

The Branch Cleanses Sinful Israel for the Nations Isaiah 2-4

What does God say will happen in Israel's future? (2:1-5)

The "latter days" usually refer to the time between the first and second comings of Christ.

In the latter days God will lift up His house, His temple, above everything else — so it will be clearly seen by the nations. And all the nations will come to His house to learn about Him.

Then (at the end of the latter days, when Jesus comes back) God will judge between the nations, stop all wars, and establish never-ending peace on earth.

In Gal 3 and Rom 11 we read that a Gentile who trusts Jesus becomes part of the people of God, the true Israel. And the New Testament teaches that God's temple is no longer in Jerusalem, it's wherever Jewish or Gentile believers in Jesus gather together.

So we Gentile believers are part of this.

In v.5 Isaiah spells out what this means for Israel. Israel had turned from God to follow the nations. But Isaiah has told them that the nations would all turn to God — so shouldn't Israel turn to God?

But this could have made Israel think that God had changed his mind about the punishment He had talked about in ch.1. So Isaiah raises the question —

Does this mean Israel will escape from God's punishment? (2:6—4:1)

No. God has been uber-gracious to Israel. Again and again and again. But Israel persisted in despising Him and turning their backs on Him. So for God to be just, He has to punish Israel.

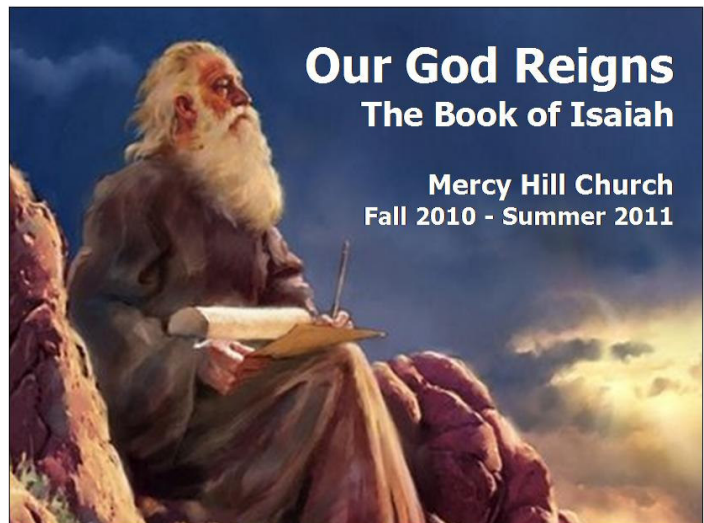
The reason God spells this out is because He loves Israel and wants her to wake up to what's coming and repent.

How will sinful Israel ever be able to bring salvation to the world?

By the Branch of the Lord — the Messiah (Isa 11:1ff; 66:1ff; Luke 4:16ff; Jer 23:5; 33:15; Zec 3:8 and 6:12).

Through His death He will cleanse her from all of her sin and write their names in His book of life.

As a result, God will bring His presence upon her — and His glory will cover her — so the nations will see and repent and be saved.



HOME GROUP DISCUSSION OF SUNDAY'S TEACHING

(Sometimes in our home groups we talk about Sunday's teaching, so we can work together on responding to God's Word — asking questions, sharing insights, talking together.)

What was the Holy Spirit saying to you Sunday through this passage?

What questions, ideas, objections, encouragements did you come away with?

What is your understanding of the future. Have you understood that God is going to work through Israel (true Israel — Jews and Gentiles who trust Jesus) to bring salvation to the world? To bring never-ending peace to the world? How does that impact you?

Did God use Isaiah's description of Israel's sin to convict you of any areas of sin? Which ones?

Do you have any area of sin in which you have not experienced cleansing (not that you're never tempted, but that you're not facing chronic defeat). What is God saying to you through this passage about this area of sin?

What's your take-away from this message? What are you going to do differently? When? How?

Share prayer requests that come up in the discussion, jot them down below, and pray for each other.

