

God's House Established Over All!

Isaiah 2:1-5

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Introduction:

Today we come to chapter 2 in our study of Isaiah.

- I explained to you before that chapter 1 is really an introduction to the entire prophecy.
- You can see that in the first verse of chapter 2, we have another introduction of sorts.
 - It says:
 - Isa 2:1: The word that Isaiah the Son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.
 - This serves as an introduction to the particular unit of prophecy that includes chapter 2, 3, and 4.
 - We will find many such introductions throughout the book of Isaiah...
 - The prophecies recorded in Isaiah did not, of course, all come at once.
- If you glance over them, you can see that chapters 2, 3 and 4 make up a complete unit...
 - This section begins and ends with encouraging words about the future glory of Christ's kingdom...
 - The first five verses of chapter 2 (which we look at today) speak of how God's house will be established and how the nations will flow to it...
 - And the last 5 verses of chapter 4 speak of how God's house will be purified and richly provide for by Jesus Christ.
 - And in between these two encouraging words,
 - there is a large section about the sorry condition of the nation at the time of Isaiah's writing and the judgement that will fall upon them.
 - There is a contrast here between what God's unfailing purpose to bless at last and Judah's present state as a nation under His displeasure.

Today, we will look at the opening section of this unit—the first five verses—where Isaiah speaks about the future establishment of God's house...

- future to him, that is—contemporaneous with us...
 - And of course, we will be looking at these prophecies as they pertain to us.
 - As I told you last week,
 - our purpose is not just to have a history lesson.

- This is God's word, and it is written for our admonition.
 - My goal in preaching from these prophecies is to apply them to you.
 - That is how we are to come to God's Word.

 - But the application to Isaiah's contemporaries is very similar to the application for us.
 - Isaiah seems to be telling his own generation about the future glory of God's house to stir them out of their lethargy!
 - They were very cold concerning their privileges...
 - And part of the reason was that they had not considered what God was going to do in Christ...
 - He had promised to Abraham that He would send Christ to bless him, and that when He did, all the families of earth would be blessed.
 - Isaiah is reminding them that the days are coming when God's house will be fully established and when the nations will come eagerly to be taught of God...
 - These nations, eager to receive God's grace, will put Israel to shame!
 - How can it be that the nation who has long enjoyed the promise of these privileges can so apathetic about it...
 - When the heathen, upon learning of it, will be so enthusiastic?
 - You see how the passage is laid out...
 - After telling of the future glory of God's house and the effect it will have on the nations in verses 2-4,
 - Isaiah then exhorts them in verse 5 to come and walk in the light of the LORD.
 - It as if He is saying—
 - You see what God is going to do!
 - You see the effect that it will have on the nations!
 - Well now you—you O house of Judah—you who already know all this—you who have the light of God's promises...
 - What is holding you back?
 - They will turn away from their idols when the light comes to them,
 - but you are turning away from the living God to idols!
 - Come and walk in the light of the LORD!
- You see how in the section that follows,

- he begins to deal with their extreme arrogance and folly in turning to vanity and to idols when they have God's Word.
 - What a shameful thing it should be for the eager Gentiles to come find the sons of the kingdom apathetic and indifferent about their own Messiah!
 - Isaiah is calling them to smarten up! to wake up to their privileges!
- And do you see how this applies to us in our present circumstances as God's people in this land and this generation?
 - We have long had God's word in our land—for many generations...
 - And we have grown cold and indifferent—apathetic!
 - There are a whole lot of baptised people who didn't even bother to go to worship today...
 - and many others who are going through the mere motions of worship, but whose hearts are cold toward the Lord Jesus!
 - Yet, at the same time, there are Chinese people and African people and Indian people who are earnestly and eagerly coming to Christ with great joy for the first time...
 - They are turning from their idols with zeal—they are suffering for Him with gladness.
 - What a shame it is for them to come into the church and find us who have long had the gospel so cold and indifferent...
 - On a personal level, the same can be said of those new converts who learn of Christ and come with enthusiasm to the church to follow their Lord,
 - and expect to find in the church seasoned believers enriched with God's grace who instead find slackers and compromisers...
 - They look at those who have grown up with the gospel with a kind of awe and envy for the privilege, but find them cold and indifferent!
 - How disappointing it must be to them!
 - How strange it must seem!
 - How inappropriate!
 - And indeed it is disappointing, strange, and inappropriate!
 - It ought not to be this way!
 - Brothers and sisters, see that it is not this way with any of you!

Let us look at what Isaiah says about the coming glory of God's house!

