

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown
Bible Study Notes: Isaiah Chapter 2 & 3

12/4/13

Chapter 2 Study Notes

The Lord's Future Reign – Verses 1-5

This is what Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem: ² In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and all nations will stream to it. ³ Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. ⁴ He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. ⁵ Come, descendants of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the LORD.

ISAIAH 2:2-4

The Temple was built on the mountain of the Lord, Mount Moriah, highly visible to all the people of Jerusalem. For more on the significance of the Temple, see the note on 2 Chronicles 5:1ff. In the last days the Temple will attract the nations, not because of its architecture and prominence, but because of God's presence and influence.

God gave Isaiah the gift of seeing into the future. At this time, God showed Isaiah what would eventually happen to Jerusalem. Revelation 21 depicts the glorious fulfillment of this prophecy in the new Jerusalem, where only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life will be allowed to enter. God made a covenant (promise) with his people and will never break it. God's faithfulness gives us hope for the future.

ISAIAH 2:4, 5

This describes a wonderful future of peace when instruments of war will be converted to instruments of farming, and we will be taught God's laws and obey them. Although we know that eventually God will remove all sin, which leads to war, conflicts, and other problems, we should not wait for him to act before we begin to obey him. We should walk in his light now, just as Judah was told to do. Though our eternal reward awaits us, we already can enjoy many benefits of obedience now as we apply God's Word to our life.

A Warning of Judgment – Verses 6-22

⁶ You, LORD, have abandoned your people, the descendants of Jacob. They are full of superstitions from the East; they practice divination like the Philistines and embrace pagan customs. ⁷ Their 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. ⁸ Their land is full of idols; they bow down to the work of their hands, to what their fingers have made. ⁹ So people will be brought low and everyone humbled—do not forgive them. ¹⁰ Go into the rocks, hide in the ground from the fearful presence of the LORD and the splendor of his

majesty!¹¹ The eyes of the arrogant will be humbled and human pride brought low; the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.¹² The LORD Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty, for all that is exalted (and they will be humbled),¹³ for all the cedars of Lebanon, tall and lofty, and all the oaks of Bashan,¹⁴ for all the towering mountains and all the high hills,¹⁵ for every lofty tower and every fortified wall,¹⁶ for every trading ship and every stately vessel.¹⁷ The arrogance of man will be brought low and human pride humbled; the LORD alone will be exalted in that day,¹⁸ and the idols will totally disappear.

¹⁹ People will flee to caves in the rocks and to holes in the ground from the fearful presence of the LORD and the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to shake the earth.²⁰ In that day people will throw away to the moles and bats their idols of silver and idols of gold, which they made to worship.²¹ They will flee to caverns in the rocks and to the overhanging crags from the fearful presence of the LORD and the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to shake the earth.²² Stop trusting in mere humans, who have but a breath in their nostrils. Why hold them in esteem?

ISAIAH 2:6

The people were following practices of the Assyrian Empire. *Divination* meant claiming to know and control the future by the power of demons or by interpreting omens. These practices were forbidden by God (see Leviticus 19:26; Deuteronomy 18:10, 14). The Philistines worshiped Dagon, Ashtoreth, and Baal-zebub. During the more sinful periods of their history, the people of Israel worshiped these pagan gods along with Yahweh and even gave them Hebrew names.

ISAIAH 2:8, 9

Under the reign of evil kings, idol worship flourished in both Israel and Judah. A few good kings in Judah stopped it during their reigns. Although very few people worship carved or molded images today, worshiping people or objects that symbolize power continues. We pay homage to cars, homes, sports stars, celebrities, money, etc. Idol worship is evil because (1) it insults God when we worship something he created rather than worshiping him; (2) it keeps us from knowing and serving God when we put our confidence in anything other than him; (3) it causes us to rely on our own efforts rather than on God. (See also Deuteronomy 27:15.)

ISAIAH 2:12

The "day" of the Lord Almighty is the day of judgment, the time when God will judge both evil and good. That day will come, and we will want a proper relationship with God when it does. God alone must be exalted (2:11, 17) as the first step toward developing that relationship with him.

ISAIAH 2:15-17

High towers were part of a city or nation's defenses. This phrase refers to security based on military fortresses. "Great trading ships" picture economic prosperity; and "the small boats in the harbor" are pleasure vessels. Nothing can compare with or rival the place God must have in our hearts and minds. To place our hope elsewhere is nothing but false pride. Place your confidence in God alone.

ISAIAH 2:22

"As frail as breath" refers to our mortality. People are very limited when compared to God. They can be unreliable, selfish, and shortsighted. Yet we entrust our life and future more readily to mortal human beings than to the all-knowing God. Beware of people who want you to trust them instead of God. Remember that only God is completely reliable. He is perfect, and he loves us with an unending love (Psalm 100:5).

