of Isaiah as a whole since each successive redaction of the former also involves a reworking of the latter.

[6] Paul Niskanen, "Yhwh as Father, Redeemer, and Potter in Isaiah 63:7–64:11," *CBQ* 68 (July 2006): 397–407.

[7] Very recently Shalom Paul (*Isaiah 40–66: Translation and Commentary* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012], 5–12) has made a strong case for authorial unity. He notes that the natural break is not between chapters 55 and 56 but between 48 and 49 as the setting shifts from Babylon to Judea. That Deutero-Isaiah may have "practiced what he preached" and returned to Jerusalem to continue his prophetic ministry is not a far-fetched hypothesis.

[8] Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 19b (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 59. While Blenkinsopp represents the majority opinion of current scholarship, an earlier generation was equally convinced of Trito-Isaian unity. The most thorough arguments based on literary analysis were put forward by Karl Elliger (*Die Einheit des Tritojesaja* [Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1928]) and Hugo Odeberg (*Trito-Isaiah [Isaiah 56–66]: A Literary and Linguistic Analysis* [Uppsala:

he may be—a commentary on Isaiah 56–66 such as this one, focusing on the "final form" of the text—must exercise caution.[9] Any attempt to read Trito-Isaiah simply as one of three self-contained and unified works by three distinct authors within the book of Isaiah is doomed to failure. Adopting such an approach, one would miss both the complexities within chapters 56–66 as well as the connections between these chapters and the rest of the book of Isaiah. It is more prudent to proceed along the lines of arguing that chapters 56–66 constitute an identifiable unit within the book of Isaiah, while recognizing that other dividing lines are in fact possible. The genesis of these chapters is then beyond the scope of this commentary, but the recognition that this unit possesses a certain inner logic to be seen in rhetorical structure, vocabulary, and key themes allows for a closer examination of these elements. Whether Duhm's hypothesis concerning the divisions within Isaiah is the best way of structuring the literary treatment of the book is a question open to debate, but it is the hypothesis from which we now proceed.

As I began to write the present commentary, an interesting development presented itself in the form of computer software developed by an Israeli team headed by Moshe Koppel. The software "analyzes style and word choices to distinguish parts of a single text written by different authors."[10] As a test, it was run on the book of Isaiah, and it did indeed

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Lundequistska, 1931]). At the same time, Charles C. Torrey (*The Second Isaiah: A New Interpretation* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928]) was arguing for the unity of Isa 40–66.

[9] I find the argument for different time periods more compelling than that for different hands, and even on this point a word of clarification is necessary. When scholars speak of the redactional stages and "time periods" of Trito-Isaiah, these can frequently run from the end of the sixth century on into the second century BCE. This obviously necessitates the conjecture of many hands as well. I have yet to see, however, a compelling argument for some of the very late datings. All of chapters 56–66 can quite easily be understood against the backdrop of the early postexilic period (late sixth to early fifth centuries), especially in their focus on the restoration of Jerusalem. The differences in content, language, and style one encounters are certainly not beyond the range of a single author (pace Seizo Sekine, *Die Tritojesajanische Sammlung [Jes 56–66] redaktionsgeschichtlich untersucht*, BZAW 175 [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989], 239–84; and Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 59) and may reflect the author's adapted response to developments over the span of decades rather than centuries. Ultimately these questions of authorship and dating are not germane here. It simply must be pointed out that the arguments for unity in Trito-Isaiah (which is presupposed to some extent by a literary analysis of chapters 56–66) are not without their merits, but at the same time they should be taken in the broader context of the composition of the book of Isaiah.

[10] Matti Friedman, "An Israeli Algorithm Sheds Light on Distinct Writing Styles Found within Bible," *The Ledger* (June 30, 2011).

support the consensus that Isaiah is the product of more than one hand. Instead of seeing the break between First and Second Isaiah as occurring between chapters 39 and 40, however, it situated it somewhat earlier in chapter 33.[11] Also of interest is the fact that the program reported no change in authorship between chapters 55 and 56. This is yet another sober reminder that our knowledge is imperfect, and our best hypotheses of today are always subject to further analysis and revision.

Given the caveats mentioned above, it does seem right and good nevertheless to comment on Isaiah 56–66 as a cohesive unit. There is, as Paul Hanson argues, a unity of tradition if not of authorship.[12] If one goes this route, however, one must also recognize the broader unity between the variously numbered parts of the book of Isaiah and their traditions. The distinctions we then make between them are still largely driven by chronological mileposts. Thus the postexilic Judean setting provides a new historical stage within the pages of the book of Isaiah.[13] Even if these chapters themselves originate from many hands and their composition spans many decades or even centuries, there is at least this historical baseline that justifies an examination of these final chapters of the book of Isaiah as a unit. Furthermore, the new theological issues raised in this context, whether by the same or different author(s) of earlier chapters in Isaiah, warrant a focused examination of Third Isaiah's language, style, rhetoric, imagery, and, above all, theology. However one breaks down the divisions within the book, it is Third (or maybe we should say "Last") Isaiah who gives us the book of Isaiah as we know it today.

Trito-Isaiah and the Book of Isaiah

Given that Trito-Isaiah exists only as part of the larger scroll of the Prophet Isaiah, some preliminary observations on the message of

[11] Ibid.

[12] Paul Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 60n29.

[13] As already noted, some would argue that there is no locational change between Second and Third Isaiah, both being written from Judea (Tiemeyer, *For the Comfort of Zion*). A temporal change is more evident and universally recognized as the context is clearly postexilic, although how far into the postexilic period continues to be debated. Jacques Vermeylen (*Du Prophète Isaïe à l'apocalyptique. Isaïe I–XXXV, miroir d'un demi-millénaire d'expérience religieuse en Israël*, 2 vols., EBib [Paris: Gabalda, 1977–78]) argues for a first edition of Trito-Isaiah from the middle of the fifth century BCE that went through a number of redactions until its final form in the middle of the third century BCE.

Trito-Isaiah in relation to the book of Isaiah are in order.[14] These will be further developed and expanded in the commentary on particular sections. The name Isaiah means "Yhwh saves." Never was a prophet's name more apropos as a summary of his message. The book of Isaiah speaks of God's salvation and deliverance from the time of the Syro-Ephraimite War to the reconstruction of the postexilic period. Yhwh's salvation in Isaiah is, however, neither unconditional nor universal. It first of all requires and depends on a human response of right action or justice. The opening chapter of Isaiah calls on the people to:

> Wash yourselves! Clean yourselves!
> Put away your evil deeds from before my eyes!
> Cease to do evil!
> Learn to do good!
> Seek out justice! . . .
> If you are willing and obey,
> you will eat the good of the land;
> but if you refuse and disobey,
> you will be eaten by the sword;
> for the mouth of Yhwh has spoken. (Isa 1:16-17a; 19)

The contingency of the promise of well-being and salvation could hardly be more emphatically expressed. It is a conversion to just living that is the prerequisite for receiving the gift of Yhwh. The opening chapter goes on to state: "Zion shall be saved by justice, and her repentant ones by righteousness" (Isa 1:27).

Second, the salvation proclaimed in the book of Isaiah is associated with a remnant that will survive. This remnant is closely connected to the city of Jerusalem, as already evident in the previous quotation from Isaiah 1:27, which speaks of salvation for the repentant in Zion. Historically, the remnant that is daughter Zion (Isa 1:8) can be traced back to the events of the Syro-Ephraimite War (735–734 BCE) and the Assyrian invasion by the forces of Sennacherib (701 BCE) in which Jerusalem survived these onslaughts, albeit not without experiencing something of the surrounding devastation (Isa 1:7-8). Theologically, the underlying reason

[14] While some have argued that Trito-Isaiah at one point was an independent composition that was added to the scroll of Isaiah only after its completion as a self-standing work (e.g., Claus Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66: A Commentary*, OTL [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969]), this position is difficult to hold today. More likely is the theory that sees Trito-Isaiah as the final redactor(s) of the book of Isaiah, responsible not only for the final eleven chapters but the reshaping of earlier material as well (Steck, "Tritojesaja im Jesajabuch"; see also Rolf Rendtorff, "Zur Komposition des Buches Jesaja," *VT* 34 [1984]: 295–320).

for Jerusalem's being the geographic location of this remnant is Yhwh's holy dwelling there on Mount Zion. This limited historical salvation for the remnant in Zion is nevertheless a symbol and a promise of something greater. A more universal state of peace and salvation is envisioned in a future time when all the nations of the world will share in Zion's blessings (Isa 2). Zion, the redeemed city in Isaiah, paradoxically stands for the redemption of a select few as well as the salvation of the many.

