Second Isaiah, who wrote in the 500’s B.C.E., is a different prophet from First Isaiah, who wrote two hundred years earlier, during the Assyrian threat in the 700’s B.C.E... The Assyrians have come, conquered, and gone; they have been replaced by the Babylonians. Israel is in exile in Babylon.

And a new empire is on the march: the Persian Empire, under Cyrus the Great! This empire will free the Israelites and restore them to their homeland. Cyrus the Great – not an Israelite, not a worshipper of the LORD – is the messiah who will bring these things to pass. Remember, “messiah” means “anointed one” -- meaning, “chosen by God.” Starting with Saul, the first Israelite king, Israel’s kings became kings by being anointed by a priest; oil is poured over their heads.

So just as evil leaders like Nebuchadnezzar could be called “God’s servant” (by First Isaiah) for unknowingly doing God’s will, so could good ones like Cyrus unknowing be doing good things that fulfilled God’s will. But after all the insistence that the anointed saviors of Israel were going to come through the line of David, this is a new thing – an anointed one who is not even an Israelite! But this is hardly the only new thing in Second Isaiah, who is very much the prophet of new things.

Read about Second Isaiah in Harris, , p. 218 of the seventh edition; sorry, sixth edition page not available. Also, see the fascinating caption to figure 7.8 on pg. 219.

Read Isaiah 40.1 to 45.25 – five chapters. Please answer all the questions in writing.

40.1-2: What’s the big news here?

40.3-5: “Prepare a way for the LORD. In the context of the historical moment Second Isaiah is written in, where is the LORD going, specifically, and who is he leading there? You may need footnotes.

40.6-31. Complete this sentence with one word: “The quality of the LORD that these beautiful lines emphasize is his ________________.”

41.14-16: “On the other hand, the quality of Israel that these lines emphasize is its ________________.” (One word.)

42.1-9. If the servant in these lines is Israel, what is its mission as described in these lines?

42.10 to 45.25:

(a) In what lines within this reading would Israelites have heard the most powerful message of hope for Israel’s redemption? (Be clear in your minds what, specifically, is meant by redemption. Many people refer to a Redeemer without having a clear idea of what is meant by the word.)

(b) In 45.14, how will foreign nations behave towards Israel now that Israel is redeemed?

(c) In what lines do you find the clearest evidence that Second Isaiah views the LORD as the only God and as a universal God?