

**Support Material for Sermon Seminar 2015**  
**Preaching on First Isaiah**  
**J. J. M. Roberts**

- I. Notes on key exegetical, theological, and pastoral insights.
- II. Sample sermon outlines
- III. Bibliography of Study Resources
  - A. General Background Reading
    1. Holladay, William L. *Isaiah: Scroll of a Prophetic Heritage*. Wipf & Stock Pub., 2012. (Amazon). This is an older work, but still one of the best general works on Isaiah that is easy to read and understand that I have ever found.
    2. A number of my earlier essays on Isaiah may be found in my collected essays, Roberts, J. J. M. Roberts, *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2002. This has a nice collection of essays on Israelite kingship, the Zion Tradition, prophecy, and on particular passages from Isaiah. Unfortunately this volume is out of print, and one is likely to find it rather expensive on the internet.
    3. There are a number of my other important essays on Isaiah and connected issues available in a variety of sources:
      - a) J.J.M. Roberts, "Contemporary Worship in the Light of Isaiah's Ancient Critique," in *Worship and the Hebrew Bible: Essays in Honor of John T. Willis*, M.P. Graham, R.R. Marrs, and S.L. McKenzie, eds. (JSOTSup 284; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1999), pp. 265-75. This is an exploration of what Isaiah might have to contribute to the contemporary debate on Christian worship. "The Enthronement of Yhwh and David: The Abiding Theological Significance of the Kingship Language of the Psalms," *CBQ* 64/4 (2002) 675-686.
      - b) "Prophets and Kings: A New Look at the Royal Persecution of Prophets against Its Near Eastern Background," in *A God So Near: Essays on Old Testament Theology in Honor of Patrick D. Miller*, ed. By Brent A. Strawn and Nancy Bowen (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003) 341-354.
      - c) "Solomon's Jerusalem and the Zion Tradition," in *Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology: The First Temple Period*, ed. By Andrew G. Vaughn and Ann E. Killebrew (SBL Symposium Series 18; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003) 163-170.
      - d) "Egypt, Assyria, Isaiah, and the Ashdod Affair: An Alternative Proposal," in *Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology: The First Temple Period*, ed. By Andrew G. Vaughn and Ann E. Killebrew (SBL Symposium Series 18; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003) 265-283.
      - e) "The End of War in the Zion Tradition: The Imperialistic Background of an Old Testament Vision of World Wide Peace," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 26 (2004) 2-23.
      - f) "The Context, Text, and Logic of Isaiah 7.7-9," in *Inspired Speech: Prophecy in the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honour of Herbert B. Huffmon*, ed. By John

Kaltner and Louis Stulman (JSOTS 378; London/New York: T & T Clark International, 2004) 161-170.

- g) "Bearers of the Polity: Isaiah of Jerusalem's View of the Eighth-Century Judean Society," in *Constituting the Community: Studies on the Polity of Ancient Israel in Honor of S. Dean McBride Jr.*, ed. by John T. Strong and Steven S. Tuell (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005) 145-152.
- h) "The Importance of Isaiah at Qumran," in *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Princeton Symposium on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. by James H. Charlesworth (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006) Vol. 1, 273-286.
- i) "The Importance of the Old Testament for the Church," *Christian Studies* 21 (Austin Graduate School of Theology, 2006) 15-25.
- j) With Kathryn L. Roberts, "Yahweh's Significant Other," in *Engaging the Bible in a Gendered World: An Introduction to Feminist Biblical Interpretation in Honor of Katharine Doob Sakenfeld*, ed. by Linda Day and Carolyn Pressler (Louisville and London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006) 176-185.
- k) "The Theological Significance of the Visual Elements in Isaiah's Vision in Isaiah 6," in *From Babel to Babylon: Essays on Biblical History and Literature in Honour of Brian Peckam*, ed. by Joyce Rilett Wood, John E. Harvey, Mark Leuchter (LHBOTS 44; New York/London: T & T Clark International/Continuum, 2006) 197-213.
- l) "Isaiah's Egyptian and Nubian Oracles," in *Israel's Prophets and Israel's Past: Essays on the Relationship of Prophetic Texts and Israelite History in Honor of John H. Hayes*, ed. by Brad E. Kelle and Megan Bishop Moore (LHBOTS 446; New York/London: T. & T. Clark, 2006) 201-209.
- m) "The End of War in the Zion Tradition: The Imperialistic Background of an Old Testament Vision of Worldwide Peace," in *Character Ethics and the Old Testament: Moral Dimensions of Scripture*, ed. by M. Daniel Carroll R. & Jacqueline E. Lapsley (Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007) 119-128.
- n) "Isaiah, National Security, and the Politics of Fear," in *The Bible and the American Future*, ed. By Robert Jewett, Wayne L. Alloway Jr., and John G. Lacey (Eugene, Or: Cascade Books [Wipf and Stock Publishers], 2009) 72-91.
- o) "The Rod that Smote Philistia: Isaiah 14:28-32," in *Literature as Politics, Politics as Literature: Essays on the Ancient Near East in Honor of Peter B. Machinist*, ed. D. Vanderhooft and A. Winitzer (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013) 381-395.

## B. Commentaries

1. Wildberger, Hans. *Isaiah 1-39: A Continental Commentary*. 3 Vols. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991-2002. This is an English translation of his German *Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament*. Vols X/1-3. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1972-1982. In my opinion, this is the best, most thorough commentary on Isaiah currently available. It is technical, however, and may tell you far more than you want to know on most topics, and on many points I disagree with Wildberger, though I have learned much from him.

2. There are a number of contemporary English commentaries in the Anchor Bible, New Century Bible Commentary, Word Commentary, and the like, which may be useful at times, but on the whole I find them pretty disappointing.
  - a) Blenkinsopp, J. (2000). *Isaiah 1-39 : a new translation with introduction and commentary*. AB. New York: Doubleday. Blenkinsopp's commentary is recent, but it tends to date too much material late, and it can be superficial at points.
  - b) Childs, B. S. (2004). *The struggle to understand Isaiah as Christian scripture*. Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans Pub. This is a very good source to see what the early Christian commentators did with Isaiah.
  - c) Childs, B. S. (2001). *Isaiah*. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press. This is vintage Childs' canonical interpretation.
  - d) Clements, R. E. (1980). *Isaiah 1-39*. NCB. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. Despite a tendency to late date material, this commentary is often insightful on particular verses.
  - e) Hayes, J. H., & Stuart, A. I. (1987). *Isaiah, The Eighth-Century Prophet: His Times and His Preaching*. Nashville: Abingdon. This commentary goes its own way. Generally it asks the right questions, though its answers to these questions are often unconvincing. Its assumptions about the historical arrangement of the material in the book are unwarranted.
  - f) Watts, John D. W. *Isaiah 1-33*. Revised. WBC 24. Colombia: Thomas Nelson, 2005. On some detailed points and for bibliography Watts' work may be useful. His literary theory for the organization of the work, however, is strange, and, in my opinion, not at all helpful.
3. My own Hermeneia commentary on Isaiah 1-39, published by Fortress Press, should be available next December, and, of course, it is my favorite.