

Studies of the Book of Isaiah in the Korean Church since its Beginning¹

Prof. Hae Kwon Kim, Ph.D. (Soongsil University, Christian Studies)

I thank God for letting us KSOTS to celebrate its jubilee anniversary by holding an international conference with the topic “Old Testament Studies in the Era of Globalization,” which deals with two subthemes, “The Old Testament and Its Interpretation in the Cross-cultural World” and “The Use and Interpretation of the Old Testament in Korea and Its Related Society.” I am honored to present a paper at this important conference and want to introduce to participants how the Prophets in general and the Book of Isaiah in particular have been read and studied in the Korean Church and academia.

I. Introduction

The history of the Korean Church is marked by its unfailing enthusiasm toward the Bible in general and OT Prophets in particular. Well before Protestant Christianity was introduced to Korea through missionaries, some members of the Korean gentry themselves have already read the Bible in the late 18th century through their contract with French Roman Catholic missionaries working in China. Some Korean traders and merchants participated in the translation of the Bible into Korean by helping John Ross a Scottish missionary who was sent to China and Manchuria, in his translation of the Bible into Korean.² There was even a Confucian noble man, like Yi Soo-Jung, who translated the Gospel of Luke as early as the late 19th century in Japan. No wonder Korean Christianity has been called a Bible-loving or Bible-committed one. Faced with the decline of their mother country, Korean Christians (both RCC and Protestant Christians) put their trust in the OT especially and its bountiful promises and prophecies designed to sustain the people of Israel in their national crises and tribulations. The OT provided Korean Christians with many inspiring lessons and convictions because of its apparently nationalistic tone and universal vision of a peaceful world full of freedom, justice, and equality.

The book of Isaiah, among others, has been one of the most widely read OT books in Korea since Christianity was first introduced to Korean people in the late 19th century for several reasons: its messianic hope, its sociopolitical oracles, and its frequent quotations and salient fulfillments in the NT. A survey of the uses and interpretations of the book of Isaiah in the Korean church illustrates how Korean Christians and Bible scholars have adopted its message in direct response to their contemporary sociopolitical challenges and ecclesial needs.

The present article examines how both the Korean Church and academia have read and interpreted the book of Isaiah these past two centuries with special attention to how the socio-religious milieu of Korea influenced Korean people's reading and interpretation of the book. To this end, the present article examines Isaiah commentaries, monographs, and important books of sermons which deal with the book

¹ The present essay was a revised version of the paper which was first read at International Conference in the Jubilee Year 2010 of the Korean Society of the Old Testament held at the Methodist Theological Seminary, Seoul, during 28-29 May 2010.

² Lee Mahn Yol et al., 『대한성서공회사 1』 (*History of the Korean Society of the Bible I*)(in Korean)(Seoul: Korean Society of the Bible, 1983), 23-89.

of Isaiah with attention to themes and methods.

For this reason the present article takes a historical approach to major works on the book of Isaiah and categorizes them into several types in accordance with their interpretive method and focus.

II. A Brief Survey of Research History of “the Prophets”³ in Korea

It is necessary to briefly survey how both Korean RCC⁴ and Protestant Christianity read and interpreted the Prophets, taking into account those works produced during the last century from 1918 to 2001, before embarking on the research history of the Book of Isaiah in Korea. The reason for making 1918 a starting period is that in 1918 Walter C. Erdman(어도만) American missionary and OT professor of Pyeongyang Theological Seminary published the first OT text book on the Prophets entitled 『이사야 공부기』 (경성: 조선야소교서회), which is reputed to be the first Korean work on the Prophets.⁵

The total number of works that deal with the Prophets produced from 1918 to 2009 amounts to more than 2500 including books, articles, translations, Th. M theses, and short essays contributed to journals and magazines written by pastors and lay scholars, conservative-evangelicals and liberals alike. A comprehensive survey of works on Isaiah will help us establish a democratic and ecumenical forum for Prophets studies. Below, we will divide the works according to major streams of study of the Prophets and give an overview of their interpretive focus and methods.⁶

About 10% of these total works are mostly expository commentary and about 5 % are monographs. Ph. D/Th. D theses occupy less than 2%, Th. M. theses a bit more than 10%. Translated works amount to 17%, which is 1.6 times the amount of works by Korean scholars. About half of the total works are about the three major Prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Among others, studies on the Book of Isaiah make up the majority(about 470 works), including translations.

For convenience's sake we divide works on the Prophets into 5 periods with attention to their respective traits: 1918-1945, 1946-1969, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s and on. Works produced before the 1945 emancipation of Korea from the Japanese regime occupy 10.7%, works from 1946-1969 9.1%, works from the 1970s 9.9%, works from the 1990s and later 51.2%. The majority of works on the Prophets were published during these past two decades. The earliest expository commentary on the Prophets is 『포로시대 후 선지서 강해: 학개 세가리야 말나기』 (경성: 조선야소교서회, 1920) by W. C. Erdman. As previously mentioned, the first monograph on the Prophets is W. C. Erdman's 1918 『이사야 공부기』. The first Korean scholar's Ph. D was Yunkuk Kim's

³ I am using this word in a Christian sense, referring to 15 OT books from Isaiah to Malachi.

⁴ Korean RCC's bicentennial commentaries on the OT have started to appear and Yim Seung Pil's translation of Isaiah catches our attention(1995). Few works have been produced by RCC scholars or priests perhaps because of their relative lack of emphasis on the Bible. For this reason, the present article does not deal with works by RCC scholars.

⁵ Walter C. Erdman(어도만), 『이사야 공부기』 (*A Study of Isaiah*)(경성: 조선야소교서회, 1918).

⁶ Refer to Park Dong Hyun's <박동현의 이야기방>(http://dhpark.net) and an appendix no. 1 at the end of *Study of the Book of Jeremiah* 『예레미야서 연구』 (Seoul: Korean Bible Institute, 2003), 201-384 for a more detailed statistics of Korean people's studies of the Prophets conducted from 1918 to 2001.

1956 Western Theological Seminary(Pittsburgh) Ph. D., entitled “The Trial of Hosea.” The first Th. M. thesis was Jae Joon Kim's 1932 Th. M. Thesis, entitled “오경 비평과 주전 팔세기 예언운동”(“Pentateuchal Criticism and BC 8th century Prophetic Movement”) that was submitted to the same seminary. The first essay on the Prophets was Frederick S. Miller(민로아 선교사)'s ‘이사야’(Isaiah), contributed to 『Shinhakjinam(신학지남)』 2/2 ([July 1919, Vol. 6], 32-35).