These pan-Isaian themes are clearly evident in the concluding chapters of the book. Trito-Isaiah takes up the vocabulary and theology of Isaiah of Jerusalem from the eighth century and applies them to his own time and circumstances. Salvation brought on by justice, the peace and welfare of Jerusalem, a remnant that is redeemed, and hints of a future universalism are all continued in Trito-Isaiah. But in recalling these great themes, Trito-Isaiah also expands on them, adding imagery that is more distinctively his own while still evoking earlier Isaian texts. Among these images, those of light, garments and adornment, building or construction, and the celebration of a wedding are especially prominent in Trito-Isaiah as symbols of salvation. The tensions in the book of Isaiah—between the remnant and the many, and between God's gifts of peace and salvation and the demand for human acts of justice—reach their climax in Trito-Isaiah.

In the drama between human and divine activity in Isaiah, Trito-Isaiah synthesizes the theology of the whole book by tightening the intricate connection between divine grace and salvation on the one hand and human works and acts of justice on the other. The link between justice (*mšpṭ*) and salvation (*yšwʿh*) is expressed most succinctly in the single word "righteousness" (*ṣdqh*), which, while prominent throughout the book of Isaiah, is uniquely used by Trito-Isaiah to express both sides of this duality—the divine gift of salvation and the human acts of justice required for its realization. One can see in the opening verse of Trito-Isaiah (Isa 56:1) this double reality expressed quite concisely in a poetic verse that could represent the main thesis of the prophet.

If the bonds that tie Isaiah 56–66 to Isaiah 1–39 are strong, those that unite these final chapters to Isaiah 40–55 are even stronger. Historically, the Isaian promise of salvation for a remnant is seen as coming to fulfillment in the return of exiles to Jerusalem throughout Isaiah 40–66. In the context of this historical moment, Yhwh is called Israel's Redeemer (an otherwise rare designation for the God of Israel) numerous times in chapters 40–66 of Isaiah.[15] The historical and theological continuity between Second and Third Isaiah finds expression in many other similarities of

[15] Niskanen, "Yhwh as Father," 402. The term "redeemer" (*gʾl*) is used of Yhwh thirteen times in Isa 40–66 and only five times in the rest of the Hebrew Bible.

terminology and ideas as well. Blenkinsopp lists some of the more significant themes and terms: comfort, the coming of God (with power), the glory of God, the creator God, justice/righteousness/salvation, and the servant/servants.[16] Seizo Sekine has given an even more extensive list of common themes.[17] Most recently, Shalom Paul has provided both a table of corresponding terms from Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah (or what he calls the earlier and latter prophecies of Deutero-Isaiah) and a list of ideas common to both sections. Among the themes common to Isaiah 40–55 and 56–66 which he notes that have not already been mentioned are the expectation of an ingathering, daughter Zion, an eternal covenant, female images of Yhwh, and an ambivalent attitude toward the nations.[18]

Literary Analysis of Isaiah 56–66

Since there have been numerous commentaries written on Trito-Isaiah (including those contained within commentaries on Isa 1–66 and Isa 40–66) from a predominantly historical-critical perspective, it is not the intention here to repeat the many arguments made concerning questions of date, authorship, sources, formation history, historical background, etc. Rather, the idea behind the present work is to focus on the "final form" of chapters 56–66 as a literary composition. As I mentioned at the outset, this literary focus does not preclude historical questions, which are to a certain extent inextricably linked to any literary work. What it does mean is that I intend to treat the received text(s) with all due seriousness and keep the complex questions concerning the (in all probability) complicated history of the text of Trito-Isaiah to the necessary minimum. If one's focus is on the formation of a text, one is free to prefer any of several hypothetical earlier versions of a text (as commentators frequently do). But in so doing, there is the danger of being dismissive of certain parts of the text that have been "demoted" by the unflattering designations of interpolations, glosses, or late additions. Such an approach fails to explain the coherence and meaning of a text as constructed by the final editor(s) and as received by faith communities. My intention is to attempt to address these questions of coherence and meaning, proceeding along the following lines.

[16] Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 31–33.
[17] Sekine, *Tritojesajanische Sammlung*, 183–216.
[18] Paul, *Isaiah 40–66*, 10–11.

First of all, I would like to pay careful attention to the vocabulary of Trito-Isaiah. The widespread use of a number of key terms throughout these chapters allows the careful reader to discern unifying thought patterns throughout the work. Texts that on the surface might appear to be disconnected or even at odds with one another can suddenly appear in a new light when considering these textual echoes and refrains that run like threads through Trito-Isaiah.

Attention to the poetry of Trito-Isaiah then expands upon this lexical analysis. The combination and arrangement of key terms in poetical parallelism helps to clarify what Trito-Isaiah understands by each word as well as showing the broader picture of a coherent theology built upon this vocabulary. To take perhaps the most significant example, the key term *ṣdqh* is alternately paired with *mšpṭ* and *yšwʿh* to great effect as we shall soon see from the very opening verse. Significant word play also connects key portions of the text, such as the use of *ʿmmym* (Isa 56:7; 61:9; 62:10; 63:3, 6) and *ʾmmym* (Isa 60:2) with roughly synonymous meaning ("peoples"/"nations") at the beginning and throughout the core of Trito-Isaiah. Structuring elements such as verse patterns and chiasm both proximate and distant also help to organize the thought of Trito-Isaiah. Another prominent feature in the poetry of Trito-Isaiah is the use of triplets, or the threefold repetition of key words within a brief poetical sequence. This draws heightened attention to the significance of the idea or image thus repeated.

Within the poetry of Trito-Isaiah one also encounters a wealth of symbolic imagery. Attention will be given to the images and symbols used by Trito-Isaiah in communicating his message. Trito-Isaiah likes to mix and blend metaphorical images, often clustered under a central metaphor. Here, there are often connections between images that might not be immediately apparent to the casual modern reader. To give one example, the wedding imagery of Isaiah 62:4-5 can be seen to extend also into the images of a new name and crown (Isa 62:2-4). The imagery of crowning and adornment also flows between symbolism associated with a wedding and with military victory (Isa 61:10–62:3). In addition to these connections, there are often startling contradictions and tensions between the images used by Trito-Isaiah. Yhwh can be described in one moment as a nursing mother and in the very next as a conquering warrior (Isa 66:13-14). The varied and complex imagery that the prophet employs to speak of Yhwh and his actions reveals a sophisticated and nuanced theology of the ultimate incomparability of Yhwh.

Special care will be devoted to the study of the intratextual allusions, highlighting a certain unity to Trito-Isaiah even amid its many paradoxes. The all-too-evident tensions in the text need not lead to its fragmentation. Rather, they reveal a complex and nuanced thought beyond that of the

caricatures of one-note ideologues so often constructed by scholars. Here, we will attempt to read these eleven chapters together. Even if there be multiple authors and redactional layers spanning a compositional history of greater or lesser length, the parts take on a new meaning in light of their present arrangement. There are ample literary clues that these chapters did not simply accrue as a hodgepodge but are meant to be read in their present proximity within the book of Isaiah.