- First of all,

I. Be encouraged that God's house is established over all!

A. Isaiah speaks here of what is to be the situation in the latter days—the days in which we now live.

1. The latter days are the days that began when the New Covenant was inaugurated at the time of Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension and that will end when He returns.
 - They are the days that we live in now.
 - This time period is called the last days, the latter days, or the ends of the ages because they are final period of God's dealing with man before the final judgement and the eternal state.

TRANS> Some have wrongly understand the last days to refer to the last days of the present age that began with the coming of Christ, but...

2. A simple survey of Scripture will prove that the last days began when Christ came to do His redemptive work on earth.
 - a. In Acts 2:17, Peter is explaining what has just happened at Pentecost when everyone heard the disciples speaking in tongues...
 - He quotes Joel who says:
 - Acts 2:17: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh;
 - Peter explains that what has just been witnessed in Jerusalem with the speaking in tongues is what Joel said would come to pass in the last days.
 - In Acts 2:32-33, he explains that Jesus is the one who has poured out the Spirit...
 - Acts 2:32-33: This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.
 - The Jews all understand the last days or the latter days to be the days of the Messiah and His kingdom.
 - Peter is telling his hearers that the last days are not some future time,
 - but have now come because Jesus the Messiah has come and has been exalted and has poured out His Spirit on all flesh!
 - b. The book of Hebrews also presents the last days as the time that began with Christ's ministry...

- In Hebrews 1:4, we are told first that God has, “in these last days spoken to us by His Son...”
 - Before it was by prophets and visions, but now, in these last days, it is by the Messiah Himself.
- And in Hebrews 9:26, we are told that
 - “now, once at the end of the ages, He [Jesus] has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.”
 - Jesus crucifixion is said to have occurred at the time called “the end of the ages.”
- c. The other Apostles also speak as those who live in the period called the last days or the end of the ages...
 - In I Cor 10:11, Paul says to the church at Corinth that the things written in Scripture were written:
 - “for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages have come.”
 - He sees His generation as being in the period called “the ends of the ages.”
 - Likewise, James, in James 5:3, accuses his contemporaries of
 - “heaping up treasures *in the last days*.”
 - And in 1 John 2:18, John refers to it as the “last hour” because many antichrists have come.
- 3. You see from this that the final phase of God’s plan of redemption began with the coming of Jesus Christ 2000 years ago.
 - This is the final age, it is the last days...
 - And at the end of it, Jesus will return to judge the world in righteousness and to usher in the eternal state.
 - This means that the latter days of which Isaiah speaks are not to be understood as some period future to us, or as a period only just now beginning...
 - They include the time from Christ’s first advent until His second advent...
 - The days in which we now live.
- B. Isaiah says that in the latter days, God’s house will be established.
 - In the original, the word *established* comes first for emphasis...
 - It is,
 - “*Established* shall be the mountain of the LORD’s House”

- To what does He refer?
1. There can be no doubt that this refers to the establishment of the church by Jesus Christ!
 - a. The New Testament repeatedly refers to the church as *the house of God*—that is, place where God dwells.
 - 1) For example, when Paul wrote to Timothy, he told him in 1 Tim 3:15 that he was writing
 - 1 Tim 3:15: “so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”
 - You see very definitely from this that after Jesus came,
 - the house of God was no longer to be thought of as the temple in Jerusalem...
 - It is rather the ecclesia—the church—the assembly of God’s people who confess Christ.
 - In a sense, it had always been that, but in the Old Testament, it was the assembly the met at Jerusalem.
 - Now it was made up of those who call upon the Lord in every place.
 - As Jesus told the Samaritan woman in John 4...
 - John 4:21-23: "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.
 - With the coming of the last days, worship would no longer be bound to the temple.
 - Now it would be wherever God’s people assembled in His name according to His directives.
- 2) In 1 Peter 2:5, Peter says,
 - 1 Peter 2:5: you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”
- 3) And in Hebrews 10:21, we are told that Jesus is the high priest we have who is over the house of God.

- b. When Isaiah says that the house of God will be *established*,
 - the word *established* means *fixed* or *made permanent*.
 - This tense in the Hebrew shows that this refers to the continuing condition of the house in the latter days...
 - In other words, it is not that the house will be being established over the years,
 - but that throughout the entirety of the last days, the house of God will be established.
 - The house of God will be established over all from the beginning to the end of this period of the last days.
 - It will be established as the agency of gracious influence in the world for salvation and sanctification.
 - The church, as the house of God, though it will be constantly added to, is firmly established forever.
 - It was brought to perfection by Jesus—not that it was filled—but it was made ready to receive the nations—
 - It was fully provided for by Jesus.

