

# **The Overflowing Grace of God in the *Book of Isaiah***

## **A Translation Note for Isaiah 56:5 and a Thematic Meditation**

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### **Introduction**

In the Hebrew of Is. 56, God speaks about how His grace will overflow the previously established boundaries, reaching to those who before were considered out of the reach of His *hesed*, His covenant love for His people. The text mentions two groups: eunuchs and foreigners. Obviously the foreigners, the *goyim*, the Gentiles, were not a part of His covenant people. The whole purpose of His covenant was to separate a people from among the nations, a people who would form the arena of His saving judgments in the world. However, eunuchs, those who had been castrated, were also disqualified from taking part in the assembly of Yahweh. The text of Deuteronomy clearly states: "No one who is emasculated (literally, "wounded by crushing," i.e.

crushing of his testicles) or has his male organ cut off, shall enter the assembly of Yahweh" (Deut. 23:1). The text goes on to exclude those of illegitimate birth and their descendants, even to the tenth generation, as well as Ammonites, and Moabites. How stringently these strictures were applied is another question, but the fact remains that the legislation was in place and was unambiguous: eunuchs had no place among the privileged covenant people of Israel.

It is these boundaries between the people of God and pagan nations on the one hand and on the other hand, within Israel itself, between the assembly of Yahweh and those disqualified from participation in that assembly, that Isaiah says God Himself will obliterate. This essay will examine in the canonical Book of Isaiah the theme of the overflowing of God's mercy and the inclusion of all people in His new creation. In following this theme throughout the Book, we will look again at some arguments for the unity of the Book, and for Isaian authorship of the whole. It is our contention that Isaiah of Jerusalem authored the entire Book, and that he had this theme of God's grace overflowing the previously set boundaries as one of his main concerns.

### **Giving the Eunuchs a Hand: A Translation Note for Isaiah 56**

As mentioned above, this manifestation of saving *hesed* to the many classes of people previously excluded from it includes the eunuchs as well. The passage says: "Thus Yahweh says: 'To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths and choose what pleases Me and hold fast My covenant, to them I will give in My house and within My walls a hand (Hebrew *yad*), and a name (Hebrew *shem*) better than that of sons of daughters; I will give them an everlasting name which will not be cut off'" (Is. 56:4-5).

The word we have translated literally as "hand" is usually not so translated, presumably because most translators felt that it made no

sense. In order to preserve the Hebrew parallelism of these verses, most translators chose a word synonymous with or comparable to "name." The New American Standard Bible (used as the basis for the English quotes in this article) translate *yad* as "memorial;" the Revised Standard Version translates it as "monument," as does the New American Bible and the Jerusalem Bible. The New English Bible interprets it as "memorial," Today's English Version (the so-called "Good News Bible") renders the verse "your name will be remembered." The Amplified Bible (rarely at a loss for words) renders *yad* simply as "a memorial." Even the Authorized Version, which usually opts for very literal renderings, translates it as "a place," a choice made by the Douay Version as well. In this they probably follow the Septuagint, which also renders *yad* as "place," *topos*. This translation of *yad* by *topos* is followed by other ancient versions as well.

Translation as "monument/ memorial" has gained support from an archaeological discovery. J. Oswalt writes in a foot-note in his commentary *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66* that "since the discovery of memorial stelae in what was probably a shrine at Hazor... the inclination has been to interpret *yad* as 'stela,' (a meaning it has elsewhere in the OT; see, e.g. 1 Sam. 15:12 and 2 Sam. 18:18.)... and conclude that the eunuch would be allowed to erect a memorial stela in the Temple precincts."<sup>1</sup> To this suggestion, Oswalt offers two other possibilities: translating it as "place," he suggests one might understand this figuratively, "as indicating that the person has a 'place' or 'standing' in Israel. Closely related would be the idea of 'share.'"<sup>2</sup>

What are we to make of this? The idea of *yad* as monument (i.e. stela) certainly fits with the poetic Hebrew parallelism. Yet, to this writer, it feels inadequate to the glorious realities spoken of by the prophet in these verses. The foreigners find themselves blessed as God's love overflows and sweeps them within the bounds of His saving

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<sup>1</sup> J. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans 1998), p. 459.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 459.

*hesed*; they are brought by God to His holy mountain and made joyful in His house of prayer. God deems their burnt offerings and sacrifices acceptable on His altar. Compared to this, being allowed to "erect a memorial stela in the Temple precincts" pales considerably. The context of the promises made to the eunuchs requires, I would suggest, something grander than a monument.

