

• Sin delays God's intended destiny for His people

We must try to follow the thought of this section of Isaiah. Isaiah chapters 1–5 fall into three sections (chapter 1; 2:1–4:1; and 4:2–6). Chapter 1 gives a general description of Israel's spiritual crisis. Isaiah must have put it all together at the end of his ministry but the various paragraphs come from bits of his preaching that had continued all his life. Now 2:1–4:1 explains the way in which sin delays and for a long time ruins God's intended destiny for his people. First there is a title:

¹*This is the word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.*

• Isaiah describes God's plan

Then Isaiah describes God's plan for his Jerusalem¹, and asks the people to walk in the light of the revealed plan of God². At the same time he points to what is happening in Israel there and then in Isaiah's own day³. But – says God – despite the ruin of God's intention, God will act in salvation and a 'new Jerusalem' will be brought into being which will fulfil the purposes of God.

1 2:2-4
2 2:5
3 2:6-4:1

• God will create a 'new Jerusalem' to fulfil His purposes

Let us consider then the destiny of God's house. Isaiah is given a vision of what God intends for his people.

There will come a day when God's house will become powerful and internationally influential.

God's house will become powerful and internationally influential

²*At the end of the days the mountain of Yahweh's house will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it.*

• Hill of Zion will be the highest mountain – picture language

The little 'house of God' (the temple) on top of the little hill of Zion is taken as a picture of something God intends for his people in the distant undated future (from Isaiah's viewpoint). The hill of Zion will become the highest mountain in the world. It is only picture-language. Actually at the top of Mount Everest, the highest mountain in the world, it is almost impossible to breathe! We need to get used to the Bible's way of using picture-language! God's 'Jerusalem' was a city but it pictures a **spiritual** headquarters in which God works powerfully throughout the world.

• 'Jerusalem' will be a spiritual headquarters

Worldwide revival – a voluntary matter

This worldwide revival is a voluntary matter.

³*Many peoples will come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of Yahweh, to the house of the God of Jacob, so that he may teach us his ways, and then we shall walk in his paths.' For teaching will go out from Zion, the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem.*

• No one is forcing people to go anywhere – a spiritual decision

No one is forcing people to go anywhere. It is a spiritual decision. The peoples will talk to themselves and to each other and say, 'Come, let us go to that place of salvation, Jerusalem, the place where Jesus died, the place where the Spirit was first poured out . . .'

And a practical matter

This worldwide revival is a practical matter. The people want to learn because they want to walk. They say, 'let us go . . . so that he may teach us his ways, and then we shall walk . . .' It is a highly practical desire to become goodly people.

Spiritual awakening – supernatural

This worldwide spiritual awakening is supernatural. The picture is one of a river of people flowing uphill to the house of God. But rivers do not flow uphill! Evidently there is some powerful attraction drawing a flood of the nations miraculously upwards to the place where God is revealing himself.

Spiritual movement – powerfully influential among the nations

The spiritual movement is powerfully influential among the nations. Isaiah says:

⁴He will give judgements among the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they learn war any more.

- War is abolished
- Will this happen in the gospel-age or after the second coming?

(i) Gospel brings release from militarism

(ii) Where the gospel is powerful war tends to be hated and resisted

(iii) Vision will be fulfilled in the new heavens and earth

Under the influence of this spiritual movement war is abolished! Will it ever happen in this gospel-age or does Isaiah's vision stretch so far into the future that it takes in what happens after the one-and-only second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ? It is hard to believe that war will ever be abolished, but who knows? It is the very nature of biblical prophecy that it gives us a total vision of the future without giving us the steps and stages. It is not for us to know the times and the seasons. The gospel certainly has a tendency to abolish war. Will the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ ever be so powerful that it will have this kind of success in this gospel-age? Isaiah's vision is far-reaching. The influence of God's Jerusalem-revelation is so great the nations no longer are at war. They put their resources into agriculture. They do not even 'learn war any more'. All preparations for military conflict become needless. How will such a glorious vision be fulfilled? We do not completely know but while we wait to find out we can know (i) that the gospel of Jesus brings release from militarism in the hearts of his people, (ii) that where the gospel is powerful there is a tendency for war to be hated and resisted, (iii) that the vision will certainly be fulfilled in the new heavens and new earth in which righteousness dwells (but will there be any nations at that time?). The question is: how much will it be fulfilled in the gospel-age? Let's find out! The reaching of the nations with the gospel of Jesus might bring some surprises!

We are to walk in the direction of Isaiah's vision immediately

We are to walk in the direction of Isaiah's vision immediately. Isaiah's vision is certainly intended for the gospel-age, for he continues:

⁵Come, O house of Jacob, let us walk in the light of Yahweh.

Prophetic visions of the future have practical implications now. If Isaiah's vision is part of God's plan for his people, let us start walking in that direction right now, expecting it to come to pass. Isaiah's own day was discouraging. The people were looking to paganism for guidance, and God was turning away from them.

- Practical implications

⁶For you have abandoned your people, the house of Jacob. They have got their full supplies from the East; they practise divination like the Philistines and have come to agree with foreigners.

- Interest in money

Their great interest was the money that pagans seemed to have.

⁷Their land is full of silver and gold; there is no end to their treasures. Their land is full of horses; there is no end to their chariots.

- Leading to idolatry

It led them into idolatry.

⁸Their land is full of nonentities; each person bows down to the work of his hands, to what his fingers have made.

- Isaiah is not discouraged

But none of this discourages Isaiah. His appeal still stands. 'Come, O house of Jacob, let us walk in the light of Yahweh.'



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Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His *Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB)* books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.



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