And finally, the connections between Trito-Isaiah and the "other Isaiahs" will be highlighted. Whether or not Trito-Isaiah ever existed as an independent composition before becoming part of the book of Isaiah is an open question. The fact is, however, that we know it only as part of this larger work. Any literary commentary on Trito-Isaiah should come to grips with how to understand this piece in its larger literary context. There are especially profound literary (and undoubtedly historical as well) ties between chapters 56–66 and chapters 40–55. Key vocabulary, imagery, and themes unite these chapters. One may note, for example, the many references to the servant(s) of Yhwh and the designation of Yhwh as Israel's redeemer (*gʾl*). And although the historical connection between Isaiah 56–66 and Isaiah 1–39 is far more remote, the literary links are unmistakable as a simple comparison of the opening and closing of the book clearly demonstrates.[19]

Themes and Theology

This literary analysis, therefore, intends to arrive ultimately at a thematic analysis of Third Isaiah's thought understood in relation to First and Second Isaiah. The theology of the book of Isaiah reaches its final synthesis in chapters 56–66. It can be argued, of course, that any attempt to extract a unified theology from these chapters, whose authorial unity is questioned and whose historical contexts are widely debated and to a large extent unknown, is a futile enterprise. It is not my intention to construct such a systematic theology from the text of Trito-Isaiah but rather to highlight running and recurring themes throughout these chapters. There are, in fact, several pronounced emphases throughout Isaiah 56–66 that merit consideration in themselves, in relation to one another, and with reference to the book of Isaiah. Many of these themes have already come up in a discussion of Trito-Isaiah in relation to the rest of the book of Isaiah. One might say this is due to the fact that the threads that tie chapters 56–66 to chapters 1–55 are to a certain extent the same

[19] See Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–4*.

ones that hold Trito-Isaiah together. It is worthwhile mentioning some of these here at the outset.

Yhwh Alone

Trito-Isaiah has a pronounced focus on the imminent future and Yhwh's impending action on behalf of his people. There is a strong emphasis on the transcendence and incomparability of Yhwh, who alone brings about victory and redemption. The solitary action of Yhwh in defeating his enemies (Isa 59:16-18; 63:3-5) and saving and redeeming his people (Isa 60:16; 63:8-9) emphasizes the gratuitous and miraculous nature of the present and future transformation. Yet this gracious and exclusive action of Yhwh demands a similar exclusive response on the part of the people. Those who would combine the worship of Yhwh with injustice (Isa 58:3-4; 61:8) or with the worship of other gods (Isa 65:3-4, 11) are singled out for severe judgment. There is no place for a worship that is merely formal ritual or for any type of syncretism.

The incomparability of Yhwh is, somewhat paradoxically, frequently accentuated with references to his glory (*kbwd*) and accompanying imagery of light, radiance, and splendor. While present in many passages, this luminous depiction of the coming of Yhwh is brightest in the central text of Isaiah 60, especially at its beginning (Isa 60:1-3) and its end (Isa 60:19-20). There are many other images that Trito-Isaiah employs in order to try to express the inexpressible. The language of light/glory/splendor/radiance, however, plays a preeminent role in describing Yhwh, especially with regard to his coming salvation and victory.

Righteousness/Victory

The key term *ṣdqh,* which appears twice in the opening verse of Isaiah 56–66, has a broad range of meaning that requires more than one corresponding English translation, depending on the context. The traditional translation "righteousness" refers to a human moral position and is closely linked with justice (*mšpṭ*). But the term is also used of Yhwh's action in which the "righteousness" of Yhwh is principally understood as his vindication and salvation of the righteous. In this latter sense of victory it is often paralleled with salvation (*yšwʿh*). This victory of Yhwh is also a two-edged sword, for the vindication of the righteous is inseparable from the defeat of all the unrighteous, Yhwh's enemies. One of the greatest challenges facing readers of Trito-Isaiah is what to

make of the disturbing images of violent judgment scattered among the prophecies of hope and restoration. Two passages that immediately come to mind are the bloody scene in Edom (Isa 63:1-6) and the gory conclusion to the book (Isa 66:24). Far from being foreign intrusions into the main themes of Trito-Isaiah, these should be seen as integral parts and the logical extension of the prophet's thought. This brings us to the next key terms and ideas.

Servants of Yhwh and Rebels

This duality, which is found throughout Trito-Isaiah, between the righteous who will receive victory and the unrighteous who will be defeated, is reflected in the key terminology used for each group. The servants (*ʿbdym*) of Yhwh are most likely the disciples of the "original" servant of Yhwh so prominent in Isaiah 40–55. The antithesis of these servants who tremble at Yhwh's words (Isa 66:2, 5) are the rebels (*pšʿym*) who do not heed the word of Yhwh but go their own way (Isa 65:2). Trito-Isaiah frequently goes back and forth, addressing first one and then the other of these two camps. Thus we find a pattern in these chapters of two-sided imagery that speaks of victory and defeat, light and darkness, salvation and destruction. The contrast between these two ways runs throughout Trito-Isaiah, sometimes manifesting itself in very tight antithetical parallelism (e.g., Isa 65:13-15). In addition to the language of servants and rebels, these two groups following their two ways are also referred to as Yhwh's chosen (Isa 65:9, 15, 22) and Yhwh's enemies (Isa 59:18; 66:6, 14). The righteousness/victory of Yhwh manifests itself to each of these two groups as either salvation or destruction.

Jerusalem and the Temple

The book of Isaiah as a whole is very Zion-centric, and chapters 56–66 are no exception. Yhwh's house (Isa 56:5) and holy mountain (56:7) make a prominent appearance at the very beginning of Trito-Isaiah. The restoration and repopulating of Jerusalem are dominant themes in many of the final chapters of the book of Isaiah. Most notably we have the concluding vision in Isaiah 66 where Jerusalem, and more specifically the temple mount, is the location and instrument for the comforting of Yhwh's people, as well as the destination of peoples from all the earth who will come to see Yhwh's glory. It is from the midst of Jerusalem and the temple that the voice of Yhwh will thunder forth in the final scene of

coming retribution (Isa 66:6). While some scholars have focused largely on the text of Isaiah 66:1-3 to argue for a rejection of the temple and temple sacrifice on the part of Trito-Isaiah, this argument is difficult, if not impossible, to maintain in light of the many other passages in which Yhwh's house and mountain play such key positive roles.[20] We will again want to consider the whole of chapters 56–66 in order to find a nuanced understanding of Trito-Isaiah's Zion theology. In this broader perspective, Jerusalem and the temple are of central importance to Trito-Isaiah, who can nevertheless be very critical of the practices of temple personnel. This ambivalent or nuanced attitude with respect to the temple can also be found with respect to the nations.

The Peoples and Nations in Yhwh's Plan

That Trito-Isaiah has much to say about the nations is without question. Exactly what he does say is often a matter of debate. The opening oracle speaks of the inclusion of two groups—eunuchs and foreigners—who were traditionally barred from access to the temple. Other texts, most notably in the "core" of Trito-Isaiah (Isa 60–62) and in its conclusion (Isa 66) will be more ambiguous as to the place foreigners find in Trito-Isaiah's worldview. On the one hand, these texts mention the gathering of nations in Jerusalem. They are not only included among Yhwh's people (Isa 56:3) and admitted to the temple (Isa 56:7), but Yhwh even promises to take some of them to be priests at the final gathering of nations to Jerusalem (Isa 66:21). On the other hand the role that these nations have in this new world order can in other places be seen as servile or second class (e.g., Isa 60:12, 14). What is clear is that the focus of Trito-Isaiah's message broadly includes these nations. We will have to probe deeper into the specific texts in order to weigh and judge the actual content of that message. In doing so we will want to avoid any over-simplifications that would label Trito-Isaiah as "universalistic" or "nationalistic" or "sectarian." Here, as in other instances, the thought of Trito-Isaiah is complex and nuanced. Rather than favoring certain passages over others, we shall try to look at the total picture presented by these chapters in order to discern the place of the peoples and nations in Trito-Isaiah.

