



## Isaiah 2:1-5; Matthew 24:36-44

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Isaiah 2 sets the tone for the whole book: a tension between **God's glorious future of peace** and **the present corruption of His people**. It's both a warning and a promise: judgment will come, but in it lies hope, restoration, and divine peace.

The prophet Isaiah opens with vision of God that he experienced. He lived during a very turbulent time in Israel's history. The Assyrians were attempting to establish an empire that would include Egypt. In order to achieve this imperialistic status, they first had to defeat all the smaller kingdoms in what is modern-day Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel. As they conquered city after city, they deported the indigenous populations to various locations under their rule to serve as cheap labor supporting the war effort.

At this time, no longer was Israel comprised of 12 tribes under a single king. Instead, it had split into two distinct monarchies: Israel in the North with 10 tribes, and Judah in the South with two. The Assyrian army sacked Israel's capital city, Samaria, in 722 BC and continued their march to the South, arriving at Jerusalem, Judah's capital, ca. 700.

Isaiah was a prophet who worked for the monarchy in Judah at this time. Although Assyria defeated almost every city it besieged, Jerusalem escaped this fate because of a civil war in Assyria's capital that required the return of the army. The people of Jerusalem saw this as a miracle: Their God had saved them.

Isaiah 2 may reflect that immediate period of joy as those inside the besieged city watched the enemy pack up their beasts of burden and march back North. Certainly, that would have been an occasion for joy and wonder.

But Isaiah perceives something better. He has a grand vision, "If you think that was amazing, just wait! Someday, these very same enemies will return here to this city, not in hostility and violence, but in humility and kindness. And not just our current enemies but all the nations will come because they realize that Israel's God is the source of wisdom. They will come to learn from God and to enjoy true justice."

Thus, Isaiah 2 pronounces a stunning vision of peace under God's rule, a divine judgment against violence, pride and idolatry, and a call for humility and trust in God alone: true security and worship belong solely to God.

Nations will realize that their trust in human arrogance, in the cruel show of power and the glittering of gold is idolatry

and will last only for a little while. Those idols can only make empty promises and fill people's eyes with smoke.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of all the tragic reality that surrounds us, the human suffering and the devastation of our world, there is hope as all people will realize that trusting the Lord makes sense: they will change their hearts and will convert their weapons of destruction into tools that feed the world.

This vision of peace anticipates the coming of God's kingdom, echoed later in Isaiah 9 ("Prince of Peace") and Isaiah 11 (the wolf dwelling with the lamb). It's a recurring promise of divine order replacing human chaos and conflict. God alone is sovereign, and human pride or reliance on wealth, armies, or idols will fail. Isaiah insists that salvation and security come from God alone.<sup>2</sup>

Jerusalem will be the center of instruction and justice but only after the "House of Jacob" turns away from evil ways and walks in the wonderful light of God (v. 5).

Amid widespread violence, enjoyment of gratuitous cruelty, and disregard for human suffering, we need a word of hope. God did not create us for this and will ultimately deliver us. God's eternal vision is stronger than temporary human calculations.

Let us put our trust in God who has the power to 'make all things new' (Revelation 21:5) in and through us." Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 44:6-25; 45:20-21; 46:1-7

<sup>2</sup> See Isaiah 7 with Ahaz, Isaiah 30 warning against Egypt