



## Isaiah 2:1-22

### The Mountain (1-3), Judge (4-19), and Coming Dread of God (20-22)

Some of the most memorable bible passages are found in the second chapter of Isaiah. The “Mountain of the Lord” is presented in all its splendor and power. Manifestations of God’s presence referred to as “Zion” are described in detail. A terrifying picture of “God the Judge” unfolds in a way that makes you wonder if anything or anyone could survive His wrath. Yet, there is also a great deal of hope here too.

We are studying Isaiah to get a glimpse of the Lord of all creation, to see what He is like, but more than that to learn and understand how to live our lives today in a way that is pleasing to Him.

One of the unmistakable aspects of man’s relationship with God, the “fear of the Lord,” is at the center of this text. What would Israel have avoided if they had understood and walked in a healthy fear of God? How might that have changed the course of human history. And more to the point for us, how can the fear of the Lord be restored in our day and time? Let’s dig in!

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Notes	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p>Isaiah 2:1 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.</p> <p>2 It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, 3 and many peoples shall come, and say: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.</p>	<p><b>a</b> 2:2 This phrase, often used by the prophets of the Old Testament, speaks of our current time in human history between Pentecost and the coming again of Christ. See Heb. 1:2; 1 John 2:18.</p> <p><b>b</b> 2:2 Or “prepared.” See Eph. 1:21–22.</p> <p><b>c</b> 2:2 This is a contrast from ch. 1 to ch. 2 of Isaiah. No matter how despicable our past, God’s grace will fully establish his people as the mountain rising above every other mountain. Mountains in the Bible are often used metaphorically for kingdoms. Kingdoms and governments are like mountains and hills on the landscape of history. The mountain-kingdom of God is in view here. It will be the chief of all mountains, the highest of all hills. The secular world sees Christ’s kingdom as irrelevant and powerless. But one day the kingdoms of the earth will be leveled and the King’s mountain will be high and exalted. With no rival, Jesus will sit enthroned. This prophetic outlook is the backdrop for all that Isaiah preaches. See Isa. 25:6–8; Mic. 4:1–5.</p> <p><b>d</b> 2:2 Or “All the nations will flow as a river to it.” The Hebrew word <i>nahar</i> can be translated “stream (river)” or “to sparkle, to be cheerful.” In Isa. 60:5 it is translated “radiant.” A cheerful, sparkling stream of people will come into divine radiance as they come up the mountain of the Lord. This speaks of the uphill flow of the river of God—a supernatural magnetism bringing the nations into the kingdom of Christ. This is the reversal of the dispersion of the people at Babel (Gen. 11).</p>	<p>Isaiah 2:1 This is the word revealed to Isaiah, son of Amoz, concerning Judah and Jerusalem:</p> <p>2 In the last days <b>a</b>, the mountain of Yahweh’s temple will be raised up <b>b</b> as the head of the mountains, towering over all the hills <b>c</b>. A sparkling stream of every nation will flow into it <b>d</b>. 3 Many peoples will come and say, “Everyone, come! Let’s go up higher to Yahweh’s mountain, to the house of Jacob’s God; then he can teach us his ways and we can walk in his paths!”</p>