According to Moon Hee Suk (ed.), *Research History of the Old Testament in the Korean Church* 『한국교회구약성서해석사 1900-1977』 (1977), about 30 different authors were found to have produced at least one work on the Prophets from 1900-1977. They were mostly theologically trained scholars and pastors. However, Park Dong Hyun found many more works on the Prophets by including works written by lay authors and non-academics. According to Park, about 700 authors produced at least one work on the Prophets, including 198 works by non-Korean authors. Given that the number of publishing scholars has rapidly increased since 1977, Park's numbers seem to be more accurate. Nowadays more than 100 OT Ph. D.-holding professors teach in over 50 seminaries and Christian colleges in Korea. Most of them earned their doctoral degree after the 1990s. Over one fourth of them have written a doctoral dissertation on the Prophets in eight different countries.

For the sake of brevity, the present article does not examine the works of lay scholars on the Prophets such as those of Ryu Hee Se (21 essays) and Lee Byung Ryol(96 essays), except to include them in a general directory of Isaiah studies and works by Koreans. It also does not examine commentaries by pastors with academic weight(Kim Kyung Won, Park Yo Il etc) except for those of Bang Ji Il and certain Isaiah commentaries.

One thing worth noting here is that translated commentaries have been in greater use among Korean Christians than any other Korean commentaries or monographs on the Prophets. Another thing worth mentioning is that most works by Korean scholars and pastors on the Prophets have been heavily dependent on foreign studies. As is the case with other fields, Korean works on the Prophets unhesitatingly reveal their overdependence on Western scholarship in terms of both methodology and hermeneutics. They tend to regard themselves as academic retailers content with merely importing foreign academic merchandise and selling it to domestic consumers. Few scholars have published a book or commentary independently of western traditions. Both Park Yune Sun(1957) and Lee Sang Keun(1991) have written commentaries on the Prophets by lumping together a variety of western scholars' theories, but not fully engaging with the Bible texts. They of course well reflect their contemporary Zeitgeist, namely unlimited respect and admiration for western Christian civilizations and their theological heritage.

Most Korean pastors and preachers have been using serial commentaries translated from English or German works, or edited versions suited for Korean readership. They include Ryu Hyung Ki's Bible Commentaries(1965), Uzzimura Ganzo's Bible Commentaries(1957-1977), Beacon Bible Commentaries(1976-1989), Calvin's Bible Commentaries(1978), Henry Matthew's Bible Exegesis(1979), Keil-Delitzsch's Exegesis(1981), Baker Bible Exegesis(1982), Hesed Exegesis(1986), Hoekma Synthetic Exegesis(1989), Grand Synthetic Exegesis(1991-1996), Lange Exegesis (1978), International Bible Exegesis(1981-1992), USA's Interpretation series commentaries, and Word Biblical Commentaries.

Trends in the Korean Church's studies of the Prophets, since its beginning, were largely marked by three characteristics: a tendency toward nearly pre-critical and supercessionistic readings, historical-dogmatic(Christological reductionism), and

eschatological and moralizing readings. Even in the midst of these dominant trends, however, there has been a divergent minority, namely, a historical-critical reading of Isaiah beginning with the 1934 Abingdon Press One Volume Commentary in the translation of which Chae Pil Keun, Song Chang Keun, and Han Kyung Jik were involved. In the period from 1945 to the early 1980s, both *Christian Thought*, a famous monthly Christian magazine, and Dr. Moon Hee Suk were instrumental in introducing several historical-critical works on the Prophets, like H. W. Wolff's commentary on the minor prophets. Since then the Duranno press has introduced to Korean readers evangelical scholars' works on the Prophets such as those by Willem van Gemeren and William J. Dumbrell.

Overall, works on the major prophets number over 1,300, including over 200 translated works and 150 commentaries (100 translations), 30 monographs, 25 Ph. D. theses, 160 Th. M. these, 800 essays and articles(90 translations). After the 1990s translations occupy a much smaller percentage(13.3%), which means that the number of Korean works has rapidly increased. About 42.4% of the works deal with Isaiah. Of over thirty or so doctoral dissertations on the Prophets that have thus far been produced, about 20 dissertations were written about the three major prophets, and of those twenty about 10 dissertations deal with the Book of Isaiah. This testifies also to the Korean church's enthusiasm towards Isaiah.

III. Studies of the Book of Isaiah in the early stage of the Korean Church History before the 1945 Emancipation of Korea from Japan.⁷

This article traces the Korean Church's commitment to the Book of Isaiah back to its earliest period, revealing how the Korean Church's studies and readings of the Book of Isaiah were conducted in direct response to the surrounding socio-political milieu. Many of the Korean readings and interpretations were dominated by Christological reductionism and messianic or eschatological hope. As noted above, Korean theological students at Pyeongyang Theological Seminary used text books that were written or translated by foreign missionary professors to teach Korean seminarians. These texts include John Ross' Chinese Isaiah commentary, Charles Erdman's Isaiah commentary, and Charles A. Clark's Isaiah commentary.

It was in the 1910s that Korean Christians started to study the Book of Isaiah both theologically and academically. The first book on Isaiah was a Chinese commentary written by a Scottish missionary in China and Manchuria. It was <舊約以賽亞註釋>(The Conference Commentary on Isaiah, 1910, 中國聖教書會), which was published in 1910(耶蘇降世 一千九百零十年) as part of a series of commentaries designed to celebrate the centennial anniversary of Chinese missionary activity conducted by western overseas mission boards. The centennial mission conference held at Shanghai in 1907 originally decided to publish a series of Chinese OT commentaries for Chinese Christians from 1909 to 1914. The Chinese Church published OT commentaries from

⁷ I am indebted to two colleagues for a survey of research history of the Prophets in Korea: Young Jin Kim et al., *Introduction to the Old Testament. Most Recent Studies in Korea* (Seoul: Korea Christian Society of Literature, 2004), 761-785(chap. 29 "The Prophets and Korean Theology")(in Korean); Dong Hyun Park, *Study of Jeremiah*(Seoul: Bible Institute, 2001)(in Korean). See also the following website for a more detailed information: <http://tong.nate.com/roiland/12797058>.

1909 to 1914.

