



Isaiah 2:1-4

The Holy City

Can you imagine a time when there will be universal peace, with no military conflict or training? Can you visualize a time when there are no war colleges and war machines? Yes, there will be a day when machinery of warfare will be turned into implements of agriculture. It will be a time of worldwide peace.

A glorious future is in store for the city of Jerusalem. Gentile nations will go to Jerusalem to learn from God. The Hebrew prophet Isaiah describes the ideal city in Isaiah 2:1-4, and then goes on to depict the actual city in his day with its sin and depravity (2:5-4:1). Finally, Isaiah described the purified Jerusalem (4:2-6). The opening verses of chapters two and four stand out as high snow capped mountain peaks with the dark valley of judgment running between them far below. The glorious future of Zion the city of God is in the Age of the Messiah. Judah and Jerusalem will be included in that glory. The center of interest is the Kingdom of Judah and its capital Jerusalem.

THE PREFACE TO THE PROPHECY (2:1-2a)

Isaiah uses interesting language in his preface to prophecies regarding the city of Jerusalem. "The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem" (v. 1). Here is the substance of the prophetic vision about the ideal Jerusalem. She is portrayed as God intended her to be. This is a divine communication of the supernatural received by Isaiah. It is a revelation that is impossible for the natural mind to comprehend, but Isaiah is qualified to behold intelligently what God has to reveal to him.

The Spirit of God illumined the prophet's spiritual eyes or the inner eyes of the mind to see and to understand what the sovereign God revealed. Isaiah did not hear; he saw the word. It is a revelation from God in vision which he communicated in words. He has received a message from God and he speaks with clarity and authority.

Isaiah introduces us to the time of the fulfillment of this prophecy on Zion. It will come about "in the last days." This expression stresses the last part of the future into which the prophetic vision penetrates. The expression is more than a neutral "in days to come." It is the final age of the world's history following the establishment of the Kingdom of God. It takes us to "the last days" which are always used in an eschatological sense. The prophet sees "the farthest point in the history of this life. It is the point which lies on the farthest limits of the speaker's horizon. It was therefore the last days in its most literal and purest sense.

The prophet is referring to a remote future far beyond his day and age. The phrase is found only in Hebrew prophecies to reveal the Messiah, who is the fulfillment and goal toward which all previous history has been pointing. In the Old Testament the phrase signifies the age or time of the Messiah and is therefore used in an eschatological sense. These last days will reach their fulfillment and come to a close when the Lord Jesus returns in His glory.

The context demonstrates that only the Messiah Himself can accomplish these things. The fact is He alone produces such results as described in these verses. This glorious future is messianic, and only He can accomplish these glorious results. Keep in mind there is no solid basis for an allegorical interpretation of this passage.

The time is limited to one of two possibilities: Some scholars see it as the New Heaven and New Earth of Revelation 21-22. Is this a prophetic glimpse down to the time when "old things have passed away, and all things have been made new"?

Another view held by many conservative, evangelical Old Testament scholars sees Isaiah 2 as "the glory of the Millennial Kingdom." Perhaps Isaiah did not know the exact time when the prophecy would be fulfilled. He just says "in the last days." Other Scriptures make it clear that these predictions will be fulfilled in the Millennium when Christ comes to reign a thousand years on the earth (cf. Revelation 20:1-6; 1 Corinthians 15:23-28).

The prophets of the Old Testament looked forward with great anticipation to a messianic age here on earth (cf. Isaiah 11:6-9; Ezekiel 36-39). The early church, until the fifth century held, with minor exceptions, to the teaching of an earthly, historical reign of righteousness. The millennium is an important demonstration of Christ's power in this age before He turns over the kingdom to the Father's all-encompassing dominion in the age to come.

At the millennium, Christ will have the opportunity to openly manifest His kingdom in world history. It will be a demonstration of the truthfulness of His claims and the fulfillment of all of God's promises to His people. Even today Christ is reigning as Lord and King, but this reign is veiled, unseen, and unrecognized by the world system. His reign is acknowledged only by those who have accepted Him by faith. History demands a day when His righteousness will be vindicated. The extreme humiliation of the suffering servant of Yahweh will be glorified by His extreme exaltation as King of kings.

When Christ returns in the glory of His millennial kingdom it will be the age of the manifestation of His full weight of glory for the entire world to see. It will be the time when the sovereignty which He now possesses, but does not openly manifest to the world, will be displayed before a watching world. Jesus will ultimately receive universal recognition as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords on this earth where He was rejected and crucified. We should see the millennium as a time of social and political and economic justice when people dwell together under the reign of Christ in peace and prosperity. What a different day that will be than the one in which we now live.

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PHYSICAL CHANGES IN ZION (2:2b,c,d)

The place is "the mountain of the house of the LORD" (v. 2b). This mountain is marked by obvious distinction. The Temple of Yahweh is rendered visible to the nations afar off and exerts captivating attraction with tremendous success. It will have drawing power and attract nations.

Is Isaiah referring to a miraculous physical elevation or to a metaphorical spiritual exaltation?

Zion will have preeminence. It "will be established as the chief of the mountains," or highest in the sense of first in dignity. It could be that the physical and spiritual values so blended into one another as to be inseparable. It will be an imposing attraction to the people of the world.

