

## B. THE IMPLORING APPEAL - CHAPTERS 2 - 4

## CHAPTER TWO

## 1. VISION OF THE COMING MESSIANIC AGE

## THE LORD'S HOUSE ESTABLISHED

TEXT: 2:1-4

- 1 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.
- 2 And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.
- 3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, 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 Jehovah from Jerusalem.
- 4 And he will judge between the nations, and will decide concerning many peoples; and 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 any more.

## QUERIES

- a. When are the "latter days"?
- b. Who are the "people" of verse 3?
- c. When will the cessation of war take place?

## PARAPHRASE

And this is the message to Isaiah from the Lord concerning Judah and Jerusalem. In the closing days of the Old Testament era the faithful people of God's remnant will grow into a great and spectacular kingdom into which people from all the nations

and races on the earth will come for membership. They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, into this universal kingdom, saying, Let us join with this faithful remnant and learn of the One True God of Israel; He will teach us His ways and we will walk in His paths. Out of this Heavenly Community shall go forth the revealed will and word of God. And God, Himself, through His word will arbitrate between citizens of this new kingdom. Its citizens shall be people of peace and love and they will not fight against one another any more. All their activities and attributes will be directed toward fruitful and productive ends.

### COMMENTS

v. 1-2 **THE TIME:** In the latter days of Judah and Jerusalem as the exclusive covenant people of God. "Latter days" does not refer to the end of time or the Second Advent of Christ or the so-called millenium. The N.T. definitely and clearly applies the phrase "latter days" to that period of time which began to run its course with the first advent of Christ (Cf. Acts 2:17 with Joel 2:28; Heb. 1:2; Jas. 5:3; I Pet. 1:5, 20; II Pet. 3:3 and I John 2:18). Literally the phrase is, "the last parts of the days," and means, "the end of the ages" (Cf. I Cor. 10:11). So the Lord's house is to be established in its glorified and pre-eminent state in the last parts of the days of the Jewish Dispensation. In these "last days" of Judah, Herod the Great was King and he was the first foreigner ever to be King over Judah. This is a fulfillment of Gen. 49:10, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh (Christ) come; and unto Him shall the obedience of the people be." It is not the present upon which the eyes of the Israelites are to be directed, but a time which is the end or goal of the contemporary course of events, when the Messiah will have come and the breach which sin had introduced between man and God will be healed (Cf. our comments in *Daniel*, College Press, chapter 9). The figure of Zion being exalted above the hills is significant. At the

time when Isaiah spoke, the very reverse was the case—many other “hills” were “higher” than Zion (Cf. Psa. 67:16). The Temple in Isaiah’s day was situated on Zion, but the false gods had their mountains as well: the Captiol, Olympus, Albordash, Meru, and Zaphon. But Zion, which, in Isaiah’s day and up to Christ, was comparatively insignificant will one day surpass all others. Even Sinai, the mount of law, will recede into the background, for the new covenant is superior to the old. This is the meaning of Hebrews 12:18-24 where Sinai represents the old covenant and Zion represents the new covenant, or the church. See also Daniel 2:35, 44; Jer. 31:12a; 51:44.

v. 2 THE SCOPE: All peoples! No longer exclusively to the Jews. A constant accession of converts streaming (flowing) from all parts of the world upward to God’s house. This high and pre-eminent mount (Zion—the church) is to serve as a unifying force for the whole world. It is to be a reversal of the dispersion (Babel). (Cf. Matt. 8:10-11; Lk. 13:29; Jn. 10:16; Acts 13:44-47, etc.).

v.3 THE NATURE: Enlightenment! The “law” here is not the law of Moses for that went forth from Sinai. It is the “law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” It is the “perfect law of liberty.” It is the word of the Lord that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in Christ’s name beginning from Jerusalem (Cf. Lk. 24:47). It will be *missionary and evangelistic*! “Many people will go and say, Come ye . . .” No national or racial boundaries. It will be didactic and doctrinal. Those who come to it will necessarily be taught His way. As a consequence of being taught, men will want to walk in God’s way. True doctrine places within one’s heart the desire to walk in the law of God. Truth leads to godliness, and when one has been truly instructed, he will want to do God’s will. One must be instructed first before he can walk in God’s way. Doctrine and ethics must go hand in hand. There can be no right obedience nor any right worship, until first one has learned of God (Cf. Heb. 8:8-13; Acts 20:32; Titus 2:11-15; John 6:44-46). It is through the church that the manifold wisdom of God is to be declared (Eph. 3:10). The church’s work is to produce a ministry for evangelizing and

edifying (Eph. 4:11-16). God's Word is the only source and foundation of truth. Those who preach must preach the Word! This passage teaches that what unbelievers need above all else is teaching which is indoctrination. The missionary and evangelistic activity of the church must be doctrinal in character. The great need of the world is the preaching of revealed absolutes (restrictive and difficult though it may be). The world does not need speculative and theoretical philosophies and theologies of men. There will be some who will reject His Way (Cf. Jer. 6:16-21; Isa. 42:24; Acts 9:2, etc.).

