

Isaiah – Chapter 2

Isaiah 2:2-4 – Now it will come about that in the last days, the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it. And many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us concerning His ways, and that we may walk in His paths.” For the law will go forth from Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war.

REVIEW

Last week, we finished our careful walk-through of chapter 1. We saw the formal opening of the covenant lawsuit. Heaven and earth were called as witnesses exactly as Moses had required in Deuteronomy 30:19. God spoke as a grieving Father whose sons had rebelled. The whole nation was sick from head to foot, the land was desolate, empty worship filled the temple courts, and yet, right in the middle of the indictment, the Lord still cried, “Come now, and let us reason together.” We watched the faithful city become a harlot and then heard the promise that one day she would be restored as the city of righteousness. The chapter ended with the certain destruction of the wicked and the preservation of a remnant.

This sets the stage for what we open today. Remember the big threads we traced in our introduction lessons. The Messianic Hope keeps breaking through even in the darkest moments of exposure of sin and judgment. The Motif of the City shows us Zion in her past glory, her present shame, and her future exaltation. And the Holy One of Israel stands at the center, too holy to overlook sin, yet too faithful to abandon His promise.

We also saw that Isaiah writes in a mosaic pattern. He places bright tiles of future hope right next to dark tiles of present judgment so that the full picture only becomes clear when we step back. That pattern continues in this section.

Before we read chapter 2, a quick note on how it connects to chapter 3. Chapters 2 and 3 appear to be part of the same vision announcement. Chapter 2 begins with a clear heading in verse 1. Yet the two chapters are tightly woven together as two movements in the same part of the lawsuit. The word *for* in 2:6 and then again in 3:11 links them directly. The repeated phrase *in that day* runs through both. The historical situation is identical. Together they do this: God first shows the glorious future He still intends for Zion, then indicts the present rebellion that makes judgment unavoidable, and in chapter 3, He spells out exactly what that judgment will look like. We will treat chapter 3 as its own lesson next week so we can feel the full weight of each part.

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Historical Context

We are still in the same time period as chapter 1, roughly 740 to 730 BC. Judah enjoys outward prosperity under Uzziah and Jotham. Borders have expanded. Trade routes bring wealth. But inward decay is spreading fast. Idolatry thrives on the high places. The rich add house to house and field to field, exactly as we will see condemned in chapter 5. Leaders already look to foreign alliances instead of to the Lord. The Northern Kingdom of Israel is still standing but slides toward its final collapse under Assyria aggression. Isaiah speaks to people who can still choose to walk in the light before the darkness falls.

Section 1: The Heading and the Glorious Future (verses 1-5)

The chapter opens with its own clear heading, just as chapter 1 did.

Isaiah 2:1 – The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

This tells us we are reading another distinct revelation from the Lord, yet it is aimed at the same audience in the same historical setting. The verb *saw* is the same one used for visions throughout the prophets. Isaiah receives this word straight from God and records it for the people.

Now comes one of the brightest tiles in the whole book.

Isaiah 2:2-4 – Now it will come about that in the last days, the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it. And many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us concerning His ways, and that we may walk in His paths.” For the law will go forth from Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war.

The Hebrew lemma for *in the last days* is יוֹם אַחֲרֵי־יָמִים (aharit yom). With the preposition and plural, it forms the full expression בְּאַחֲרֵי־הַיָּמִים (be’acharith hayyamim). This expression appears approximately fifteen times in the Hebrew Bible. In the prophetic books, it consistently points to the final era when God fulfills His promises through the Messiah. See Micah 4:1 (identical wording), Hosea 3:5, Jeremiah 23:20, Daniel 2:28, and Ezekiel 38:16.

The mountain of the house of the Lord is not merely prominent. It is established as the chief of the mountains and raised above the hills. Zion becomes the center of the earth. All nations stream to it. The Hebrew verb *stream* pictures a river flowing uphill, an impossible thing unless God Himself draws the peoples.

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The nations do not come to conquer. They come to learn. They say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us concerning His ways, and that we may walk in His paths.” The law goes forth from Zion. The word of the Lord goes forth from Jerusalem.

Then the result is stated plainly. The Lord Himself will judge between the nations and render decisions for many peoples. The outcome is total peace. Swords become plowshares. Spears become pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war.

This exact wording appears again in Micah 4:1-3. Micah was a contemporary prophet who ministered in the countryside while Isaiah spoke in the city. The near-verbatim match shows that both men delivered the same message from the Lord at the same time. It is not coincidence. It is confirmation.

This is the city motif at its highest point. Isaiah 1:21 called Jerusalem “the faithful city” that had become a harlot. Isaiah 1:26 promises she will again be called “the city of righteousness, a faithful city.” Here in 2:2-4, we see that future fulfilled on a global scale. Zion, once trampled by the nations, will one day draw the nations to herself in peace. Isaiah 60:3 says, “...nations will come to your light,” and Isaiah 62:4 gives her the new name “My delight is in her.” This is the Messianic Hope in seed form. The coming King will sit on David’s throne (Isaiah 9:7) and bring the justice and peace the world has never known. Isaiah 11:1-5 describes that same King ruling with perfect righteousness so that “the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.”

