

## Isaiah 2

*The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. Now it will come about that In the last days The mountain of the house of the Lord Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it. And many peoples will 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 concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths." For the law will go forth from Zion And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war. Come, house of Jacob, and let us walk in the light of the Lord. For You have abandoned Your people, the house of Jacob, Because they are filled with influences from the east, And they are soothsayers like the Philistines, And they strike bargains with the children of foreigners. Their land has also been filled with silver and gold And there is no end to their treasures; Their land has also been filled with horses And there is no end to their chariots. Their land has also been filled with idols; They worship the work of their hands, That which their fingers have made. So the common man has been humbled And the man of importance has been abased, But do not forgive them. Enter the rock and hide in the dust From the terror of the Lord and from the splendor of His majesty. The proud look of man will be abased And the loftiness of man will be humbled, And the Lord alone will be exalted in that day. For the Lord of hosts will have a day of reckoning Against everyone who is proud and lofty And against everyone who is lifted up, That he may be abased. And it will be against all the cedars of Lebanon that are lofty and lifted up, Against all the oaks of Bashan, Against all the lofty mountains, Against all the hills that are lifted up, Against every high tower, Against every fortified wall, Against all the ships of Tarshish And against all the beautiful craft. The pride of man will be humbled And the loftiness of men will be abased; And the Lord alone will be exalted in that day, But the idols will completely vanish. Men will go into caves of the rocks And into holes of the ground Before the terror of the Lord And the splendor of His majesty, When He arises to make the earth tremble. In that day men will cast away to the moles and the bats Their idols of silver and their idols of gold, Which they made for themselves to worship, In order to go into the caverns of the rocks and the clefts of the cliffs Before the terror of the Lord and the splendor of His majesty, When He arises to make the earth tremble. Stop regarding man, whose breath of life is in his nostrils; For why should he be esteemed?*

In 1875 William Ernest Henley expressed what man thought about man in his poem, *Invictus*. Here are some of the words of that poem:

*I am the master of my fate,  
I am the captain of my soul.*

Now, hundred and fifty years later, is this not very much what man still thinks of himself today? We are in charge, we are great and glorious, and if we do not think like that, we are sent to a psychologist to "sort us out," because we have a "negative self image." Man is glorious and God is there to serve us.

A great concern of mine is the extent to which this idea of the world has been picked up and carried into the church. So many worship songs and so many sermons have a basic message of how great we are made by God, which factually is not wrong, but the focus is.

## Great Man Made by God:

Years ago I read through the Apocrypha, and I could immediately feel the lack of authority in comparison to the Bible. Then I realised that, while God is recognised as the author of man's greatness in the apocrypha, the focus is still on man's greatness.

This was the same problem Isaiah had with the so-called people of God in his day. Judah worshipped God, but (**verse 6**) trusted the soothsayers. They approached Egypt for salvation against Assyria – their trust was on horses and chariots (**verse 7**). They created idols (**verse 8**), their own gods, and chased after silver and gold and treasures (**verse 6**). Yes, as an after-thought, it was God who made him great, but man thought himself so great, he did not really need God, and God was pushed to the sideline. It was this kind of thinking and behaviour that led to their judgement (**verses 9-10**), probably, in the immediate future, the Babylonian captivity, and they would desire (**verse 10**) to "enter the rock and hide in the dust From the terror of the LORD and from the splendor of His majesty." They will be humbled.

But that was not only Judah's problem, and Isaiah's prophecy changes here from the specific (Judah) to the universal (throughout history and of the whole world). Man still is in the centre and life turns around man, how great he is. Science has advanced so much that man thinks of himself to be invincible and that he can work out his own salvation. He does not need God. Man in general and throughout the ages was in the centre, but all that will culminate in his humiliation.

A day of reckoning is coming (**verse 12**) *"against everyone (everywhere and always) who is proud and lofty And against everyone who is lifted up, That he may be abased."* On the day of the final judgement man will realise that nothing in which he trusted can help. It will be so terrible that lost man will try to escape *"...before the terror of the LORD And the splendour of His majesty"* by trying to hide in caves and holes (**see Luk 23:30; Rev 6:16**), but it would not help him.

Isaiah concludes this whole chapter (**verse 22**) by saying one more important thing about man, *"Stop regarding man, whose breath of life is in his nostrils; For why should he be esteemed?"* The value of man is simply a breath coming from God, which could just as easily be taken away.

### **Great God Made Man:**

Where man is in the centre in the Apocrypha, in the Bible God is always in the centre, and He alone is exalted.

Even when David says (**Ps 8:5-6**), *"You have made him (man) a little lower than God, And You crown him with glory and majesty!"* the focus is not man, but God who has made man great, and man has been made great to serve the even greater God.

Isaiah (**Isaiah 2**) puts man in the right perspective. While man walks in His paths, referring to obeying Him, God will bless him. Speaking about the "last days," Isaiah mentions that *"all the nations will stream to it"* (**verse 2**) (it being Zion). Will they come to see the beauty of the city or to walk where Jesus walked on earth? No, but (**verse 3**) *"That He may teach us concerning His ways... For the law will go forth from Zion And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."* The nations will come, not for the city or the people, but to be taught the ways of the Lord and receive the consequent blessing. God will be glorified.

In response to this, Isaiah invites the people of Judah (**verse 1**) to change their present way and *"...walk in the light of the LORD"* (**verse 5**). His desire is that they will be part of that blessing, but as it was at that time, they could only expect the judgement.

The outcome and highlight of Judah placing man in the centre is (**verse 11**), *"The proud look of man will be abased, And the loftiness of man will be humbled (referring to the Babylonian Captivity), And the LORD alone will be exalted in that day."* All man's trust in his greatness, has disappointed, and the only one to be glorified that day will be God, and that is how it is supposed to be.

The outcome of man being in the centre of man universal, is once again (verse 17), *"The pride of man will be humbled And the loftiness of men will be abased (referring to hell); And the LORD alone will be exalted in that day."*

### **God Alone Deserves All the Glory:**

God alone deserves all the glory, and man's place is to glorify God. This will realise when Jesus returns and *"...Every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"* (**Phil 2:10-11; see Is 45:23**). The final straw! Now God will be glorified for all eternity. Not man, but God deserves all the glory, and those who glorify Him, He will glorify. He will give them a place with Him in heaven, where they will truly glorify Him alone. God says (**Is 48:11**), *"...I will not yield My glory to another."*

While reading through Isaiah, I noticed this very interesting verse (**29:16**), *"...Shall the potter be considered as equal with the clay, That what is made would say to its maker, 'He did not make me'; Or what is formed say to him who formed it, 'He has no understanding'?"* Man got confused, and took the glory belonging to God alone, but we need to give it to God.

**Extra Notes:**

- i. Psychologist Hector Garcia claimed "Man has created God in his own image."
- ii. The books that competed for Biblical authority, but never made it aposed to the canonical books which became our Bible.
- iii. Even in a book like Esher, where God is not mentioned once, God remains in the centre and the central theme of the Book is God scheming (beforehand) and remaining in control and even saves His people from a situation where it seemed absolutely impossible.
- iv. The consequent blessing is going to heaven and spending eternity with God. Verse 4 mentions the reign of peace, where "they will hammer their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war." That will only be a reality in heaven.