v. 4 THE RESULTS: Peace! is the result of this establishing of the Lord's house. When men are brought into the kingdom of God, the church, they are brought to peace—peace with God and peace with their fellow citizens of the kingdom (Cf. Eph. 2:11-22; Col. 3:15; Jn. 14:27; 16:33; Acts 10:36; Rom. 14:17, etc.). It does not necessarily demand the cessation of all literal human or physical war for the fulfillment of this prophecy. There will be war between human beings as long as there are unregenerate people. But if all men knew and did the will of God war would cease. Peace comes through knowing and doing (voluntarily, not by force) the will of God. There can not be war in the kingdom of God, the church, for it is recreated in the image of God and knows no man anymore after a human (unregenerate) point of view (Cf. II Cor. 5:16-21). If the peace of Christ rules in our hearts (Col. 3:15), this will arbitrate any disagreement we might have as Christians (Cf. I Cor. 5:9—6:8). The Christian, "if possible, so far as it depends upon him, must live peaceably with all" (Rom. 12:18). When the exalted, universal house of the Lord is established and people are so taught His Way that they want to walk in it, the result will be peace and productivity. The instruments of their bodies, the talents they have, formerly used for unrighteousness, will now be "beaten into plowshares and pruning hooks" and used for productive profitable ends (glorifying God and serving others) (Cf. Rom. 6:12-23).

## QUIZ

1. When ("latter days") is the Lord's house to be established?
2. Cite two scriptures to show that Mount Zion is typical or prophetic of the church in the N.T.
3. Who is to be included in the exalted house of the Lord?
4. What will be the essential nature of the establishing of this house?
5. What will be the result of it?

## 2. THE VIOLENCE OF CORRUPTION AND JUDGMENT

2:5-22

## a. LIGHT UPON THE DARKNESS

TEXT: 2:5-9

- 5 O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of Jehovah.
- 6 For thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob, because they are filled with customs from the east, and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they strike hands with the children of foreigners.
- 7 And their land is full of silver and gold, neither is there any end of their treasures; their land also is full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots.
- 8 Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made.
- 9 And the mean man is bowed down, and the great man is brought low: therefore forgive them not.

## QUERIES

- a. What is wrong with the "customs of the east"?
- b. What is "striking hands"?

## c. Who is the "mean man"?

## PARAPHRASE

If the nations are going to seek to walk in His ways, O house of Jacob, then, come, let us walk in the light of Jehovah also! But, thou O Jehovah, hast withdrawn thy mercy from the house of Jacob because they are filled with the superstition and idolatry of the eastern peoples and God's sons have become like a nation of uncircumcised Philistines; they reject their own godly heritage to fraternize with foreign unbelievers and their pagan life. They have become money mad and filled the land with the machinery of war. More heinous than that, however, is their inordinate, insatiable hunger to practice idolatry—the land is filled with idols. The common men and the great men all bow down before things they have invented with their own hands. Do not forgive them, O lord!

## COMMENTS

v. 5 THE APPEAL TO WALK IN THE LIGHT: In view of the vision which has just preceded this of the Gentiles voluntarily coming to walk in the ways of Jehovah, Isaiah attempts to provoke the house of Jacob to seek His ways. To walk in the light of Jehovah they would have to give up all their materialism and idolatry.

v. 6 GOD HAS FORSAKEN THEM: This does not mean God would not turn and heal them should they repent, but it means He must forsake them as long as they forsake Him. If they will not have Him, He cannot have them. They are granted the freedom to choose whom they will serve—they chose the pagan superstition and idolatry of their eastern neighbors (Syrians, Assyrians, Ammonites, Babylonians, etc.) "Striking hands" (literally, "to clap hands with") means to fraternize with, approve or associate with to the extent of cooperation, indulgence appropriation. It is not wrong in itself to be found in the midst of foreigners or sinners, but to participate in their sin is what the house of Jacob was doing and this is a rejection of Him. Judah

was "filled" with heathen customs of all kinds: animism, sexual sins, human sacrifices, divination, etc. (Cf. Lev. 19:26; Deut. 18:10). It was not that God did not want them—they did not want God!

