

## ***Isaiah Part 2: Glorious hope and fearful judgments...***

**Isaiah 2 to 4**

**Wednesday 13 June 2018, 12.45 – 1.30 pm**

Isaiah's vision of future glory (Isaiah 2 v 2 to 5) gives way to a picture of God's judgment caused by man's sin (Isaiah 2 v 6 to 22). From a description of the anarchy resulting from the sins of the ruling class (Isaiah 3), Isaiah turns again to the hope of the glory that will follow such judgments (Isaiah 4 v 2 to 6)...

### ***The mountain of the Lord (Isaiah 2 verses 1 to 5)***

- In this picture of future glory under the Messiah's reign, what does Isaiah say about the word of the Lord and the peace of the world? What is the connection between these two concepts?
- What does it mean to "walk in the light of the Lord" (v 5)?

With verses 2 to 5 compare Micah 4 verses 1 to 3 and 5. Isaiah and Micah both seem to be quoting from an anonymous third source; however, Isaiah also personally perceived this (v 1).

"In the latter days" (v 2): this term refers to the 'time of the Messiah', when Jesus reigns over the earth. This speaks of the time many refer to as the Millennium, the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth (see Isaiah 11 v 4 to 9; Jeremiah 23 v 5 to 6; Luke 1 v 30 to 33; Revelation 20 v 1 to 6).

### ***The Day of the Lord (Isaiah 2 verses 6 to 22)***

- In this passage, Isaiah describes the sins that prevent Judah from "walking in the light of the LORD" (v 5). What does Isaiah regard as the greatest sin (v 11), and why is it so serious?
- The word "against" is used ten times in verses 12 to 16. What is God fundamentally against (v 12)?

The phrase "in that day" (occurring seven times in Isaiah 2 to 4) does not necessarily refer to one particular day: it speaks of 'God's time'. The idea is that now may be 'man's time', but that time will not last forever. One day, the Messiah will end the 'day of man' and bring forth the 'day of the LORD'.

### ***Judgment on Judah and Jerusalem (Isaiah 3 verse 1 to Isaiah 4 verse 1)***

The first few verses give us a profile of a society under judgment, with such desperate shortages of food, water, and competent leaders that Isaiah is describing the total collapse of the nation (Isaiah 3 v 1 to 7).

- "For Jerusalem has stumbled and Judah has fallen" (v 8) – what had they done wrong (v 8 to 12)?
- In verses 11 to 13 God judges the "elders and princes" for their ill treatment of the poor, and verse 16 to Isaiah 4 verse 1 describe the sinful "daughters of Zion" and God's judgment against them – why do you think God's judgment against these two groups of people is so severe?

"They proclaim their sin as Sodom; they do not hide it" (v 9) – their sin is openly displayed, and they have no sense of shame. The cultural dynamic in Isaiah's day was probably similar to ours today: in the name of 'frankness' and 'tolerance' all kinds of sin and perversion are approved, and even 'celebrated'.

The luxurious clothing and jewellery of the women are listed in verses 16 to 22 – notice how this contrasts with the way women of God are commanded to behave in 1 Peter 3 v 3, 4. The phrase "instead of" occurs five times in verse 24: God will replace the women's finery with the marks of captivity and humiliation.

***[MORE OVER...]***

## ***The Branch of the Lord glorified (Isaiah 4 verses 2 to 6)***

“In that day the branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious” (v 2) – the image of ‘the branch’ is repeated many times in the Old Testament, including Isaiah 11 v 1, Jeremiah 23 v 5, Jeremiah 33 v 15 and Zechariah 3 v 8.

The title ‘the Branch of the LORD’ speaks of fruitfulness. Jesus extended this image when he said that he was the vine, and *we* are the branches (John 15 v 5)...

- “Survivors of Israel” (v 2) and “he who is left in Zion” (v 3) are phrases that suggest Isaiah is referring to the time when the nation of Israel will be restored after the Great Tribulation (see Matthew 24 v 21, 22). How does Isaiah describe ‘Mount Zion’ and its society, in terms of moral values and protection from the natural elements?

“The Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion...” (v 4) – when the Branch of the LORD reigns, there will be cleansing. But the cleansing will not come easily: it will come by “a spirit of judgment” and “a spirit of burning”.

“A cloud by day, and smoke and the shining of a flaming fire by night...” (v 5) – when the Branch of the LORD reigns, there will be the tangible presence of the LORD. Just as in the days of the Exodus, God will be as real as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (see Exodus 13 v 21, 22).

“There will be a booth for shade by day from the heat, and for a refuge and a shelter from the storm and rain” (v 6) – when the Branch of the LORD reigns, there will be protection from the natural elements. God’s people will be safe and secure, washed and cleansed, and enjoying his presence.

*Prayer – Lord, help us heed the warnings of judgment in these chapters. We pray that it may never be said of us that we have ‘stumbled and fallen’, but rather, though we might slip and stumble, yet we shall not fall completely, for you are our strength and our stay.*

*Thank you, Jesus, that you are the Branch of the LORD, beautiful and glorious. Help us to abide in you, because you are the vine and we are the branches, and as the Branch of the LORD speaks of fruitfulness, so help us too to bear much fruit as we abide in you, and so prove to be your true disciples. Amen.*