

## Isaiah 2:1-5

- 1 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.
- 2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.
- 3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
- 4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.
- 5 O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.

## MILLENNIAL SYSTEMS

### I. The Issue

Will there be a literal, future thousand year (i.e. millennium) reign of Jesus Christ on this earth, or is the present "spiritual" kingdom (i.e. the church) the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises of the "kingdom?"

### II. The Approaches

#### A. A-millennialism

1. The prefix a- means "no." A-millennialism affirms that there will not be a future thousand year reign. The present church age is the "millennial" period (not a "literal" thousand years). Some hold that the millennium is realized now on earth (e.g. Augustine). Others hold that millennium is being experienced now by the saints in heaven (e.g. Warfield). Some prefer the title "realized millennialism" (Adams).
1. Christ will come again literally and bodily. When He comes He will not institute a kingdom on earth, but will usher in the eternal state. The Old Testament promises of a return of Israel to the land and a kingdom centered in Jerusalem are interpreted as spiritually fulfilled in the church today.

#### B. Postmillennialism

1. Christ will return after society has been Christianized by the church's preaching of the gospel. Christ will come after ("post") the kingdom has been established. The thousand years of Revelation 20 are not taken literally.
2. Evangelical postmillennialists (e.g. Loraine Boettner) should be distinguished from the liberal theological view which taught that a utopia would be created on earth through human achievement and betterment. Popular in the 19th century, this was dealt a severe blow by the First World War.
3. A modern "revival" of postmillennialism is espoused by the advocates of "dominion theology" (Rushdoony, North, Bahnsen, Chilton). They hold that government should enforce the Old Testament laws and penalties, thus infusing society with "righteousness," along with the preaching of the gospel.

Contemporary Reconstructionist, postmillennialist Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr. gives the following seven characteristics of evangelical postmillennialism:

- 1) Postmillennialism "understands the Messianic kingdom to have been founded upon the earth during the earthly ministry and through the redemptive labors of the Lord Jesus Christ....the Church becomes the transformed Israel."
- 2) "The fundamental nature of that kingdom is essentially redemptive and spiritual... Christ rules His kingdom spiritually in and through His people in the world (representation), as well as by His universal providence."
- 3) Christ's "kingdom will exercise a transformational socio-cultural influence in history. This will occur as more and more people are converted to Christ."
- 4) Fourth, "postmillennialism, thus, expects the gradual, developmental expansion of the kingdom of Christ in time and on earth....Christ's personal presence on earth is not needed for the expansion of His kingdom."
- 5) "Postmillennialism confidently anticipates a time in earth history (continuous with the present) in which the very gospel already operative in the world will have won the victory throughout the earth in fulfillment of the Great Commission...During that time the overwhelming majority of men and nations will be Christianized, righteousness will abound, wars will cease, and prosperity and safety will flourish."
- 6) There are "two types of postmillennialism today: pietistic and theonomic postmillennialism....Pietistic postmillennialism...denies that the postmillennial advance of the kingdom involves the total transformation of culture through the application of biblical law. Theonomic postmillennialism affirms this."
- 7) "Possibly 'we can look forward to a great 'golden age' of spiritual prosperity continuing for centuries, or even for millenniums.... 'After this...earth history will be drawn to a close by the personal, visible, bodily return of Jesus Christ (accompanied by a literal resurrection and a general judgment) to introduce His...consummative and eternal form of the kingdom."  
Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *He Shall Have Dominion: A Postmillennial Eschatology* (Tyler, Tex.: Institute for Christian Economics, 1992), pp. 70-73.

\*There is very little difference between these two systems. David Chilton says, "orthodox Christianity has always been post-millennialist...At the same time, orthodox Christianity has always been a-millennialist." Chilton declares, "What I am saying is this: A-millennialism and Post-millennialism are the same thing. The only fundamental difference is that 'postmills' believe the world will be converted, and 'amils' don't. Otherwise, I'm an amil."

#### C. Pre-millennialism

1. The Old Testament promises to Abraham and David are unconditional and will have a literal fulfillment. These promises to Israel have not been fulfilled by the Church, which is a distinct body in this age.
2. At the close of this age, Christ will rapture his saints and a seven year period of tribulation will precede His return to earth. He then will establish His kingdom on earth for 1000 years during which time the promises to Israel will be fulfilled. (Pre-millennialists differ on the timing of the rapture in relation to the tribulation).