The word *yad* is used figuratively in the following chapter, and I suggest that this use contains the key to understanding our present passage. Certainly its use by the same author should carry more weight than its use much earlier by the writer of 1 and 2 Samuel.

In Chapter 57 of Isaiah we have an extended denunciation of Israel's sin, a denunciation that accords well with a similar description of pre-exilic idolatry in Is. 1:27-31. The pre-exilic sin denounced involves "sacred" prostitution among the garden shrines, the fertility cult of Baal and Ashtoreth. I suggest that this same sin is being denounced here in Is. 57 as well. Whatever the exact nature of the sin, it is clearly sexual. In the New American Standard Bible, Is. 57:8 reads, "Behind the door and the doorpost you have set up your sign; indeed, far removed from Me, you have uncovered yourself; and have gone up and made your bed wide. And you have made an agreement for yourself with them; you have loved their bed; you have looked on their manhood." The word here rendered "manhood" is once again the Hebrew *yad*.

The verse is translated in other ways as well, often very periphrastic. The New English Bible translates, "you drove bargains with men for the pleasure of sleeping together," no doubt because often hands were used in making bargains. This line seems to be followed by the Jerusalem Bible, which renders the text, "You have struck a pact with those whose bed you love, whoring with them often with your eyes on the sacred symbol." The Good News Bible renders the phrase rather colourlessly, "...your lovers whom you pay to sleep with you," presumably because hands are used in the exchange of money. The

New American Bible renders the phrase, "of those whose embraces you love you carved the symbol and gazed upon it," presumably because hands are used for the act of carving.

Other translations render the verse using the word "hand" in their translation. The Amplified Bible renders it, "you loved their bed where you saw a beckoning hand or a passion-inflaming image." The Douay Version renders it "thou hast loved their bed with open hand," which has the advantage of literality, though not comprehensibility. The Authorized Version is not much better: "thou lovedst their bed where thou sawest it." Perhaps the beckoning hand of the Amplified Version may be assumed here too. The Revised Standard Version, closest to the New American Standard Bible quoted above, renders it "nakedness," but excuses its lack of imagination in a footnote, explaining, "The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain."

How does *yad*, hand, become "manhood?" One guesses that the translators of the New American Standard Bible were led to this choice by the context: those in the bed looked upon something, and the sexual context suggested this. Supporting this interpretation, perhaps unwittingly, is J. Oswalt. He mentions the guess of J.C. Doderlein, that *yad* is a euphemism for the male organ, and says that it is used in this way in the Egyptian and the Ugaritic as well.<sup>3</sup>

If this is true, it accords well with the promise made to the eunuchs in Chapter 56. Thus in that passage the prophet promises that God would restore the honor of the eunuch, giving him back his manhood, and so he would have "a name better than that of sons and daughters" (56:5). This is not, of course, a miracle of biological healing. Rather, God is saying that He will accept the eunuch in His House and within His walls, even as He accepted others. Though formerly shamed and excluded, the manhood, dignity and honour of the eunuch would be thus restored, and in this restoration he could find pride and joy – a

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 480.

greater joy than if he had begotten children (and we know how important having descendants were in ancient Judaism). *Yad* is here thus used figuratively for manhood, honour, strength, and dignity. Far from hanging his head and lamenting, "I am a dry tree" (v.3), devoid of life, fruit or joy, the eunuch is brought near with all the others, and given by God "an everlasting name," an abiding reputation, "which will not be cut off." This interpretation does justice to the glorious nature of the other promises in the immediate context. It is an interpretation and a prophecy worthy of the Gospel which calls all to be God's children, and makes His house a house of prayer for all the peoples (v. 7).

### **Overflowing the Boundaries: Grace to Egypt and Assyria**

This theme from Isaiah 56 where God extends His *hesed* to those formerly beyond the reach of His covenant love (such as eunuchs) accords with a theme also found in Isaiah 19. This chapter contains Isaiah's oracle (or burden) concerning Egypt. This oracle about Egypt comes in the midst of a series of oracles regarding the nations surrounding Israel – nations such as Babylon (13:1-14:28), Philistia (14:28-32), Moab (15:1-16:14) and Damascus (17:1-11). It is followed by oracles regarding "the wilderness of the sea" (21:1-10), Edom (21:11-12), Arabia (21:13-17), "the valley of vision" (probably Jerusalem; 22:1-25), and Tyre (23:1-18).

