



Single Authorship Theory Summarised

Conservative scholars (eg Motyer and Oswalt) argue that Isaiah of Jerusalem was active during the Assyrian period, and although disaster was averted for Jerusalem (chs 37-39) he foresaw that (a) disaster and judgment would come through Babylon and (b) salvation and renewal would follow when Babylon in turn was judged.

Multiple Authorship Theory Summarised

The main reason for this hypothesis: different 'parts' of the book seem to address different periods of Israel's history, over 100s of years which one prophet could not possibly have lived through. The most commonly held view is that there was one prophet who wrote the first part of the book and then two or more who wrote or edited the rest.

Structure of the Book of Isaiah

First/ Proto Isaiah	Ch 1	Introduction – texts from different periods
	Ch 2-12	Jerusalem judged and redeemed
	Ch 13-27	Yahweh among the nations
	Ch 28-35	A righteous king in Jerusalem salvation
	Ch 36-39	Narrative and prophecy of Assyria and Babylon

Second/ Deutero Isaiah	Ch 40-41	A new call
	Ch 42-44	1st Song of Yahweh's Servant
	Ch 44-48	Babylon's fall
	Ch 49-53	2nd, 3rd and 4th Songs of Yahweh's Servant
	Ch 54-55	Joy over a new covenant and community

Third/ Trito Isaiah	Ch 56-65	Creating a new, faithful "righteous" community
	Ch 66	Jerusalem restored, God over all.

For those who accept that there may have been more than one writer of Isaiah, there is still great value in conservative commentaries and their vision of a unified text. For those who accept that there was only one author, there is still room for engaging with the multiple authors view and the way it sees that the book could have addressed different periods in Jewish history. On this side of eternity of course we cannot know which theory (if either!) is correct. It is not really important. What is important is the message of book, in its own time and in ours.