

A Prediction of the Coming Blessings and Purgings

Isaiah 2

Isaiah 2:1-4 – *“The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. ² Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. ³ Many people shall come and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. ⁴ He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people. They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”*

Background Notes

When I was in elementary school, we took a class trip to the United Nations in New York City. I remember seeing Isaiah 2:4 inscribed in stone at the entrance of the impressive U.N. building: *“They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”*

I was excited! When I got home I told my father that the United Nations had a Bible verse inscribed in stone right at the entrance to the building. I’ll never forget what my father said. He explained to me that the Bible verse is a prophecy about a great time of peace that will come on this earth in the future – but the U.N. will never bring in world peace. World peace will only come with the return of Christ. I’ll never forget that. We can be thankful for every effort of man to bring about world peace, but ultimately world peace will only come when the Lord Jesus Christ returns to earth.

In verse 2, Isaiah was speaking of the last days. At that time wars and the weapons of war will be a thing of the past. Technology and machinery will be used for peaceful purposes only. This great time of peace will not happen automatically, and it will not be brought about by the United Nations - or any other global organization. In fact, the Church will not bring about peace in this world. The ending of all wars and the establishment of peace in this world will only take place when the Lord returns. Notice that verses 3-4 indicate that the Lord Himself will be here on this earth at that time.

Doctrinal Points

1. The future Millennium will be a time of godliness and peace.

Revelation 20 teaches that when the Lord returns, the great time of godliness and peace to come on this earth will last one thousand years. That's why this time is often called the "Millennium." Jerusalem will be the headquarters of this earthly kingdom of Christ, and there will be a new Temple atop the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. You can read about the details of the Millennial Temple in Ezekiel 40 to 48.

Notice that this great time of blessing and peace is not just for restored Israel, but also for the believing nations as well: *"And all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob'"* (v2-3).

But remember - this prophecy about Israel's future must not be spiritualized away and re-interpreted as "the present godliness and peace in the Church" - as is sometimes taught! No! This prophecy predicts the spiritual restoration of the **literal nation of Israel** and the conversion of many Gentiles in the future. These believers will make up the literal nations of the Millennial kingdom of Christ. The future Millennium will be a time of godliness and peace.

2. The future Tribulation will be a time of humbling and terror.

Isaiah 2:5-21 - *"O house of Jacob, come and let us walk in the light of the Lord. ⁶ For You have forsaken Your people, the house of Jacob, because they are filled with eastern ways; they are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they are pleased with the children of foreigners. ⁷ Their land is also full of silver and gold, and there is no end to their treasures; their land is also full of horses, and there is no end to their chariots. ⁸ Their land is also full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made. ⁹ People bow down, and each man humbles himself. Therefore do not forgive them. ¹⁰ Enter into the rock, and hide in the dust from the terror of the Lord and the glory of His majesty. ¹¹ The lofty looks of man shall be humbled; the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. ¹² For the day of the Lord of hosts shall come upon everything proud and lofty, upon everything lifted up— and it shall be brought low. ¹³ Upon all the cedars of Lebanon that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan; ¹⁴ upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up. ¹⁵ Upon every high tower, and upon every fortified wall; ¹⁶ upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all the beautiful sloops. ¹⁷ The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be brought low; the Lord alone will be exalted in that day. ¹⁸ But the idols He shall utterly abolish. ¹⁹ They shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth from the terror of the Lord and the glory of His majesty, when He arises to shake the earth mightily.*

²⁰ *In that day a man will cast away his idols of silver and his idols of gold which they made, each for himself to worship to the moles and bats, ²¹ to go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the crags of the rugged rocks, from the terror of the Lord and the glory of His majesty, when He arises to shake the earth mightily.*”

In verse 5 Isaiah called on Judah to repent, in view of the promise of future restoration. Then in verses 6-7, Isaiah listed the sins in which Judah has been involved, and for which she must be judged: her involvement with the idolatry of the Assyrians in the east and the occult practices of the Philistines along the western coast of the Mediterranean Sea (v6); Judah’s trust in wealth and military might (v7); and the worship of idols of her own making (v8). Sadly, all of these sins can be applied to our own nation today.

Beginning in verse 9 there is the warning of judgment to come. The pride of man will be brought down. Verse 11: *“The proud looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down.”* And verse 17: *“The loftiness of man shall be bowed down and the haughtiness of men shall be brought low.”*

During this coming judgment, Isaiah predicted that people would try to hide from the terror of the Lord. Verse 10: *“Enter into the rock, and hide in the dust from the terror of the Lord.”* And verse 19: *“They shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, from the terror of the Lord. And verse 21: “To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the crags of the rugged rocks from the terror of the Lord.”*

When will this time of judgment take place? Verse 12 says that it will be on “the day of reckoning” or “the Day of the Lord.” Generally speaking, in the Old Testament the “Day of the Lord” is any time that the Lord intervenes in the affairs of nations – either for blessing or for judgment. Here in the second half of Isaiah 2, the Day of the Lord is for judgment.

It’s important to understand that there is a ***past*** or ***historical aspect*** of the Day of the Lord, as well as a ***future*** or ***eschatological aspect*** of the day of the Lord. In Isaiah 2, is the Day of the Lord past - or future? It is primarily eschatological, or future - although there was a historical aspect when Judah was conquered by the Babylonians and taken into captivity. However, at that time, there were no more ships with smelted metal going from Judah to Tarshish (v16). And at that time, idolatry was removed from Judah (v18).

But much of Isaiah 2 is about the future judgments of God upon this earth in the last days. This time is known as the Tribulation period. This period will precede the return of the Lord to earth and His Millennial kingdom. When Isaiah uses the phrase “in that day” (which he does a number of times throughout the book), he was primarily thinking of the eschatological (future) Day of the Lord.

Notice verse 11: *“And the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.”* And verse 17: *“The Lord alone will be exalted in that day.”* And verse 20: *In that day a man will cast away his idols of silver and his idols of gold.”* Clearly Isaiah was primarily thinking of the eschatological day of the Lord.

Furthermore, notice how Isaiah moves in this chapter from judgment upon Judah to the worldwide judgment of the Tribulation period. Look at the end of verse 19: *“when He arises to shake the earth mightily.”* And the end of verse 21: *“When He arises to shake the earth mightily.”* A worldwide scope was in view, not just God’s judgment on Judah in the past. The future Tribulation will be a time of humbling and terror.

Practical Application

Change your value system now before it’s too late.

Isaiah 2:22 – *“Sever yourselves from such a man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for of what account is he?”*

During the Tribulation period of the future, people will throw away silver and gold in order to hide and survive (v20) – but it will be too late for them. However, it’s not too late for you.

Are you an unbeliever? It’s not too late for you - yet. But a day is coming when your silver and gold - and whatever other “idols” you’ve placed between yourself and God - will have no value. Your trust in human effort, rather than in God, will be futile. Why not change your value system now, and become a Christian before it’s too late? Place your trust in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, and join the family of God!

Are you a believer? Then what is your value system right now? What is more important to you – your “idols of silver and gold” or the Lord? In Matthew 6:24 the Lord Jesus said, *“you cannot serve God and money.”* You **cannot** serve both - it’s one or the other! Are you trusting in human effort and earthly success? Is your real treasure here on this earth - or is it in heaven?

Suppose the Lord were to return this week. At the judgment seat of Christ, the lives of all believers will be reviewed, and our value systems will be analyzed. How will you measure up? How will I?

Change your value system now before it’s too late!