

5. ISAIAH SERIES: The Future Church Of God

Isaiah 2:1-4 (Micah 4:1-3)

The first chapter of Isaiah was an introduction to the whole book. In the first verse of chapter 2 we have an introduction to a second prophecy or revelation from God, which stretches from Isaiah 2:1 thru Isaiah 5:30. It is speculated that this section may have been circulated as a unit for some time prior to the circulation of Isaiah as a complete unit. This unit forms a more thorough introduction to the entire book of Isaiah.

'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 (Isaiah 2:1-4)

These are words that Isaiah received by revelation from God. God so worked in Isaiah's mind that he received these very words and relayed them to his hearers and readers, yet they remain Isaiah's words also (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20,21). This revelation has to do with Judah, but more particularly Jerusalem.

It is interesting to note that this prophecy is also recorded in Micah 4:1-3. A number of theories, including the speculation that Isaiah borrowed from Micah have been brought forward (cf Jer 26:18). That Isaiah may have quoted Micah here in no way lessens the Divine inspiration at this point, for the Lord brought these verses to Isaiah's mind for inclusion in the prophecy.

Verse 2: This prophecy that Isaiah is revealing, as God's instrument of revelation will indeed come to pass. God has decreed this end and therefore it is completely sure. The prophecy has to do with the part of human history known as '*the latter days* (Acts 2:16,17; Heb 1:2; 9:26; 1 Pet 1:5,20; 2 Pet 3:3; 1 Jn 2:18),' or eschatology. It is the period at the latter end of human history. The Scriptures understand this period to have begun with the coming of the Messiah and to continue until the return of Christ. In other words, the period covered is that of the Christian Church.

QUESTION: How can we be sure that this passage is speaking of the church in our day?

Isaiah refers to the establishment and exaltation of Mount Zion above all mountains. In geographical terms, Mount Zion was a very small mountain, if it could be called that. Mount Zion of course was the location of the Old Testament temple and the place of God's peculiar presence among His people, and it too seemed very insignificant. What we have here, couched in Old Testament language, is a prophecy pointing to the establishment of the Christian Church. The true Church of God was very insignificant in Isaiah's day, yet it had permanent significance and duration, and would eventually rise to the greatest prominence over all religions and peoples (Jn 4:24).

The result of this prominence would be, that people the world over would flock to it (Jer 31:12, 51:44; Jn 12:32). So much will be the Church's significance, that people the world over will flow as a river, uphill and into the church (Lk 2:32; Jn 4:22-24; Acts 2:9-11). What an amazing picture of church growth is here presented.

Isaiah is teaching truth regarding the New Testament church to people of his own day and for them to understand the significance of what he is teaching, he uses Old Testament terminology with which they are familiar. Though a prophecy of the way of the future, there is yet much encouragement for the people of Isaiah's day and so it was necessary for them to be able to understand the message to some degree.

QUESTIONS: How would this prophecy be an encouragement to the people of Isaiah's day?

How is this verse an encouragement for evangelistic activity?

Verse 3: In *'the latter days,'* there will be many people who will turn to the true God, willingly hearing with great desire the truths of God (Acts 2:9-11). They will long to know of the great God and will flock to the place where they will be able to learn of Him. These people will bear witness to one another of God, learning His ways in the church and desiring to obey Him.

This is a glorious picture of the Church of God reaching out to the nations with the message of salvation and of the saved coming into the church with a desire to serve and obey God. As people come into the church, so they encourage others to also come and to hear of the Lord. Only the church can present such a message and so people flock to the church to hear it.

NOTE INDIVIDUAL DISCOVERY QUESTION HERE: What is Verse four speaking of? Please give reasons for your answer.

Verse 4: Even though these people will have all manner of backgrounds, the consequence of there coming together is peace. The people's of the world will be brought into the church by God and the church will be known as the only place of true peace (Rom 5:1). Even those who were enemies become brothers and sisters in the church. They will each one live together in peace, serving the Lord (Eph 2:11-22).

The Lord of the church will settle disputes that will arise within the church. He will be the One who keeps the peace in His church. This is done though His Word, as each one learns and submits to it.

What a message of hope for a demoralised Jerusalem. The true church will continue on through the trial of the Assyrian conquest and beyond, and will not be snuffed out. It will become truly great and exalted, for the Lord is faithful who has promised - praise Him!

QUESTIONS: How will the Lord keep the peace in His church? What do you understand by this concept being spoken of in verse four?

How are we to deal with troubles within the church according to this passage?

INDIVIDUAL DISCOVERY

What is '*the day of the Lord of Hosts*' mentioned in Isaiah 2:12?