

EXPOSITORY NOTES ON THE PROPHET ISAIAH

by

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ISAIAH CHAPTER TWO

ZION'S FUTURE GLORY

“The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And 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 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. And 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. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord” (verses 1-5).

THE four chapters that now demand our attention form a connected discourse, a soul-stirring message addressed to Judah and Jerusalem, at a time unspecified. The parable of the vineyard in chapter five is a lovely, yet solemn epitome of it all, and forms really the prophet’s text, that which precedes being introductory, and what follows is a fitting conclusion, pronouncing the woes of the Lord upon the vine that brought forth but wild grapes.

The opening verses of chapter two (verses 2-4) are almost identical with those of Micah 4:1-3. There is no need to suppose plagiarism or a scribe’s blunder, in transferring the words of one prophet to the book of another. Rather is it a blessed evidence that one Spirit inspired each speaker, or writer. The double testimony is but added assurance that the thing spoken cannot fail.

It tells in language too plain to be misunderstood, that in the last days God will again take up His ancient people, Israel, restoring them to their land, and making Jerusalem His throne-city, from which His laws will go forth to the ends of the earth. **“The mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills.”**

The mountain is the city itself. This is a common prophetic symbol. Mountains signify governments and throne-cities; and Jerusalem will be **“the city of the great King,”** and **“all nations shall flow unto it.”** This will be fulfilled literally in the coming age, after God’s present work of grace has come to an end.

He is now, as James points out in Acts 15:14, visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His Name. But when this special work is completed He will “**build again the tabernacle of David,**” and through restored Israel, bless all the nations. Then will be the time when “**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 in that day of His power, the law will go forth from Zion and His word from Jerusalem. He will rule all the nations in equity and put down every opposing thing.

It is not in this dispensation that Israel will thus be saved, and, through them, the nations brought to own Immanuel’s sway. Therefore, those who expect to see all wars ended and righteousness everywhere established in this age are doomed to bitter disappointment.

It is not now, while the King is sitting as the earth’s rejected One upon His Father’s throne, that the nations “**shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks.**” But when He returns to this world and takes His own throne - the throne of His father, David - then “**nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.**”

It is in view of this glorious fulfillment of Israel’s Messianic hopes that the exhortation of verse 5 comes in, “**O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord.**” The house of Jacob, so long blinded because of their rejection of Christ when He came the first time, will then have their eyes opened to see the light which has been hidden from them.

Therefore 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. Their 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 also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made: and the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself: therefore forgive them not. Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty. The 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.

For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon everyone that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low: and upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, and upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall, and upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures. And 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. And the idols he shall utterly abolish. And 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. In 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; to 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. Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of? (Verses 6-22)

It is very evident that the verses we have been considering are parenthetical, for there is no apparent connection between verse 6 and what has gone before. But if this verse be read as immediately following the last verse of the first chapter it fits perfectly. Wealth and luxury will not avail to avert the wretchedness that is to be the portion of all who forsake the Lord and turn aside to false gods who are powerless to deliver those who put their trust in them.

In verses 10-22 the prophet speaks of the Day of the Lord when God shall arise in His might and His indignation to deal with wickedness and corruption wherever found. As depicted in the judgment of the sixth seal in Revelation 6, men may seek to enter into the rocks and hide in the ground, but their hope of escaping the fierce anger of the Lord will be in vain, for **“the 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”** (verse 11).

The day of the Lord is in contrast to the day of man, this present evil age when God is permitting men to take their own way and to try out their own plans independently of His authority. In that coming day high and low, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, all alike shall be brought low before the God they have defied or forgotten.

That judgment will be like a tremendous storm or a forest fire sweeping over the mountains of Lebanon, devouring the great cedars and oaks and destroying lesser trees of the forest, then reaching down the mountain slopes and consuming the farmhouses and villages and even spreading across the plains to the shipping ports, destroying all the ships of Tarshish and all objects of art, for God has decreed that **“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”** (verse 17).

All that men have put in the place of God shall be abolished, and in their terror men shall hide in the holes of the rocks and in the caves of the earth, hoping thereby to find shelter from the wrath of an offended God (verse 19).

Casting away all in which they have trusted vainly, they will find themselves bereft of all confidence and will seek shelter in vain in the most inaccessible places as they endeavor to flee from the majestic glory of the Lord **“when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth”** (verse 21). Such will be the end of man’s boasted civilization, of his effort to make this world a place of rest and security while ignoring the claims of Him who created all things for His own glory.

And so the section closes with the solemn admonition: **“Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?”** (Verse 22)

~ end of chapter 2 ~

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