This city motif is a prominent feature in prophecy and how this benefits not only Israel but the whole world:

Jeremiah 3:17 (nations gathered to Jerusalem as the throne of the Lord)

“At that time they will call Jerusalem ‘The Throne of the LORD,’ and all the nations will be gathered to it, to Jerusalem, for the name of the LORD; nor will they walk anymore after the stubbornness of their evil heart.”

This shows the nations coming to Zion not for politics or war, but because it has become the visible throne of the Lord Himself.

Zechariah 8:20-23 (peoples coming to seek the Lord in Jerusalem)

“Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘It will yet be that peoples will come, even the inhabitants of many cities. The inhabitants of one will go to another, saying, “Let us go at once to entreat the favor of the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts; I will also go.” So many peoples and mighty nations will come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem and to entreat the favor of the LORD.’ Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘In those days ten men from all the nations will grasp the garment of a Jew, saying, “Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.”’”

This is the most vivid picture of nations actively streaming to Jerusalem to learn and worship, exactly the “stream to it” and “come and let us go up” language of Isaiah 2.

Zechariah 14:9, 16 (the Lord as King over all the earth, with nations coming yearly to Jerusalem)

“And the LORD will be king over all the earth; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one. ... Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths.”

This ties the universal reign and peace directly to annual pilgrimage to Zion.

Habakkuk 2:14 (the knowledge of the Lord filling the earth)

“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.”

This captures the end result of the law and word going forth from Zion.

Revelation 21:2, 24-26 (the fulfilment of this prophecy in Revelation)

“And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. ... The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it.”

Right after this glorious vision, Isaiah turns straight to the people standing in front of him.

Isaiah 2:5 – O house of Jacob, come, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.

The verbs are imperatives—*come* and *let us walk*. It is a personal, urgent invitation. The future is certain. The choice is now. Walk in the light of the Lord today or face the darkness tomorrow. The same God who has planned the peace of the last days calls His people to live in His light in the present.

Section 2: The Present Rebellion and Coming Judgment (verses 6-22)

The tone shifts sharply with the word *for* at the beginning of verse 6. The Hebrew *ki* shows that everything that follows explains why the call of verse 5 is so necessary. The bright hope makes the present darkness even darker.

Isaiah 2:6-8 – For You have abandoned Your people, the house of Jacob, because they are filled with influences from the east, and they are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they strike bargains with the children of foreigners. Their land has also been filled with silver and gold, and there is no end to their treasures; their land has also been filled with horses, and there is no end to their chariots. Their land has also been filled with idols; they worship the work of their hands, that which their fingers have made.

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The Hebrew word for *abandoned* is נָטַשׁ (natash). It is a strong term that means to forsake or cast off. God has not been unfaithful. The people have filled themselves with everything but Him.

Look at the specific sins Isaiah names, all documented in the reign of Ahaz.

Eastern superstitions and soothsayers like the Philistines – Ahaz copied the pagan altar he saw in Damascus and set it up in the temple court (2 Kings 16:10-16). He sought omens and divination just as the Philistines did.

Foreign alliances – Ahaz sent silver and gold from the temple to Tiglath-pileser of Assyria, saying, “I am your servant and your son; come up and rescue me” (2 Kings 16:7-9). He bought help from a pagan empire instead of trusting the Lord.

Idols without end – Ahaz “made metal images for the Baals ... sacrificed to the gods of Damascus ... shut up the doors of the house of the Lord ... and made altars in every corner of Jerusalem ... in every city of Judah he made high places to burn incense to other gods” (2 Chronicles 28:2-4, 24-25).

Notice the repetition of “filled” and “no end.” The nation is overflowing with everything except the knowledge of the Lord.

Then comes the first of three “in that day” refrains that hammer the coming reversal.

Isaiah 2:9-11 – So the common man has been humbled, and the man of importance has been abased, but do not forgive them. Enter the rock and hide in the dust from the terror of the LORD and from the splendor of His majesty. The proud look of man will be abased, and the loftiness of man will be humbled, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.

The Hebrew word for *humbled* and *abased* is שָׁפַל (shaphal). The Hebrew words for *loftiness* and *proud look* are רִם (rum) and גְּאֹוָה (ga'avah). The contrast is intentional. Everything high will be brought low so that the Holy One alone stands high.

Verses 12 through 16 give a long list that builds like a wave. The day of the Lord will come against all that is proud and lofty. Against all the cedars of Lebanon and all the oaks of Bashan. Against all the lofty mountains and all the hills that are lifted up. Against every high tower and every fortified wall. Against all the ships of Tarshish and every beautiful craft. The list moves from nature to man-made structures to commerce. Nothing that represents human self-sufficiency will escape.

