

Book of Isaiah



Chapter 2

Theme: A Vision of the Coming Kingdom

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It is Isaiah's style to give the positive elements in the future of Israel-Zion before the trials that the nation will endure. Isaiah introduced that style here. The nation is to endure calamities of exile. -- for the northern kingdom the punishment is imminent. For Judah the exile is more than a generation or two ahead and described in several places in his book,-- including chapters 41-49. But the nation had a divinely appointed future to bless mankind. According to these previews of future glory, God is not through with them: as is seen here in the first few verses of chapter 2. They will rise again and they will reach the establishment of Zion.

Isaiah continues this style in chapter 8 of Isaiah. He had named his son Shearyashuv (7:2) which means "a remnant will return". He predicted the return of the ten tribes before they were exiled. He named his son long before he warned Ahaz of the Assyrian advance before the Assyrians attacked Galilee and before he gave the prediction of the exile of Israel.

Isaiah chapters 2 through 5 constitute one complete prophecy. These chapters look beyond the present time to the last days concerning Israel (the total nation of twelve tribes). As we move through these chapters, God makes it clear that He is speaking of all the tribes of Israel which will be brought back together. God always thinks of Israel as one nation. The last days of Israel need to be distinguished from the last days of the church. God is not talking about the church in these chapters. There is no way of making what He says applicable to the church. We can be sure of this fact, because in the New Testament Paul says that the church was a mystery which was not revealed in the Old Testament at all. In writing to the Romans, Paul makes this very clear: "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Rom. 16:25). Now if Isaiah had known about the church, it would not have been a new revelation in Paul's day. From Paul's day to the present time the church has been God's agency through which He is giving His message to the world. However, the church will be removed from the world at the time of the Rapture. Isaiah's message looks beyond the time of the church to the day when God will begin to move in a new way. We call it the Great Tribulation period, at the close of which He will set up His Kingdom.¹

When Isaiah speaks of Israel, Judah, and Jerusalem, he means exactly these people and places. Judah means Judah, Israel means Israel, and Jerusalem means Jerusalem. If Isaiah uses figures of speech, he will make it perfectly clear that they are figures of speech. The prophet will let you know when he is making a different application. Beware of the fallacy of spiritualizing prophecy in conformity to some outmoded theological cliché which fits into some church's program.²

¹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

² Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

- a. The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw: This was revealed to Isaiah in some kind of vision, because this was a word that he saw.
- b. This prophecy (continuing on through Isaiah 4) is directed towards the southern kingdom Judah and its capital Jerusalem.
- c. Isaiah 2:1-3 is repeated in Micah 4:1-3. Since Isaiah and Micah were contemporary prophets, it isn't surprising that the same Spirit of the Lord could give these two prophets the same word, to establish and emphasize His word.³

The message recorded in these verses is what Isaiah . . . saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem (cf. 1:1). The prophets in Israel had at one time been called "seers" because of their divinely given power to "see" or foretell what would happen (1 Sam. 9:9). Here Isaiah was foretelling the future of Jerusalem and Judah. In the prophecies of restoration which are prominent in Isaiah's book, he was not specific as to the exact time when they would be fulfilled (perhaps he did not know; cf. 1 Peter 1:10-11). Here he simply said in the last days. Other Bible passages make it clear that these predictions will be fulfilled in the Millennium, Christ's 1,000-year reign on the earth. Because of God's covenant promises to Abraham, Moses, and David, Isaiah knew that Israel will again be in the land and will again have a superior position among the nations.⁴

The presence of another superscription to the following prophecies (cf. 1:1), the only other one in Isaiah, bears witness to the composite nature of the book; it consists of several different prophecies. Probably one appears here to set off the prophecies that follow (in chs. 2—4 or chs. 2—5) from what preceded (in ch. 1).⁵

²And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

[And it shall come to pass ...] The 3rd prophecy in Isaiah (Isa. 2:2-4, unfulfilled; will be fulfilled in the Millennium). Next, Isa. 2:6.⁶

[the top of the mountains] God always has been a "Mountaineer," dwelling on a mountain. The Holy City, the New Jerusalem itself, is a mountain city (note, Rev. 21:10). The Lord's house of Isa. 2:2 is called "the mountain of the Lord" and "the house of the God of Jacob," also Zion and Jerusalem (Isa. 2:3; cp. Ps. 24:3). *Dake's Annotated Reference Bible*

Verses 2-5 similar to Micah 4:1-3, 5 (a contemporary).

"Mountains" idiomatic for kingdom, authority, rule: Dan 2:35, 44-45; Rev 17:9-11; etc.

All nations: Acts 15:14.⁷

³ <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-1.html>

⁴ Walvoord, J. F. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary*: (Is 2:1). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁵ Notes on Isaiah, Dr. Thomas L. Constable; <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

⁶ *Dake's Annotated Reference Bible*:

⁷ Chuck Missler, Commentary notes on Isaiah, koina.house.org

"The last days:" be'acharith hayyamiym. This Hebrew construction is found 13 times in the Old Testament. It is translated "last days, latter times, latter days, days to come (NIV)."