TRANS> It is complete because Christ's work in founding it and laying its foundation is complete.

- 2. So what has Christ done to establish the house?
 - a. He has come to make atonement for the house of Jacob...
 - just as God had promised from ancient times...
 - just as the services of the temple and of the tabernacle had portrayed through the thousands of bulls and goats that were offered on the altar!
 - Jesus Christ, is the Lamb of God, the priest that is over the house of God, who has made full provision for our sins.
 - And so it was that when He was on His way to offer Himself on the cross,
 - He gathered His disciples to eat the Passover and presented to them the bread and the wine to represent His body given for them and His blood shed for them...
 - And He declared that by the shedding of His blood there would be forgiveness of sins...
 - “This is my blood of the new covenant, shed for the remission of the sins of many!”

- This was the blood by which the house of Jacob would be redeemed.
 - He did all that was required to atone for the house, once and for all...
- b. And besides that, He also promised to His disciples that He would pour out His Spirit upon the house...
- That He would baptise the house with His Spirit.
 - This is how He furnishes the house with life so that those who would otherwise be dead in their sins are alive unto God...

TRANS> So you see that there are these two things by which the house has been established...

- A sacrifice—His sacrifice—to take away its sins...
 - And a Spirit—His Spirit—even the Holy Spirit to renew it and sanctify it so that it can serve God by resurrection power.
- c. And having thus provided for the house, Jesus Himself became the foundation of the house...
- He Himself is called the chief cornerstone on which the whole house is built.
 - Now that the foundation has been laid, it cannot be moved.
 - It is a kingdom that cannot be shaken.
 - It is firmly fixed so that all who come into this house by faith are surely saved.
 - They receive forgiveness by His blood and life by His Spirit.

TRANS> What a glorious house!

3. The mountain of this house is said to be above all the other mountains...
- a. There is Mount Olympus for the Greek gods...
- and Capitoline Hill for Jupiter in Rome,
 - and Meru for the Hindus in Tanzania,
 - and Zalphon for Baal...
 - and Fuji for the Japanese...
- But Mount Zion, though it be the but a little hill,
- is exalted above all the rest because it was here that the Son of God was presented to take away the sin of the world.

- It was here that the only true God who made heaven and earth is reconciled to man in the sight of nations.
- b. This is the little stone that Daniel spoke of that was cut out without hands—without the agency of men—
- and that broke the kingdoms of the nations in pieces and became a great mountain that filled the whole earth.
 - In the visions of the prophets, Jerusalem and the temple become an immense structure, visible to the whole world.
 - This is the Mountain that Christ established forever
 - This is the house of God, the church, that abides forever and ever.
 - It was founded by Christ and remains as the only mountain where salvation can be obtained.
 - There is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved.
 - There is no other mountain like this mountain!

TRANS> And so you see in the first place how Isaiah speaks of house of God that Jesus established by His suffering and death, a kingdom that cannot be shaken.

- And now secondly,

II. See the effect the establishment of God’s house has on the nations...

A. Isaiah predicted what we have now seen and still see to this day...

1. That the last days would be days in which the nations would flow to God’s exalted house.
 - a. The end of verse 2 says,
 - “All nations shall flow to it”
 - And verse 3 continues...
 - Isa 2:3: “Many people [that is, peoples—various peoples from the nations] shall come and say, ‘Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob.’”
 - b. Isaiah sees them coming to God’s house with eagerness...
 - He sees them unable to keep silent, but rather urging their brethren to come along with them...
 - This is what happens when our eyes have been opened to see the glory of God’s house...
 - We become zealous for others to come also!
 - We cannot keep silent because of the love of Christ constrains us.