Since back then there was no Korean book on the Prophets, Pyeongyang Presbyterian Seminary had to use John Ross' Chinese Commentary which was published in 1910. In accordance with the theological line of mission theology of the Scottish Presbyterian Church, Ross(羅約翰), well versed in Chinese Confucian canons, revealed himself as a progressive evangelist with a deep respect for the traditional cultures of both China and Korea(refer to his 1903 *Method of Missions in Manchuria*). His commentary reveals a skill in reformation-theological exegesis by relating a certain verse or passage to other OT and NT verses so that it may understood more fully and theologically.

Ross' commentary divides the Book of Isaiah into two major parts(chapters 1-39 and 40-66). After a very brief introduction of the prophet Isaiah and the historical background of his prophetic activity, it divides chapters 1-39 into three smaller units. The first part deals with the devastation of Jerusalem for her sins against God: Chapters 1-12 deal with the history of Judah in BC 740-701; chapters 13-35 deal with the survival and restoration of Judah in and through the judgment of God against all foreign nations; chapters 36-39 deal with the history of Hezekiah King of Judah. The second part(chapters 40-66) deals with the restoration of Judah coterminous with the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven. This commentary gives each smaller section an summarizing rubric and each chapter a relevant title. It is marked by its verse-by-verse exposition and relatively rich information of historical and chronological circumstances. This commentary fundamentally reads the Book of Isaiah as a scripture for the Church named a new Israel, not fully exploring it in its proper historical context. For example, it reads Chapter 4 as a prophecy about a great restoration of the Church(教會大興). Overall, it reads the Book of Isaiah from the perspective of a Protestant doctrine, justification by faith, placing emphasis on the inability of human beings to save themselves(人舞自救之力) and on the grace of God to redeem them from sin and death. It submerges the Book of Isaiah under the 16th century Reformation motto, *sola gratiae*. It also seeks a very exhortatory and moralistic-sermonic approach to Isaiah's prophecies, distinctly reflective of Scottish Presbyterian theological tradition. Ross' commentary takes a Christological reductionist approach while still paying attention to its historical context. It does not subscribe to B. Duhm and other critical scholars' critical view of the so-called three divisions of the Book of Isaiah, however.

In 1918 the Presbyterian Society of Literature(예수교서회) published <이사야 공부>, a Korean textbook on Isaiah, which was a very brief monograph on the Book of Isaiah by Charles R. Erdman.⁸ It was not a commentary or monograph in a strict sense, but an outline study guide, which, dividing Book of Isaiah into 12 sections, was something of a pocket-book on the Book of Isaiah.

Charles Erdman's 1918 Isaiah commentary was translated by Rev. Kwan Suck Kim as a textbook on Isaiah. Its original version had been used in Korea since the 1930s.

⁸ Charles R. Erdman, *The Book of Isaiah. An Exposition*(Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Rowell Company, 1918), 1-160= Charles R. Erdman(어도만), *The Book of Isaiah. An Exposition* (『이사야 주석서』), (Seoul: The Christian Literature Society, 단기 4290[1957]). This book was used by Pyeongyang Seminary to teach its students before it was translated into Korean. Therefore, I included it here in the discussion of pre-1945 studies of Isaiah.

This commentary divides the Book of Isaiah into three major parts: Part I(Chapters 1-35) Prophecies of Punishment and Judgment; Part II (Chapters 36-39) The Historical Section; Part III(Chapters 40-66) Prophecies of Restoration. Each part is divided into smaller parts. Part I consists of 7 units(chapters 1-5 Judah's Sins, Chapter 6 The Call of Isaiah, chapters 7-12 a Book of Prophecy on Immanuel, Chapters 13-23 Destiny of All Nations, Chapters 24-27 The Day of Yahweh, Chapters 28-33 a Book of Prophecy on a Catastrophic Disaster, chapters 34-35 The Redemption of God's People). Part III consists of 3 smaller units(Chapters 40-48 The Power of Yahweh, Chapters 49-57 The Servant of Yahweh, Chapters 58-66 God's Perfected Kingdom).

This commentary interprets the Book of Isaiah from two foci: the redeeming and self-sacrificial ministry of Yahweh's Servant(the people of Israel, the Remnant, the Suffering Messiah) and God's perfection of His Kingdom through His suffering servant. It views Luke 4:17-21 as a fulfillment of Isaiah Chapters 58-66. After a brief discussion of the historical background(the periods of four Judean kings from Uzziah to Manasseh), the prophet Isaiah, and his biography(royal counselor for Judean kings), it first shows a deep appreciation of the poetic value of Isaiah's oracles as well as their revelatory depth. Generally speaking, it also takes a Christological-reductionist approach to the Book of Isaiah. For example, it argues that Chapter 6 is talking about the pre-incarnate Christ, the Son God of the Trinity. It even goes as far as to say that Isaiah encountered the triune God here by connecting this chapter with John 12:40-41. This commentary is marked by its terse yet intertextual connections. Nearly every Isaiah verse is related to and connected with NT verses or OT verses in a meaningful and heuristic manner. For example, 6:4 is connected to Josh. 5:13-14, Ezek 1:28, Dan 10:5-11, and Lk 5:8. 6:6 is related to I John 1:9. 6:7 is connected to Matt 28:19 and Mark 1:17. 6:8 is interlocked with Rom 12:1 and Acts 26:19. This Reformed principle of Bible interpretation (The Bible interprets itself) is very thoroughly employed especially for commenting on chapters 11-12 in a very sermonistic way(Isaiah 26:19 with Hebrews 11:13-16; 27:1 with Ps 74:14).