- a. In the latter days: In context, the term latter days refers to the time of the Messiah, when the Anointed of the Lord reigns over the earth. This speaks of the time many refer to as the *millennium*, the thousand-year reign of Jesus on this earth (Psalm 72, Isaiah 11:4-9, Jeremiah 23:5-6, Luke 1:32-33 and 19:12-27, Matthew 5:18).
- b. The mountain of the Lords house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it: During the millennium, Israel will be the superpower of the world. It will be the leading nation in all the earth, and the center of Israel will be the mountain of the Lords house - the temple mount, which will be the capital of the government of the Messiah. All nations shall flow to the capital of the government of Jesus.
- c. Come, let us go to the mountain of the Lord . . . He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths: During the millennium, the citizens of earth will acknowledge and submit to the Lordship of Jesus. It will be a time of perfectly administrated enforced righteousness on this earth.⁸

The glorious future of Israel presented here is in striking contrast to the condition of the nation in Isaiah's day described in chapter 1. An almost identical prophecy appears in Mic. 4:1-3 (cf. Pss. 2 and 46). Perhaps Isaiah quoted Micah here, or Micah quoted Isaiah, or both of them quoted another prophet.⁴³

"The last days" is a phrase that describes a distant time from the perspective of the prophet. The Hebrews regarded history as a series of days, the days of their lives. The title of the Books of Chronicles means literally "the words of the days." When these days come to an end, in their last part, human history on this earth will end. New Testament Christians applied this term to the time following Messiah's coming (Acts 2:17; Heb. 1:2; James 5:3; 1 Pet. 1:5, 20; 2 Pet. 3:3; 1 John 2:18). Here, it must mean after His second coming, since these conditions did not follow His first coming.⁹

"The expression 'the last days' (acharith hayyamim, 'the end of the days'), which does not occur anywhere else in Isaiah, is always used in an eschatological sense. It never refers to the course of history immediately following the time being, but invariably indicates the furthest point in the history of this life—the point which lies on the outermost limits of the speaker's horizon."¹⁰

Compare Isaiah 2:2-4 with Micah 4:1-4 which follows:

But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow to it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk

⁸ <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-1.html>

⁹ See John H. Sailhamer, "Evidence from Isaiah 2," in *A Case for Premillennialism: A New Consensus* 79-102.

¹⁰ Delitzsch, 1:113.

in his paths: for the law shall go forth from Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make [them] afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken it.

"It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains." Again let me say that this is not speaking of the last days of the church. The last days of the church pertain to the time of spiritual apostasy. Paul makes this clear in his pastoral epistles of 1 and 2 Timothy: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith..." (1Tim. 4:1). You can see that the "latter times" of the church and the "last days" of Israel are not identical, nor are they contemporary, although there is some overlapping. Certainly they do not refer to the same period of time. It is important to note this. The "last days" in this verse refer to the Great Tribulation period. The Lord Jesus Christ made it clear, when His disciples asked Him, "When shall these things be?" (Luke 21:7 refers to the destruction of Jerusalem) that by the "last days" He meant the Great Tribulation period. The Great Tribulation ends with the coming of Christ to earth and the setting up of His Kingdom. The first section of Isaiah, chapters 2 -- 5, deals with the Great Tribulation period and the Kingdom that shall be set up on this earth.

"The mountain of the Lord'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains." This pertains to the nation of Israel after the church has been removed. The word mountain in Scripture means "a kingdom, an authority, or a rule." Daniel makes this clear in his prophecy. "The Lord'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains" -- that is, above all the kingdoms of this earth. The kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, and He will be King of kings and Lord of lords. One of the reasons that today Israel is such a hot spot and such a sensitive piece of real estate is because it is the very spot that God has chosen to be the political and religious center of the world during the Kingdom Age. Speaking of those days Daniel says, "Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (Dan. 2:35). God's Kingdom will be exalted above the kingdoms of this world.¹¹

The Temple was built on the mountain of the Lord, Mount Moriah, highly visible to all the people of Jerusalem. For more on the significance of the Temple. In the last days the Temple will attract the nations, not because of its architecture and prominence, but because of God's presence and influence.¹²

God gave Isaiah the gift of seeing into the future. At this time, God showed Isaiah what would eventually happen to Jerusalem. Revelation 21 depicts the glorious fulfillment of this prophecy in the new Jerusalem, where only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life will

¹¹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹² Life Application Study Bible.

be allowed to enter. God made a covenant (promise) with his people and will never break it. God's faithfulness gives us hope for the future.¹³

For out of Zion - These are the words of the "prophet," not of the people. The prophet declares that the law would go from Zion; that is, Zion would be the center from which it would be spread abroad; see the note at Isaiah 1:8. Zion is put here for Jerusalem, and means that the message of mercy to mankind would be spread "from" Jerusalem. Hence, the Messiah commanded his disciples to tarry in Jerusalem until they should be endued with power from on high. ' Luke 24:49. Hence, also, he said that repentance and remission of sins should be preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem' - perhaps referring to this very passage in Isaiah; Luke 24:47.