[20] The viewpoint that sees here a radical rejection of temples and sacrifice is developed most thoroughly by Georg Fohrer, "Kritik an Tempel, Kultus und Kultusausübung in nachexilischer Zeit (Jes 56,9–57,13; 65:1-7; Hag; Mal)," in *Archäologie und Altes Testament: Festschrift f. Kurt Galling z. 8. Jan. 1970* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1970), 101–16.

ISAIAH 56–57

Isaiah 56:1-2: Opening Oracle and Beatitude

Since there exist no independent manuscripts of Trito-Isaiah, the beginning of this portion of the book of Isaiah is itself a matter of hypothetical conjecture. My starting point has been determined for me according to the hypothesis of Duhm. Before setting out with a commentary on chapters 56–66 of Isaiah, however, it is worth noting that this hypothesis has not met with universal agreement. In addition to scholars who doubt the distinction made between Second and Third Isaiah, there are those who will accept the distinction but choose a different line of demarcation.[1] If an introduction or opening passage of an author can set the theme of an entire work (consider the effect of the stirring imperatives to comfort God's people and Jerusalem at the beginning of Deutero-Isaiah), it would seem crucial to start at the right spot. One intriguing

[1] Torrey (*The Second Isaiah*) gave one of the strongest reactions to the thesis of a Third Isaiah, arguing for a single author of chaps. 40–66. More recently, Christopher Seitz ("Isaiah, Book of [Third Isaiah]," in *ABD*, vol. 3, 501–7) first questioned the idea of different authorship for Isa 40–55 and 56–66 since the differences could be explained in terms of different subject matter rather than different time period. In his more recent *NIB* commentary ("The Book of Isaiah 40–66," in *NIB*, vol. 6, 309–552), he argues for a distinction to be made between chaps. 40–53 and 54–66 since in the former chapters the "servant of Yhwh" is spoken about in the singular, while the latter chapters speak of "servants" in the plural (*NIB*, 317). Ulrich Berges, in a paper delivered at the SBL in Chicago in 2012, raised the possibility of starting Trito-Isaiah with Isa 54:21b as the "title verse" of this final section. His argument is supported by three textual breaks in 1QIsa^{a} that mark a new section beginning at that point. In addition to a line break in the middle of Isa 54:17, there is an added space between lines and a *paragraphos* in the margin marking a new section. "This is the inheritance of the servants of Yhwh," which begins the new section, would then be the title or theme of Trito-Isaiah.

alternative to Duhm's choice for marking the beginning of this work within a work is the proposal of Ulrich Berges who argues on textual grounds for Isaiah 54:17b as perhaps the opening of Trito-Isaiah.[2] I find the argument rather compelling, and although I will not be offering an extended commentary on Isaiah 55 here, we may note that the opening themes of the inheritance (*nḥlt*) and the victory/righteousness (*ṣdqh*) of the servants of Yhwh give a more optimistic tone to Trito-Isaiah than is sometimes admitted when starting with chapter 56 and its mixture of hopes (Isa 56:1-8) and threats (Isa 56:9-12). Likewise, the grace and inscrutable action of Yhwh, so prominent in chapter 55, are themes that echo throughout chapters 56–66.

Suffice it here to say that Isaiah 56 does not appear as a dramatic intrusion clearly marking a new and entirely different piece of text. Rather, it continues and develops the language and thought of the preceding chapters. We begin, then, where we do as a matter of convention as much as (or more than) conviction.

Starting with chapter 56 as we are here, one also finds a fitting overture to the final chapters of this great prophetic book. Third Isaiah begins in full stride with themes that are thoroughly Isaian through and through. After the opening oracular formula ("Thus says Yhwh"), the prophet delivers the double imperative to observe and to do "justice" (*mšpṭ*) and "righteousness" (*ṣdqh*). The eighth-century passion of Isaiah of Jerusalem continues to burn in the latter chapters of this prophetic book. His concern for true religious devotion that is lived out through ethical conduct in one's daily life shines as brightly here as ever. These verses would appear to blend seamlessly with the opening chapter of Isaiah and its own appeals for justice and a restoration of righteousness (Isa 1:17, 21, 26, 27).[3] The unmistakable imprint of the spirit of Isaiah is further found in the second half of the opening verse which speaks of Yhwh's salvation (*yšwʿh*) and deliverance (*ṣdqh*) about to come. This salvation, which is entirely Yhwh's doing as an unmerited gift to his people Israel, has been a constant promise of the Prophet Isaiah, and Trito-Isaiah once more invokes its imminent arrival.

What is striking in the Hebrew text of Isaiah 56:1 (and what is invariably lost in translation) is the repetition and double meaning of the term *ṣdqh*. In the first occurrence in this verse, English translations generally translate *ṣdqh* as "righteousness" or "what is right" in a roughly synonymous parallelism with the "justice" that precedes it. In the second

[2] Berges, SBL paper, Chicago, 2012.

[3] There is a slight change in the vocabulary of Isa 1:21 and 26, which use *ṣdq* where Isa 56:1 has *ṣdqh*. There is an exact parallel with Isa 1:27, which uses the same two nouns in a bicolon as does Isa 56:1.

half of the verse, *ṣdqh* is usually rendered as "deliverance" or "vindication," corresponding to the "salvation" of the previous line. This gives us an ABCB pattern of three key Isaian terms, as has been pointed out by Gregory Polan.[4] He observes that the first pair—*mšpṭ* and *ṣdqh*—occurs frequently throughout Isaiah 1–39 (Isa 1:21b; 1:27; 5:7c; 5:16; 9:6d; 16:5b; 26:9b; 28:17a; 32:1a; 32:16; 33:5), while the second pair—*yšwʿh* and *ṣdqh*—is common to Isaiah 40–55 (Isa 45:8b-c; 45:21d; 46:13a; 51:5a; 51:6c; 51:8b).[5] Trito-Isaiah then ties the two together, as it were, in a synthesis of the first two main movements in the book of Isaiah. One observes in Trito-Isaiah the same kind of movement that one finds in Isaiah 1–55 whereby the exhortation language of doing and keeping *ṣdqh* and *mšpṭ* (Isa 58:2b; 58:2c; 59:4a; 59:9a; 59:14a) precedes the salvation terminology of *yšwʿh* and *ṣdqh* (Isa 59:16b; 59:17a; 61:10b; 62:1b; 63:1c).[6]

If one were to attempt to sum up the whole of Trito-Isaiah in a single word (or indeed the whole of Isaiah in light of what has been demonstrated above), that word would be *ṣdqh*, with its double sense of justice and salvation. While this would certainly be an oversimplification and an exaggeration, it could nevertheless serve a positive function by highlighting a unifying theme around which the many motifs of Trito-Isaiah might be arranged and organized. It has frequently been said that stereotypes exist because there is an element of truth in them. Like an artist's caricature that exaggerates prominent features of a subject, these generalizations might not fully or accurately portray the truth about their subject, but they can convey a significant truth nonetheless. One such lopsided depiction used to be frequently encountered in presentations of the eighth-century prophets. How many surveys and textbooks have contrasted Amos, "the prophet of God's justice," with Hosea, "the prophet of God's mercy." While certainly overstated, the comparison is not without its truth. The term *mšpṭ* occurs only four times in Amos in chapters 5 and 6 (versus twice in Hosea), but who could deny the significance of the term and the idea in Amos's thought. Similarly in Hosea, *ḥsd* appears but three times (to none in Amos), but the concept transcends the mere occurrence of the word.

Likewise, in Isaiah, *ṣdqh* (understood as both righteousness and salvation) is not only a key term but a key concept found throughout all three sections of the book. As Gregory Polan has pointed out, there is a development within the book of Isaiah as *ṣdqh* is first associated with justice and later with salvation. Joseph Blenkinsopp likewise speaks of the

[4] Gregory J. Polan, "Still More Signs of Unity in the Book of Isaiah: The Significance of Third Isaiah," *SBL Seminar Papers* (1997), 224–33.