Isaiah 2:17-21 – And the loftiness of man will be humbled, and the pride of men will be brought low; and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day. But the idols will completely vanish. And men will go into caves of the rocks, and into holes of the ground before the terror of the LORD, and before the splendor of His majesty, when He arises to make the earth tremble. In that day men will cast away to the moles and the bats their idols of silver and their idols of gold, which they made for themselves to worship, in order to go into the

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caverns of the rocks and into the clefts of the cliffs, before the terror of the LORD and the splendor of His majesty, when He arises to make the earth tremble.

Twice more the refrain says *in that day*. The first is that “the Lord will be exalted” repeated from 2:11. The second use of this refrain is “men will cast away their idols to the moles and bats.” Idols that men once treasured will be trash, worthless (Isaiah 30:22, 31:7). People who once ignored the Holy One will hide in caves from the very presence they refused to fear. This is the terror of the Lord in its Old Testament fullness. The same majesty that will one day bring peace to the nations will first bring judgment on those who reject His light.

Notice in this section that God tells the wicked they will hide in caves three times. In Revelation, this is stated clearly as well (Revelation 6:15-17). This is almost the same picture: people of every social class running into caves and rocks to hide. Both passages are set in the context of the day of the Lord.

Isaiah’s words are so precise that the Apostle John picks them up again in the book of Revelation. When the sixth seal is opened, the very same scene unfolds. It is an obvious echo of Isaiah 2, but the content is so close that it is a near quote.

The chapter closes with a solemn warning that still rings today.

Isaiah 2:22 – Stop regarding man, whose breath of life is in his nostrils; for why should he be esteemed?

Human beings are frail. Their breath is in their nostrils. Do not put your trust in them. Israel and Judah were both prone to making alliances with foreign nations instead of relying upon the promises of YHWH, which he will demonstrate.

CONCLUSION

Chapter 2 places a brilliant tile of future hope right beside the dark tiles of present rebellion and coming terror. In the last days, Zion will be lifted up, and the nations will come in peace. But right now, Judah is filled with everything but the Lord. Therefore, the proud will be humbled, idols will be discarded, and the Holy One alone will be exalted.

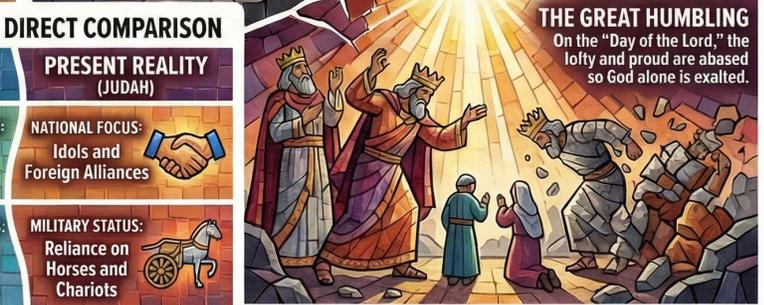
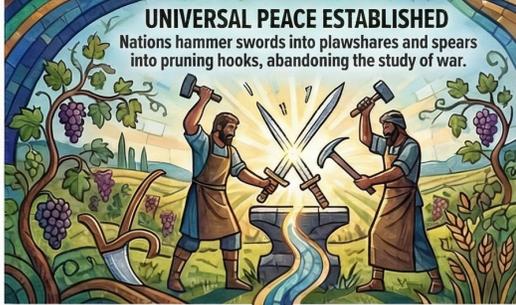
This is the pattern we will see again and again. Judgment is never the final word. The same God who must judge sin is the God who has already planned the day when swords become plowshares and the mountain of the house of the Lord draws every nation to learn His ways.

Look at the threads once more. The Messianic Hope shines in verses 2-4. The coming King will sit as Judge and bring the peace the world cannot achieve. The City motif contrasts Zion’s future glory with its present pride. The Holy One of Israel will be the only one exalted. The call of verse 5 is for a good principle for us to consider. Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord while in accordance with our identity, not to avoid curses or to incur blessing, but out of gratitude of the grace of God.

ISAIAH'S MOSAIC: THE VISION OF FUTURE PEACE VS. PRESENT PRIDE

THE GLORIOUS FUTURE (THE MESSIANIC HOPE)

THE PRESENT REBELLION (THE COMING JUDGMENT)



THE TWO ZIONS: A DIRECT COMPARISON

FUTURE HOPE (ZION)	PRESENT REALITY (JUDAH)
<p>NATIONAL FOCUS: God's Law and Word</p>	<p>NATIONAL FOCUS: Idols and Foreign Alliances</p>
<p>MILITARY STATUS: Weapons to Farm Tools</p>	<p>MILITARY STATUS: Reliance on Horses and Chariots</p>
<p>HUMAN STATURE: Seeking God's Paths</p>	<p>HUMAN STATURE: Hiding in Caves from His Terror</p>