³And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Both government and religion will center in Jerusalem. The Lord Jesus Christ will sit upon the throne of David. One of the primary concerns of those who inhabit the earth will be to discover and do the will of God. They will seek to learn His ways and walk in His paths.¹⁴

The mountain of the Lord's temple refers to the mount where the temple was built (and where the millennial temple will be built, Ezek. 40-43). Often in the Scriptures **mountains** denote governmental authorities (Dan. 2:35; Amos 4:1). Here God's rule from the temple will be preeminent (**chief**). The theme of the prominence of the temple mount in Jerusalem is repeated often in Isaiah's prophecies all the way to the end of the book (Isa. 11:9; 25:6-7; 27:13; 30:29; 56:7; 57:13; 65:11, 25; 66:20). Isaiah clearly wanted his readers to be aware that God will protect His covenant nation despite their spiritual insensitivity and even though they would go into captivity.¹⁵

[go up to the mountain of the LORD] The highway of holiness of Isa. 11:16; 19:23; 35:8 is a literal highway that will be built from Egypt through Palestine and into Assyria, on which all nations will go up to the temple where Christ will be reigning over all kingdoms of the earth (Isa. 9:6-7; Ezek. 43:7; Zech. 14:1-5,9,16-21; Rev. 5:10; 11:15; 22:4-5).¹⁶

⁴And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

nation, shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more] This will be eternally true, for in the last rebellion of Satan and man against God and Christ, at the end of the Millennium, they will not manufacture weapons or learn the art of war. The rebels will be

¹³ Life Application Study Bible.

¹⁴ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹⁵ Walvoord, J. F. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary*: (Is 2:1). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

¹⁶ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

deceived by Satan to think that they can overthrow the government in one sudden surprising attack with whatever weapons they have; but God will send fire to destroy every rebel. This will officially end all rebellion on earth (Rev. 20:7-10).¹⁷

"He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people." The period of the reign of Christ on the earth during the Millennium is another trial period for mankind. And there will be a great many judged during that period; and, of course, multitudes will be saved during that time also.

"They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks" -- the rule of the Lord upon earth at this time will be righteous, and He will compel the nations to practice justice and fairness with each other. For the first time all countries will dwell together in peace. Only during the Kingdom Age will the people be able to beat their swords into plowshares. Joel 3:10 tells us that during the Tribulation just the opposite will be true: the people will beat their plowshares into swords. In fact, we are living in times like that right now. The idea of disarming nations and disarming individuals is, in my judgment, contrary to the Word of God. In the New Testament the Lord Jesus said, "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace..." (Luke 11:21). If you are going to have peace and safety, you must have law and order. The prophecy of beating swords into plowshares will be fulfilled during the Millennium, when the Lord Jesus is reigning. Then you will be able to take the locks off of your doors, and you will be able to walk the streets at night in safety. You will not be drafted, because there will be no more war. There will be no more need for weapons for defense. The Kingdom that the Lord is going to establish upon earth will be one of peace. He is the Prince of Peace.

It is futile, nonsensical, and asinine for any man or nation to promise to bring peace upon the earth today. The United Nations, which was founded to help bring peace on earth, is one of the greatest places to carry on battles. It has proven how impotent it is. It cannot bring peace on earth. It has only increased dictatorship on the earth. We do not have peace in the world. If you are a child of God with your thinking cap on and begin to think God's thoughts after Him, you will find that you are living in a big, bad, evil world. If you expect to see a brotherhood of all men, you are doomed to disappointment, because man is not capable of bringing peace to this earth. There will be no peace as long as there is sin in the hearts of men and an overweening ambition to rule over other people.¹⁸

This is one of the more familiar verses in the Book of Isaiah. God will have a worldwide ministry of judging and settling disputes. He will require nations and peoples everywhere to abstain from warfare. Universal peace, with no military conflict or training, will prevail because the implements of warfare (swords and spears) will be turned into implements of agriculture (plowshares and hooks; cf. Joel 3:10). At this time of worldwide peace the nations will go to Jerusalem to learn from God (Isa. 2:2). Peace will come not by human achievement but because of God's presence and work in Jerusalem. At that time Israel will be filled with God's Spirit (Ezek. 36:24-30) and her sins will be forgiven (Jer. 31:31-34).¹⁹

¹⁷ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

¹⁸ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹⁹ Walvoord, J. F. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary*: (Is 2:4). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

a. They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: During the reign of the Messiah, there will be no more war. There will still be conflicts between nations and individuals, but they will be justly and decisively resolved by the Messiah and those who reign with Him (He shall judge between the nations, and shall rebuke many people).