In speaking about Egypt, Isaiah does not simply place Egypt as one nation among many, with no more historical significance to Israel than the other nations surrounding her, despite the position of the oracle in the text, in the midst of other oracles regarding the nations. Egypt had a significance which eclipsed the other nations on the list – it remained Israel's primordial womb, its place of beginning, the locale in which Yahweh worked His wonders of redemption and deliverance in the midst of the earth. In fact, it was "the house of bondage" (Ex. 13:3; literally, "the house of slaves") from which God liberated Israel.

Egypt remained forever imprinted upon Israel's collective and sacramental memory as the place from which God delivered them.

The exodus from Egypt testified to Yahweh's uniqueness: "Has a god ever tried to go to take for himself a nation from within another nation by trials, by signs and wonders and by war and by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm and by great terrors, as Yahweh your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?" (Deut. 4:34). Egypt was the locus of God's delivering power, and by bringing out His people from the midst of Egypt, Yahweh did what no other god had ever done. There He proved Himself mightier than all other gods, for His victory there revealed that He had authority not only over the Holy Land (His "jurisdictional turf" as it were), but even in Egypt, on the "turf" of the gods of Egypt. This revealed that He was God over all the earth, and that compared to Him, the other gods were no real gods at all. By smiting Egypt with plagues and thus compelling Pharaoh to free his slave force, Yahweh made fools of the gods of Egypt, who proved themselves utterly incapable of withstanding His will. "After God made sport of the Egyptians, did not they let the people go, and they departed?" (1 Sam. 6:6).

Thus God commanded Israel to always remember Egypt, and to recount the story of deliverance from Egyptian slavery each Passover, as the annual memorial of God's saving power, the story of Israel's national origin (Ex. 12:40-51). Egypt was synonymous with slavery; to return to Egypt meant embracing spiritual apostasy. If Israel disobeyed God and turned to idolatry, God would judge them, sending plague and drought and famine and pestilence (Deut. 28:20-24). He would judge them by invasion by foreign foes, and scatter them to the ends of earth where they would languish in captivity (Deut. 28:63-67). And as the culmination of all the curses, God would bring them back to Egypt in ships as slaves, reversing His promise that they would never see Egyptian slavery again (Deut. 28:68). Egypt thus remained a symbol of spiritual bondage; it was the land of the enemy, far from the blessing of their covenant God. No one was to return there – not even their

king, to buy horses for his army, for God had set them free from Egypt, commanding them never to return there again (Deut. 17:16).

The oracle in Isaiah 19 also speaks of Assyria. Assyria also has significance beyond that of the other nations. If Egypt was the primordial adversary of God, the house of bondage, Assyria functioned as a symbol of cruelty, of towering pride, of opposition to God. Assyria's king strutted through the earth, gobbling up kingdoms with "an arrogant heart," in "the pomp of the haughtiness of his eyes," looking down disdainfully upon all (Is. 10:12). Though Assyria was but an instrument in the hand of Yahweh to judge His own people, it had boasted against the living God, despising the God of the Hebrews as a weakling, a god plainly inferior to its own Assyrian gods. That was absurd – like the axe boasting itself over the one who chops with it (Is. 10:15).

Isaiah recounts the story of this towering hubris, this Assyrian pride, in the story of the Hezekiah oracle, found in chapters 36-37. The Assyrians were so superbly confident of victory that they taunted Hezekiah and his men, offering to give them two thousand horses if the Hebrews thought they could find riders for them (36:8). As far as the Assyrians were concerned, their gods towered over the pathetic gods of the other nations, and assured the Assyrian armies of victory. Had any one of the gods of the nations been able to deliver their lands from the hand of the king of Assyria? Certainly not. Where were the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where the gods of Sepharvaim? Indeed, "who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their land from the hand of the king of Assyria, that Yahweh should deliver Jerusalem from his hand?" (36:18-20). Here speaks the voice of pride. Assyria stood as the national embodiment of godless might, the voice of the ancient Nietzschean superman, the serene untroubled confidence that cruelty and power could conquer all.