Additionally, George T. B. Davis's book *Fulfilled Prophecies That Prove the Bible* was translated into Korean by 소열도(T. S. Soltau) as 『예언의 응험』 (예수교서회, 1934). Davis played an active role in the 1910 One Million Souls Saving Movement of the Korean Church, participated in the world-wide revival movement, and especially took the lead in spreading One Million NT to the Chinese. He advocated a dispensationalist and pre-millennial kingdom eschatology and Zionism as well. His understanding of the Prophets and eschatology greatly influenced the then Korean Christians of that time as they read the Prophets. This book was written to assure Korean Christians and readers that the Bible is God's Word which was faithfully fulfilled in the devastations of pagan cities(Tyre, Sidon etc) and in the rebuilding and restoration of Jerusalem after 1948.⁹ It argues that the Bible proved itself a collection of fulfilled prophecies based on Isaiah 41:22-29, which declared that God's prediction of the things to come through OT prophets is a proof of God's omnipotence and wisdom. Thus, one can believe that the Bible is a collection of God's fulfilled prophecies in view of its own stated criterion "prophecy and fulfillment"(Deut 18:21-22). This book consists of 14 chapters beginning with "the Destruction of Tyre" and ending with "The Bible being a divine Wonder to the

⁹ George T. B. Davis, *Fulfilled Prophecies That Prove the Bible*, trans. by 소열도(T. S. Soltau), (『예언의 응험』)(Seoul: The Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1934), 1.

whole world." Chapter 13(Devastation of Jerusalem)-14("Rebuilding of Jerusalem") are devoted to proving that God's prophecies concerning Jerusalem were amazingly fulfilled by providing photographs. In a similar vein, W. L. Swallen(소안론)'s *Understanding of the Book of Daniel*(『다니엘서요해』, 1938) influenced the Korean Christians' pessimistic view of human history in the 1940s and discouraged them not to participate in any human effort to improve their contemporary society.

Lastly, Rev. Charles Allen Clark's 『이사야서 연구(*Expository Commentary on Isaiah*)』¹⁰ shows a Christological reductionism in the reading of the Book of Isaiah. Although, Allen published 『이사야서 연구』 in 1958, its English original had probably been used in the seminary since the 1930s. It interprets the Book of Isaiah from the principle of "Justification by Faith" and reads the theology of Romans into Isaiah. He claims that the purpose of the Book was to declare God's plan, glorification of Zion and redemption of Israel. He argues that the concept of "the Holy One of Israel" secures the unity of chapters 1-66, with twelve occurrences in 1-39 and thirteen occurrences in 40-66. He aptly notes a universalistic overtone in the Book of Isaiah, especially in its conclusion, saying that the prophecy of Isaiah ends with a perfect and eternal redemption for all the nations and peoples with a sobering comment on an eternal hell and punishment.¹¹ This commentary divides the entire book of Isaiah into 24 sections, giving each section an appropriate title.

IV. Studies of the Book of Isaiah in the Korean Church from 1945 to 1980.

About 500 works have been produced on Isaiah(70 translations)- 70 commentaries, 12 monographs, 10 Ph. D. theses. Of these 68 works were produced before 1945, 37 works in the period from 1946 to 1969, 32 works in the 1970s, 84 works in the 1980s, 250 works after 1990. Several works on Isaiah were published before 1945. As aforementioned, Erdman had published his commentary on Isaiah in 1918 as a textbook for Pyeongyang Seminary. This indicates that the Korean Church, from very early on, held the Book of Isaiah in high esteem. Then came Clark's 1948 Isaiah commentary, followed by Joseph Hopper(趙夏潘)'s 1954 Standard Bible Commentary on Isaiah. It was followed by Chan Kook Kim's 1980 <A Study of the Creation Tradition in Deutero-Isaiah(in Korean)> and Park Chul Woo's 1984 <A Study of Threefold Structure of Isaiah 40-48>.

About 10 Korean students wrote a Ph. D/Th. D. dissertation on Isaiah after 1990. Ma Won Suck's 1996 dissertation deals with the Spirit of God in the Book of Isaiah. Song Byung Hyun's 1997 dissertation takes a textual-linguistic approach to God's exaltation and the humiliation and restoration of human beings in the Book of Isaiah, Yim Chang Il's 1997 dissertation deals with the creation motif in Isaiah's idea of Restoration, Oh Taekhyun's 1998 dissertation deals with Deutero-Isaiah and its relationship to Deuteronomy, Kim Hae Kwon's 2001 dissertation deals with the Plan of Yahweh in First Isaiah, and Park Kyung Chul's 2001 dissertation deals with Israel's Righteousness and Salvation of Gentiles with a focus on the final text of the Book of

¹⁰ Charles A. Clark, *Expository Commentary on Isaiah*(Seoul: The Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1958)(단기 4291 년=1958 년), 1-264.

¹¹ Ibid., 264.

Isaiah.¹² Kim Keun Joo has recently written a dissertation on the position of Egyptians in the Book of Isaiah at Oxford.

Here I will examine Joseph Hopper's translated commentary, the works of Korean Bible scholars and pastors on Isaiah. In 1954 Hong Chun Kim translated Joseph Hopper's commentary on Isaiah as part of the Standard Bible Commentary¹³ planned by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Korea. This commentary begins by declaring itself as a biblical-pastoral commentary rather than a critical commentary. This commentary used the 1938 Korean Revised Version of the Bible and American Revised Version of the Bible. Hopper stated that his book was written for an evangelistic minister under the guiding principle of two 2 Timothy verses(2:5; 4:2). He confessed that his commentary owed a great deal of insight and inspiration to several preceding works: The Treasure of Scripture Knowledge, Joseph A. Alexander's commentary, Franz Delitzsch's work, John Calvin's commentary, Barnes' work, Matthew Henry's commentary, George Adam Smith's work etc. Hopper's commentary in particular was heavily dependent on J. Addison Alexander in terms of principles of exegesis and theological stance. I believe that this commentary greatly influenced Park Yune Sun's commentary on Isaiah. It consists of 60 chapters each with an summarizing title. It views the prophet Isaiah as a Paul of the OT and reads the Book of Isaiah as the fifth Gospel. Exegetical exposition is followed by a short proposal of some practical and dogmatic tenets inferred from texts. One striking aspect of this commentary is that it does not succumb to a Christological-reductionist reading of messianic oracles and his future ideal kingdom, but rather, interprets them from a double perspective. Hopper's exegetical stance is well-balanced and highlighted in his reading of Isaiah Chapters 2, 7, 9-11, 40 and 53. His understanding of the Immanuel prophecy in Chapter 7 in particular refutes a Christological-reductionist approach to it. He argues that this oracle on the newly born baby Immanuel first of all refers to a son of Isaiah, namely Maher-shallal-has-baz in Chapter 8, not directly pointing to Jesus Christ.¹⁴ He differentiates between a historical meaning or reference of the Immanuel prophecy and its ultimate and glorious fulfillment in the birth of Jesus Christ(Matt 1:21-23). He aptly warns against reading Matt 1:21-23 back into Isaiah 7:14 before making a full exploration of the Isaiah passage in its proper historical matrix(2 Kings 15:29, 16:9). However, this interpretive principle was not so thoroughly maintained in his interpretation of Isaiah 9 and 53. In exegeting Isaiah 9, Hopper quickly connected that Chapter with Matthew 4:12-17, John 8:12 and 12:46 in order to cast a illuminating light on the first few verses of Isaiah 9. This light-hearted attitude towards interpretation is noticeable in the way he deals with Isaiah 53. He is quick to jump to a retrojection of the portrait of Jesus of Nazareth back into this chapter without fully probing its theological and historical depth in its 6-5th BC historical context.