It isn't the reign of the Messiah itself that will change the heart of man. Citizens of earth will still need to trust in Jesus and His work on their behalf for their personal salvation during the millennium. But war and armed conflict will not be tolerated.

b. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore: It is important to see that this is not the peace of capitulation. This is the peace of enforced righteousness. There is no more war, and no more need for swords and spears, so why not make them into plowshares and pruning hooks? But there is no more war because there is a new ruler on earth, Jesus Christ. Psalm 2:9 tells us what the Messiah will do to the disobedient in that day: *You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.*

We long for the day when there is no more need for a military budget, when the money that goes for weapons and armies can go to schools and parks. But we are only safe doing that when the Messiah reigns among us!²⁰

Men yearn for peace, but they will not acknowledge the hopelessness of their own efforts to achieve it. It is only when the word of the Lord goes forth from Jerusalem, when He Himself is reigning over the nations, that lasting peace will come. (Martin)

This describes a wonderful future of peace when instruments of war will be converted to instruments of farming, and we will be taught God's laws and obey them. Although we know that eventually God will remove all sin, which leads to war, conflicts, and other problems, we should not wait for him to act before we begin to obey him. We should walk in his light now, just as Judah was told to do. Though our eternal reward awaits us, we already can enjoy many benefits of obedience now as we apply God's Word to our life.²¹

⁵O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.

In view of the future that is coming, certainly we should walk in the light of the Lord. This is the only way of peace. When you leave God out, you will never have peace.

a. After painting the picture of the glory of the Messiah's reign, Isaiah then challenges Judah (house of Jacob) to live in the Messiah's reign right now.

b. To walk in the light of the Lord means to order your life after God's truth and God's ways. The ultimate reign of the Messiah may be many years away, but Jesus can reign in our lives, in our minds, and in our hearts right now. We don't have to wait for the *enforced* righteousness of the millennium to have the blessing of Jesus' righteousness in our lives right now.

c. To walk in the light of the Lord means you enjoy the *blessings* of the Messiah's reign right now. You don't have to live a dark, depressing, discouraged Christian life. You can walk in the light of the Lord!

²⁰ <https://www.study-light.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-1.html>

²¹ Life Application Study Bible.

What is it that gets you down, that brings darkness into your life? What can it compare to the light of the Lord? Is the *darkness* of spiritual attack, of unfaithful friends, of bad circumstances, of shame, of guilt, of anything greater than the light of the Lord? We think not!²²

You know that, if you were to go to Australia in a good sound ship, you would get there even if you were always to lie down in the hold among the luggage and the rats; but I should like to go in a first-class cabin, and I do not see why you and I, if we are going to heaven, should not go first-class. (Spurgeon)

Isaiah closed this short section with an exhortation for his readers to **walk (live) in the light of the LORD**.

The prophet called Israel the **house of Jacob**, a reference to Jacob's descendants. Isaiah used this term eight times (vv. 5-6; 8:17; 10:20; 14:1; 29:22; 46:3; 48:1) whereas it is used only nine times by all the other prophets. When great truths about the future are given in the Scriptures, readers are often reminded of how they should live in the present (e.g., 1 Thes. 4:13-18; 5:1-8; 2 Peter 3:10-14; 1 John 3:2-3). In view of the fact that in the Millennium all nations will stream to Jerusalem to learn God's Word, it would be sensible for Israel, already knowing that Law, to follow it (walking in its "light") until the Lord sets up His glorious kingdom.²³

(come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD) Judah and Jerusalem were again commanded to come and walk in the light of the Lord to avoid chastening and destruction. God always makes such offers to those whom He warns of impending judgment; then if they persist in rebellion He has to fulfill His word and judge them (cp. Isa. 1:16-18).²⁴

This emphasis is a major one in Isaiah 1—39, and the prophet introduced it at this point. Many in his day—and this is still true today—preferred to trust in strong people, especially nations, rather than in the Lord.

In view of what the nations will do eventually, Isaiah appealed to the house of Jacob (Israel) to do the same thing immediately, namely: walk in the Lord's light (presence and truth). Commit to following the Lord. This motivation is also applicable to present-day Christians (cf. Eph. 5:8-20). Virtually all the commentators recognized that this verse is transitional. Some make it the end of the previous section and others the beginning of the next.²⁵

⁶Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob, because they be replenished from the east, and *are* soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers.

[Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob ...] The 4th prophecy in Isaiah (Isa. 2:6-21; Isa. 2:6-9 fulfilled, Isa. 2:10-21 unfulfilled). God swore that if Israel forsook Him,

²² <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-1.html>

²³ Walvoord, J. F. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary: (Is 2:5)*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

²⁴ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

²⁵ Notes on Isaiah, Dr. Thomas L. Constable; <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

He would forsake them; so here was the final act of God in keeping His word (Dt. 31:17; 1Chr. 28:9; 2Chr. 15:2; cp. 2Tim. 2:12).²⁶

2:6-9. God had abandoned His people (on the house of Jacob see comments on v. 5) not because He no longer loved them but because they had become like the pagans around them. The people of Judah were as superstitious as the people in **the East**, that is, they were following the practices of the Assyrian Empire, which at that time was encroaching on the entire Syro-Palestinian area. (Or perhaps the people of "the East" were Arameans; cf. 9:12.) At the same time Judahites were engaging in divination like the Philistines. The Philistines occupied the southwestern part of Canaan and had sought to control Israel. So Israel was influenced by pagan practices from several sources. That Philistines were involved in divination is evident from 1 Samuel 6:2; 2 Kings 1:2. Divination (from 'ānan, "to practice sorcery"; cf. Lev. 19:26; Deut. 18:10, 14; 2 Kings 21:6; Micah 5:12, "cast spells") was the attempt to control people or circumstances or to seek to know the future through power given by evil spirits (demons).