v. 7 **MATERIALISM:** In the law of Moses (Deut. 17:17) the king was forbidden to multiply silver and gold, for these would tend toward an indulgent and profligate life. Those who possess much silver and gold generally are never satisfied with what they have but always seek to procure more (Cf. I Chron. 29:4; II Chron. 8:18; 9:10). It is not the silver and gold in themselves which are condemned, but the filling of the land with them—they were money mad! When God's people are filled with the fullness which the world offers, they are empty toward God (Cf. Lk. 12:21). God's people should be filled with those things in which the world is empty (Cf. Eph. 5:18). They also filled their land with the machinery of war—horses and chariots. A standing army for the purpose of self defense is not wrong and is even advocated specifically in the O.T. and in principle in the N.T. But multiplying a "military-industrial complex" inevitably leads men to trust more in their own power than in God. The multiplication of horses and chariots was another prohibition of the Mosaic law for kings (Deut. 17:17). The military might of a nation can be made into an idol by proud and vain men (Nazi Germany, Communist Russia and China, Roman Empire, etc.).

v. 8 **IDOLATRY:** Generally speaking, it can be established that there was no national idolatry under Uzziah and Jotham. But by the time of Ahaz, there had been such a wide practice of private idolatry by the people, it had become a national policy. Ahaz promoted it personally. Showing the stupidity of idolatry is one of Isaiah's recurring themes (Cf. Isa. 40:18-31; 41:21-29; 44:9-20, etc.). The utter stupidity of bowing down and worshipping and asking help from a figurine which owes its existence to the one bowing down should be manifest to any intelligent being. Then to receive no utterance or oracle from a block of wood or granite should convince the idolator of his folly, (Cf. Acts 17:22-31). But men have continued for nearly as long as the world has existed to prostitute themselves to objects fashioned

by their own hands, or the hands of others, and called them gods.

V. 9 DEGRADATION: All classes of men are brought low and degraded as a result of Judah's sin. Two Hebrew words for man are used here—*adam*, the general word or "mean" word for man (common mankind), and *ish*, the word for men of importance. All men, high and low, educated and uneducated, rich and poor, are bowing themselves before idols. It is a national disease. Therefore, the prophet commands (imperative), "forgive them not." Isaiah asks that his message be vindicated—God is asked to withhold His forgiveness so long as Judah remains in stubborn rebellion and idolatry. This is what Isaiah proclaimed—now God will establish the truth of what Isaiah preached.

### QUERIES

1. Upon what basis does the prophet exhort Jacob to walk in the light of God?
2. When does God "forsake" His people?
3. What is "striking of hands"?
4. Why did God forbid the accumulation of silver and gold?
5. Why did God forbid the accumulation of horses and chariots?
6. Why is idolatry stupid?
7. How extensive was idolatry in Judah at this time?

### b. LOSS OF DIGNITY

TEXT: 2:10-22

- 10 Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, from before the terror of Jehovah, and from the glory of his majesty.
- 11 The lofty looks of man shall be brought low, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day.
- 12 For there shall be a day of Jehovah of hosts upon all that is proud and haughty, and upon all that is lifted up; and it



- shall be brought low;
- 13 and upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan,
- 14 and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up,
- 15 and upon every lofty tower, and upon every fortified wall,
- 16 and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant imagery.
- 17 And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be brought low; and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day.
- 18 And the idols shall utterly pass away.
- 19 And men shall go into the caves of the rocks, and into the holes of the earth, from before the terror of Jehovah, and from the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake mightily the earth.
- 20 In that day men shall cast away their idols of silver and their idols of gold, which have been made for them to worship, to the moles and to the bats;
- 21 to go into the caverns of the rocks, and into the clefts of the ragged rocks, from before the terror of Jehovah, and from the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake mightily the earth.
- 22 Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?

### QUERIES

- a. Why command the sinful people to try to hide from God?
- b. Why does God bring His wrath upon nature and things?
- c. What does "cease ye from man . . ." mean?

### PARAPHRASE

There is only one recourse left to you, Come, crawl into the depressions in the rocks or holes in the earth and try to hide from the terror and majesty of Jehovah's inexorable judgment. For

the day is coming when your proud looks will be turned into looks of terror and shame and God alone will be exalted. On that day the Lord of Hosts will act against the proud and haughty and bring them down into the dust. All the tall cedars of Lebanon and the mighty oaks of Bashan which you admire and feel secure about will bend low. All the high mountains and hills, and every military tower and fortified wall, and all the proud ocean ships which bring you commercial treasure and all the trim pleasure craft which you enjoy so—all shall be crushed before the Lord that day. All the glory of mankind will bow low; the pride of men will lie impotent in the dust, and the Lord alone shall be exalted. Finally, idolatry shall be utterly abolished and destroyed. When the Lord stands up from His throne to shake the earth, His enemies will crawl with fear into the holes in the rocks and into the caves because of the glory of His majesty. Then will be the time when they will at last abandon their gold and silver idols to the moles and bats, and crawl into the caverns to hide among the jagged rocks at the tops of the cliffs to try to get away from the terror of the Lord and the glory of His majesty when He rises to terrify the earth. Quit placing your confidence for salvation in puny man! Man's life is extremely transitory! He is nothing compared to God!