Israel therefore looked upon Egypt and Assyria as its two greatest national foes, as the quintessence of all that God had taught



them to despise. Yet the oracle in Chapter 19 reverses these thoughts. It speaks of these foes as being God's covenant people equally with Israel:

In that day, five cities in the land of Egypt will be speaking the language of Canaan and swearing to Yahweh of hosts...in that day there will be an altar to Yahweh in the midst of the land of Egypt and a pillar to Yahweh near its border. And it will become a sign and a witness to Yahweh of hosts in the land of Egypt, for they will cry to Yahweh because of oppressors and He will send them a saviour and a champion, and He will deliver them. Thus Yahweh will make Himself known to Egypt and the Egyptians will know Yahweh in that day. They will even worship with sacrifice and offering and will make a vow to Yahweh and perform it...In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria and the Assyrians will come into Egypt and the Egyptians into Assyria and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians. In that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, whom Yahweh of hosts has blessed, saying, 'Blessed is Egypt My people and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance' (19:18-25).

We find it difficult, imbued as we are with a spirit of internationalism and the idea that all are equal before God, to feel the original force of these words as they struck the hearts of their first hearers. These words stand on its head the whole spiritual and psychological world of Isaiah's day. They take all the vocabulary of covenant salvation – images of an altar for sacrifice, and a memorial pillar (compare Deut. 12:5ff, 1 Sam. 7:12); of crying to God for help, and Him sending saviours and champions (compare Judges 2:16ff); of making vows to elicit God's help and keeping them once God had delivered them (compare Ps. 50:14-15), and apply these to God's ancestral and current enemies. These scandalous words seem to suggest that Yahweh would deal with Israel's sworn enemies in exactly the same way and with the same covenant faithfulness with which He dealt with Israel.

Despite the Egyptians and the Assyrians having different gods, the oracle envisions these two nations joining together in worshipping the one God, the God of the Hebrews. This might have been acceptable to Jewish sensibility if these ancestral and sworn enemies had somehow become subordinated to Israel, becoming (as it were) hewers of wood and drawers of water (see Deut. 20:11, Joshua 9:23). However, such servitude is clearly not what Isaiah speaks of. These nations were not to be subject to Israel. They were to be made equal with Israel. More shockingly, Israel does not even have the pre-eminence among them. Rather, Israel is a "third," coming after Egypt and Assyria. God had always spoken of His beloved Israel with such terms of covenant loyalty as "Israel My people," "Israel the work of My hands" (compare Ex. 7:4, Is. 29:23). Now the text applies these terms of endearment to Egypt and Assyria.

In this oracle Isaiah promises that God's love would one day flow so abundantly as to utterly sweep away every single historical distinction, even distinctions that God Himself had made and drilled into Israel through His Law and through bitter historical experience. Such promises eclipse anything that national Israel experienced (such as the existence of a Jewish temple for the Jewish expatriate workers in Elephantine during the Greek age). The promises are only fulfilled, I would suggest, in the salvation brought by Jesus, the Messiah of the Jews, in which salvation national distinctions are utterly transcended, so that in Him there is "no Greek or Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free, but Christ is all, and in all" (Col. 3:11). What we may note here in Isaiah 19 is the same (by Jewish standards) scandalous disregard for ancient boundaries as we found in Isaiah 56. Isaiah said to his generation (and to ours also, since, as St. Peter says, it was revealed to him that he was serving ultimately not himself and his generation, but us Christians; see 1 Peter 1:12) that Yahweh's purposes were far above the narrow and self-serving nationalism his eighth century B.C. hearers cherished. Isaiah's hearers wanted a God who would prop up their social order, a utilitarian God who would give them what they wanted if only they

offered enough proper sacrifices in His Temple. Isaiah confronts them with a far different God, a God who judges them as well as saves them, a God who uses Assyria as the rod of His anger against Israel, a God whose final restoration of His people included nations from all the earth.

### **Rewriting the Rules: Levites from All Nations**

At the end of the Book of Isaiah, we find the following passage:

...the time is coming to gather all nations [Hebrew: *goyim*] and tongues, and they shall come and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them and will send survivors from them to the nations: Tarshish, Put, Lud, Meshech, Rosh, Tubal and Javan [i.e. Greece], to the distant coastlands that have neither heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they will declare My glory among the nations. Then they shall bring all your brothers from all the nations as a grain offering to Yahweh, on horses, in chariots, in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem, says Yahweh, just as the sons of Israel bring their grain offering in a clean vessel to the House of Yahweh. I will also take some of them for priests and for Levites, says Yahweh (Is. 66:18-21).