¹² I shall not discuss here Koreans' doctoral dissertations in details, because the present essay deals with works written in Korean.

¹³ Joseph Hopper, *The Standard Bible Commentary on Isaiah*, trans. Hong Chun Kim, 『표준주석 이사야』 (Seoul: The Theological Seminary and the Board of Christian Training of the Presbyterian Church of Korea, 1954). Park Hyung Ryong was commissioned to serve as a general editor of the PCK's standard commentary series. Park thus was erroneously credited with having written this commentary on Isaiah.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 65-66.

On the other hand, Park Yune Sun's Isaiah commentary is characterized by its Christological-reductionist and supercessionist approach to the Book of Isaiah.¹⁵ He consistently deprives Isaiah's oracles on a messiah and his future kingdom of their contemporary meaning and reference. By doing so he plucks most of Isaiah's oracles out of their proper historical context and forges them into a collection of predictions about Jesus Christ and his redemptive ministry. This means that most of Isaiah's oracles concerning the Messiah meant nothing to his own contemporary audience. This extreme Christological reductionism is found in his interpretation of Isaiah 7-9. Park reads the Immanuel prophecy as directly pointing to the birth of Jesus by the Virgin Maria without attempting to place it in its immediate historical context.¹⁶ He never mentions here the Syro-Ephraimite War clearly, against which Isaiah clearly proclaimed a series of salvific oracles to the house of David. This tendency is slightly corrected in Lee Sang Keun's commentary.¹⁷ Park Yune Sun consistently seeks a supercessionist interpretation by replacing the historical people of Israel with the Church, namely, a new Israel (cf. Rom 11:25-26). For example, this hermeneutical stance is clear in his interpretation of 9:1. The darkness described in this chapter serves to forecast a pre-messianic age which is remote from his immediate audience. Those who are sitting in the shadow of death simply refer to those people who are spiritually dead. He dehistoricizes the prophecy of Isaiah about a messianic time by negating its immediately historical referentiality. He thinks that verse 4 dealing with the day of Median simply points to Jesus' redemption of sinners from sin and death, not a particular deliverance of the Israelites from Assyria.¹⁸ This spiritualizing tendency is seen in his interpretation of Isaiah 40:1, which he asserts does not necessarily predict the return of the Babylonian exiles in the 6th century BC, but a future conversion of the Gentiles to Jesus Christ in the NT times. In his view, chapter 40 simply envisages a glorious future of his Church.¹⁹

Overall, Park reads the Book of Isaiah exclusively from a Christian viewpoint without being aware of its position in God's overall plan of redeeming the entire world including the people of Israel from Sin and Death. No wonder Park discredits Bernard Duhm's historical critical division of the Book of Isaiah into three Isaiahs. He shows himself heavily dependent on E. J. Young and Lange concerning the historical development of the Book of Isaiah. Interestingly, Park sometimes quotes and mentions a vigorous historical critic, Karl Marti's views in order to dispute such a historical-critical understanding of certain passages. In summation, Park's Christological-reductionist interpretation of the Book of Isaiah impoverishes the inspirational dimension(2 Tim 3:16-17; 4:1-2) of Isaiah's oracle necessary for understanding a progressive and organic redemption of God running through various stages of human history. One thing to commend in his commentary is that he interpolates sermons or sermonic reflections in the middle of exegesis or at its concluding part in order to make the prophecies of Isaiah relevant to readers.

¹⁵ Park Yune Sun, *A Commentary on Isaiah* Vols. 1-2(in Korean) (Seoul: Yungeumsa, 1991).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 91-92. Park grudgingly identifies the baby named Immanuel with the people of God in Isaiah's time(8:8; 66:7-14).

¹⁷ Lee Sang Keun, *The Lee's Commentary on Isaiah*(in Korean) (Seoul: Sungdeung Press, 1991), 83-85.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 107-108.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 148.

Lee Sang Keun's Isaiah commentary shares some features with Park's commentary²⁰: Christ-centered interpretation, pre-critical stance, and heavy dependence on western scholars. However, Lee's commentary is slightly different from Park's work and more balanced than it in some ways. First of all, after evaluating various theories in arguing against or for the unity of Isaiah, he concludes that the Book of Isaiah can be read as a unified book. Furthermore, he combines biblical ideas and insights drawn from Isaiah with dogmatic teachings of God, human beings, salvation, history. Lee points out four goals of the Book of Isaiah, though unimpressively²¹: warning against idolatry, emphasis on political neutrality and isolationism, prediction of the birth of Christ, and preparation of the people of God for his coming into the world. Lee defines Isaiah as a prophet commissioned to pave the way for the Messiah Jesus Christ to come into this world. According to him, the Book of Isaiah contains both the oracles predicting the first coming of Christ(9:2, 6; 53:1-12) and the oracles concerning his second coming(2:1-5, 9:7, 11:1-16, 35:1-10, 54:11-17). Christ's redemption begins with his first advent and will be consummated with his second coming. In this way Lee argues for the unity of the Book of Isaiah. He believes that Isaiah 40-66 was written during a latter stage of the prophet's life, namely, after his retirement from the public ministry.²² Like Park, Lee interprets most of the messianic oracles(Chapters 2, 9, 11, 53)²³ in terms of how they were fulfilled in the first coming of Christ Jesus or will be fulfilled in his second coming without situating them in their original historical-theological context. For example, Lee regards Isaiah 53 as solely predicting the suffering and sacrificial death of Jesus Christ as described in the Gospels. He thus is forced to retroject Matthew 8:17, Mark 15:28, Luke 22:37, John 12:37-38, Acts 8:32-333, Rome 10:16, and 1 Pet 2:24-25 back into this chapter, showing little interest in its historical anchorage. One exception to this tendency is found in his understanding of the Immanuel prophecy in 7:14. He basically sees it as fulfilled in the birth of Jesus in Matthew 1:23. However, he tries to position it in its immediate historical context. He argues that the baby named Immanuel was one of Isaiah's sons and his mother was his second virgin wife(cf. 8:1-4).²⁴ He applies a theory of double perspectives here to interpreting this oracle. But he does not attempt this way of reading in interpreting other messianic oracles that consistently.