Isaiah sees a miraculous elevation of Zion in which it "will be raised above the hills." Apparently, the Temple will have a loftier site than formerly. In his vision, he sees Zion towering above all the high places on the earth. Keil and Delitzsch thinks it is referring to "the New Jerusalem of the last days on this side and the New Jerusalem of the new earth on the other, blended as it were together, and did not distinguish the one from the other." Compare the millennial temple in Ezekiel 40-43.

THE PILGRIMAGE OF THE PEOPLE TO ZION (2:2e-3a,b,c).

Isaiah sees all nations streaming to Zion. The "nations" are the non-Jewish nations. The house of Yahweh is attracting Gentiles. In contrast to the nations in confusion at Babylon leaving in a rage to the far ends of the earth, Isaiah sees them streaming or flowing to Jerusalem the "city of peace." Jerusalem. People are streaming like a flowing river in contrast to the former tossing, raging strife of the nations of the world (Psalm 2:1-3).

When God is enthroned in Zion, many people will be attracted to Him because His people accept His sovereignty.

Crowds of Gentiles are seen approaching the Temple (v. 3). In verse 3 "many peoples" is parallel to "all the nations" in verse two. Many nationalities, perhaps all nations, will be represented in this mass-movement. Is this the same time Jeremiah is referring to in 3:17? "At that time they shall call Jerusalem 'The Throne of the LORD,' and all the nations will be gathered to it, for the name of the LORD in Jerusalem; nor shall they walk any more after the stubbornness of their evil heart." Cf. Zechariah 8:20-22; Haggai 2:6-7; Isaiah 66:22f for similar passages.

You can hear the people in the street excitedly encouraging one another in Isaiah's vision. "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways, and that we may walk in His paths" (v. 3). Where are they headed? "To the house of the God of Jacob."

THE PURPOSE OF THE PILGRIMAGE TO ZION (2:3e,f,g)

The Gentiles have deep spiritual values and desire to be instructed of the LORD. Their goal is stated in "that He may teach us concerning His ways." Only the Spirit of God can teach man things concerning the LORD God (1 Corinthians 2:10, 11; Romans 11:34, 35). It is not our human philosophies, but "His ways." These Gentiles are ready to obey God's word. They are ready to "walk in His paths." It is a remarkable picture of love, adoration and reconciliation as opposed to hostility, wars and pride.

The result of the Gentile pilgrimages to Zion will be the steady emanation of the Word of God from Zion to all parts of the earth. "The Law will go forth from Zion" (v. 3f). God's final word of authority will go forth as the norm.

It is not hard to see a partial fulfillment of this prophecy on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:8; 2:5-8, 11).

However, these fulfillments are only preludes to a termination which is still to be looked for in the future. The promise in the following verse is yet to be fulfilled in the future. It is "still altogether unfulfilled" (Keil and Delitzsch).

Verse four is clearly not yet fulfilled. In no way of the imagination can we see this as having been fulfilled in the past two thousand years or at the present day and time.

THE PEACE THAT WILL ISSUE FROM ZION (2:4).

The Messiah is the bringer of peace. Only when the LORD returns will this prophecy be realized in its totality.

Isaiah is describing a time of universal and unending peace. He is not describing a *Pax Romana* or temporary peace treaties that are so popular in our day which look great on the surface and sound good in twenty-second sound bites or TV news. What is promised in this passage is altogether unfulfilled at the present time.

When Yahweh arbitrates, conflicts cease and peace is the issue. When God rules, there are no wars. There is no other avenue to a warless world.

Gentile nations from all over the world are seen coming to Zion to a supreme arbitrator (v. 4). The very nations who have an inveterate hate for Israel are coming to Zion to submit to Israel's King Messiah for settlement! No longer will they settle disputes by force of war. "He will judge between nations." "He will render decisions." What a change of attitude on the part of world leaders toward God! This will be the court of last appeals. Whatever He renders will be unquestionably accepted by the nations. The result of His decisions will be peace like the world has never known.

Can you imagine a day when all the nations will live in a state of perfect peace? This will be a full time, genuine God-given peace among men. What a contrast this will be to the evening world news. There will be no more war colleges, no *Pax Romanas*, no nuclear arms race, no nuclear blackmail or threats. It will be a time of perfect peace.

"They will hammer their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war" (v. 4). What a contrast to our day when we are busy beating our plowshares into swords, and our pruning hooks into spears. The wild beast in man will finally be destroyed.

Carefully observe the strict sequence of events in these verses. The elimination of war cannot come about before the nations have learned to submit to the Word of the LORD.

THE PLEA TO THE PEOPLE OF ZION (2:5).

"Come, house of Jacob and let us walk in the light of the LORD."

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Yes, there are little islands of peace all over the world composed of men, women and youth who have come to an intimate love relationship with Jesus Christ. They know God's everlasting peace in their hearts. This is where true peace begins. He gives us His peace.

However, there is a time in the future coming when the world will know peace in personal relations that effect every nation of the world. Only God can bring this world peace. And one day He will.

The only way to participate in the future city is to turn one's total loyalty to the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world now. One day in the future He will come to will reign as the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

As you read this study there is still time for you to turn from your unbelief and trust in the all-sufficient grace of God that gives eternal life to all who will call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the time of grace. God offers you the free gift of eternal life now. The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. . . . for whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved (Romans 10: 9, 13).

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