Chapter 3 Study Notes

Judgment Against Judah – Verses 1-15

See now, the Lord, the LORD Almighty, is about to take from Jerusalem and Judah both supply and support: all supplies of food and all supplies of water, ² the hero and the warrior, the judge and the prophet, the diviner and the elder, ³ the captain of fifty and the man of rank, the counselor, skilled craftsman and clever enchanter. ⁴ "I will make mere youths their officials; children will rule over them." ⁵ People will oppress each other—man against man, neighbor against neighbor. The young will rise up against the old, the nobody against the honored. ⁶ A man will seize one of his brothers in his father's house, and say, "You have a cloak, you be our leader; take charge of this heap of ruins!" ⁷ But in that day he will cry out, "I have no remedy. I have no food or clothing in my house; do not make me the leader of the people." ⁸ Jerusalem staggers, Judah is falling; their words and deeds are against the LORD, defying his glorious presence. ⁹ The look on their faces testifies against them; they parade their sin like Sodom; they do not hide it. Woe to them! They have brought disaster upon themselves. ¹⁰ Tell the righteous it will be well with them, for they will enjoy the fruit of their deeds. ¹¹ Woe to the wicked! Disaster is upon them! They will be paid back for what their hands have done. ¹² Youths oppress my people, women rule over them. My people, your guides lead you astray; they turn you from the path. ¹³ The LORD takes his place in court; he rises to judge the people. ¹⁴ The LORD enters into judgment against the elders and leaders of his people: "It is you who have ruined my vineyard; the plunder from the poor is in your houses. ¹⁵ What do you mean by crushing my people and grinding the faces of the poor?" declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty.

ISAIAH 3:1-3

Jerusalem besieged, her leaders destroyed—this unhappy picture would soon become a reality. Disobedience would bring serious affliction and great destruction, as God had warned (Deuteronomy 28).

ISAIAH 3:9-11

The people would be proud of their sins, parading them out in the open. But sin is self-destructive. In today's world, sinful living often appears glamorous, exciting, and clever. But sin is wrong, regardless of how society perceives it, and, in the long run, sin will make us miserable and destroy us. God tries to protect us by warning us about the harm we will cause ourselves by sinning. Those who are proud of their sins will receive the punishment from God they deserve. Having rejected God's path to life (see Psalm 1), they had only one alternative—the path to destruction.

ISAIAH 3:10, 11

In the middle of this gloomy message, God gives hope: Eventually the righteous will receive God's reward, and the wicked will receive their punishment. It is disheartening to see the wicked prosper, while we struggle to obey God and follow his plan. But let us keep holding on to God's truth and take heart! God will bring about justice in the end, and he will reward those who have been faithful.

ISAIAH 3:14

The leaders and princes were responsible to help people, but instead they stole from the poor. Because they were unjust, Isaiah said the leaders would be the first to receive God's judgment. Leaders will be held accountable for how they lead. If you are in a position of leadership, you must lead according to God's just commands. Corruption will bring God's wrath, especially if others follow your example.

Why is justice so important in the Bible? (1) Justice is part of God's nature; it is the way he runs the universe. (2) It is a natural desire in every person. Even as sinners, we all want justice for ourselves. (3) When government and church leaders are unjust, the poor and powerless suffer. Thus, they are hindered from worshipping God. (4) God holds the poor in high regard. They are the ones most likely to turn to him for help and comfort. Injustice, then, attacks God's children. When we do nothing to help the oppressed, we are, in fact, joining with the oppressor. Because we follow a just God, we must uphold justice.

A Warning For Jerusalem's Women – Verses 16-26

¹⁶ The LORD says, "The women of Zion are haughty, walking along with outstretched necks, flirting with their eyes, strutting along with swaying hips, with ornaments jingling on their ankles. ¹⁷ Therefore the Lord will bring sores on the heads of the women of Zion; the LORD will make their scalps bald." ¹⁸ In that day the Lord will snatch away their finery: the bangles and headbands and crescent necklaces, ¹⁹ the earrings and bracelets and veils, ²⁰ the headdresses and anklets and sashes, the perfume bottles and charms, ²¹ the signet rings and nose rings, ²² the fine robes and the capes and cloaks, the purses ²³ and mirrors, and the linen garments and tiaras and shawls. ²⁴ Instead of fragrance there will be a stench; instead of a sash, a rope; instead of well-dressed hair, baldness; instead of fine clothing, sackcloth; instead of beauty, branding. ²⁵ Your men will fall by the sword, your warriors in battle. ²⁶ The gates of Zion will lament and mourn; destitute, she will sit on the ground.

ISAIAH 3:16-26

The women of Judah had placed their emphasis on clothing and jewelry rather than on God. They dressed to be noticed, to gain approval, and to be fashionable. Yet they ignored the real purpose for their lives. Instead of being concerned about the oppression around them (3:14, 15), they were self-serving and self-centered. People who abuse their possessions will end up with nothing. These verses are not an indictment against clothing and jewelry, but a judgment on those who use them lavishly while remaining blind to the needs of others. When God blesses you with money or position, don't flaunt it. Use what you have to help others, not impress them.