On the other hand, Rev. Bang Ji-Il's two-volume Isaiah commentaries take a more balanced approach to the Book of Isaiah in that he explores the historical depth of Isaiah's oracles and their theological relevance to their original audience while anticipating their final fulfillment in the saving life of Jesus Christ(2:1-4 a Kingdom of Christ, Church; 54:1) and their more perfected future fulfillment.²⁵ He believes that the Book of Isaiah as a Gospel of Redemption and Forgiveness is an equivalent to the

²⁰ Lee Sang Keun, *The Lee's Commentary on Isaiah*(in Korean) (Seoul: Sungdeung Press, 1991).

²¹ Ibid., 10.

²² Ibid., 16-17.

²³ Ibid., 102, 122, 419.

²⁴ Ibid., 90-91.

²⁵ Bang Jil Il, *A Commentary on Isaiah*(in Korean) I 『이사야서 강해 I(Isaiah 1-33)』 (Seoul: The Board of Education of PCK, 1976); idem, *A Commentary on Isaiah*(in Korean) II 『이사야서 강해 II(Isaiah 34-66)』 (Seoul: The Christian Press, 1977).

Epistle to the Romans in the OT and at the same time is a book of revelation that helps the reader or audience cope with various real-life issues. For example, he claims to find a biblical diagnosis of current family problems in 4:1 such as the numerical imbalance between women and men. According to him, 9:5 warns against modern nations' military armaments and equipments to save themselves from any potential enemies. Like Park, Bang occasionally interpolates a sermonic reflection or exhortatory notes where necessary. In commenting on 53:3, Bang is critical of his contemporary pastors who are capitalizing on the saving cross of Jesus Christ in order to secure private gains such money and power.²⁶ In exegeting 54:2, Bang says that stretching the curtains of tent means a taking broad-minded and inclusive attitude toward others with different standpoints. Overall, Bang seeks to steer a middle path between rigid traditionalists and progressive liberals in terms of theological posture towards other religions or denominations.²⁷ All in all, nearly all the commentaries in the period from 1945 to 1980 are pastoral, expository, moralistic, and christological-reductionist ones.²⁸

V. Studies of the Book of Isaiah in the Korean Church from 1980 to the Present.

This part examines several post-1980 works on Isaiah that were produced by those scholars or preachers who are alive and active in the church and academia as well. First of all, Chung Hack Bong's commentary²⁹ does not accept B. Duhm's historical critical divisions of the Book of Isaiah, while admitting to the division of the Book into three larger sections. He interprets the Book of Isaiah under one clause of the key verse 1:18, "Let us Reason Together." He claims that the Book of Isaiah is an invitation of God for the people of Israel to engage in debate with Godself, whose aim is to renew and rehabilitate them by awakening a heart in them for divine eternity(Eccl. 3:11). In a nutshell, this commentary reads the Book of Isaiah from certain systematic theological viewpoints. Chapters 1-13 comprise of commentaries in a proper sense and Chapters 15-20 discuss several doctrines of systematic theology such as doctrines on God, human beings, and history. This book unhesitatingly reads the theological tenets of Romans into Isaiah. In this sense, it is heir to Park Yune Sun and Lee Sang Keun.

One may still examine some other works on Isaiah that resemble these two works in terms of method and exegetical principles. Park Chul Soo's Isaiah commentary claims to find a threefold structure in the Book of Isaiah, not necessarily accepting the historical critical division of it into three independent books.³⁰ It seeks a historical-grammatical, salvation-historical, and theological understanding of the Book of Isaiah. The theme of Isaiah, in his view, is God's healing of Israel, the elected people and his redemptive work through Jesus Christ. He blatantly christianizes the Book of Isaiah, leaving unexplored most of the Isaianic oracles addressed to the prophet's contemporary

²⁶ Bang Ji Il, *A Commentary on Isaiah*(in Korean) II, 321.

²⁷ Bang Jil Il, *A Commentary on Isaiah*(in Korean) II, 341.

²⁸ One exception to this trend may be mentioned, namely Kim Eung Jo, *Commentary on Isaiah and Jeremiah* 『이사야 예레미야 주석』 (구약성서 대강해 7; 서울: 대한성경교회 출판부, 1961), which interpreted the Book of Isaiah from the historical-critical perspective.

²⁹ Chung Hack Bong(정학봉), *Let us Reason Together Layman's Bible Commentary on the Book of Isaiah*, 『평신도 성경강해. 우리가 서로 변론하자』 (Seoul: Jordan, 1980), 11-16, 7-151.

³⁰ Park Chul Soo(박철수), *A Commentary on Isaiah* 『구약강해 이사야』 (Seoul: Youngsung, 2000).

audience.

Yoo Do Sun's *The Isaiah Panorama* offers a panoramic overview of Isaiah 1-39 by intertwining it with the Book of Revelation with attention to two central ideas predominant in both the books: the Lamb of God(Isa 53) and God's Throne(Isa 6).³¹ It argues that the essence of Isaiah's theology can be summarized in a verse: "Our salvation lies in our God and his Little Lam enthroned together."³² This book claims that the purpose of Isaiah's oracles was not to proclaim God's plan to restore the Judean exiles from the Babylonian captivity, but to restore all the posterity of Adam back to the garden of Eden.³³ While admitting that the OT does bear witness to Christ's twice comings, Yoo still submits that Isaiah's prophecies are bifocal, predicting first the return of the Babylonian exiles and then God's consummated redemption of human beings through the twice comings of Christ. Both scenes appear to overlap with each other.

Rev. Kim Chang Yin's six volume Isaiah commentaries merit discussion.³⁴ This is comprised of a collection of 195 sermons which were delivered to Choonghyun Church during about 8 years from 1969 to 1977. He is very careful to make the prophecy of Isaiah bear on the real life of an individual Christian or a congregation.