[5] Ibid., 226–27.

[6] Ibid., 225–26.

"extended scope" that the term *ṣdqh* acquires as it expands from meaning "righteousness to the establishment of a righteous social order in the coming event of salvation."[7] This development, or extension, appears in miniature in the introductory verse of Trito-Isaiah, which presents justice (poetically paired with *ṣdqh*) as the precondition for God's coming salvation (also paired with *ṣdqh*!). Righteousness understood as justice (the imperative addressed to humans) is the precondition for righteousness understood as salvation (the deliverance coming from God).

We thus note an ambiguity in this key term as it is understood as both cause and effect. On the one hand, righteousness leads to salvation. On the other hand, righteousness and salvation are in some way identified.[8] The ambiguity, or multiple meanings, behind the term *ṣdqh* in Isaiah was especially highlighted by Rolf Rendtorff, who saw the deliberate combination of the two senses—righteousness and victory—in Trito-Isaiah as key to understanding the formation of the book of Isaiah.[9] Whether one accepts his conclusions regarding the formation of the book or not, the implications for reading Trito-Isaiah are inescapable. The term *ṣdqh* means both the righteousness and justice that lead to salvation and that very salvation or vindication itself. Translators, of course, are forced to make a choice, but readers would do well to keep both concepts in mind whenever they encounter the term in Trito-Isaiah.

What is missing from Trito-Isaiah's opening exhortation to do justice and right (when one compares it to First Isaiah) are the words of reproach and accusation and the threats of punishment. The call to justice and righteousness is linked only to the coming salvation. The people are

[7] Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 33. Blenkinsopp goes on to point to the relative infrequency with which this expanded meaning occurs in Isa 40–55 and would assign one of these occurrences (46:12-13) to Trito-Isaiah following Hermisson's *qārôbSchicht* (Hans-Jürgen Hermission, "Einheit und Komplexität Deuterojesajas: Probleme der Redaktionsgeschichte von Jes 40–55," in *Book of Isaiah—Le Livre d' Isaie*, 287–312 [Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1989], 295). He neglects, however, the three occurrences of the root *ṣdq* in conjunction with *yšʿ* that Polan has noted in Isa 51. On the other hand, he adds mention of Isa 48:18 in which *ṣdqh* is linked with *šlwm* ("well-being"), expressing the same idea if not the same vocabulary.

[8] There may be one precedent for this in the book of Isaiah before chapter 56. In Isa 45:8 the raining down of *ṣdq* (here, masculine) is seen according to the symbolic imagery as the effective cause of the sprouting of salvation (*yšʿ*) and *ṣdqh*. Although in this case righteousness is not explicitly paired with justice in the first part of the verse, it may be implied in that it is seen (as in Isa 56:1) as the cause of *ṣdqh* as salvation. The alternative here (if the sense of *ṣdq* and *ṣdqh* is not developed or extended in this verse) would be that the causal relationship is being expressed as salvation *from heaven* giving rise to salvation *on the earth*.

[9] Rolf Rendtorff, "Isaiah 56:1 as a Key to the Formation of the Book of Isaiah," in *Canon and Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 181–89.

called to act justly so that they can share in the beatitude of the just when salvation does dawn (Isa 56:2). The scarcity of condemnation in the latter parts of the book of Isaiah is most often associated with the anonymous figure of the time of the Babylonian exile whom we call Deutero-Isaiah. Although there are certainly real contrasts that one may draw between Isaiah 40–55 and Isaiah 56–66, sometimes this has been done overly simplistically, to the point where one forgets that Trito-Isaiah maintains its share of an emphasis on salvation and redemption.[10] Trito-Isaiah is truly a prophet of *ṣdqh* understood both as justice and salvation.

Isaiah 56:3-8: A New Universalism

Two classes of people typically excluded from the life of worship in the temple in Israel—eunuchs and foreigners—are now explicitly welcomed to join Yhwh's people in his house of prayer. For each group, the dual stipulations to "observe my Sabbaths" and "hold fast to my covenant" (Isa 56:4, 6) are the only requirements for acceptance within the worshiping community of a restored Israel. If one does see Isaiah 56 as the "opening passage of the third major segment of the book of Isaiah," this introit then heralds a notable theme of a more universal access to the worship of the God of Israel in his temple in Jerusalem, with Sabbath observance seen as the essential religious obligation.[11] These themes are repeated in the concluding chapter of the book, creating a thematic inclusio or "bookends" for the chapters we call Trito-Isaiah.

In light of what was mentioned regarding a possible earlier opening passage for the last part of the book of Isaiah, the thematic and linguistic links suggested between chapters 55 and 56 should perhaps also be revisited. Almost a century ago, Charles C. Torrey suggested viewing 55:1–56:8 as one unit.[12] Blenkinsopp, who does not endorse a substantial connection

[10] An example of this radical dichotomy, which sees the two senses of *ṣdqh* in opposition, and which therefore finds the thought of Isa 56:1 incompatible with Isa 40–55, may be found even in commentaries of those who argue, *grosso modo*, for the authorial unity of Isa 40–66. One such example is James D. Smart, *History and Theology in Second Isaiah: A Commentary on Isaiah 35, 40–66* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965). Commenting on Isa 56:1, he states, "There is nothing similar to this anywhere in chs. 40 to 55" (p. 229). He sees this text of Trito-Isaiah "moving in the direction of the later legalistic system of Judaism" in a manner that is "utterly alien" to Deutero-Isaiah (p. 229). To be fair, it should be noted that he also finds Isa 56:1-7 "alien in content" to the author of Isa 56:8–66 as well as to Deutero-Isaiah (p. 230).

[11] Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 131–32.

[12] Torrey, *The Second Isaiah*, 255–57, 426–29. See also Willem Beuken, "Isa. 56.9–57.13: An Example of the Isaianic Legacy of Trito-Isaiah," in *Tradition and Reinterpretation in*

between these two chapters, nevertheless points out the linguistic link between 55:13b and 56:5b, which both speak of a lasting name that will not be cut off. As we look at Trito-Isaiah within the book of Isaiah in its present form, we can conclude that chapter 56 looks both forward (to the conclusion of the book) and backward (to the immediately preceding chapter). Without entering into the debates of textual formation, redaction, and authorship, one may simply note that the final text suggests a certain unity within chapters 56–66 as well as a further unity between these chapters and what precedes them in the Isaiah scroll.

On a thematic level, the question of Trito-Isaiah's universalism or lack thereof has sometimes been raised.[13] Here at the outset, the tone is definitely one of greater inclusion. The mention of foreigners is easily explained according to the putative setting of Trito-Isaiah in the mixed-race context of the early postexilic period (see, e.g., Ezra, Malachi). The welcome extended to foreigners to become part of the worshiping community of Israel reaches its apex perhaps in the concluding chapter of Trito-Isaiah. There we will hear of the gathering of all nations and tongues—all those who have not yet heard of Yhwh's glory—to come to worship on God's holy mountain in Jerusalem (Isa 66:18-21). But along the way to the dramatic conclusion of the book of Isaiah, there are passages that speak of God's vengeance in Edom (Isa 63:1-6) and a more subservient role for the nations vis-à-vis Israel (Isa 60:12; 61:5). How is one to reconcile these with Trito-Isaiah's so-called universalism expressed here at the beginning (and perhaps at the end) of chapters 56–66?

It would seem that a complex and nuanced relationship is being expressed. Without attempting to propose a historical setting for this text, which goes beyond the scope of this commentary, one might offer a literary comparison to the book of Judith. There we see a large-scale conflict between Israel and the nations in which the conflation of Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, and Greek referents is portrayed as the enemy that must be opposed and indeed destroyed.[14] On the individual scale, however, the Ammonite Achior can find a place within the worshiping com-

Jewish and Early Christian Literature: Festschrift J. C. H. Lebram, ed. J. W. van Henten et al, 48–64 (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 50–52; and Odil H. Steck, *Studien zu Tritojesaja*, BZAW 203 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991), 41–42, 170–71.

