

EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH

Message #6

Isaiah 2:6-22

Whenever God reveals His truth about the future, He always does so to get His people to make adjustments in the present. The more He reveals, the more accountable His people are. As we come to **Isaiah 2**, Isaiah is allowed to “see” prophetic things, specifically concerning Judah and Jerusalem. Judah and Jerusalem are not the Church. Israel is not the Church. This distinction refers to those physically related to Abraham who are non-Gentile. **Jerusalem is the capital of Judah and one day will be the capital of the world.** What Isaiah was permitted by God to see were incredible “last day” prophetic details. He saw a time when people were traveling to the Temple in Jerusalem from all over the world just to be taught the Scriptures. But before this would happen he saw something else. He saw a time when proud, arrogant Israel was being totally humbled by God. He saw a time when Israel’s land was being demolished, not blessed. In other words, **Isaiah saw what God was going to do to Israel in the Tribulation**, which I believe is very, very near. The thing that Isaiah communicates is a message that is relevant for Israel and for us:

IN VIEW OF WHAT GOD IS GOING TO DO IN THE FUTURE IN ESTABLISHING HIS KINGDOM AND IN POURING OUT HIS WRATH, GOD’S PEOPLE SHOULD SEEK TO WALK IN THE LIGHT OF THE WORD OF GOD, FEARING AND REVERENCING GOD, NOT ESTEEMING AND FEARING MEN.

When we see things heating up in the Middle East and when we see a uniting of European nations and when we see Arab uprisings against Israel, and hear of political leaders who are speaking against Israel, we should take these things prophetically and personally and turn up our commitment to learn the Scriptures and live our lives in conformity with them. Our goal is not to be honored by men; our goal ought to be to be acceptable to God.

Last time, we saw what will eventually happen, Jerusalem and the Temple will be esteemed as the chief place in the world and people will travel there just to be taught the Word of God by Jesus Christ in Person (2:1-4). The nations will be judged and there will be no more war. A wonderful millennial peace will eventually exist all over the world. But before this happens, Isaiah saw some scary events:

PROPHETIC SCARY EVENT #1 – Isaiah saw a time when God abandons His own people.
2:6-8

The Hebrew word used for “abandon” (natash) here is different than the one used in 1:4, 28 (azab). This word is one that means to leave them alone, to forsake them, to leave them to themselves (Brown, Driver, Briggs, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 643). There is nothing worse for a child of God than for God to decide to just let them go in their own way and leave them alone. Because what that ultimately means is that the child of God is all done as far as His blessings.

In these verses, God tells Israel why He has abandoned her:

Carefully notice in these verses that evil had “filled” God’s people (**2:6, 7-2 times, 8**). There was no room for God or His Word, because His own people were filled with other things.

(Reason #1) - He abandons His own people for their intellectual focus. **2:6a**

Rather than focusing on the Word of God, Israel gave way to eastern influences. These eastern influences included philosophy, education, meditation and relaxation methods. Instead of God's people focusing on understanding His Word, they were all caught up with worldly knowledge and education that actually was contrary to God's Word.

Years ago when I worked for Kregel Publishing part of my sales responsibilities were to contact theological training centers concerning their curriculum, to determine what books we might offer that could help. I contacted Bible colleges, seminaries and institutes all over the country. I was amazed when I would look through these catalogues how little training was done in the Word of God. These were theological institutions and instead of intensely studying the Bible, they were studying different religions and philosophies. That is exactly what Israel did so God said, I will just let them go.

(Reason #2) - He abandons His own people for their demonic religion. **2:6b**

Not only did the wrong focus of mind lead to wrong knowledge, but it also led to evil worship. Mystical religions were forbidden by God (Deut. 18:10-14) and the Canaanite land featured all kinds of evil, demonic religions. Witches, soothsayers, fortune-tellers were to be removed from the land; not tolerated in the land. The problem is that some of God's own people were getting caught up in foreign religion that was evil. Instead of God's people influencing the world, the world influenced them. Regardless of the dispensation, when you fraternize with demonic religion, in the mind of God you have just crossed a major line.

(Reason #3) - He abandons His own people for their business partnerships. **2:6d-7**

God wanted His people dependent on Him for their needs. Instead they were depending on foreign business deals. Israel did not consult God in business; she crawled into bed with any foreigner who had money to contribute. She struck bargains with those she had no business dealing with for the sake of a dollar. Her business deals made her lots of money, brought in great treasures and filled her land with horses and chariots. Israel thought life was good because she had made such great business deals. With resources like this, she became proud and self-reliant and that is exactly when God said you are going down.

(Reason #4) - He abandons His own people for their idolatrous worship. **2:8**

The basic meaning of the Hebrew word "idol" (elilim) is worthless or nothing (B.D.B., p. 47).

As she was bringing in the money, she also was bringing in the idols. These people imported things and made things with their own hands and then worshipped what they made. As Dr. John Calvin said, these people are stupid.

PROPHETIC SCARY EVENT #2 – Isaiah saw a time when God humbles the proud and lofty and exalts Himself. **2:9-11**

When you look down through the remaining verses you will notice that two things keep being addressed, “pride” (2:11, 12, 17) and “loftiness” (2:11, 12, 13, 14, 17). When a person becomes proud and lofty, he is on the verge of being humbled by God. These words describe a very proud arrogance which lifts oneself high. This refers to a very haughty attitude that presumptuously boasts and brags about self. From the way one looks, to the way one thinks, to the way one talks, he lifts himself up high.