Isaiah's irony here is strong, for Judah should have known what her future would be because of the Word of God; yet she was trying to discern the future by pagan means. No wonder Isaiah asked God **not** to **forgive** her (Isa. 2:9). Judah had great material wealth (**silver and gold**) and military strength (**horses and chariots**, v. 7) which they no doubt mistakenly thought came to them because of their worshipping **idols**. This probably led to pride and self-confidence because God said they would **be brought low** and **humbled** (v. 9; cf. vv. 11-12, 17). Their sinful condition made judgment a necessity.²⁷

For. The urgency of v. 5 is explained. full . . . filled . . . no end. Rather than the world coming to Zion to learn God's ways (vv. 2-4), the people of God in Isaiah's day are influenced by the ways of the world—to the point of saturation.²⁸

[6 - 22] The necessity of humility in the Day of YHWH.

Judah had allowed the false gods of foreigners to captivate their attention.

This was not an anti-immigrant statement. God is not against the cultures and customs of other peoples, except where those customs and cultures honor and worship false gods. Perhaps in the name of diversity, the leaders and people of Judah were allowing the worship of false gods.²⁹

Judah's present condition (2:6-11) and its consequences (2:12-4:1) contrast with the glorious kingdom Isaiah had just described (2:1-5). As was true throughout much of Israel's history, the people were not obeying the Lord and therefore had to be disciplined by Him.³⁰

The people were following practices of the Assyrian Empire. Filling their land with magicians and sorcerers meant that they were claiming to know and control the future by the power of demons or by interpreting omens. These practices were forbidden by God (see Leviticus 19:26; Deuteronomy 18:10, 14). The Philistines worshiped Dagon, Ashtoreth, and Baalzebub. During

²⁶ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

²⁷ Walvoord, J. F. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary* : (Is 2:6). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

²⁸ ESV Study Notes

²⁹ <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-1.html>

³⁰ Walvoord, J. F. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary*: (Is 2:6). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

the more sinful periods of their history, the people of Israel worshiped these pagan gods along with Yahweh and even gave them Hebrew names.³¹

Israel must walk in Yahweh's light because God had forsaken her in her present condition for departing from Him. Contrast the nations that will seek the Lord in the future (v. 2). Israel had stopped living as a distinct people in the world, had adopted the ways of other nations, and had relied on them rather than on the Lord. She had looked to the east (first Assyria and then Babylonia) for light rather than to the Lord, and had become like her despised enemies, the uncircumcised Philistines.³²

⁷Their land also is full of silver and gold, neither is there any end of their treasures; their land is also full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots:

Their land is also full of silver and gold: Judah had allowed the false gods of wealth and materialism to captivate their attention. Because Judah was in a time of economic prosperity (full of silver and gold . . . no end to their treasures . . . full of horses . . . no end to their chariots), they were far more prone to economic idolatry.

This was not an anti-wealth statement. God is not against wealth and riches, and may choose to bless some with significant resources. This is a rebuke of the *love* of riches, and any *trust* in wealth.³³

Specifically, Israel had filled herself with the wealth, armaments, and idols of the pagan nations (cf. Deut. 17:16-17; 1 Kings 10:26—11:8). King Uzziah's successful reign brought material prosperity to Judah, but this wealth had only encouraged Jewish materialism and neglect of God. Judah had accumulated these things to make herself secure, but she was only trusting in what she herself had made. Contrast the nations that will seek spiritual benefits (v. 3), enjoy peace (v. 4), and follow the Lord (v. 4).³⁴

⁸Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made:

Their land is also full of idols: Judah had allowed idols to captivate their attention. Because everyone has an innate tendency to worship themselves (the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made), we are tempted to worship what we have made and accomplished instead of worshipping the One who made us.

This was not an anti-work statement. God wants us to work hard, and show forth the work of our own hands, and to see the accomplishments that our own fingers have made. This is a rebuke of the *worship* of what we have made and what we have done.³⁵

³¹ Life Application Study Bible.

³² Notes on Isaiah, Dr. Thomas L. Constable; <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

³³ <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-1.html>

³⁴ Notes on Isaiah, Dr. Thomas L. Constable; <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

³⁵ <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-1.html>

Under the reign of evil kings, idol worship flourished in both Israel and Judah. A few good kings in Judah stopped it during their reigns. Although very few people worship carved or molded images today, worshipping people or objects that symbolize power continues. We pay homage to cars, homes, sports stars, celebrities, money, etc. Idol worship is evil because: (1) it insults God when we worship something he created rather than worshipping him; (2) it keeps us from knowing and serving God when we put our confidence in anything other than him; (3) it causes us to rely on our own efforts rather than on God. (See also Deuteronomy 27:15.)³⁶

⁹And the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself: therefore forgive them not.

