



First Isaiah The Demand for Justice

Interpreting the Text:

1. Isaiah rather clearly weaves his political opinions into his prophetic writings. He has a dislike for Assyria, but also finds rebelling against them to be a bad idea. Can we separate Isaiah's political writings from his prophetic ones? Is there a difference in the first place?
2. Isaiah has several contextual condemnations in this section, meaning, they were intended for a particular people in a particular time. Can we understand the contextual realities of these statements, yet also understand them as potentially meaningful outside their context?
3. How does Isaiah's call for justice compare to that of Amos or Jeremiah?

Applying the Text:

1. Isaiah once again moves emphasis from purity of ritual to purity of action and intention. In what ways do we still distinguish between intention and action? Is this a useful tool for understanding or teaching?
2. Isaiah's criticism of sacrifice is rooted in the people's responses to it rather than the structure itself. How does Isaiah demonstrate a balance between critical engagement with religious structures and holding communities individually accountable? What can we learn from this today?
3. Isaiah's condemnation of excess is sometimes connected to wholesale condemnations of certain actions, such as drinking or playing music. Does it resonate with you? Is any part of it challenging or disconcerting?