Now contextually we may expect that just before God humbles man, this is the attitude that you will see prevail, even among some of His own people. They will be pompous and proud.

Now Isaiah saw a time when both the proud, arrogant common man and the high strutting man of importance were “humbled” and “abased.” That word “humble” (shapel) means to be brought very low and it comes from Hebrew radicals that would mean to be brought very low in a moment (B. D. B., p. 1117). The word “abase” means to be totally and completely humbled.

Now you will notice that at the end of **verse 9** the text says, “do not forgive them.” Isaiah saw a time when God would humble every man on earth and a time when forgiveness was no longer an option. Isaiah was so sickened by the evil arrogance that he asked God not to forgive them. In **verses 10-11**, Isaiah described this time as a time when people are hiding from the terror of the Lord, in a day in which God is totally being exalted for His majestic power.

The time that He is referring to, as we will see, is the Great Tribulation, when God is pouring out His wrath on this world and men are crawling in caves trying to escape it. During this time, when God is pouring out His wrath, people literally will be hiding in the rocks (Hosea 10:8; Revelation 6:15-16). The day of the LORD is contrasted with the proud existence of man. God can level proud man in literally a day.

Now before we move on, there are certain observations and applications we want to make:

- 1) Proud arrogant people do not need to hear about how much God loves them; they need to hear how God’s wrath is going to completely humble them and terrify them. Preaching about the coming wrath of God and the judgment of God is exactly what Isaiah does.
- 2) There is a moment when it is too late for forgiveness. It is possible for one to reach a point in which forgiveness is no longer an option.

PROPHETIC SCARY EVENT #3 – Isaiah saw God pouring out His judgmental wrath in the Great Tribulation. **2:12-22**

Now **verse 12** is important for we learn that what Isaiah sees is a time when “everyone” who is arrogant and proud is brought down. There have been moments in history when certain groups of people have been brought low but not “everyone” in the world. But God will have His day of reckoning on the entire world and when He does, the whole world will be brought low.

Now we get a glimpse as to what God will do in the Tribulation, which corresponds precisely to information we get in the book of Revelation.

(Fact #1) - God's wrath will demolish the trees . **2:13**

God is not angry at the trees or mountains, He is angry with arrogant man and He will tell the trees and mountains to humble man.

There will literally be a judgment against vegetation and trees during the Tribulation (Rev. 8:7). Literally the trees will be destroyed. The "cedars of Lebanon" and the "oaks of Bashan" were used for big business during Isaiah's day. In fact, Solomon used the cedars of Lebanon for the building of the Temple (I Kings 5:6). The wood and timber were the finest available. God will bring them down. Literally during the Tribulation there will be a judgment against trees (Revelation 8:7).

(Fact #2) - God will demolish all the mountains . **2:14**

There are two ways you may view mountains - symbolically as a reference to political governments and literally as a reference to literal mountains. There are times when "mountains" refer metaphorically to political powers (Daniel 2:35; Amos 4:1). There are also times when mountains refer to literal mountains. I take this literally. It is predicted in Revelation that when God pours out His wrath He will literally move the mountains (Revelation 6:16). At the base of most major mountains are resort cities and businesses that feature life for the elite. God will bring them all down. (Jackson Hole, Wyoming will be crushed by the Tetons; Sun Valley, Idaho will be crushed by the Saw Toths and the White Clouds; Aspen, Colorado will be crushed by Elk Mountain. God is going to move those mountains and bring them down on people as His judgment.)

(Fact #3) - God will demolish all military operations. **2:15**

Every high place had a tower or wall to watch for enemies and people were trusting their military for protection and not God.

Fortified places will come down. Forts, military bases all will be toppled. Things men designed which they thought are impregnable will be completely demolished. It won't matter what the military, every one will be toppled.

(Fact #4) - God will demolish all shipping businesses. **2:16**

Tarshish was known to make beautiful boats. They will all be destroyed. Those elite yachts, of which the rich are so proud, will be totally destroyed by God. In fact, Revelation tells us that in one moment God will destroy one third of all ships in the world (Revelation 8:9).

(Fact #5) - God will humble all the proud and God will be exalted alone. **2:17-22**

Notice **verse 17** says that in that day, God alone will be exalted. These judgments are going to come right out of heaven. In the first part of the Tribulation there will be an outbreak of war all over the world (Revelation 6:3-4), but by the time these things Isaiah sees occurs, God is totally pouring out His wrath on this world and He alone will be exalted:

(Reason #1) - God alone is exalted because all idols are gone. **2:18**

(Reason #2) - God alone is exalted because all arrogant men are hiding in caves from the terror and majesty of God. **2:19**

When God judges at this level in the Tribulation, all people will be crawling into holes and caves to hide from His wrath. The earth will shake. Mountains will sink, holes will be created and people will crawl in them to hide. When God does these things, He alone will be exalted and man will be leveled.

(Reason #3) - God alone is exalted because all people stop trusting in their money because they finally realize what they worshipped in life cannot stop the terrible, majestic wrath of God. **2:20-21**

Now let's reason some things out in view of this:

- 1) People need to be warned of God's pending judgment and wrath.
- 2) People need to humble themselves before God right now so He does not have to humble them in the future.
- 3) God's people should want to know the Word of God and walk in the light of it (2:2).
- 4) We should not waste our life esteeming and fearing other men, but esteeming and fearing Almighty God (**2:22**).
- 5) God wants His people completely dependent upon Him, not their money.