Judah adopted new ideas from the heathen and incorporated them into their own religion. They embraced all kinds of ways from Assyria and Babylon. Before long they had joined the rest of the nations in worshipping the creature more than the Creator.

People bow down, and each man humbles himself: There was plenty of worship (bow down) in Judah, and plenty of people humbling themselves. They were simply worshipping the wrong things, and humbling themselves before the wrong things!

We know how to bow down, we know how to humble ourselves; we just don't find it easy to direct it properly towards the Lord. We are more than happy to bow down and humble ourselves for something of our choosing, but often find it difficult to do it for the Lord.

ii. The application is sobering: Therefore do not forgive them. Their worship of foreign gods, of riches, and of idols was sincere. It may have been ennobling or helpful to society. But it rejected the Lord God, and was therefore unforgivable.³⁷

forgive them not. Isaiah has given up on his generation. The mystery of forgiveness—for sin cannot be ignored—is revealed in ch. 53.

Glorifying created things rather than the Creator results in the humiliation and abasement of those who do these things (cf. Rom. 1). Forgiveness is unthinkable when people do these things (v. 9; cf. Exod. 34:7). "Do not forgive them" is an idiom meaning "for sure you will not forgive them."³⁸

Isaiah was not asking God to refrain from forgiving His people. "A major motif in OT theology is here (and in vv 11-22): pride and ambition are humanity's besetting and most devastating sins. Idolatry is seen as an expression of this drive by which man seeks to exalt himself."³⁹

³⁶ Life Application Study Bible.

³⁷ <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-1.html>

³⁸ Motyer, p. 56.

³⁹ Watts, Isaiah 1—33, p. 35.

¹⁰Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty.

2:10-11. Ultimately only one Person will be **exalted**. That One will be **the LORD alone** (v. 11; cf. v. 17). When the Lord comes to judge, people will seek to escape His judgment by hiding in caves (cf. vv. 19, 21; Rev. 6:16). They will fear His **splendor** (cf. Isa. 2:19, 21), realizing that their arrogance (v. 11; cf. v. 17) and wealth (vv. 7-8) cannot save them. Throughout this section (2:6-4:1) and many others in the Book of Isaiah, there is an interesting interplay between the judgment which the Lord will inflict on the nation by the Assyrian and Babylonian Captivities and the judgment which will come on Israel and the whole world in the "last days" just before the Millennium. Probably Isaiah and the other prophets had no idea of the lengthy time span that would intervene between those exiles and this later time of judgment. Though many of the predictions in 2:10-21 happened when Assyria and Babylon attacked Israel and Judah, the passage looks ahead to a cataclysmic judgment on the whole world ("when He rises to shake the earth," vv. 19, 21).⁴⁰

The Lord's day of reckoning (2:12-22)

When the Lord comes to establish justice on the earth human values will be reversed. Things that people had considered important will be considered unimportant and some things that people thought were insignificant will be highly valued.

2:12-18. God **has a day** (cf. "day" in v. 17) **in store**, a scheduled time of reckoning for sinners. **The LORD Almighty** (Yahweh) is an appellation used of God 62 times in Isaiah's book; 52 times alone and 10 times in the title "the Lord ('ăḏōnāy), the LORD Almighty."⁴¹

¹¹The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

Compare with Isa 14: the fall of Lucifer through pride (Cf. v.17).

God intends to break down the proud man -- the man who thinks he can rule himself and the man who thinks he can rule the world without God.

[in that day] Generally in the prophets, and always in scriptures mentioning the day of the Lord, such expressions as "in that day" and "at that day refer" to the time in which prophecies of this kind will be fulfilled (Isa. 2:11,12,17,20). "In that day" is used 43 times by Isaiah, compared to only 35 times by all the other 15 writing prophets. *Dake's Annotated Reference Bible*

¹²For the day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low:

The beginning of the chapter described the glory of the Messiah's reign (Isaiah 2:1-4). The second part of the chapter described the current corruption of Judah (Isaiah 2:6-9). How will the

⁴⁰ Walvoord, J. F. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary* : (Is 2:12). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁴¹ Walvoord, J. F. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary* : (Is 2:10-12). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

earth be transformed from its current corruption to the glory of the Messiahs reign? It will happen by the victory of the Messiah in the day of the Lord of hosts.⁴²

The term day of the Lord (used more than 25 times in the Bible) does not necessarily refer to one specific day. It speaks of Gods time. The idea is that now is the *day of man*, but the day of man will not last forever. One day, the Messiah will end the day of man and bring forth the day of the Lord.

