

**The Unity of Isaiah:
A Critical Response to Y.T.
Radday's article: *Two
computerized statistical-
linguistic test concerning
the Unity of Isaiah***



**A Term Paper for Lee Davis
For the Class The Book of Isaiah
Online Academy of Biblical Studies**

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OBJECTIVE: People continue to try to disprove the unity of Isaiah. (Isaiah wrote the book of Isaiah). Most people argue that there were three different writers to the book of Isaiah. The first Isaiah, the second Isaiah which is called the Deutero-Isaiah, and the third Isaiah which is called the Trito-Isaiah. The arguments have been beaten down over the years by conservative scholars to the point that liberal scholars have run to another way of arguing that Isaiah was not written by one man. This way was they put the book of Isaiah to a test in a computer and they let the computer decide whether it was written by one man or more than one man. In the article *Two computerized statistical-linguistic test concerning the Unity of Isaiah*. Y. T. Raddy attempted to explain how the computer was able to state that Isaiah did not write the book that bears his name. Our purpose is to destroy the arguments that Raddy makes in his article.

INTRODUCTION:

A computer is only as smart as the programming that is put into it. If we program a computer to look for differences in a piece of literature that is what it is going to do. That does not mean that the same author did not write all that literature. It just simply means that he used different styles for different reasons and for different purposes. To base a conclusion on what a computer says is to beg the question. Because we have already told the computer what to say.

Most people because we live in the age of computers think that computers are perfect and that they cannot make mistakes and that whatever they say must be true. The problem lies not with the computer but with the computer programmer. If a Bible believer was to come up with a computer software program that would tell a computer to search out every verse in the Bible and then to say that the bible was perfectly harmonious from beginning to end the Bible critic would not stand for it for even a moment. Yet this is exactly what Raddy has done on the opposite side of the issue. How did Raddy go about this?

DISCUSSION:

First thing he did. He drew from each chapter group three stratified samples of 500 words each. He calculated the mean number of syllables per word because he was struck that the word length measured in syllables as defined and traditional Hebrew grammar seemed to vary in chapter groups. The chart below shows his conclusion.

To see chart go to <http://www.challenge2.org/linguistics.pdf> . He says that from table one that he saw an unmistakable trend towards longer words in the second half of the book than the first half. This really doesn't prove anything at all. If that were true I would get flamed non stop by my friends on forums because when I write an rpg (Role Playing Game) character I always make them

sound different from how I sound. I try to leave out as much of my own personality in the character unless it's made up to be specifically like me.

His second idea was to ask the computer to count for each chapter group the total of words that were nouns and the number of inflected nouns hoping to discover another linguistic characteristic. Chart 2 which can be seen at the same website as listed above shows the percentages of inflected nouns in chapters 1-35 and 40-66 lie very close to each other but the frequency of inflected nouns after chapter 40 is greater by 63% than in the previous chapters. He says "At this point it may be claimed that the disparity like the one just observed can be viewed to pure chance because such a disparity may occur also within one and the same author. This may doubtless be the case. The answer to this objection will depend on whether the disparity observed is so significant that one may assume, with a certain measure of probability, that it is not due to chance alone but to a different authorship" (*Two Computerized Statistical Linguistic Test concerning the Unity of Isaiah* pp 322, 323).

The second test that they used was called chi-square test (χ^2). Raddy says "It permits one to verify what measure an observed distribution corresponds to a hypothetical random distribution" (Ibid, page 323). The main idea of the Chi test is basically a test that assumes the so called null hypothesis. Raddy says this means "In our case, that the populations from which the samples are drawn are identical" (Ibid). However the null hypothesis "typically proposes a general or default position, such as that there is no relationship between two measured phenomena, or that a potential treatment has no effect" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Null_hypothesis).

Raddy tells us that the test will give us a degree of probability as to whether or not Isaiah wrote the entire book. The Chi test is not even for that. It

was misused. So Raddy's results were unfounded because they were based on a faulty test. However even if the test was validly used it still does not justify coming to the conclusion that more than one person wrote the book of Isaiah.

The book of Isaiah was written over a long period of time and there were different reasons for writing. But Isaiah's style can be found all the way through the book. In a time of National Crisis when Ahaz was getting ready to go to war against Syria he had approached Isaiah to ask for Gods guidance and write in the middle of a national crisis Isaiah gave a messianic promise Isaiah 7:14, when Hezekiah had come to Isaiah in chapter 39 because they were about to be carried away into Babylonian captivity right in the middle of a national crisis in Isaiah 40:1-5 Isaiah gave another messianic promise. This was Isaiah's way and these promises and prophecies crop up through out the book of Isaiah from the first verse to the last.

Why is it that so many people work so hard to get rid of Isaiah's authorship of the book of Isaiah. There is only one reason and that is because Isaiah is the messianic prophet. He is quoted by more New testament writers than any other prophet. He has more prophecies concerning Christ than any other prophet. You take away Isaiah's authorship and you do much damage. Not only to the Deity of Christ but to the Inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible. Why any child of God would question the book of Isaiah is simply beyond all comprehension. Yet ACU's New Commentary "*The Transforming Word*" teaches this very doctrine and is being read and studied by members of the Lord's Church. That is just one more nail in ACU's coffin which puts them away from the truth and in the path of Denominationalism. We of soldiers of Christ have to stand up against this sort of teaching. We don't have the luxury to sit back and say it isn't my fight. We have done that for far too long. And now Atheism and Agnosticism and skepticism has

infiltrated the Church and most of our Christian colleges.

CONCLUSION

Basically Raddy begged the question because he programmed the computer to do exactly what he wanted it to do. The begging the question is a fallacy of Logic that every Logician knows is wrong. His test was invalid. His results were invalid. Therefore his conclusion was invalid. Isaiah wrote the entire book.