

Lesson 3
Isaiah 2
Hope And Fear

Memory verse: "Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear and celebrate His rule with trembling. Kiss His son, or He will be angry and your way will lead to your destruction, for His wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in Him." Psalms 2:10-12 (NIV)

The prophecy in this chapter right through chapter four was probably delivered in the time of Jotham, or perhaps in that of Uzziah, as Isaiah is said to have prophesied in his reign; to which time not any of his prophecies is so applicable as that of these chapters. The seventh verse of the second, and the latter part of the third chapter, plainly point out times in which riches abounded, and luxury and delicacy prevailed. Plenty of silver and gold could only arise from their commerce; particularly from that part of it which was carried on by the Red Sea. This circumstance seems to confine the prophecy within the limits above mentioned, while the port of Elath was in their hands; it was lost under Ahaz, and never recovered.

The prophecy contained in the second, third, and fourth chapters, makes one continued discourse. The first five verses of chapter 2 foretell the kingdom of Messiah, the conversion of the Gentiles, and their admission into it. From the sixth verse to the end of the second chapter is foretold the punishment of the unbelieving Jews for their idolatrous practices, their confidence in their own strength, and distrust of God's protection; and moreover the destruction of idolatry, in consequence of the establishment of Messiah's kingdom. The whole of the third chapter, with the first verse of the fourth, is a prophecy of the calamities of the Babylonian invasion and captivity; with a particular amplification of the distress of the proud and luxurious daughters of Zion; Isaiah 4:2-6 promises to the remnant, which shall have escaped this severe purgation, a future restoration to the favour and protection of God.

As you read through this book, you find that more than Athens to Demosthenes, Rome to Juvenal, Florence to Dante, is Jerusalem to Isaiah. She is his immediate and ultimate regard, the centre and return of all his thoughts, the hinge of the history of his time, the one thing worth preserving amidst its disasters, the summit of those brilliant hopes with which he fills the future. He has traced for us the main features of her position and some of the lines of her construction, many of the great figures of her streets, the fashions of her women, the arrival of embassies, the effect of rumours. He has painted her aspect in triumph, in siege, in famine, and in earthquake; war filling her valleys with chariots, and again nature rolling tides of fruitfulness up to her gates; her moods of worship and panic and profligacy-till we see them all as clearly as the shadow following the sunshine, and the breeze the breeze, across the cornfields of our own summers.

If he takes wider observation of mankind, Jerusalem is his watch-tower. It is for her defence he battles through fifty years of statesmanship, and all his prophecy may be said to travail in anguish for her new birth. He was never away from her walls, but not even the psalms of the captives by the rivers of Babylon, with the desire of exile upon them, exhibit more beauty and pathos than the lamentations which Isaiah poured upon Jerusalem's sufferings or the visions in which he described her future solemnity and peace.

It is not with surprise, therefore, that we find the first prophecies of Isaiah directed upon his mother city: "The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem." There is little about Judah in these chapters: the country forms but a fringe to the capital.

What Isaiah saw was inspired by God. Of that inspiration Isaiah was himself assured. It was God's Spirit that enabled him to see thus keenly; for he saw things keenly, not only as men count moral keenness, but as God Himself sees them, in their value in His sight and in their attractiveness for His love and mercy.

Scripture reading: Isaiah 2: 5 to 11.

Things to learn: 1) Vision foretold 2) Walk in the Light 3) Judgement to come

Discussion Questions:

1). Isaiah 'saw' the 'word' (in NKJV) and the 'word' means vision. What is your understanding of "vision" in these chapters and as such what did Isaiah "saw" in verses 1 to 4?

2). Why did Isaiah pleaded to his people to walk in the light of the Lord and what hindered them from doing so and is this relevant to us today? (refer to verses 5 to 9)

3). There seemed to be hope in the midst of fear when Isaiah warned about the day of the Lord in verses 10 to 22. How should the world receive this warning?