

THE EPIC OF EDEN: ISAIAH

Session 9 Video Notes – The Book of Isaiah and the Idol

1. The Servant's Foil: the Idol
 - a. What is an "idol"?
 - b. To the locals, an *èlōhim* (a "god") or a *śélem* (an "image")
 - c. For the biblical writers and idol was a *pésel* ("a thing crafted")
2. Monotheism versus Polytheism
 - a. Polytheism
 - i. Multiple gods – multiple sources of power = limited power
 - ii. Gods derive from primordial "stuff"
 - b. Monotheism
 - i. God distinct from creation = cannot be manipulated by it
 - ii. One God = no rivals = unlimited power
 - iii. Essential texts
 1. Exodus 20:3-1 – "no other gods before Me..."
 2. Deuteronomy 12:1-5 – "destroy their idols..."
 3. Deuteronomy 6:4 – the *Shema* of ancient Israel
3. What is an "Idol"?
 - a. An incarnate, animated diety
 - b. How to "make" a god (a *śélem* or "image")
 - i. The mis-pi ("mouth washing") ritual of ancient Mesopotamia
 - ii. The installation of a god (or "image")
 - c. The Goal? To animate the idol in order to make it a god
4. Isaiah's Take?
 - a. Isaiah 44:6-23 and the "idol parody" hymns
 - b. Who made whom?

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

"Behold, the former things have come to pass, now I declare new things, before they spring forth I declare them to you!" 42:9

ISAIAH 1-39		ISAIAH 40-66	
Former things . . . Israel's sin and impending judgment		Latter things . . . Israel's hope of restoration after judgment	
1-6	Introduction: The Problem: Judah's Sin	40-43	Transition: The Solution: Yahweh's Transformation and Restoration of Israel
7-12	Ahaz: A Faithless King	44-53	"Who Will You Serve?"
13-23	Oracles against the Nations	54-63	The Restoration of Israel and the Nations
24-27	The "Little Apocalypse"	64-66	Summary of All: "Can a Land Be Born in a Single Day?"
28-35	A Series of Woes against Israel		
36-39	Hezekiah: An (Almost) Faithful King		
1	Introduction of lawsuit		
2-4	Summary oracles		
5	Poetic reiteration		
6	Denouement: the introduction of Isaiah		
7-9:7	The children-name-signs		
9:8-10:4	"His anger does not turn away"		
10:5-34	Judgment against Assyria		
11:1-12:6	Salvation for Israel and a hymn of praise		
13-14	Babylon and "The Day of Yahweh"		
15-17	Philistia, Moab, Damascus		
18-20	Egypt		
21-22	Babylon and Judah		
23	Tyre		
24	Cosmological judgment and coming kingdom		
25	Hymn of praise for new order		
26	Resurrection after death		
27	"In that day" Leviathan slain; Jacob exonerated		
28-31	Drunken Ephraim; sinful Ariel; rebellious children		
32-34	Resolution: a righteous king and judgment		
35	Hymn of redemption		
36-37	Hezekiah, Sennacherib and Isaiah		
38	Hezekiah [and Israel's] temporary reprieve		
39	Hezekiah's foolishness: Babylon is coming		
40-41	The restoration begins!		
42	The new servant		
43	The new thing [The exiles come home!]		
44	The servant vs. the idol		
45-48	The idols and those who serve them humiliated; Yahweh delivers [cf. Cyrus]		
49-53	Yahweh reclaims his people by the work of his servant		
54	Judgment has its limits; there is a script		
55-56	Come to the waters		
57-58	The fate of the wicked		
59-62	The fate of the righteous		
63	The winepress of Yahweh		
64	Israel finally understands, "Our Father"		
65	Yahweh will restore: a new heaven and earth		
66	"I extend peace like a river"		

"For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind!" 65:17 (NRSV, emphasis mine)