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Notes	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p>"For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup> He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.</p> <p><sup>5</sup> O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD.</p> <p><sup>6</sup> For you have rejected your people, the house of Jacob, because they are full of things from the east and of fortune-tellers like the Philistines, and they strike hands with the children of foreigners. <sup>7</sup> Their land is filled with silver and gold, and there is no end to their treasures; their land is filled with horses, and there is no end to their chariots. <sup>8</sup> Their land is filled with idols; they bow down to the work of their hands, to what their own fingers have made. <sup>9</sup> So man is humbled, and each one is brought low—do not forgive them! <sup>10</sup> Enter into the rock and hide in the dust from before the terror of the LORD, and from the splendor of his majesty. <sup>11</sup> The haughty looks of man shall be brought low, and the lofty pride of men shall be humbled, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.</p>	<p><b>e</b> 2:3 Zion is more than a location; it is a realm where God is enthroned (Ps. 2:4–6; 87:5). Zion is a synonym for the people of God, the dwelling place of his Spirit (Ps. 9:11; 74:2; 76:2; Heb. 12:22–24). The perfection of beauty is in Mount Zion, where the light of God shines (Ps. 50:2). Perfected praise rises to the Lord in this place of perfect rest (Ps. 65:1–2). The Mountain of Zion is where the Lord is known in his greatness (Ps. 99:2; Isa. 12:4–6). It is the hope of all the afflicted (Ps. 102:16–22; Isa. 14:32; 51:11).</p> <p><b>f</b> 2:3 Although the Hebrew word <i>torah</i> is used here, it means more than “the law.” It also can be translated “instruction” or “teaching.” This is not the law of Moses, for that came from Sinai. This is revelation of the gospel and the instruction of God out of the Zion realm that overcomes every work of darkness within us and around us. From Jerusalem the gospel light and the twelve mighty apostles went forth to change the world.</p> <p><b>g</b> 2:4 The wisdom of the Lord will resolve ethnic conflicts and international disputes.</p> <p><b>h</b> 2:4 Or “sickles.” Weapons that were turned on one another will now be used for the harvest.</p> <p><b>i</b> 2:5 The Hebrew concept of the light of the Lord includes his ways, favor, presence, blessings, and revelation.</p> <p><b>j</b> 2:6 That is, since they don’t seek the true light of the Lord and his true prophetic word, they end up with Eastern mysticism, the false and the foreign. Arguably, this is one of the more difficult verses to translate in Isaiah, with multiple possibilities. The last clause can be rendered “They clasp hands with foreigners (unholy alliances)” or “They are with the children of foreigners.”</p> <p><b>k</b> 2:8 Isaiah condemns what the people were trusting in: their broadminded tolerance, financial security, military might (horses and chariots), and the idols they themselves had crafted. See also Deut. 17:14–17.</p> <p><b>l</b> 2:9 Or “Do not raise them up again.”</p> <p><b>m</b> 2:10 Everyone on earth will seek to hide in a rock. Those who love the Lord will find shelter in the rock of salvation. Those who deny the Lord will make the rocks and caves their hiding places from the face of God (lit. “hide in the dust from the face of the terror of the Lord”).</p> <p><b>n</b> 2:11 Or “the eyes of the haughty.”</p>	<p>Zion <b>e</b> will be the center of instruction <b>f</b>, and the word of Yahweh will go out from Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup> He will judge fairly between the nations and settle disputes among many peoples <b>g</b>. They will beat the swords they used against each other into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks <b>h</b>. No nation will take up weapons against another, nor will they prepare for war anymore.</p> <p><sup>5</sup> O house of Jacob, come let us walk in the wonderful light of Yahweh! <b>i</b></p> <p><sup>6</sup> Lord, you have abandoned your people, the house of Jacob, for they are full of divinations from the east, like the land of the Philistines, with diviners everywhere; they are pleased with what is false and foreign <b>j</b>. <sup>7</sup> Their land overflows with gold and silver; they are wealthy beyond measure. Their land is filled with horses and innumerable chariots! <sup>8</sup> Worthless idols are everywhere, and they worship the work of their own hands, what their fingers have made <b>k</b>. <sup>9</sup> The people bow down low before the “no-gods,” and the leaders lie down flat before them in worship, so do not spare them! <b>l</b> <sup>10</sup> Enter into the rock and hide in the dust from the dreadful presence of Yahweh and from his majestic glory <b>m</b>. <sup>11</sup> The arrogant <b>n</b> will be humbled and the pride of man brought low. Only one will be exalted in that day: Yahweh!</p>