- We want those we love to come and see the Messiah whom we have found.
2. The grammar here, once again, suggests that this is something that is to be characteristic throughout the last days...
 - a. It is to be a feature that will be prominent throughout...
 - And indeed it has been so!
 - In our New Testament reading today, we read how the Thessalonians came eagerly to Christ...
 - how they left their idols to serve the living God...
 - how that even though they were sorely persecuted, they still received the Word and broadcast the tidings of Christ far and wide!
 - The gospel had a glorious entrance to them...
 - b. And this has been repeated again and again as one nation after another has come to Christ.
 - Even in this present day, we see the eagerness of the Chinese and of some of the African nations...
 - They come with joy even though it means persecution.
 - Once they see what Christ has done, nothing can keep them from coming to Him.
 - Let them be threatened—still they come...
 - Let them be assaulted and tortured—still they come...
 - Let all their goods be ceased—still they come...
 - Let them be murdered—still they come...
 3. This is a most incredible prophecy!
 - How could Isaiah possibly know that the day would come when God's house would be established and that from that day on, the nations of the world would flow to it?
 - This had never happened before—that people should come willingly and eagerly to worship the God of another nation.
 - Yet, this is exactly what happened in a most extraordinary way!
 - The nations suddenly became interested and every since, their have always been those who eagerly flow into the church.
 - Clearly, this is a divine prophecy!
 - When Isaiah gave it, the nation was about to be taken into exile.
 - But in a vision, he sees the nations flooding into the church in the last days.

B. And what is it that they come to receive from the house of Jacob?

1. You see what it says in our text—they come to be taught by the living God!
 - a. We have already seen what Paul said to Timothy—the house of God is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.
 - It is here that the LORD of glory has deposited His truth...
 - It is here that His Word is found and that His ministers are appointed to preach the Word.
 - It is here that God's Spirit is given to bless the ministry of the Word so that it is received not as the Word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, that effectively works in those who believe.
 - b. The Lord reveals His glory, through the Word, in the face of Jesus Christ...
 - When the Lord teaches us, we learn of our sin—our desperate condition—our inability to make ourselves acceptable to God...
 - And we learn of His great love in sending His Son to redeem His people and save them from their sins...
 - There is no minimising of either our sin or of God's holiness as there is in every other religion, because here we are taught by God Himself.
 - Instead of minimising our sin and minimising God's holiness,
 - so that God can accept us as we are,
 - we are told of our glorious Saviour who died to atone for our sins and who baptises with the Holy Spirit to renew a people zealous of good works.
 - And then, having been forgiven through faith and given the Holy Spirit when we ask,
 - He teaches us how to live as sons and daughters in His house...
 - He teaches us how to love as Jesus, the founder of the house and the provider for the house and the foundation of the house, loves...
2. And so we come to this house, not only to be taught by God Himself, but also that we might walk in His ways.
 - a. We do not come merely to learn interesting facts about God, but to live in the truth of God by His saving grace...
 - We come to God's house to be empowered by God through Christ to live in His forgiveness and in the power of His Spirit...
 - That we may be the true children of God through Jesus Christ.

- b. And it has an effect on us when we come...
 - We are changed—we are given the peace of Christ...
 - We are reconciled to God and we submit to His word and we are changed from bitter, malicious, fighting people,
 - to those who love and serve one another.
 - Isaiah says that the nations, having come to Christ, will transform their weapons of war in tools of service...
 - Instead of destroying each other, they will plant corn and wheat for each other!
 - We are not talking about those Christians who have grown apostate and cold—we are talking about those who love the Lord...
 - Justin Martyr described it like this:
 - “We can show you that this actually happened. For a group of twelve men went out from Jerusalem, and they were ignorant men, not trained in oratory. But through the power of God they witnessed to every race of humanity that they were sent out by Christ to teach the Word of God to all people. Now we who once killed one another no longer war against each other, but more so we gladly die for the confession of Christ in order not to lie or to deceive our interrogators.”
 - c. We should not suppose that Isaiah is saying that all war shall cease in this world, for it shall continue to the end of the world...
 - But he is saying that where the gospel of Jesus Christ takes root in a people, it changes them from a warring people to a people of peace...
 - He does not say that a Christian prince will cease to use the sword to defend his people from injustice,
 - for that will be necessary as long as this world stands...
 - But where the gospel of peace has had its effect,
 - covetousness, pride, ambition, malice, and such things will be subdued and replaced with kindness and loving service.
 - Where Christ is followed, there will be remarkable peace.
 - We even see this transformation in our very families—what a difference it makes when we have Christ!
 - when He has truly captured our hearts and converted us.
3. Isaiah emphasises the means by which all this gospel blessing comes forth...
- a. At the end of verse 3, he says that it is from the Word going forth—from Zion and from Jerusalem.