There are still other works on Isaiah which are not dealt with at length here because of their obscure nature. Kim Kyung Rae published *Comfort My People* 『내 백성을 위로하라』 in 1998, which consists of dozens of short devotional essays and several comments on Zionism and the final destiny of Israel. He seems to be sympathetic to and supportive of Zionism.³⁵ Yoo Haeng Yeol produced a small book named 『아, 감미로운 말씀』 (*Ah! What a Sweet Word!*) in 2009.³⁶ Cho Seong Wook has published a short book on Isaiah which invites the reader to enjoy several Hebrew passages of Isaiah. The author collects several essays and reflections derived from closer readings of Hebrew texts into a book. This book lacks its compositional unity and coherence. However, its discussion of the Seraph image in Isaiah is somewhat illuminating, though offering tantalizing comments occasionally.³⁷

Now let me turn to examine Jang Se Hoon's *Reading Isaiah as a Whole* 『한 권으로 읽는 이사야서』, which attempts a synchronic and canonical reading of the Book of Isaiah as One Book without being entangled in thorny disputations with historical-critical theories concerning its compositional history. Part I offers a concise discussion of recent trends in favor of reading Isaiah as a whole. Part II shows his thematic studies

³¹ The word "throne" occurs 44 times in the Book of Revelation and "the little lamb of God" occurs 29 times in it.

³² Yoo Do Sun(유도순), *The Isaiah Panorama* 『이사야 파노라마』 (Seoul: The Capstone, 2007), 238-255

³³ Ibid., 15.

³⁴ Kim Chang Yin, *Expository Commentary on Isaiah* vols. 6 『강해설교 이사야 1-6 권』 (Seoul: Choonghyun Church Press, 1986-1987).

³⁵ Kim Kyung Rae, *Comfort My People* 『내 백성을 위로하라』 (Seoul: Daejangan, 1988), 234-268, 273-277.

³⁶ Yoo Haeng Yeol, 『아, 감미로운 말씀』 (*Ah! What a Sweet Word!*) (Seoul: Handeul, 2009).

³⁷ Cho Seong Wook, *A Teatime with Isaiah* 『이사야와 차 한잔을』 (Seoul: Korea Bible Institute, 2008), 59-68.

to support the unity of the Book of Isaiah.³⁸ Part III consists of exegetical essays that explore chapters 7-9, 1:2-9, 2:1-16, and 54:4-8. In conclusion Jang firmly argues for the compositional unity of the Book of Isaiah by saying that the 8th century BC Isaiah substantially authored it.³⁹

Finally I will discuss two books on Deutero-Isaiah and one commentary on First Isaiah. Both Jang Il Sun and Chong Joong Ho are agreed in accepting the historical-critical divisions of the Book of Isaiah initiated by B. Duhm. Jang is inclined to date the final production of the Book of Isaiah to the 2th century BC based on the reference of Ben Sirach(BC 2th century) to the Isaianic authorship of the Book of Isaiah.⁴⁰ He thinks that the servant of Yahweh in the four songs of the Servant of Yahweh, authored Deutero-Isaiah. Jang is careful not to read the songs of the Servant of Yahweh as solely depicting the work and saving ministry of Jesus Christ. To his credit, Jang endeavors to situate the four songs in an immediate historical context in order to gain a proper understanding of them.⁴¹

In a similar vein, Chong Joong Ho's commentary on Isaiah 40-66 combines a moderate historical-critical approach with a canonical way of reading.⁴² He is specially interested in exploring the meaning and significance of Deutero-Isaiah's sensual language through his analysis of sensual expressions and metaphors. Chong suggests that we should take into multimedia and cyber reality in interpreting the Bible in a postmodern society like ours. In interpreting Isaiah 53, Chong grapples with the identity of the suffering servant and argues that the suffering servant was an anonymous prophet who suffered persecution for his vigorous execution of God's prophetic task and at the same time anticipated the humiliation of Jesus Christ and his exaltation.⁴³ This way of reading is attempted in interpreting Isaiah 61:1-4.⁴⁴

Hae Kwon Kim's commentary on Isaiah 1-39 largely takes a historical approach to the Isaiah texts, but attempts a historical-critical approach to a few Isaianic texts such as Isaiah chapters 13-14 and 36-37.⁴⁵ This commentary is interested in situating Isaiah's oracles in the matrix of the prophet's own times and activities in order to make as many as oracles in First Isaiah bear on the life of his contemporaries. It makes sure that the oracles of Isaiah should be understood first to address his own contemporary audience prior to its being summoned to predict only the coming of Jesus Christ or his coming. This commentary places emphasis on exploring how much Isaiah's oracles

³⁸ Ibid., 87-142.

³⁹ Ibid., 33-42.

⁴⁰ Jang Il Sun, *Isaiah II* 『이사야 II』 (Seoul: Jeonmangsa, 1993), 16, 98.

⁴¹ Ibid., 101. According to Jang, Isaiah 53 deals with three themes: the possibility of God's fulfillment of justice after his servant's tribulations, Forgiving through enduring sufferings, and glorification after humiliation. At the same time Jang comments on its possible reference to Jesus Christ's suffering, crucifixion, burial, and exaltation.

⁴² Chong Joong Ho, *A Commentary on Isaiah II* 『성서주석 이사야 II』 (대한기독교서회 100주년기념성서주석 시리즈; 서울: 대한기독교서회, 2003), 30, 227.

⁴³ Ibid., 219.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 319.

⁴⁵ Kim Hae Kwon, *A Commentary on Isaiah I* 『성서주석 이사야 I』 (대한기독교서회 100주년기념성서주석 시리즈; 서울: 대한기독교서회, 2006).

impacted his contemporaries. Overall, this book places all the messianic oracles of First Isaiah (chapters 2, 7-9, 11, 33) in their immediate historical settings. It devotes little space to making a dialogue between biblical exegesis and dogmatics, however.

V. Conclusion

The pre-1945 Korean Church studied the Prophets as a systematic education of the Bible in its earliest stage. The post-1945 Korean Church approached the Prophets with various questions and concerns such as the understanding of Korean people's tribulations represented by the 1948 separation of Korea and its subsequent Korean War(195-1953), advocacy of human rights for the oppressed people in the industrialization period, pursuit of socioeconomic justice and peace, commitment to the reconciliation of South Korea to North Korea, attending to the rights of imported laborers, critique against the injustice of political and religious authorities, redressing gender inequality. The Korean Church has sought to find solutions to these questions through its studying of the Prophets. It is very likely that these questions will continue to propel the Korean Church to listen to God's guiding voice in and through the Prophets. In this process the Prophets will provide the Korean Church with the opportunity to get empowered by God and enable it to renew itself and to transform a secular Korean society into a more humane and just one nearing the perfected Kingdom of God as envisioned in Isaiah 11 and 65.