[13] Joel Kaminsky and Anne Stewart, "God of All the World: Universalism and Developing Monotheism in Isaiah 40–66," *HTR* 99, no. 2 (2006): 139–63. The authors consider the universalistic and the dichotomous language of both Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah. They conclude that Trito-Isaiah shows "a greater receptivity to the inclusion of some Gentiles within the elect group" than Deutero-Isaiah (p. 162).

[14] In Jdt 1:1 Nebuchadnezzar (the Babylonian king) is called king of the Assyrians and situated in the Assyrian capital of Nineveh. His general Holofernes (Jdt 2:4) was

munity of Israel (Jdt 14:10). Here too in Isaiah 56, it is the foreigner who has attached himself to Yhwh who is addressed. Individual converts are welcomed and assured that their status will be no less than full-blooded Israelites if they but keep the Sabbath and hold fast to God's covenant.

The inclusion of eunuchs raises some interesting questions regarding how widespread a phenomenon this might have been. Once more, without attempting a historical reconstruction, we may observe that the only previous mention of eunuchs in the book of Isaiah comes in 39:7 (paralleled in 2 Kgs 20:18) when the prophet tells King Hezekiah that some of his sons will be taken away and become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. The inference might be that one could expect to find a certain number of eunuchs among the returned exiles in the early postexilic period. Literarily we might ask if there is some intrinsic connection between these two classes of people mentioned in Isaiah 56. It is not a common pairing; in fact, such a pairing does not occur at all in the biblical literature.[15] The one common denominator that Isaiah 56 picks up on is their traditional exclusion from temple worship that is now abrogated (Isa 56:3, 5, 7). Thus the caricature of Deutero-Isaiah's prophetic disinterest in cultic affairs and Trito-Isaiah's hierocratic obsession with them finds ready support in what are considered to be the opening verses of the latter.

Isaiah 56:9–57:13: Trouble in Paradise

If the distinction between Second and Third Isaiah is to be based on tone—where optimism, hope, and consolation give way to pessimism, judgment, and condemnation—perhaps Isaiah 56:9 is the place to draw the line. Here we have the first prophetic utterances of severe judgment against the depraved religious and political leaders of Israel in a style very reminiscent of the preexilic prophets.[16] In fact, this style, coupled perhaps with the lack of any clear historical referents in the text, has even led some to suggest a preexilic dating for this section of the book of Isaiah.[17] References to the prophets as "watchmen" (*ʿwrym*) and other

historically Persian. The desecration and rededication of the temple (Jdt 4:3) alludes to the original Hanukkah (164 BCE) in the Greek period.

[15] Foreigner and eunuch could, of course, be the same person, as in the case of Ebedmelech mentioned in Jeremiah 38:7. But there it is simply mentioned that this particular eunuch was an Ethiopian. There is no connection drawn between his status as foreigner and as eunuch in the narrative.

[16] E.g., Hos 5:1-10; Amos 6:1-7; Mic 3:1-12.

[17] Volz, *Jesaia II*, 207. See also the footnote on Isa 56:9–57:13 in the NAB. Others have gone in the opposite direction, dating it as late as the time of Antiochus IV. So, e.g.,

leaders (presumably political) as "shepherds" (*rwʿym*) follows the usage of Ezekiel 3:17 and 34:1. The very abrupt switch from the joyful gathering of Israelite and foreigner alike into God's house (Isa 56:7-8) to the threats and accusations against Israel's watchmen and shepherds (Isa 56:9-11) is striking. The rhetorical force of this stark juxtaposition of texts may well be to serve as a warning that just as some thought to be outside of the community will be included, so too some of the very leaders of the community will find themselves cast out in judgment.

The introductory invocation in verse 9, which calls on the wild beasts to come and eat, is left hanging as the imagery is neither developed nor reiterated after this verse. Instead, the animal imagery shifts to a description of the watchmen who are likened to dumb dogs unable to bark out a warning, which is their normal function. It is likely that the wild beasts are a metaphor for Israel's enemies (see Jer 12:9) that are ready to attack the defenseless people due to the lack of vigilance and self-serving greed of its leaders.[18] It is interesting, nevertheless, that there is no mention of the "sheep" that would be the natural analogue for the people or nation in this scenario. Rather, the passage moves directly to a consideration of the watchmen as lounging, ineffective dogs. The implication may well be that these sleeping, overfed dogs will themselves become food for the more alert animals called on in verse 9—a *contrapasso* worthy of Dante himself.

The reference to shepherds in the middle of verse 11 is somewhat obscure. The MT appears to read: "And they, the shepherds, do not know how to give heed." The suggested emendation of *hwn* ("enough"; "sufficiency") for *hbyn* makes a more direct parallel between what is attributed to the dogs and the shepherds, but the proposal lacks any textual support.[19] Blenkinsopp considers the central lines of the verse a gloss, identifying the dogs with the shepherds (i.e., the leaders of the community).[20] It seems more likely, however, that dogs and shepherds are not identified here but rather that two types of leaders are being critiqued (as also in Ezekiel mentioned above). Hence the move to identify the predicates of the clauses is entirely unnecessary as each group has its own distinctive flaw. The dogs are never satisfied in their greed, and the shepherds lack the wisdom and discernment to govern and lead.

R. H. Kennett, *The Composition of the Book of Isaiah in the Light of History and Archaeology* (London: Oxford University Press, 1910), 56.

[18] Paul, *Isaiah 40–66*, 437.

[19] The emendation is suggested in the NJPS Translation, 2nd ed., comparing to Prov 30:15.

[20] Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 144. He also notes the parallels to Jer 12:9-10 in which wild animals called to eat are paired with bad shepherds.

The dual accusations against political leaders and prophets is also found in Isaiah 9:14, where the elders are likened to heads and the prophets to tails. The reference to "all of them" (*klm*) in the last part of the verse strengthens the likelihood that multiple categories of people are being addressed here.

As chapter 57 begins, the accusations against the wicked leaders is contrasted and punctuated by a verse reflecting on the fate of the just in this scenario. The righteous (*hṣṣddyq*) in Isaiah 57:1 is obviously closely connected etymologically to the key theme of *ṣdqh* introduced in Isaiah 56:1. Here we have yet one more quasi-synonymous term thrown into the key word cluster of Trito-Isaiah. The righteous is paralleled poetically with "men of *ḥsd*" (which is typically and inadequately translated as "the pious" or "the devout"). Just as earlier we witnessed the pairing of *ṣdqh* with the *mšpṭ* characteristic of Amos in Isaiah 56:1, here the related term is paralleled with the *ḥsd* of Hosea. The eighth-century prophetic synthesis of Micah 6:8 lives on in Trito-Isaiah who likewise connects righteousness and justice to faithful covenant love.

Blenkinsopp, following James D. Smart, takes the singular *hṣṣddyq* of this verse to refer to an actual individual—the founding prophetic figure of the Trito-Isaianic school.[21] This would be the Servant of Isaiah 53 who was killed. Although he presents an interesting argument based on the alternation of singular and plural forms in an a-b-a pattern, it certainly seems to be the case that a simple collective understanding of the singular can just as easily be maintained here.[22] This seems more in keeping with the context of chapter 57, which contrasts the two ways of the righteous and the rebels (referred to as the *yldy pšʿ* in Isa 57:4).

Verse 3 returns to accusations and judgment against the wicked. If the religious and political leaders (the watchmen and shepherds) bore the brunt of condemnation in Isaiah 56:9-12, the net appears to be cast more widely on the other side of the brief interlude reflecting on the fate of the righteous in Isaiah 57:1-2. Here, children are initially addressed (Isa 57:3) who, in the absence of any distinguishing identifying elements, would seem to correspond to the inhabitants of the land or of the city of Jerusalem.[23] It is noteworthy that the opening chapter of the book of

[21] Ibid., 150–51. Smart, *History and Theology*, 240–41.