- This is very important, for you see, our LORD was crucified at Jerusalem...
 - He went there to be crucified because He said that it could not be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.
 - And so, having been crucified for the house of Jacob and for the entire world at Jerusalem,
 - He then sent forth His disciples from Jerusalem into the whole world.
 - They did not go forth from Sinai, but from Jerusalem...
 - Not with the Old Covenant with its sacrifices and ceremonies,
 - But with the New Covenant from Jerusalem, with the Spirit and the Gospel to proclaim throughout the whole world.
 - Nor did they go forth from Athens—
 - from the place of human philosophy and the wisdom of the world...
 - The wisdom of God comes from the cross—
 - The cross at Jerusalem is the power of God and the wisdom of God.
 - Whenever the church has tried to mix human wisdom or human tradition with the pure word of God,
 - it is has always lost as way.
- b. Understand that it is not that the nations must literally go up to Jerusalem as pilgrims...
- Isaiah says that the Word comes forth from Jerusalem to them...
 - They go up to Jerusalem, as we have seen, to receive the Word and the grace of God...
 - Their going up is not a pilgrimage made on foot,
 - but rather a welcoming of the Word of God and the Spirit of God that comes forth from Jerusalem where our Lord was crucified.
- c. What a shameful thing it is when the church ceases to preach the Word of God...
- 1) When her ministers wickedly begin to proclaim their own doctrine—
 - man-made traditions no matter how great their antiquity...
 - man-made philosophies no matter how much appearance wisdom they may have...
 - man-made sentiments, no matter how pleasing they may be to the hearts of men...

- 2) Or when instead of preaching the Scriptures,
 - they begin to serve as priests offering sacrifices with their little paper hats and all their wretched pomp...
 - or they begin to put on shows—dramas and musicals—talk shows and interviews...

- 3) It is extreme wickedness because it leads the nations astray!
 - They need the word of God!
 - It is the Word that gives life!
 - When the church is being the church,
 - it proclaims only the pure Word of God so that the nations learn of God and are saved.
 - We must do nothing else but this!

TRANS> And so you see what a glorious vision Isaiah sees of our age...the latter days—the days of the Messiah...

- The days when His saving work has been completed and His kingdom established...
- The days when the nations are gathered to the glorious gospel of salvation...

- Isaiah is showing Israel what God is going to bring forth to the world from them—from the house of Jacob...
 - Salvation is to come from the Jews!
 - And so in verse 5, having shown them this glorious future, he turns to Israel to exhort them, saying,

III. Walk in the light that you have as God's people

- His words are,
 - “O house of Jacob, come and let us walk in the light of the LORD.”

- A. Israel already had Christ in the promises that the Lord had made to them...
 1. The Lord had chosen them out of all the nations to be His people until the coming of Christ...
 - It was from them the Word was to go forth...
 - It was from that Christ Himself was to come forth...
 - Already they had Christ promised, but as we saw in chapter 1,
 - They were not eagerly feeding upon Him...

- God had nourished and brought them up in His grace, but now they did not know Him...
 - a remnant knew Him, but most of them did not know Him.
 - They were false sons.
2. And so now, having shown them how in the future the nations will come with eagerness to discover what they have had all along—
- to feast upon God's salvation in Jesus Christ—
 - to come to be taught of the truth God with zeal to walk in His ways...
 - having shown them all this...
 - Isaiah now admonishes them to walk in the light of the LORD... to walk in this light that they are privileged to have first.
 - He is admonishing them not to be cold and indifferent to God's Word,
 - but to be like those Gentiles of the future that will come with such zeal and enthusiasm.

B. Now my brothers and sisters,

- This admonition is for you who live among a people that have had the gospel for many generations...
1. We are not as eager as we once were—
- We have grown cold and familiar with things that ought to put fire in our souls!
 - Our love has grown cold, our zeal has waned!
 - The Chinese and the Africans who have just come to Christ put us to shame.
2. The fault is not with the gospel but with us!
- a. The gospel is such that it ought to become a richer sweeter fuller source of joy to us as we go on...
- It is an inexhaustible treasure!
 - The more we learn of our Saviour's love and of our Father's glory and of His holy ways,
 - the more ardent our zeal and the more firm our resolve...
 - the more mature our wisdom and the more rich our living.
- b. But inasmuch as we have turned from the word which feeds our souls with Jesus Christ, and have not received the Spirit who gives us new understanding and life in Jesus Christ,

- we have ceased to walk in the light of the Lord and have cast away our privileges...
- Brothers and sisters, remember what you have in Christ!
 - He has delivered you from eternity in Hell!
 - He has given you life in His Father's house forever!
 - Come to Him with fresh eagerness and take His blessing!
 - Open your mouth wide and He will fill it!
 - You are God's house, so be God's house!
 - Jesus has established it and it is the most glorious place in all the earth!
 - Come and let us walk in the light of the LORD!