3. It is generally agreed that pre-millennialism was the view held by virtually all church fathers during the first two centuries of the church.

Philip Schaff has said, "The most striking point in the eschatology of the ante-Nicene Age [A.D. 100-325] is the prominent chiliasm, or millenarianism,... a widely current opinion of distinguished teachers, such as Barnabas, Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Methodius, and Lactantius."

Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (New York: Scribner, 1884), Vol. 2, p. 614

Augustine (5<sup>th</sup> century) first articulated the a-millennial view, while postmillennialism was first systematized by Daniel Whitby around 1700.

### III. Arguments for Pre-millennialism

- A. The literal or historical/grammatical method of interpreting prophecy leads to an espousal of pre-millennialism. Any other view must "spiritualize" the many prophecies about Israel, Jerusalem, Zion, etc., reforming their fulfillment to the church in this age.
- B. The key issue is what method of interpretation will be employed. All evangelicals agree that the Bible should be understood in a literal sense. Pre-millennialists are consistent in applying this to prophecy as well.

If already fulfilled prophecies were fulfilled literally, this argues for a literal fulfillment of unfilled prophecies.

Examples:

1) Micah 3:12 - 4:5 (Zion destroyed: literal)  
(Zion restored: literal)

2) Messianic Prophecies: Isaiah 7:14 (Virgin birth: literal)  
Isaiah 9:6, 7 (Throne of David: literal)

- C. Pre-millennialists teach that a literal millennium with a restored Israel is necessary for the fulfillment of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants. An everlasting people in an everlasting land inheritance (Gen 12, 15, 17) with an everlasting king on an everlasting throne (2 Sam. 7) can only be fulfilled in a future literal millennium.
- D. Pre-millennialists teach that the only sound exegesis of Revelation 20 demands a future millennium.
  - a. After Christ's coming to judge His enemies (19:11-21), Satan is bound for a thousand years (20:2).
  - b. Satan's activity is removed from the earth during this thousand year period (20:3).
  - c. Christ reigns with his resurrected saints during this "millennium" (20:4).
  - d. This passage in no way can describe this present age (a-millennialism), or can be viewed as describing conditions before Christ's coming (postmillennialism).

CONCLUSION: The testimony of the early church, the literal interpretation of the Old Testament covenants and promises, as well as a clear reading of the Revelation all support pre-millennialism.

Only pre-millennialism fit the facts of this passage in Isaiah.

## 1 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

The prophecy concerns Judah and Jerusalem.

The same prophecy is given in Micah 4: 1-3.

There are 4 views on the reason for this same prophecy in Micah and Isaiah

- 1) Isaiah was the originator and Micah borrowed from him.
- 2) Micah was the originator and Isaiah borrowed from him
- 3) Isaiah and Micah got this from a third source
- 4) The Holy Spirit inspired both men separately to write this prophecy.

There are two things we should notice in this verse.

- 1) Isaiah "saw" the events that are coming.

Not only did Isaiah hear the word of prophecy but saw the prophecy also.

- 2) Saw is in the past tense. What we have is common in the book of Isaiah. He sees things in the future and speaks of them having already come to pass. This is referred to as the prophetic past.

### **Comment on Isaiah 2:2**

"In the light of the New Testament we may say that the reference of this prophecy is to the church which Jesus Christ founded. Beginning at Jerusalem the disciples went throughout the world proclaiming the true salvation. This church is the pillar and ground of the truth. By it the truth is to be preached to every creature (cf. John 4:22b; Luke 2:32)."

