

- 2** The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.
- ² In days to come the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it.
- ³ Many peoples shall come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths."
- For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
- ⁴ He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.
- ⁵ O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD! ¹

The message recorded in these verses is what Isaiah . . . saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem (cf. 1:1). Although Israel was God's chosen people, salvation's blessings are intended for all. This great truth is powerfully affirmed by Isaiah. The prophets in Israel had at one time been called "seers" because of their divinely given power to "see" or foretell what would happen (1 Sam. 9:9). The prophet looked ahead to the time when God's righteous kingdom would be established and the temple would become the center for the worldwide worship of the Lord. In Isaiah's day, the Jews were adopting the false gods of the Gentiles; but the day would come when the Gentiles would abandon their idols and worship the true God of Israel. Isaiah was not specific as to the exact time when they would be fulfilled, as most likely he did not know (1 Peter 1:10-11). Here he simply said in the last days. Other Bible passages imply that these predictions will be fulfilled in Christ's 1,000-year reign on the earth. Because of God's covenant promises to Abraham, Moses, and David, Isaiah knew that Israel will again be in the land and will again have a superior position among the nations.

Verses 2-4 are not original to Isaiah. They are the words of another prophet taken out of their connection. The words are also found in Micah 4:1-4.

The mountain of the LORD's temple is the mount where the temple was built and where it will be again (Ezek. 40-43), and denotes God's governmental authorities (Dan.

¹ *The Holy Bible : New Revised Standard Version*. Nashville : Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989, S. Is 2:1-5
cf. *confer*, compare

2:35; Amos 4:1). Isaiah clearly wanted his readers to be aware that God will protect His covenant nation despite their spiritual insensitivity and even though they would go into captivity.

“The last days,” is the last time in its most literal and purest sense, started with the beginning of the New Testament period, and will terminate with the return of Jesus (compare Heb. 1:1, 1 Pet. 1:20, with 1 Cor. 15 and the Revelation). The prophet predicted that the mountain which bore the temple of God, would one day tower in actual height above all the high places of the earth. This is confirmed by Ezek. 40:2, where the temple mountain looks gigantic to the prophet, and also by Zech. 14:10, where all Jerusalem is described as towering above the country round about, which would one day become a plain. The prophet saw the new Jerusalem of the last days on this side, and the new Jerusalem of the new earth on the other (Rev. 21:10), blended as it were together, and did not distinguish the one from the other. The chosen mountain will become the rendezvous and center of unity for all nations. They would all “flow unto it.” In the same way that humans had been separated and estranged from one another in the plain of Shinar, where different nations and languages had first began, then the nations will assemble together on the mountain of the house of God, and there, as members of one family, live together again. And as Babel, whose name means *confusion*, was the place whence the stream of nations poured into all the world; so would Jerusalem, the *city of peace*, become the place into which the stream of nations would empty itself, and where all will be reunited once more. At the time that Isaiah wrote there was only one people, Israel, which made pilgrimages to Zion on the great festivals, but it would be very different then.

The Jewish temple will be rebuilt, and the Word of God will go forth from Jerusalem to govern the nations of the world. When these events take place many nations will be attracted to Jerusalem (cf. 14:1; 27:13; 66:23; Zech. 8:23; 14:16) and to God’s house, the temple (Isa. 2:2a). The attraction will be the Lord’s ways . . . paths . . . Law, and

Word which will be made known from that place. In fact the LORD Himself will give forth the Law (51:4). (Zion is a synonym of Jerusalem; cf. 4:3; 40:9; 52:1; 62:1.) In the time to come, people everywhere will realize that God's Word is foundational to their lives. They will want to know it and God will teach us, and we will live according to it (walk in it).

As they go up to Jerusalem and the temple the *peoples in multitude will sing*

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob;
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.”

This is their signal for starting, and their song by the way (cf., Zech. 8:21, 22). What urges them on is the desire for salvation. They call the place Moriah, “the mountain of the Lord,” and the temple upon it “the house of the God of Jacob.” They want the Lord to teach them “*out of His ways*,”—the source of instruction with which they desire to be entrusted. The “ways of the Lord” are the ways which God takes, and by which men are led by God—the revealed ordinances of God's will and action. Desire for salvation also expresses itself in the resolution with which they set out: they not only wish to learn, but are resolved to act according to what they learn. The prophet then adds the reason and object of this holy pilgrimage of the nations. The expressions “from Zion” and “from Jerusalem” reminds them that “salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22). From Zion-Jerusalem there would go forth *thorah*, and *debar of the Lord*, the word of God, which created the world at first, and by which it is spiritually created anew. There the nations will assemble together; and will they will take the information back to their own homes, and Zion-Jerusalem becomes the fountain of universal good. This was partially fulfilled on that day of Pentecost, when the disciples, the first-fruits of the church of Christ, proclaimed the *thorah* of Zion, the gospel, in the languages of all the world. The word of the gospel, rising from Jerusalem “as from a fountain,” flowed through the

whole of the known world. But these fulfillments were only the beginning to a conclusion which is still to be looked for in the future.