Most pre-1945 works on Isaiah tended to interpret the Book of Isaiah in terms of its fulfillment in the life of Jesus Christ, not fully paying attention to the oracles of Isaiah as they impacted his own contemporaries and historical situations. Of course, nearly all the works on Isaiah maintained a 19th century pre-critical stance toward the compositional history of the book and its messianic oracles. While highlighting the normative and moral aspects of Isaiah's oracles, they did not seek a historical-grammatical understanding to the fullest.

Likewise most works produced from 1945 to 1980 made no significant progress in terms of method and exegetical depth. Park Yune Sun, Bang Ji Il, and Lee Sang Keun were faithful followers of the pre-1945 works on Isaiah in terms of method and theological direction. However, post-1980 Korean scholars cautiously applied form-critical, tradition-historical, redaction-historical, and synchronic approaches to the text of Isaiah. Most of the Korean works on Isaiah may be categorized as historical-christological, historical-pneumatic efforts. Strictly speaking, no significant historical-critical exegetical commentary thus far has appeared in Korea. Most of the Korean commentaries works on the Book of Isaiah are simply expository commentaries without text-critical endeavors and thus private translation. It is as if 19th century historical criticism has never reached Korea. One may wonder why. I think that biblical exegesis in Korea was done always in close response to various external pressures. In the colonial period under the imperial Japan, the Korean Church tended to reduce all the sociopolitical oracles of Isaiah to a set of spiritualized and moral tenets so that they may not propel Korean readers to act against the Japanese regime. This external and oppressive atmosphere caused Korean commentators to dehistoricize and spiritualize all the political oracles dealing with justice and righteousness on earth. This situation has continued in the period of military dictatorship in the 1960-1980s and became worse even now. Though Korea has been liberated from the Japanese bondage and has grown to become a democratic state, Korean scholars and commentators are not interest to make Isaiah's harsh condemnation against corrupted upper-classes such as priests, kings, landlords, and high-ranking state officials relevant to their own society. They are not bold enough to highlight the historical-revelatory dimension of Isaiah's oracles so

that they may address our own situations. What caused the dehistoricizing interpretation of Isaiah's oracles now? I think that the ecclesial power of the Korean Church has put a big bridle on the mouth of biblical commentators and scholars so that they may not read the Bible afresh so as to deconstruct the status quo of the Korean Church. The conservative and status quo-maintaining atmosphere prevalent in the church, I think, is at least partly responsible for the dehistoricizing and eschatological interpretation of the Book of Isaiah. Dehistoricizing, Moralizing, and Eschatologizing of Isaiah's oracles deprive the prophet Isaiah of his prophetic function to confront and challenge, encourage and refresh us now and here so that we may seek first His Kingdom and His Righteousness. I am inclined to believe that the wide gap between academic studies of the Book of Isaiah and pastoral ministry will still remain unbridged, as long as this dehistoricizing tendency dominates Korean people's engagement in the Book of Isaiah. I hope a fuller exploration of the historical and earthly dimension of Isaiah's sociopolitical oracles will result in a substantial and effective dialogue between lay people and Bible scholars, academic research and needs of pulpits.

Abstract

The history of the Korean Church is marked by its unflinching enthusiasm toward the Bible in general and OT Prophets in particular. Well before Protestant Christianity was introduced to Korea, Korean noble class people have already read the Bible in the late 18th century through their contact with French Roman Catholic missionaries working in China. Some Korean trading merchants participated in the translation of the Bible into Korean by helping John Ross a Scottish missionary to China and Manchuria in his translation of the Bible into Korean. Even a Confucian noble man like Yi Soo-Jung himself translated the Gospel of Luke as early as the late 19th century in Japan. No wonder Korean Christianity has been called a Bible-loving or Bible-committed one. Faced with the decline of their mother country, Korean Christians (both RCC and Protestant Christians) specially put their trust in the OT and its bountiful promises and prophecies designed to sustain the people of Israel in many national crises and tribulations. The OT provided them with many inspiring lessons and convictions because of its apparently nationalistic tone and universal vision of a peaceful world full of freedom, justice, and equality.

The book of Isaiah, among others, has been one of the most widely read OT books in Korea since Christianity was introduced to Korean people in the late 19th century for several reasons: its messianic hope, its sociopolitical oracles, and its frequent quotations in the NT. A survey of the uses and interpretations of the book of Isaiah

illustrates how Korean Christians and Bible scholars have appropriated its message in close response to their contemporary sociopolitical challenges.

The present essay reviews how both the Korean Church and academia have read and interpreted the book of Isaiah these two past two centuries. It also pays special attention to how the socio-religious milieu of Korea influenced Korean people's reading and interpretation of the book. To this end, the present article examines both Isaiah commentaries, monographs, articles, and important books of sermons which deal with the book of Isaiah with attention to themes and methods.

For this reason the present essay takes a historical approach to major works on the book of Isaiah and categorizes them into several types in accordance with their exegetical method, focus, and targeted reader. Through its diachronical analysis of major works on the Book of Isaiah, the present essay categorizes all Korean works on Isaiah into three types of interpretation: pre-critical and over-Christological(supercessionistic) interpretation, historical-critical interpretation, and historical-canonical interpretation. The initial stage of the Korean people's reading of Isaiah has been marked by its supercessionistic and spiritualizing tendency. The middle stage of Korean churches and Christians has been tilted a bit toward the historical-critical reading with relatively insufficient attention to the pastoral and devotional function of the Book of Isaiah. The latest stage seeks to steer a middle road between Christological and spiritualizing reading on the one hand and historical and canonical reading on the other hand. The present essay concludes that the interpretation and reading of the Book of Isaiah in Korea has been undergoing various stages of change in accordance with societal and cultural environments they have faced.

short summary

The book of Isaiah has been one of the most widely read OT books in Korea for several reasons: its messianic hope, its sociopolitical aspects, and its frequent quotations in the NT. A survey of the uses and interpretations of the book of Isaiah illustrates how Korean Christians and Bible scholars have appropriated its message in direct response to their sociopolitical challenges.

The present article reviews how both the Korean Church and academia have read and interpreted the book of Isaiah these past two centuries. It also pays special attention to how the socio-religious milieu of Korea influenced Korean people's reading and interpretation of the book. To this end, the present article examines Isaiah commentaries, monographs, and sermons which deal with the book of Isaiah with attention to its themes and methods.

Key Words:

Isaiah, Korean commentaries on Isaiah, supercessionism, Christological reading of Isaiah, Messianic hope