2:12-18. God has a day (cf. "day" in v. 17) **in store**, a scheduled time of reckoning for sinners. **The LORD Almighty** (Yahweh šēbā'ôt) is an appellation used of God 62 times in Isaiah's book; 52 times alone and 10 times in the title "the Lord ('ăḏōnāy), the LORD Almighty." It denotes His military might and strength. When this Almighty One comes nothing will be able to stand in His way. Proud people will be humbled (cf. vv. 9, 11, 17), and even the great cedar trees in the forests of Lebanon, north of Israel, and oak trees (cf. 1:29) in Bashan (meaning "fertile plain"), east of the Sea of Kinnereth (later named Galilee), will be no match for the Lord. Mountains, perhaps suggesting governmental authorities (cf. comments on 2:3), and their military defenses represented by towers and fortified walls, cannot oppose Him (vv. 14-15). He will also demolish man's trade efforts typified by the merchant ships, the hub of which existed in the city of Tyre, north of Israel (v. 16). Everything that seemed to man in his arrogance to be permanent and secure will be swept away. The LORD alone will be exalted (cf. v. 11) when He demolishes Judah's idols (cf. v. 8). This may refer to the time when the Babylonians captured Judah in 586, but the ultimate judgment will be in the future at Christ's Second Advent.⁴³

The Lord's "day of reckoning" is the day of judgment, the time when God will judge both evil and good. That day will come, and we will want a proper relationship with God when it does. Pride, however, will cripple us. God alone must be exalted (2:11, 17) as the first step toward developing that relationship with him.⁴⁴

"Throughout this section (2:6—4:1) and many others in the Book of Isaiah, there is an interesting interplay between the judgment which the Lord will inflict on the nation by the Assyrian and Babylonian Captivities and the judgment which will come on Israel and the whole world in the 'last days' just before the Millennium. Probably Isaiah and the other prophets had no idea of the lengthy time span that would intervene between those exiles and this later time of judgment. Though many of the predictions in 2:10-21 happened when Assyria and Babylon attacked Israel and Judah, the passage looks ahead to a cataclysmic judgment on the whole world ('when He rises to shake the earth,' vv. 19, 21)."⁴⁵

¹³And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan,

⁴² <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-1.html>

⁴³ Walvoord, J. F. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary* : (Is 2:12). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁴⁴ Life Application Study Bible.

⁴⁵ Martin, p. 1039.

14And upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills *that are* lifted up,
This may be a reference to government and society.

15And upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall,

This may be a reference to the military, which will be judged.

High towers were part of a city or nation's defenses. This phrase refers to security based on military fortresses. "Great trading ships" picture economic prosperity; and "every magnificent vessel" reveals pleasure and enjoyment. Nothing can compare with or rival the place God must have in our hearts and minds. To place our hope elsewhere is nothing but false pride. Place your confidence in God alone.⁴⁶

16And upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures.

Commerce and art are going to be judged.

17And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.

The Lord alone. Also, Isa 63:5 (Cf. v.11).

God is going to put down all of the pride and pomp of men.

Man in all matters of religion, and in all his dealings with God, is proud. It is wonderful how apparently humble men will be when they worship false gods. They will cut themselves with knives, and roll themselves in the mire. We have known some votaries to kneel before the representation of the Virgin Mary and lick the very pavement with their tongues by way of penance, and perform the most degrading rites in honor of their false gods. Man seems to be humble enough in his dealings with a false deity, but as soon as ever he comes to deal with the true God, the first things that have to be got out of him are his pride, his high looks, his haughtiness. (Spurgeon)

18And the idols he shall utterly abolish.

God is going to get rid of all false religion.

Even more explicit figures of speech picture Yahweh's humiliation of the self-aggrandizing. Here the similarity of Isaiah's description of the eschatological judgment is very close to the apostle John's in the Book of Revelation (cf. Rev. 6:12-17). When God acts in judgment, all attempts to

⁴⁶ Life Application Study Bible.

glorify the creation over the Creator will appear vain. Valuable idols will be cast aside to the bats and mice and consigned to the dark, unattractive places where those creatures live.⁴⁷

"Idols are precious. They are always our hard-won silver and gold. That's why we prize them. They are beautiful, but also contemptible. J. R. R. Tolkien portrayed this in *The Lord of the Rings*. Everyone who wears the golden ring of power morphs into something weirdly subhuman, like Gollum, who cherishes it as 'My Precious.' So for Middleearth to be saved, the ring must be thrown into the fire of Mount Doom and destroyed forever. Tolkien understood that the key to life is not only what we lay hold of but also what we throw away."⁴⁸

¹⁹And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

Rev 6:16; Josh 10:16,17.

Two reasons men will hide:

1. For fear of the Lord -- what He will do to them when He comes (repeated for emphasis, Isa. 2:10,19)
2. For the glory of His majesty which will shake the whole earth terribly (also repeated for emphasis, Isa. 2:10,19)

See Revelation 6:15-17 for a description of the dread in God's enemies on the day of his wrath. The Bible talks of two kinds of fear. In this verse, fear is the panic and peril unbelievers feel at the judgment of God. The right kind of fear means to revere and stand in awe of God. Proverbs 1:7 says, "Fear of the Lord is the foundation of true knowledge." Those who honor and respect God need not fear God's wrath.⁴⁹

2:19-22. When the Lord's vengeance comes, people will try to escape by fleeing into **caves** (cf. vv. 10, 21). They will be terrified because God will **shake the earth** (see comments on Hag. 2:6-7). Carrying their **idols** made with **silver** and **gold** (cf. Isa. 2:7) will hinder their escape, so the people will toss them aside to **rodents and bats** (v. 20). Once again Isaiah's sense of irony is strong: things highly valued will be thrown aside to detestable creatures that people hate. In verse 21 Isaiah again spoke of people hiding in caves away from God's terror (cf. vv. 10, 19a) when **He will shake the earth** (cf. v. 19b).