The passage is part of the vision of Jerusalem's eschatological glory, for the next verse (v. 22) speaks of "the new heavens and the new earth which I make," referring to a previous eschatological vision in 65:17. The author is looking beyond the immediate future to a time when God's glory and Kingdom fill the earth. This passage assumes the scattering of Israel to all nations as a judgment for their sin, and says that survivors from Israel (see 4:2 and 10:21 for the concept of a remnant surviving the coming judgment) will be sent to the nations. The term here rendered "nations" is the Hebrew *goyim*, often translated "Gentiles." The nations which before had "neither heard God's fame nor seen His glory" (v. 19) will hear His fame, and see His glory. These *goyim*, these Gentiles, will "bring all your brothers (i.e. the

Jewish brothers of Isaiah's audience) from all the nations as a grain offering to Yahweh" in the same way that "the sons of Israel bring their grain offering to the House of Yahweh." That is, these pilgrim Gentiles will escort the exiled Jews back to their Land in comfort ("on horses, in chariots, in litters, on mules, on camels") as part of their Gentile worship of the Hebrew God. The Jews bring a grain offering to Yahweh as their homage, and the Gentiles from all the distant nations bring the returning exiled Jews as their homage to Him.

Then comes the staggering promise, "I will also take some of them for priests and for Levites" (v. 21). We may ask who is referred to by the phrase, "some of them?" It is grammatically possible that the antecedent is "the sons of Israel." I reject this interpretation. For one thing, it seems pointless to say that God "will take some of them for priests and Levites" if all this means is that God would acknowledge the returning priests and Levites as priests and Levites. Furthermore, the position of this promise at the climax of the passage demands something more radical and wonderful. This passage comes as the climax of a whole series of promises, if not the climax of the entire Book. In the immediate context God has promised that He would create new heavens and a new earth (65: 17), that the sound of weeping and the sound of crying would no longer be heard in Jerusalem (65: 19). He promised that the life-span of His people would be increased so as to compare to the life-span of a tree, so that a youth would be one who dies at the age of a hundred (65: 20-22). He promised that the wolf and the lamb would graze together and the lion eat straw like the ox, and they would do no harm in all His holy mountain (65: 25). God would extend His peace and prosperity (Hebrew *shalom*) to Jerusalem like a mighty river and the glory of the nations to her like an overflowing stream (66: 12). It is unthinkable anticlimactic to suggest that, as the culmination and crown of all these promises, God promises that He would allow returning priests and Levites to fulfil their function in the Temple. Would they not have done this even without this promise?

I suggest that the "them" in v. 21 has as its antecedent the nations, the *goyim* that are the subject of the preceding verses. Here is a staggering promise indeed, for God promises that He would even take some of the pilgrim Gentiles to function in His Temple as priests and Levites. This overturns the entire structure and framework of the Mosaic Law. That Law stipulated that only the tribe of Levi could function in the Temple, and of the tribe of Levi, only the house of Aaron could function as actual priests. (This limitation originally met with hot resistance from some in Moses' day; see Numbers 16). To now promise that the priesthood would be open, not only to Jews who were not of the house of Aaron, or even of the tribe of Levi, but even to Gentiles, is to promise what was previously unimaginable. For this would involve a complete re-ordering of the Law and of the Mosaic dispensation. For, as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us, "when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of Law also" (Heb. 7:12). It is consistent, however, with the previously prophesied changes in the world. In a world where we would find a new heavens and a new earth, where a man might live as long as a tree, where the wolf and the lamb graze together, we might even find Gentiles serving as priests and Levites to the living God of the Jews in His Temple. Once again, this new creation finds its fulfillment only in Christ. In Him alone do we find the creation of a new humanity, one that is neither Jew nor Gentile, and where the dividing-wall of the Law has been torn down (Gal. 3:28, Eph. 2:14-15). In Him the wolf and the lamb live together in harmony, and the tax-collector and the Zealot share a common Eucharistic table. Christ has rewritten all the rules of the Old Covenant, so that both Jew and Gentile share the same access to God in one Spirit (Eph. 2:18).

### **The Significance for the Unity of the Book of Isaiah**

Since the days of Duhm in the late nineteenth century, certain scholars have denied the unitary authorship of the Book of Isaiah. Some have assigned Chapters 1-39 to the original prophet Isaiah (sometimes called "Isaiah of Jerusalem"), and have assigned Chapters

40-66 to a second unknown writer in the Exile (sometimes called "Deutero-Isaiah"). Some have refined this even further, finding significant differences between Chapters 40-55 (the work of "Deutero-Isaiah"), and assigning the final chapters of the book (56-66) to yet another figure, referred to (inevitably) as "Trito-Isaiah." These scholars find certain literary characteristics unique to each Isaianic writer. Some scholars, for example, claim that the view-point of Isaiah of Jerusalem is markedly different, if not actually incompatible, with the view-point of Deutero-Isaiah. Why writers as manifestly brilliant as "Deutero-Isaiah" and "Trito-Isaiah" should have vanished from history without a trace, leaving neither biography, legend or even a name, when writers such as Joel should have left both their books as well as their names, has never (to my mind) been adequately explained. This point was underlined as early as 1846 by J. A. Alexander, and as recently as 1969 by R. K. Harrison.<sup>4</sup>

