

The Mountain of the Lord (Isaiah 2:1–22)

By Pastor Jeff Alexander (5/27/2018)

Introduction

1. After Isaiah's *vision* of Judah and Jerusalem (1:1), Isaiah is given a *word* (a message of an ambassador to a foreign nation, 2:1) to Judah and Jerusalem.
2. This official message to Judah and Jerusalem is first preempted by a revelation of the purpose of the Lord in the "*latter days*."
 - a. This revelation concerns the establishment of "*the mountain of the house of the LORD*."
 - b. The text from verse 2 though verse 4 is also found verbatim in the prophet Micah, a contemporary of Isaiah (Micah 4:1–3).
 - c. The fact that this passage is repeated twice in the OT gives it powerful significance (such as "*truly, truly*" in Jesus' pronouncements).
 - d. The significance of this text prepares the reader for the word of judgment (the Day of the Lord) to follow (2:6–5:7).
3. The Zion and Jerusalem pictured here is the greater and spiritually dynamic Zion, ruling over and judging its earthly counterpart, usually identified with Mount Sinai (Hebrews 12:18–24; Galatians 4:24–26).

I. The House of the God of Jacob

1. Her identification
 - a. Ancient mythology taught that the gods lived and ruled from sacred mountains (Psalm 48:1, 2; 68:15–19).
 - b. The spiritual realm is given identity with familiar locations such as Mount Zion, which may lead to confusion when care is not taken to discern which Zion is spoken of.
 - c. Thus, the house of the God of Jacob is spiritual Zion (the church), not the physical mountain located in Israel.
2. Her great privileges
 - a. God's true people of faith are those from every people (*am*) and nation (*goy*) who flow into Mount Zion (salvation) through evangelism (v. 3a).
 - b. Those who *come* enjoy the teaching, presence, and blessing of the God of the New Covenant (v. 3b).
 - c. They also experience the blessing of peace and security (v. 4).

We must beware of seeing this imagery (swords into plowshares, *etc.*) as pertaining to some future earthly kingdom where war ceases between nations. Rather, the imagery relates to the work of true unity, harmony, and peace among God's people as they walk in His ways (Hebrews 12:14).

II. The House of Jacob

1. Her identification
 - a. An invitation was given to the house of Jacob (the Jews) to walk in the light of the Lord (salvation, v. 5; 1 John 1:5–7).

b. The context reveals that the prophet was addressing the natural descendants of Abraham—Israel, and in particular, the house of Judah (v. 1).

2. Her rejection

The invitation was a call to repentance because, due to her sins, Judah faced imminent destruction (the Day of the Lord) because God rejected her due to her great sins.

3. Her great sins

a. The *corruption* of her worship (v. 6)

- 1) The Jews borrowed practices from their pagan neighbors to worship Yahweh. “*Things from the east*” is a reference to a heathen altar that Ahaz saw in Damascus and had replicated and placed in the temple at Jerusalem (2 Kings 16:10).
- 2) Rather than seeking the Lord for wisdom and direction, the Jews depended on *sorcery* like their Philistine neighbors (1 Samuel 6:2–6).
- 3) “*Striking hands*” refers to the fact that the Jews, rather than trusting God to defend them, sought alliances with heathen nations like Egypt, whose military might was superior to that of their immediate enemies.

b. The *corrosion* of her economy (v. 7)

The reason that the Jews were so bent on looking to the surrounding nations was their lust after the material wealth and power they witnessed there (Deuteronomy 17:16, 17).

c. The *collapse* of her self-estimation—her pride (vv. 8–11).

Isaiah’s favorite term for idols is *el-eel*, which comes from the root meaning *worthless* and *of no value*. What they spent their lives for was worthless, and, thus, they were humbled or brought low. They traded their privileged relationship to God for nothing! The prophet’s response was, “*Do not forgive them.*” There was no hope for revival; judgment was certain.

III. The Day of the Lord

1. Its certainty (vv. 12–16)

The day of the lord is a reference to God’s certain judgment on those for whom there is no hope of repentance and restoration. Judah suffered two “days of the Lord,” the first at the hands of the Babylonians (587 B.C.) and the second at the hands of the Romans (A.D. 70).

2. Its purpose (v. 17)

To destroy the loftiness and pride of man and his idols (the worthless things cherished instead of the Lord) in order that the Lord alone be exalted.

3. Its terror (vv. 18–21)

Prideful humans will cower in holes and caves, trembling with fear (Revelation 6:12–17).

What Can We Take Away?

Two simple admonitions to the true house of Jacob:

1. “*Walk in the light of the Lord*” (v. 5).
2. “*Stop regarding man*” (v. 22).