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<p><sup>12</sup> For the LORD of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up—and it shall be brought low; <sup>13</sup> against all the cedars of Lebanon, lofty and lifted up; and against all the oaks of Bashan; <sup>14</sup> against all the lofty mountains, and against all the uplifted hills; <sup>15</sup> against every high tower, and against every fortified wall; <sup>16</sup> against all the ships of Tarshish, and against all the beautiful craft. <sup>17</sup> And the haughtiness of man shall be humbled, and the lofty pride of men shall be brought low, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day. <sup>18</sup> And the idols shall utterly pass away. <sup>19</sup> And people shall enter the caves of the rocks and the holes of the ground, from before the terror of the LORD, and from the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth.</p> <p><sup>20</sup> In that day mankind will cast away their idols of silver and their idols of gold, which they made for themselves to worship, to the moles and to the bats, <sup>21</sup> to enter the caverns of the rocks and the clefts of the cliffs, from before the terror of the LORD, and from the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth. <sup>22</sup> Stop regarding man in whose nostrils is breath, for of what account is he?</p>	<p><b>o</b> 2:12 Or “Jehovah-Sabaoth,” the Lord of hosts.</p> <p><b>p</b> 2:12 See Zeph. 2:3; Mal. 4:1.</p> <p><b>q</b> 2:13 Isaiah uses the metaphor of trees to symbolize humanity. Lebanon is used metaphorically as a symbol of beauty in the Scriptures. The tall and lofty cedars of Lebanon are a picture of the cultural elite, those of high standing in society. Men are like trees who stand tall and upright, only to be cut down in death. Jesus stands as the fairest of all the trees, like an apple tree in the forest of humanity (Song. 2:3).</p> <p><b>r</b> 2:13 These oaks were known for making oars (Ezek. 27:6). They speak of the military captains and soldiers surrounding Jesus on the cross, who were like the savage bulls of Bashan (Ps. 22:12). The word Bashan, although the area was known as a fertile land northeast of the Sea of Galilee, is also the word for “serpent.” Oaks of Bashan may also represent great global leaders empowered by demonic spirits.</p> <p><b>s</b> 2:14 Governments and kingdoms of this earth are like hills and mountains. Even the highest of men’s governmental authorities will bow to the one called the Lord Almighty.</p> <p><b>t</b> 2:15 High towers could also represent godless academia that towers intellectually above others.</p> <p><b>u</b> 2:15 This could refer to the strongholds in the mind of man, thoughts of self-importance that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God (2 Cor. 10:3–6). Towers and walls served as a refuge during an attack. Rebels against God built a tower in Babylon (Gen. 11:1–9), seeking to be independent of God.</p> <p><b>v</b> 2:16 The ships of Tarshish were the largest of ships, able to take the longest voyages and the greatest cargoes. They typify the great commercial empires built by man (Ezek. 28:2–5). The economic system, the commerce of earth, will be brought to the feet of Jesus as he establishes an eternal kingdom where righteousness and justice rule.</p> <p><b>w</b> 2:16 The last clause is difficult to translate with accuracy. Some scholars believe the Hebrew word may be an Egyptian loan word for something like “yacht” or some impressive sailing vessel or “ship of pleasure.” Others translate it as “splendid palaces, works of art, pleasant pictures, images of desire.”</p> <p><b>x</b> 2:17 Isaiah taught that those who bowed low before idols (2:11) will one day bow low before the true God.</p> <p><b>y</b> 2:18 The Hebrew has only three words: “Nothings to nothingness!” See 1 Cor. 8:4.</p> <p><b>z</b> 2:20 The phrase “in that day” is used fifty times by Isaiah.</p> <p><b>aa</b> 2:21 See Heb. 12:25–29; Rev. 6:15–17.</p> <p><b>ab</b> 2:22 Or “who has but breath in his nostrils—of what account is he?” Man’s life is fragile and temporary. His breath is in his nostrils, ready to stop at any moment. With all our boastings and with all our ingenuity and marvelous inventions, man is but a poor, vain creature. In all our littleness and helplessness we must turn away from the answers of men and ask for the breath of God.</p>	<p><sup>12</sup> The Lord of Angel Armies <b>o</b> has a day of humiliation in store for all the high and mighty, for all who are proud and self-exalting. They will be brought low <b>p</b>. <sup>13</sup> His judgment is coming against all the lofty cedars of Lebanon <b>q</b> and all the oaks of Bashan <b>r</b>, <sup>14</sup> against all the high mountains and all the lofty hills <b>s</b>, <sup>15</sup> against every high tower <b>t</b> and every fortress wall <b>u</b>, <sup>16</sup> against all the trading ships of Tarshish <b>v</b> and all the impressive sailing vessels <b>w</b>. <sup>17</sup> People’s arrogance will be conquered and brought low <b>x</b>, and those proud of heart will be humiliated. Only one will be exalted in that day: Yahweh! <sup>18</sup> Every worthless idol will utterly pass away <b>y</b>. <sup>19</sup> People will hide in caves and holes in the ground from the dreadful presence of Yahweh and from his majestic glory when he rises to mightily shake the earth.</p> <p><sup>20</sup> In that day <b>z</b>, people will throw away the worthless idols their hands have made from gold and silver. They will fling their treasures to the rodents and bats <sup>21</sup> as they crawl into the clefts of the rock to hide from the dreadful presence of Yahweh and from the majesty of his glory when he rises to shake the earth mightily! <b>aa</b> <sup>22</sup> So once and for all, stop trusting in man, who is but one breath from death—frail and puny man! <b>ab</b></p>