### COMMENTS

v. 10-11 **TERROR OF JEHOVAH:** In view of the sin of Judah and the inexorable judgment of God because of it, Judah's only recourse is to attempt to hide from God in the limestone rocks of Palestine which are filled with crevices in which people often took cover from threatened danger (Cf. Judges 6:2; I Sam. 13:6, etc.). Of course, it is impossible for man to hide from God. But Isaiah is emphasizing that the time for repentance is past—the only hope for Judah (which is no hope at all) is to try to hide. This is the judgment which is to come upon Judah in the devastation of the Babylonian captivities, but it typifies and foreshadows the final judgment of God (Cf. Rev. 6:15-17; and our Special Study on *The Day of the Lord in Minor Prophets*,

College Press). The appearance of Jehovah in judgment is both glorious and terrible at the same time! God's glory is manifested in His judgment as well as in His grace! Isaiah's appeal to the fear of God's judgment as a motive in preaching runs contrary to most modern psychological theories which assert that it is wrong to use fear as a motive in preaching and teaching. How different God's methods! Judgment is set before sinful men as a terrible reality! Men must turn from sin if they are to escape such judgment. This is the only motive that will prevail with rebellious sinners. The only way to run from God is to run to Him!

v. 12-17 **MAN, AND HIS PRIDE BROUGHT LOW:** Isaiah announces the judgment of God upon a number of objects in which man had placed his confidence. The cedars of Lebanon—used in the Temple (I Kings 5:6); for masts of ships (Ezek. 27:5); as a symbol of beauty (Jer. 22:6; Zech. 11:1ff); particularly admired by Jews (Cf. Psa. 92:12; 104:16; Ezek. 31:3). Because of man's sin, even the great and beautiful things of creation will suffer His judgment. Things created by man's hand—his buildings for wealth, show and fortification will never survive the judgment of God. One only has to read the notes of archaeologists to verify this statement. The greatest fortifications that the mind of man can devise and the hand of man can build can be destroyed by the least, most insignificant handiwork of God. God is able to direct and send the smallest insect to ruin and make helpless the most complex electronic defense instrument ever devised by man! God can shake the tallest and thickest wall or bridge or sky-scraper to rubble and dust through an earthquake. Objects which bring to man the necessities and luxuries of life—ships of commerce from Tarshish which was a critical lifeline of the nation of Judah would be cut off. Also the ships of pleasure which the rich people of Judah used for selfish pleasure would be destroyed. Verses 11 and 17, beginning and ending of specifying judgments, emphasize that God's eye of judgment is upon the evil of man and not on things. Man's sin has perverted the object and the objects have become a cause of man's sin and so God will remove the cause.

v. 18-21 **IDOLATRY TO BE DESTROYED:** When God begins to act in judgment, the impotence of their idols and their own stupidity in trusting in them will be so evident the people will cast them away in shame. Also, the people will be so intent upon escaping during these terrible times they will consider their idols only hindrances, encumbering their attempts to escape, and they will leave them behind for the heathen to carry off as booty. The destruction of idols is mentioned last because idolatry is the root sin that causes all the rest. Covetousness (the desire to have more) is called idolatry in the N.T. The captives destroyed forever the practice of idolatry among the Jews.

v. 22 **TRUST IN MAN TO BE DESTROYED:** Trust in idolatry is, in a sense, trust in man himself, for the idols are the products of his ingenuity and creative powers. But any trust in any man for salvation of the soul, for redemption is to be stopped! Man's knowledge, limited by the finitude of his being, is not only unable to extricate him from his predicament, but when trusted in to the exclusion of God, buries man deeper and deeper in his own predicament—ignorance and immorality. Man's life is extremely transitory (Cf. Psa. 146:3-4; 118:8; 104:29; Eccl. 12:7; Psa. 33:10; Jas. 4:13-17, etc.). What can man do against the wrath of God? The answer is: Nothing! Man without God is lost!

### QUERIES

1. Why would Isaiah direct men to try the impossible—hide from God?
2. Is an appeal to fear God a proper avenue of motivation?
3. Why will God bring His wrath upon the objects of creation as well as persons?
4. Why would the people of Judah "cast away" their idols?
5. Why not trust in man?