It is possible, as has been suggested by some scholars, that these later chapters were written not by Isaiah himself but by his disciples, men in the "school of Isaiah" who preserved his teaching and collected and arranged them for posterity, a group of admiring scribes. However, these chapters radiate with divine authority, and emphatically claim to be the voice of God. The authority which rings out in Is. 48:16 can be detected throughout these later chapters: "Come near to Me, listen to this: from the first I have not spoken in secret. From the time it took place, I was there. And now the Lord Yahweh has sent me and His Spirit." All of Is. 40-66 resonates with this commanding authority. It claims to be the voice of prophecy and the genuine words of a prophet. Now if one of Isaiah's disciples was a genuine prophet, why did he not speak in his own name as his mentor Isaiah did? If the word of the Lord not only came to Isaiah the son of Amoz (Is. 1:1, 2:1), but also to this later man, why did he not speak out for himself? And

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<sup>4</sup> R.K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1969), p. 769.

moreover, if his prophetic authority was acknowledged and his prophecies accepted, treasured and preserved by his fellows, how is it that he vanished from history without a trace? With all due respect to the liberal Protestant German scholars of the nineteenth century, I find their historical reconstruction frankly incredible.

A full-scale defence of the unity of the Book of Isaiah is well beyond the scope of this small meditation. It is worth mentioning certain things that need explaining if the unity of the book is rejected. Take for example the phrase "the Holy One of Israel." This is scarcely ever found in the other prophets; I can find the title only in Jer. 50:29 and Jer. 51:5, though Ezek. 39:7 has the title "the Holy One *in* Israel"). However, the title remains a favourite of Isaiah of Jerusalem. He uses it many times. See Is. 1:4, 5:19, 5:24, 10:20, 12:6, 17:7, 29:19, 30:11, 30:12, 30:15, 31:1, 37:23. Given the scarcity of the title in the other prophets of the Old Testament, it seems clear that the use of the title is specifically Isaianic. Yet the title is found also in "Deutero-Isaiah." See Is. 37:23, 41:14, 41:16, 41:20, 43:3, 43:14, 45:11, 47:4, 48:17, 49:7, 54:5. Furthermore, we also find the title in "Trito-Isaiah:" see Is. 55:5, 60:9, 60:14. I find it difficult to avoid the conclusion that the specifically Isaianic title "the Holy One of Israel" is found in all parts of the canonical Book of Isaiah because all parts were written by the same author.

Apart from such literary considerations, I would suggest that the presence of such a shocking and (in their day) scandalous overthrow of established religious boundaries, both in the early chapters of Isaiah and in the later chapters of Isaiah, also witnesses powerfully to an over-all unity of authorship of the canonical Book. Rarely has a prophet or writer dared to proclaim such things. If a large part of the prophet's perceived task was to call Israel back to fidelity to its ancestral Law (see Jeremiah 6:16: "ask for the ancient paths"), then such trampling upon concepts and precepts hallowed by that Law is surely astonishing. A prophet might be expected to confirm God's commandments, separating eunuch from non-eunuch, Israelite from foreigner,

covenant-partner from sworn enemy, and reinforcing these distinctions which God insisted upon in His Law. Yet here, in both the opening and closing parts of the Book of Isaiah, we meet the spectacle of the prophet outraging the established divine order by proclaiming the overthrow of such distinctions. I suggest that only a prophet as daring as Isaiah of Jerusalem, who knew the Holy One of Israel, would dare to announce such things. He knew that God's thoughts were not their thoughts, neither were His ways their ways. Indeed, as the heavens were higher than the earth so were ways of God higher than theirs (55:8-9). This God was the One who would dare anything for the sake of the salvation of the world. As events were to prove, He would even take on human flesh and live and die among His people as a Suffering Servant to bring those far away back to God. Israel would then indeed be a third in all the earth, rejoicing in their God with Egyptians and Assyrians. Then even the dried up eunuch would receive an inheritance and salvation from God equal to that received by others. In Christ, even the hopeless and formerly excluded eunuch would receive an everlasting name, a name better than that of sons and daughters.

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