The Book of Isaiah, Vol. 1, Edward J. Young, page 102

### **Comment on Isaiah 2:3**

"For the ancient world Zion was the source of religious truth, but in the new dispensation that source is the preaching of the church. Thus the heathen world is dependent upon the faithful preaching of the church. This passage clearly teaches that the great need of the world is the preaching of the gospel, preaching that is of such a nature that it may be characterized as the very teaching of God." Page 106

### **Special Note by Young**

"There are two prevalent types of answer to the interpretation given in this commentary. On the one hand, there are those who teach that it is possible that war may cease during this present age before the return of Christ from heaven. On the other, those who are known as dispensationalists maintain that the prophecy is not fulfilled during the present age but will be fulfilled during the millennium which follows the return of Christ. This latter type of interpretation does violence of a serious kind to the general structure of Biblical eschatology." Page 108-109

"The prophet saw this vision *concerning Judah and Jerusalem*. This indication should have been sufficient for all exegetes to keep them from applying it to the church or heaven, as has been done most of the time. Calvin says, 'This concerns a scene of the restoration of God's church - a matter of utmost significance.' This entirely contradicts the opening words *concerning Judah and Jerusalem*....But, such willful exegesis is the result of the hapless identification of Israel with the Church, a heresy that more than anything else has led to the breakdown of the historic churches.... In all of Scripture there is not a semblance or shadow of justification for the identification of Israel as a nation with the Church as the body of Christ. In the New Testament the word *Israel* appears seventy times, but it must always be taken in its literal historical meaning." Harry Bultema, *Commentary on Isaiah*, pg. 51-52

## Has the Church replaced Israel?

"...there is no historical evidence that the term *Israel* was identified with the church before A.D. 160. Further, at that date there was no characterization of the church as 'the Israel of God.'"

S. Lewis Johnson, *Paul and "The Israel of God": An Exegetical and Eschatological Case-Study*, page 191, quoting Peter Richardson

There are 73 occurrences of *Israel* in the N.T. Arnold Fruchtenbaum suggests only three passages (Romans 9:6; 11:26; Galatians 6:16) are used by Covenant theologians to try to prove their viewpoint that Church-equals-Israel. Some Covenant Theologians understand Romans 9:6 and 11:26 as speaking of national ethnic Israel. Of the three the only one they are in agreement on is Galatians 6:16. "Fruchtenbaum says, "The only one verse on which all Covenant Theologians are unanimous is Galatians 6:16. This is the one and only verse that even comes close to saying what Covenant Theologians want it to say."

**"And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them [Gentile Christians], and mercy, and upon the Israel of God [Jewish Christians]."**

- 1) Two groups of people, Jews and Gentiles

This has already been taught in Galatians

Galatians 2:7-9

Galatians 5:6

Galatians 6:15

- 2) The use of *and*

"If *kai* (the Greek conjunctive translated *and*) should be understood as Paul's intention to identify the *them* as being the *Israel of God* it would have been best to eliminate the *kai* altogether. The very presence of the *kai* argues against the *them* being the *Israel of God*."

S. Lewis Johnson, *Paul and "The Israel of God": An Exegetical and Eschatological Case-Study*, page 188.

Let me summarize the teaching that "Israel of God" is the church by quoting S. Lewis Johnson once more:

"...If there is an interpretation that totters on a tenuous foundation, it is the view that Paul equates the term 'the Israel of God' with the believing church of Jews and Gentiles. To support it, the general usage of the term *Israel* in Paul, the New Testament, and in the Scriptures as a whole is ignored. The grammatical and syntactical usage of the conjunction *kai* is strained and distorted-and the rare and uncommon sense accepted when the usual sense is unsatisfactory-only because it does no harmonize with the presuppositions of the exegete. And to compound matters, in the special context of Galatians and the general context of the Pauline teaching, especially as highlighted in Romans 11, Paul's primary passages on God's dealings with Israel and the Gentiles, are downplayed. If, as LaRondelle asserts, 'Paul's benediction in Galatians 6:16 becomes, then, the chief witness in the New Testament in declaring that the universal church of Christ is the Israel of God, the seed of Abraham, the heir to Israel's covenant promise (cf. Gal. 3:29; 6:16),' then the doctrine that the church of Gentiles and Jews is *the* Israel of God rests on an illusion. It is a classic case of tendentious exegesis."

S. Lewis Johnson, *Paul and "The Israel of God": An Exegetical and Eschatological Case-Study*, page 195

- 2 **And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.**
- 3 **And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.**

- ***it shall come to pass...***

The second coming is a reality. As Jesus came the first time (this is a historical reality), so He will come again (this is a reality). The embracing of this reality will be life changing.