[22] A point that Blenkinsopp (*Isaiah 56–66*, 150) himself acknowledges to a certain extent, noting the parallels in Ps 12:2 and Mic 7:2 where the singular is clearly used to express the fate of the devout understood collectively.

[23] The transition to a second-person feminine singular verb in Isa 57:6, would suggest that it is the mother of these children (i.e., the sorceress, adulteress, and harlot of 57:3) who is now addressed. The promiscuous mother taken in conjunction with her illegitimate children closely mirrors the usage in Hos 1–3 where the mother as

Isaiah begins with a similar diatribe against the city that has become a harlot (Isa 1:21) and against rebellious children (Isa 1:2-4). The roots *znh* and *pšʿ*, which were in chapter 1 associated with sins of injustice and violence, are now associated with sins of idolatry. Isaiah 57:3-13 contains some of the most colorful accusations and the harshest condemnations in all of Trito-Isaiah. Its imagery and language are reminiscent not only of Isaiah 1 but especially of Hosea and Ezekiel, who also use the motifs of adultery and licentiousness to speak about the people's idolatry.

In the vocabulary of the book of Isaiah, *pšʿ* ("rebel," "transgress") occurs throughout all three main sections as the opposite of the Isaian watchword *ṣdqh*. The opening verse of prophecy in Isaiah 1:2 mentions the children of Yhwh who have rebelled (*pšʿw*) against him. Later in Isaiah 1:27-28, *ṣdqh* as the cause of salvation (and perhaps that salvation itself) for the repentant in Zion is contrasted with the destruction of those who rebel (*pšʿym*). Here in Trito-Isaiah, the righteous of Isaiah 57:1-2 is contrasted with the rebellious of Isaiah 57:3-13. The lively and deliberately insulting language of these latter verses takes a number of swipes at the targeted audience through unflattering statements regarding their parentage. Of course, the well-known Hebrew idiom by which nature or identity is expressed through genealogy is at work here. It is interesting, nonetheless, that the opening verses use three parental metaphors ("children of a sorceress," "seed of an adulterer and a harlot") that are clearly verbal insults. The latter examples, referring to illegitimacy, will be familiar to virtually anyone, as such insulting accusations are almost universal. The former—"children of a sorceress"—is a bit more unusual. What is the significance of this more idiosyncratic insult in the context of Isaiah 57?

The root *ʿnn* in the Polel is generally translated as practicing soothsaying or divination but can be understood more literally as "to cause to appear."[24] On this basis Blenkinsopp understands the feminine noun here (*ʿnnh*) as a "female practitioner of the necromantic arts."[25] The masculine plural form of the same root had already appeared in Isaiah 2:6, adding to the many textual connections one may note between the opening chapters of Proto- and Trito-Isaiah. In that earlier passage, the *ʿnnym* are likened to the Philistines, and their presence in Jacob is equated with the embracing of foreigners and foreign customs. Perhaps the simplest hypothesis is that the sorceress (*ʿnnh*) is representative of an alien cult and

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representing the nation and the children its inhabitants are somewhat overlapping images. The context of Trito-Isaiah (and indeed of the whole book of Isaiah) would indicate that the sinful mother more closely corresponds to the city of Jerusalem as in Ezek 16, although no explicit identification is made here.

[24] BDB, 778.

[25] Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 163.

therefore symbolic of the idolatry that is so frequently associated with adultery in Hosea, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and now here in Isaiah. Illegitimate children are, here as elsewhere, fundamentally symbolic of apostasy.

The imagery of verse 3 gives way to actual qualities that are described in verse 4. The accused are now called "children of rebelliousness" (*yldy pšʿ*) and "seed of treachery" (*zrʿ šqr*). As noted already, the image of rebellious children immediately evokes the opening accusation of the book of Isaiah. The nature of the rebellion and treachery then quickly unfolds in the subsequent verses, which allude to acts of idolatry in the usual locations among the trees, in the wadis, and under the clefts of rock (Isa 57:5). The libations and sacrifices (including infant sacrifice in verse 5) clearly connect to the worship of foreign deities, especially Molech who is probably mentioned in verse 9.[26] So the insulting metaphor, "offspring of an adulterer and a harlot," corresponds to the reality it represents: "rebellious children" who have turned from Yhwh to the worship of other gods. The opening accusation of these verses, "children of a sorceress," closely connects the image to the reality in that it implies both illegitimacy and alien cult.

This section concludes with one final contrast. Verse 13b returns to a consideration of the righteous: "But the one who trusts in me will inherit the land / And possess my holy mountain." This brings us back full circle to the beginning of Trito-Isaiah, where Yhwh said that he would bring to his holy mountain the eunuchs and foreigners who observe the Sabbath and keep the covenant (Isa 56:6). These are numbered among the righteous and considered Yhwh's people, while those who by birth and by law were thought to be on the inside have proven themselves by their idolatrous turning to foreign gods to be illegitimate and now excluded. The undulating motion of these two chapters corresponds to a process of judgment, separating the righteous from the rebels. In the former category are found both eunuchs and foreigners (Isa 56:1-8), the righteous departed (Isa 57:1-2), and those who even now trust in Yhwh (Isa 57:13b). While the shepherds and watchmen (Isa 56:9-12) and the apostate children who turn to other gods (Isa 57:3-13a) can await only destruction from Yhwh.

Isaiah 57:14-21: Grace and Renewal

The unusual *vʿmr* ("and he said") at the beginning of verse 14 clearly indicates the beginning of a new section with the use of the perfect verb

[26] The Masoretic text reads "the king," but there can be no doubt, considering the context, that the Canaanite deity represented by the same Hebrew consonants (*mlk*) is understood here.

rather than continuing the sequence of imperfect verbs from the preceding verse. The break is also indicated by a new paragraph on the Great Isaiah Scroll from Qumran. Although the preceding verse ends in the middle of a column, the scribe has begun a new line with verse 14. This paragraph extends through the end of the chapter. What is unusual is the presence of the conjunction if the verb is indeed a third-person perfect form of the verb "to say" as vocalized in MT and not a first-person imperfect, which might be syntactically connected to the string of imperfect verbs in verses 12 and 13. Hence the Vulgate follows the latter route and reads this as a first-person imperfect with the translation *et dicam* ("and I will say"), which is a possible reading of the consonantal text.[27] What is also unusual is the absence of a subject as the text stands in MT. It simply reads, "and he said," or "and he will say," with no clear antecedent.[28] If the implied "he" is Yhwh (which seems to be the case with the reference to "my people" at the end of the verse), this introduction to Yhwh's speech applies only to the remainder of verse 14. Verse 15a then contains a more elaborate formula that will introduce a longer discourse of Yhwh. Another possibility is that the "he" in question is the prophetic authority behind Trito-Isaiah who would be calling for action on behalf of his people. What is unclear in either case is to whom these words are being addressed. It might be the nations, the leaders of the people, or the people themselves. Some have argued that it is not any human at all that is being addressed but rather the hosts of heaven.[29] Indeed, it may be all of the above, or even all of creation if Yhwh is the one who speaks.

The theme of Isaiah 57:14—that of preparing a way for Yhwh's people—echoes loudly the call of Isaiah 40:3-4 to prepare a way for Yhwh himself.[30] The double imperative *sllw* ("build up") refers to the construction of a highway, a point that is made explicit in The Great Isaiah Scroll from Qumran (1QIsa[a]) with the addition of the corresponding

[27] The Septuagint also reads the verb as an imperfect with *kai erousin* ("and they will say"), but this is not a possible reading of the consonantal text of MT.

[28] Adding to the mystery is the fact that 1QIsa[a] preserves the meaning of MT but appears to have the converted third-person masculine singular imperfect form of the verb. Of course, this depends on how one vocalizes the initial conjunction, but that the verb is taken as third person rather than first is clear from the addition of a *yod* before the root.