The nations would also lay down their weapons and stop warring. God will have a worldwide ministry of judging and settling disputes. He will require nations and peoples everywhere to abstain from warfare. Universal peace, with no military conflict or training, will prevail because the implements of warfare: swords and spears, will be turned into implements of agriculture: plowshares and hooks (Joel 3:10). Peace will come not by human achievement but because of God's presence and work in Jerusalem. At that time Israel will be filled with God's Spirit (Ezek. 36:24-30) and her sins will be forgiven (Jer. 31:31-34).

If any dispute arise, it is no longer settled by the force of war, but by the word of God, to which all will willing submission. With such power as this in the peace-sustaining word of God (Zech. 9:10), there is no more need for weapons of iron: they are turned into the instruments of peaceful employment. There is also no more need for military practice, because there will be no more war. There is peace, not an armed peace, but a full, true, God-given and blessed peace. It will be like all those nuclear weapons factories being turned into places where energy to warm our houses and greenhouses were produced. Rather than weapons of war everything will have a peaceful use. One scholar described it as the conflicts of the world will keep Sabbath. It is hard for us to image a world without war, but it will be realized.

Isaiah closed this section with an exhortation for his readers to walk (live) in the light of the LORD. In view of the fact that in the future all nations will stream to Jerusalem to learn God's Word, it would be sensible for Israel, already knowing that Law, to follow it (walking in its "light") until the Lord sets up His glorious kingdom.²

²Walvoord, John F. ; Zuck, Roy B. ; Dallas Theological Seminary: *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL : Victor Books, 1983-c1985, S. 1:1037

The “light of the Lord” is the knowledge of God and God manifested love. It was now high time to walk in the light of the Lord, to turn this knowledge into life, and reciprocate this love³

Political events since 1948 have sadly left these hopes unfulfilled, since instead of “the word of the Lord” going forth from Jerusalem (v. 3), Israel has become a byword for superior military technology. The hopes expressed in these verses are unfulfilled, among both Jews and Christians, as they struggle to see beyond present failures to the eventual establishment of justice and peace among the nations “in the latter days”.

As Christians today have a similar motivation as we await the return of Christ for His church (1 John 2:28–3:3).⁴ We must be eager to walk in and live in the light of God’s word. We are to encourage each other and those who don’t know God’s ways to learn and obey. Then we can live at peace and let God be the judge and arbiter of disputes.⁵

The idea is simply that, where now disputes are settled by the sword, “in the latter days” they will be settled by peaceful arbitration; and where now humans spend time and energy on studying the art of war, there will come a time when instead they use all their intellectual resources, to establish peace and justice in the world.

Today begins our season of Advent, when we eagerly await Jesus’ return. We read Isaiah’s words with hope, knowing: “In that day the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious” (4:2–6). Isaiah, the prophet of hope, who lived in such a time of war in the history of Israel, provided the background of so much New Testament and early Christian thinking about salvation and peace.

The Isaianic version is clearly intended to lead us away from our greed, arrogance, idolatry, dishonesty and injustice. It is an appeal to the people of God to

³Keil, Carl Friedrich ; Delitzsch, Franz: *Commentary on the Old Testament*. Peabody, MA : Hendrickson, 2002, S. 7:73-77

⁴Wiersbe, Warren W.: *Be Comforted*. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1996, c1992 (An Old Testament Study), S. Is 2:1

⁵Richards, Lawrence O.: *The Bible Readers Companion*. electronic ed. Wheaton : Victor Books, 1991; Published in electronic form by Logos Research Systems, 1996, S. 413

remember God's ways (v. 3), and to live up to their mission to be "a light to the nations."⁶

Thanks be unto God!

⁶Sawyer, John F. A.: *Isaiah : Volume 1*. Louisville : Westminster John Knox Press, 2001, c1984 (The Daily Study Bible Series), S. 22