

Isaiah 2

Isaiah 2:1-4 NKJV

The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. [2] Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the LORD's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it. [3] Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. [4] He shall judge between the nations, And rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.

- The purpose for describing God's future kingdom was to present a vision of what God will ultimately do in Israel (Zion)
- The audience can choose either to be a part of God's plan (2:5) or to reject it.
- God will transform the present world by his presence, his teaching, and his just judgment
- The new Zion will have great prominence as the "highest, chief" mountain
- This new exaltation of God's dwelling place will symbolically demonstrate to the nations the superior glory and greatness of God
- God's plans for mankind always included his desire to reach the whole world, not just the small nation of Judah (45:22–23; 49:26; 60:3).
 - Isaiah focuses on an endless stream of people from all over the world who will encourage others to join them as they go up
 - What will be the attraction that will draw the nations?
 - The God of Israel will be the main speaker and he will teach those who accept his ways and follow his truth.
 - Isaiah does not reveal the detailed contents of what God will say, but part of his instruction will be to explain his "law, instruction" (tôrâ).
- (v 4) As king and ultimate judge of the universe, God will help these nations settle their differences and will remove the reasons for war.
 - There will be no need for swords to kill people, so a marvelous reign of peace will begin.
 - This was quite the opposite of Uzziah's impressive efforts to prepare for and carry out several wars against neighboring states (2 Chr 26:6–15).
 - All war preparations can end when people focus on God, who is the true source of their security.

Isaiah 2:5 NKJV

O house of Jacob, come and let us walk In the light of the LORD.

- Isaiah ends this brief look at the ideal Zion of the future with a call for his audience to:
 - transform their thinking,
 - to reorient their worldview,
 - and to change their behavior
- based on their knowledge of what God will do in the future

Isaiah 2:6-11 NKJV

For You have forsaken Your people, the house of Jacob, Because they are filled with eastern ways; They are soothsayers like the Philistines, And they are pleased with the children of foreigners. [7] Their land is also full of silver and gold, And there is no end to their treasures; Their land is also full of horses, And there is no end to their chariots. [8] Their land is also full of idols; They worship the work of their own hands, That which their own fingers have made. [9] People bow down, And each man humbles himself; Therefore do not forgive them. [10] Enter into the rock, and hide in the dust, From the terror of the LORD And the glory of His majesty. [11] The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, The haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, And the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

- The topic of this new paragraph moves from the acceptance of the nations that will come to learn God's way in Jerusalem in the future (2:2–5),
 - To the rejection of the people who presently make up the house of Jacob,
 - The audience Isaiah was speaking to during the prosperous reign of Uzziah
- No doubt his audience listened approvingly to the grand ideals of 2:2–5, thinking that they would be in Zion enjoying God's presence when the nations finally would submit to his rule.
 - But God had a different plan for Isaiah's audience because the "house of Jacob" (2:5) was not walking in God's ways.
 - God had "forsaken" them (2:6a) in the sense of not paying any attention to them, or leaving them alone to depend on their own resources.
- This implies a removal of God's direction and protection because of their sinfulness
- Four reasons are provided for "forsaking" Israel
 - (v 6) assimilating pagan religious practices
 - (v 7) Dependency on their wealth
 - (v 7) Relying on the security of a large military

- Wealth, a large army, and political stability characterized Uzziah's long reign.
 - When a nation has a large army as Uzziah did (2 Chr 26:11–15), there is the temptation to think that it is not necessary to depend on God for military security.
 - When a nation is rich, it may seem unnecessary to trust God for food and other daily needs, but this is a false source of security
 - We are to depend on the giver not the gift
 - (v 8) Worshipping idols
 - The word for idols means “nothing, worthless,” a fitting attribution for objects of worship formed by human hands.
 - The people of Judah have a glorious God (2:2–5) who has chosen them as his special people and desires to bless them with everything they would ever need, but they prefer to worship “worthless” pieces of wood and stone that can do “nothing.”
 - Good paying job? Pension fund? Leisure? Entertainment?
- (v 9-11) The consequences of their sins are given
 - They are going to be humbled
 - Uzziah is a great lesson in being humbled
 - Offered unlawful sacrifices
 - Stricken with leprosy
 - God honors the humble and brings judgment on the proud
 - They will be so humbled and God exalted

Isaiah 2:12-22 NKJV

For the day of the LORD of hosts Shall come upon everything proud and lofty, Upon everything lifted up— And it shall be brought low— [13] Upon all the cedars of Lebanon that are high and lifted up, And upon all the oaks of Bashan; [14] Upon all the high mountains, And upon all the hills that are lifted up; [15] Upon every high tower, And upon every fortified wall; [16] Upon all the ships of Tarshish, And upon all the beautiful sloops. [17] The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, And the haughtiness of men shall be brought low; The LORD alone will be exalted in that day, [18] But the idols He shall utterly abolish. [19] They shall go into the holes of the rocks, And into the caves of the earth, From the terror of the LORD And the glory of His majesty, When He arises to shake the earth mightily. [20] In that day a man will cast away his idols of silver And his idols of gold, Which they made, each for himself to worship, To the moles and bats, [21] To go into the clefts of the rocks, And into the crags of the rugged rocks, From the terror of the LORD And the glory of His majesty, When He arises

to shake the earth mightily. [22] Sever yourselves from such a man, Whose breath is in his nostrils; For of what account is he?

- These verses build out on the idea of God humbling men (nations) in judgment.
- Two things will happen in the future:
 - (a) the splendor of God's majesty will be revealed; and
 - (b) the dread of God's presence will cause people to hide
- When such an event happens, people are immediately aware of God's holiness and power, and they immediately sense their sinfulness and unworthiness in his presence.
 - Two responses are possible when God reveals his glory:
 - (a) unrepentant people may attempt to hide from God (Gen 3; Ps 139:11; Isa 2:21), or
 - (b) humble people will confess their sins, repent, and commit themselves to serving God (6:6–8).
 - There is no way to escape from God (cf. Ps 139:1–16; Amos 9:2–4)
 - Every person in the past, present, and future must choose how they will respond to God, because one day everyone will meet him face to face.
- (v 22) If anything is to change in Judah, they must take a long look inward.
 - People are actually very transitory, like a breath of air.
 - They come to and depart from the earth in a relatively short time, and the contribution of each individual is relatively unimportant when one looks at things from the perspective of eternity (cf. Eccl 1:1–11).
 - If the people in Isaiah's audience would quit regarding themselves so highly, there would be a potential opportunity to remove pride and adopt God's view of humanity.
 - This admonition is applicable to people in every culture and every time period, for all people tend to be self-centered rather than God centered.
 - If people do not transform their view of themselves and God, some day God will humble them himself

Gary V. Smith, Isaiah 1–39, ed. E. Ray Clendenen, The New American Commentary (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2007)