[29] K. Koenen, '*Ethik und Eschatologie im Tritojesajabuch*,' WMANT 62 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Newkirchener Verlag, 1990), 53–54.

[30] Also interesting is the fact that Isa 40:6 contains yet another instance of the unusual *vĕʾāmar* found here. K. Marti (*Das Buch Jesaja* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1990], 370) argues that the presence of this verbal form in Isa 57:14 may have been influenced by the earlier passage.

noun *hmmsllh*. This noun is also mentioned in the closely related passage of Isaiah 40:3. A question that might be raised is whether we are to understand this highway and road (*drk*) in a literal or in a metaphorical sense.[31] It appears to have a bit of both involved, as, undoubtedly, did Isaiah 40:3 to which it so clearly alludes.[32] Given that what follows speaks of Yhwh reviving the spirits of those who are lowly, it would appear that a figurative way is meant. Likewise, given what has come before concerning the evils of the sorceress's children, it would seem that there are plenty of spiritual obstacles in need of removal. The reference to Yhwh's dwelling in a high and holy place (Isa 57:15), however, can easily be understood both as transcendence high above our human ways (see Isa 55:9) and as immanence inasmuch as God's holy dwelling may be high, but the height is no more than that of Mount Zion (Isa 56:7). Therefore, a more literal path to the temple may be included in the figurative language of clearing a way for the people to come to God.

As a companion piece to Isaiah 40:3, Isaiah 57:14 also evokes the dialectic between divine grace and human response. The way for Yhwh of Deutero-Isaiah is complemented by the way for his people in Trito-Isaiah. Although this is a path that the people must walk on to approach the holy and exalted one, it is still the grace of God and the divine role in bringing about the return of God's people that is emphasized throughout the passage. In verse 15, Yhwh speaks of reviving the spirits and hearts of the lowly. The children have not responded to the accusations and punishments designed to provoke their conversion (Isa 57:16-17), yet in spite of this human failure God promises to heal them, guide them, and comfort them (Isa 57:18). The affirmation that this return of the people to Yhwh is, in fact, Yhwh's own doing is reaffirmed by repetition in the concluding phrase "I will heal them" accompanied by the oracular formula *ʾmr yhwh* ("says Yhwh") in Isaiah 57:19. While the clear emphasis on grace and divine activity has led some to doubt the possibility that the opening imperatives to build up the road could be addressed to a

[31] Walther Zimmerli ("Zur Sprache Tritojesajas" [1950], reprinted in *Gottes Offenbarung: Gesammelte Aufsätze zum Alten Testament* [Munich: Kaiser, 1963], 217–33) argued for a metaphorical understanding by which Trito-Isaiah spiritualized what had been understood as a literal way through the desert for the returning exiles in Deutero-Isaiah.

[32] While Isa 40:3 alludes to the actual movement of exiles returning from Babylon to Judea, few would argue that the new construction of a highway was necessary to achieve this transport. And since the construction there is not described as being for the people (as in Isa 57:14) but for Yhwh, the necessity of such a road is further reduced. There is clearly a spiritual or ethical interpretation to be had here also.

human audience, this is an unlikely and unnecessary assumption.[33] The context of verses 16 and 17 especially make it very clear that the divine call and divine activity expect a human response. The call to road construction is another variant on the prophetic language that forever calls to conversion.

Another significant intratextual connection that ties together the many layers of the book of Isaiah is the reference to Yhwh in verse 15 as the one who is exalted and whose name is holy. The inaugural vision of Isaiah 6 cannot be missed in this language. Isaiah 57:15 uses two descriptive participles for Yhwh in its first line: *rm* ("the one who is high") and *nśśʾ* ("the one who is lifted up"). These are the same two verbal adjectives used to describe the throne of Yhwh in the vision of Isaiah 6:1. Throughout all sections of Isaiah, Yhwh is the exalted, transcendent, all-holy one, who is incomparable and beyond the reach and even the perception of mere mortals. The precise pairing of the terms in the formula *rm wnśśʾ* occurs only in these two passages of First and Third Isaiah. It is interesting, however, that Second Isaiah also pairs the terms in their conjugated form to describe the Servant of Yhwh who will be "raised high and lifted up" (Isa 52:13). The exalted and majestic status that belongs to Yhwh alone is thus also conferred upon the Servant of Yhwh.

The two roots also occur in conjunction in slightly different forms in the book of Isaiah to refer to the proud and the arrogant. In this sense, one finds these adjectives in their plural and definite form modifying the cedars of Lebanon in Isaiah 2:13. Isaiah 2:11-17 is an oracle of judgment on the haughty and, through a number of images (trees, mountains, walls, ships), speaks of the bringing down of all that humans raise up. The refrain that forms an inclusio around the passage is that "Yhwh alone will be exalted [*nśgv*] on that day."[34] Trito-Isaiah reaffirms this idea that any human attempt at exaltation will meet with a divine reckoning that lays it low. It is rather for Yhwh to raise up and exalt the lowly as he promises for the Servant in Isaiah 52:13–53:12. Likewise here, Yhwh (his high and exalted status notwithstanding) dwells not only on high but also with the lowly and the contrite. The promise in this passage is "to revive" (*ḥyh*, Hiphil) their hearts and spirits. Thus the language of these verses does not speak of a glorious or God-like exaltation of the people as was accorded the Servant of Deutero-Isaiah. Rather, it is a more modest, but also more essential, restoration to life and healing of which the prophet speaks.

[33] See, e.g., Brevard Childs, *Isaiah*, OTL (Louisville: WJKP, 2001), 470.

[34] The root *sgv* in the *Niphal* ("to be high" or "to be set on high") closely related in meaning to both *rm* and *nśśʾ* occurs frequently in First Isaiah but not beyond chapter 33.

The other verbal link to Isaiah's vision in chapter 6 is the repetition of the adjective "holy" (*qdwš*). The description of Yhwh as the one whose name is holy and who dwells in a holy place vividly recalls the thrice-holy one of Isaiah 6:3. Given the context of Isaiah 57, where just two verses earlier Yhwh's holy mountain was mentioned, the high holy place that Yhwh inhabits in verse 15 clearly implies the temple on Mount Zion. This provides yet another allusion to the earlier vision that takes place in the temple. Isaiah 57:15 provides a microcosm of the Isaian paradox that the utterly transcendent Yhwh, the all-holy one, is at the same time close to the remnant of Israel. This immanence is realized most especially in and through the presence of Yhwh's holy temple on Mount Zion.

The back-and-forth between righteous and wicked takes one more turn to the wicked at the end of chapter 57. The emphasis in verses 14-19 has been on the return of Yhwh's people in a spirit of contrition and humility. Yhwh promises not to remain angry at their sins of greed but to restore, heal, and lead his people anew. This concluding verse is a reminder against any presumption on his people's part. The wicked will suffer a different fate. While some see in the stark contrast of this final verse signs of a later addition to the text,[35] it fits with the pattern of contrast that Trito-Isaiah employs. Indeed, it foreshadows the final contrast of the book of Isaiah with its horrific ending vision of the fate of the rebels in Isaiah 66:24. The verse is also a repetition of Isaiah 48:22 with the substitution of "my God" for "Yhwh." As commentators note, the repeated phrase in Isaiah 48:22 and 57:21 neatly divides chapters 40–66 into three roughly equal sections of nine chapters each.[36] Whether or not this is a deliberate structural marker, at the very least it can be said that literary and structural observations on Trito-Isaiah necessarily spill over into a consideration of the rest of the book of Isaiah. Similarly, the theological themes of Yhwh's holiness, grace, and presence in the temple, along with the contrasting fates of the contrite and the wicked, all belong to the larger picture of the whole of Isaiah.

[35] E.g., Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 172.

[36] R. N. Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66*, NCBC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975), 134; Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 56–66*, 173. Blenkinsopp traces this observation at least as far back as Duhm's commentary.