Then the prophet called on Judah to **stop trusting in man** (v. 22; cf. Ps. 118:8-9). Man is merely like a vapor. His **breath** can be snuffed out quickly. Therefore to trust in him is nonsensical, for man is easily removed (Isa. 2:9, 11-12, 17). In view of God's coming judgment Judah should begin to turn to Him in the present. God's glory should cause them to live righteous, holy lives and thus escape His severe judgment.

Judgment on Judah for her actions (3:1-15)

⁴⁷ Notes on Isaiah, Dr. Thomas L. Constable; <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

⁴⁸ Raymond C. Ortlund Jr., *Isaiah*, p. 54.

⁴⁹ Life Application Study Bible.

Having affirmed in broad terms (2:9-21) that judgment would come, Isaiah gave examples of present sins in the nation that needed to be judged by God.⁵⁰

The Book of Revelation repeats what man will do in that day of judgment: "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb" (Rev. 6:15-16).

All you see on television today has to do with the political economy, government, commerce, art, the pomp and pride of man -- and the religion of man. The day is coming when all of man's pride is going to be brought low, and the Lord Jesus Christ will be exalted on earth. Today He is not being given His proper place in government, in society, in business, in art, or in the pomp and ceremony of the world -- or even in the religion of the world. He is left out today. When He comes again, men are going to run for the caves of the earth. I don't know whether men were ever cavemen or not, but a day is coming in the future when men are going back to the caves.⁵¹

[they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth] If men will do this under the sixth seal nearly seven years before the second coming of Christ (Rev. 6:12-17), they will surely do it at the second coming itself, for at that time there will be the greatest earthquake ever: the cities of the nations will fall, Babylon will be destroyed, Jerusalem will be divided into three parts, and the Mount of Olives will be completely removed in a moment (Zech. 14:1-5; Rev. 11:13; 16:17-21; 18:1-24).⁵²

²⁰In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made *each one* for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats;

²¹To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

"When he ariseth to shake terribly the earth" is the time of the Great Tribulation.

²²Cease ye from man, whose breath *is* in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?

Don't put your confidence in man. You and I exhale, but we don't know whether we are going to inhale the next breath. That is the frailty of man -- if he misses one breath he is out of the picture. Multitudes today going about their daily business will have fatal heart attacks and disappear from the earth's scene. Don't put your confidence in man. Put your confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ today.⁵³

⁵⁰Walvoord, J. F. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary*: (Is 2:19-3:1). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁵¹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁵² Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

⁵³ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

For of what account is he? If men are only men, why do we give so much attention to the opinions of men? Why rise so high on the praise of men, and get so low at their disapproval? We have something - Someone - better to live for.

But they say. What do they say? Let them say. It will not hurt you if you can only gird up the loins of your mind, and cease from man. Oh, but they have accused me of this and that. Is it true? No, sir, it is not true, and that is why it grieves me. That is why it should not grieve you. If it were true it ought to trouble you; but if it is not true let it alone. If an enemy has said anything against your character it will not always be worth while to answer him. Silence has both dignity and argument in it. (Spurgeon)

Brethren in Christ, let us think more of God and less of man. Come, let the Lord our God fill the whole horizon of our thoughts. Let our love go forth to him; let us delight ourselves in him. Let us trust in him that liveth for ever, in him whose promise never faileth, in him who will be with us in life, and in death, and through eternity. Oh that we lived more in the society of Jesus, more in the sight of God! Let man go behind our back, and Satan too. We cannot spend our lives in seeking the smiles of men, for pleasing God is the one object we pursue. Our hands, and our heads, and our hearts, and all that we have and are, find full occupation for the Lord, and therefore we must Cease from man. (Spurgeon)

"As frail as breath" refers to our mortality. People are very limited when compared to God. They can be unreliable, selfish, and shortsighted. Yet we entrust our life and future more readily to mortal human beings than to the all-knowing God. Beware of people who want you to trust them instead of God. Remember that only God is completely reliable. He is perfect, and we can rely on his unfailing love (Psalm 100:5).⁵⁴

This section (2:5-22) closes as it opened, with an exhortation, this one being negative. Isaiah called on his hearers to stop trusting in man. His life, after all, comes from God, who should be trusted (cf. Gen. 2:7; 7:22; Ps. 146:4). Human beings have no real value as objects of trust. Idolatry is but a result of man's self-glorification, not its cause. Human beings will never bring about Israel's glorious destiny. Only God can and will do that. This verse, like verse 5, is transitional, and bridges the preceding proclamation of universal judgment with the following more specific judgment.

⁵⁴ Life Application Study Bible.

Missler

Dake

McGee

<https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-1.html>

<http://www.moellerhaus.com/isaiahdi.htm>

Bible Knowledge Commentary: Wolvrod

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