Acts 1:11; 8:1-4; 17:6

- ***the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills...***

The picture here is figurative. Mount Zion represents the kingdom of the Messiah and his reign. This is a picture of God's kingdom ruling over the kingdoms of the world.

Psalms 68:15-17; Daniel 2:35; Revelation 13:1 (17:9-11)

ראש ro'sh {roshe}

**Meaning:** 1) head, top, summit, upper part, chief, total, sum, height, front, beginning 1a) head (of man, animals) 1b) top, tip (of mountain) 1c) height (of stars) 1d) chief, head (of man, city, nation, place, family, priest) 1e) head, front, beginning 1f) chief, choicest, best 1g) head, division, company, band 1h) sum

**Usage:** AV - head 349, chief 91, top 73, beginning 14, company 12, captain 10, sum 9, first 6, principal 5, chapters 4, rulers 2, misc 23; 598

The meaning of this verse is: "...*the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established as the head [chief] of the mountains...*"

- ***all nations shall flow unto it...Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob...***

In the millennium all nations will be required to go to Jerusalem to worship Messiah.

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|----|--|---|
| 1) | Jesus will be in Jerusalem                     | Zechariah 2:10; Zephaniah 3:14-17                                 |
| 2) | All will worship Him                           | Isaiah 11:9; Psalm 22:27  |
| 3) | Worship will be centered in Jerusalem          | Zechariah 8:20-23   |
| 4) | The Temple will be rebuilt for worship         | Zechariah 6:12-13<br>Ezekiel 40-43 (cf. 43:1-7)                   |
| 5) | Nations will celebrate the Feasts in Jerusalem | Zechariah 14:16<br>Ezekiel 44:24; 45:18,21; 46:15                 |
| 6) | Sacrifices offered                             | Ezek. 43:13-27; Isaiah 66:20-23;<br>Zech. 14:16-21; Malachi 3:3-4 |

The purposes of sacrifices are most likely two-fold. They are a memorial of what Jesus has done and a reminder of the penalty (death) of sin. Also, the sacrifices are a ceremonial cleansing (Ezekiel 45: 15,17,20) to prevent pollution of the Temple where Jesus is residing. Although similar to the Mosaic system it is not the same.

- **...and he will teach us of his ways...for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.**

Jesus will be the teacher: Isaiah 30:19-21; 54:13

His teaching will be the Word of God

**4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.**

**Judge** - שָׁפַט shaphat {shaw-fat'}

Meaning: 1) to judge, govern, vindicate, punish 1a) (Qal) 1a1) to act as law-giver or judge or governor (of God, man) 1a1a) to rule, govern, judge 1a2) to decide controversy (of God, man) 1a3) to execute judgment 1a3a) discriminating (of man) 1a3b) vindicating 1a3c) condemning and punishing 1a3d) at theophanic advent for final judgment 1b) (Niphal) 1b1) to enter into controversy, plead, have controversy together 1b2) to be judged 1c) (Poel) judge, opponent-at-law (participle)

**Rebuke** - יָכַח yakach {yaw-kahh'}

Meaning: 1) to prove, decide, judge, rebuke, reprove, correct, be right 1a) (Hiphil) 1a1) to decide, judge 1a2) to adjudge, appoint 1a3) to show to be right, prove 1a4) to convince, convict 1a5) to reprove, chide 1a6) to correct, rebuke 1b) (Hophal) to be chastened 1c) (Niphal) to reason, reason together 1d) (Hithp) to argue

When Messiah reigns it will be as a righteous judge who corrects, makes the right decision, in all cases of disputes, between men and nations.

Isaiah 11:4-5; Jeremiah 23:5

Peace will finally reign on earth.

**5 O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.**

Isaiah now turns his focus back to his people. As usual, he identifies with them, "let us..." in exhorting them to follow the light of the Lord.

A very common theme in the Bible is light and darkness. Light represented the Lord and His ways...darkness represented sin, evil, and the path of unrighteousness and false gods.

**Verses 15 – 22**

**Isaiah rebukes Israel for their sin and promises judgment.**