- **Isaiah 2:1-2a.** The message recorded in these verses is what Isaiah ... saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem (cf. 1:1). The prophets in Israel had at one time been called “seers” because of their divinely given power to “see” or foretell what would happen (1 Sam. 9:9). Here, Isaiah was foretelling the future of Jerusalem and Judah. In the prophecies of restoration which are prominent in Isaiah’s book, he was not specific as to the exact time when they would be fulfilled (perhaps he did not know; cf. 1 Peter 1:10-11). Here he simply said in the last days. Other Bible passages make it clear that these predictions will be fulfilled in the Millennium, Christ’s 1,000-year reign on the earth. Because of God’s covenant promises to Abraham, Moses, and David, Isaiah knew that Israel will again be in the land and will again have a superior position among the nations.
  - The mountain of the LORD’S temple refers to the mount where the temple was built (and where the millennial temple will be built, Ezek. 40-43). Often in the Scriptures mountains denote governmental authorities (Dan. 2:35; Amos 4:1). Here God’s rule from the temple will be preeminent (chief). The theme of the prominence of the temple mount in [Vol. 1, p. 1038] Jerusalem is repeated often in Isaiah’s prophecies all the way to the end of the book (Isa. 11:9; 25:6-7; 27:13; 30:29; 56:7; 57:13; 65:11, 25; 66:20). Isaiah clearly wanted his readers to be aware that God will protect His covenant nation despite their spiritual insensitivity and even though they would go into captivity.
- **2:2b-3.** When these events take place many nations will be attracted to Jerusalem (cf. 14:1; 27:13; 66:23; Zech. 8:23; 14:16) and to God’s house (the temple, Isa. 2:2a). The attraction will be the Lord’s ways ... paths ... Law, and Word which will be made known from that place. In fact the LORD Himself will give forth the Law (51:4). (Zion, referred to dozens of times by Isaiah, more than by any other author of Scripture, is here a synonym of Jerusalem; cf. 4:3; 40:9, 52:1; 62:1. See comments on Zech. 8:3.) In the Millennium, people everywhere will realize that God’s revelation is foundational to their lives. They will want to know it (He will teach us) and to live according to it (walk in it).
- **2:4.** This is one of the more familiar verses in the Book of Isaiah. God will have a worldwide ministry of judging and settling disputes. He will require nations and peoples everywhere to abstain from warfare. Universal peace, with no military conflict or training, will prevail because the implements of warfare (swords and spears) will be turned into implements of agriculture (plowshares and hooks; cf. Joel 3:10). At this time of worldwide peace the nations will go to Jerusalem to learn from God (Isa. 2:2). Peace will come not by human achievement but because of God’s presence and work in Jerusalem. At that time Israel will be filled with God’s Spirit (Ezek. 36:24-30) and her sins will be forgiven (Jer. 31:31-34).
- **2:5.** Isaiah closed this short section with an exhortation for his readers to walk (live) in the light of the LORD.
  - The prophet called Israel the house of Jacob, a reference to Jacob’s descendants. Isaiah used this term eight times (vv. 5-6; 8:17; 10:20; 14:1; 29:22; 46:3; 48:1) whereas it is used only nine times by all the other prophets. When great truths about the future are given in the Scriptures, readers are often reminded of how they should live in the present (e.g., 1 Thes. 4:13-18; 5:1-8; 2 Peter 3:10-14; 1 John 3:2-3). In view of the fact that in the Millennium all nations will stream to Jerusalem to learn God’s Word, it would be sensible for Israel, already knowing that Law, to follow it (walking in its “light”) until the Lord sets up His glorious kingdom.
- **2:6-9.** God had abandoned His people (on the house of Jacob see comments on v. 5) not because He no longer loved them but because they had become like the pagans around them. The people of Judah were as superstitious as the people in the East, that is, they were following the practices of the Assyrian Empire, which at that time was encroaching on the entire Syro-Palestinian area. (Or perhaps the people of “the East” were Arameans; cf. 9:12.) At the same time Judahites were engaging in divination like the Philistines. The Philistines occupied the southwestern part of Canaan and had sought to control Israel.

- So Israel was influenced by pagan practices from several sources. That Philistines were involved in divination is evident from 1 Samuel 6:2; 2 Kings 1:2. Divination (from NĀnDo, “to practice sorcery”; cf. Lev. 19:26; Deut. 18:10, 14; 2 Kings 21:6; Micah 5:12, “cast spells”) was the attempt to control people or circumstances or to seek to know the future through power given by evil spirits (demons).
- Isaiah’s irony here is strong, for Judah should have known what her future would be because of the Word of God; yet she was trying to discern the future by pagan means. No wonder Isaiah asked God not to forgive her (Isa. 2:9). Judah had great material wealth (silver and gold) and military strength (horses and chariots, v. 7) which they no doubt mistakenly thought came to them because of their worshiping idols. This probably led to pride and self-confidence because God said they would be brought [Vol. 1, p. 1039] low and humbled (v. 9; cf. vv. 11-12, 17). Their sinful condition made judgment a necessity.
- **2:10-11.** Ultimately only one Person will be exalted. That One will be the LORD alone (v. 11; cf. v. 17). When the Lord comes to judge, people will seek to escape His judgment by hiding in caves (cf. vv. 19, 21; Rev. 6:16). They will fear His splendor (cf. Isa. 2:19, 21), realizing that their arrogance (v. 11; cf. v. 17) and wealth (vv. 7-8) cannot save them. Throughout this section (2:6-4:1) and many others in the Book of Isaiah, there is an interesting interplay between the judgment which the Lord will inflict on the nation by the Assyrian and Babylonian Captivities and the judgment which will come on Israel and the whole world in the “last days” just before the Millennium. Probably Isaiah and the other prophets had no idea of the lengthy time span that would intervene between those exiles and this later time of judgment. Though many of the predictions in 2:10-21 happened when Assyria and Babylon attacked Israel and Judah, the passage looks ahead to a cataclysmic judgment on the whole world (“when He rises to shake the earth,” vv. 19, 21).
- **2:12-18.** God has a day (cf. “day” in v. 17) in store, a scheduled time of reckoning for sinners. The LORD Almighty is an appellation used of God 62 times in Isaiah’s book; 52 times alone and 10 times in the title “the Lord, the LORD Almighty.” It denotes His military might and strength. When this Almighty One comes nothing will be able to stand in His way. Proud people will be humbled (cf. vv. 9, 11, 17), and even the great cedar trees in the forests of Lebanon, north of Israel, and oak trees (cf. 1:29) in Bashan (meaning “fertile plain”), east of the Sea of Kinnereth (later named Galilee), will be no match for the Lord. Mountains, perhaps suggesting governmental authorities (cf. comments on 2:3), and their military defenses represented by towers and fortified walls, cannot oppose Him (vv. 14-15). He will also demolish man’s trade efforts typified by the merchant ships, the hub of which existed in the city of Tyre, north of Israel (v. 16). Everything that seemed to man in his arrogance to be permanent and secure will be swept away. The LORD alone will be exalted (cf. v. 11) when He demolishes Judah’s idols (cf. v. 8). This may refer to the time when the Babylonians captured Judah in 586, but the ultimate judgment will be in the future at Christ’s Second Advent.
- **2:19-22.** When the Lord’s vengeance comes, people will try to escape by fleeing into caves (cf. vv. 10, 21). They will be terrified because God will shake the earth (see comments on Hag. 2:6-7). Carrying their idols made with silver and gold (cf. Isa. 2:7) will hinder their escape, so the people will toss them aside to rodents and bats (v. 20). Once again Isaiah’s sense of irony is strong: things highly valued will be thrown aside to detestable creatures that people hate. In verse 21 Isaiah again spoke of people hiding in caves away from God’s terror (cf. vv. 10, 19a) when He will shake the earth (cf. v. 19b).
  - Then the prophet called on Judah to stop trusting in man (v. 22; cf. Ps. 118:8-9). Man is merely like a vapor. His breath can be snuffed out quickly. Therefore to trust in him is nonsensical, for man is easily removed (Isa. 2:9, 11-12, 17). In view of God’s coming judgment Judah should begin to turn to Him in the present. God’s glory should cause them to live righteous, holy lives and thus escape His severe judgment.

- **Discussion Questions:**

1. Verse 3 says, "Come, let us go to the mountain of the Lord." Is this a place? If the "latter days" is describing the time period between Pentecost and the Second coming of Christ, where is the mountain of the Lord today?
2. Is the judgement described in verse 4 a future judgement or is it a judgement that is being executed by the Lord on the earth today? Explain.
3. Is there a contemporary expression of "Zion" in the earth today? Explain how "Zion" might apply to God's presence and power being manifested in and through the body of Christ in Kelso/Longview today.
4. Verses 3-6 describe the things that Israel was trusting in besides God. What is it that America trusts in that reflects the poor choices that Israel was making in those days? What is the one area of life YOU are tempted to trust in instead of trusting the Lord.
5. When the things they trust in fail them, verses 10-11 describe a reaction of the people to their dilemma. They run and hide in caves, realizing their arrogance. What cultural shifts have taken place in our nation over the past 30 years as a result of our arrogance in the face of God's righteousness?
6. What to you think is the key to seeing the fear of the Lord restored in our nation?