

“The Lord Alone Exalted” Isaiah 2:1- 21

Context: Isaiah, as a prophet, served as God’s prosecuting attorney, declaring God’s indictment against Judah and Jerusalem during the reigns of Kings Uzziah through Hezekiah. In chapters 2-5, Isaiah reveals God’s judgment on Jerusalem for (1) self-indulgent values, (2) irresponsible leadership, and (3) self-absorption of their women. Interspersed in these indictments are calls for repentance and the revelation of the remnants’ salvation. It is unclear whether the prophetic themes of salvation and judgment were set in the backdrop of the Syro-Ephraimite massacre of Judah (2 Chron. 28:5ff) or Sennacherib’s siege (2 Chron. 32:9ff). Both were awful. The principle of God’s judgment on the ancients for individual and community sin is applicable for today’s individual and community sin as well. Further, God’s promised redemption of the repentant remnant of Israel from foreign oppression symbolizes the redemption of the Church, a foreigner in the globalized Babylon of today (cf. Revelation 17:3-18:24).

1. Exalted through worship – Isaiah 2:2

Whether in the millennial age or the age of ages, God’s reign is founded so as to tower high above all that exists. His exaltation is symbolized by Mount Zion, overlooking all other mountains. Worship of God is depicted by the remnant, made up of all races, coming together in unity to surround Mount Zion, as waters run off foothills into a lower common pool at the Mt. Zion’s base.

2. Exalted through works – Isaiah 2:3-4

Verse 3 certainly intimates a time of learning. What is clear is that learning’s end is blessed covenantal obedience, intimated by the phrase “house of Jacob.” Although high and exalted, God remains mercifully accessible, illuminating the way of peace for those who choose guidance.

3. Exalted through judgment – Isaiah 2:5-21, 11

The people acted wickedly during the prosperous times of Uzziah and Jotham. They traded worship of the exalted God for human religions of the east, spiritual riches for riches of the world, and Divine exaltation for human exaltation. Their choices would bring humbling discipline through judgment, as promised by God.

Study questions:

- The ‘exaltation’ of God is a common and important Biblical teaching (cf. Isaiah 2:11). As a **Bible study method**, look up the meaning of this concept in the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (#2234a/ *sāgab* - Harris et al). Why do you suppose it is in the passive (*niphal*) voice? How is God exalted in the redemption of the remnant, in the judgment of the house of Jacob, and in the final day of reckoning (Isaiah 2:6-21)? Give one example of God’s salvation or judgment in your life in which He is ‘exalted’ in the sense of *sāgab* (cf. Proverbs 18:10).
- The use of the phrase “last days” depicts the last part of some future epoch. It is not always the same epoch, however (cf. Genesis 49:1ff; Acts 2:17ff; 2 Timothy 3:1ff). In Isaiah 2:2-3, the prophet’s vision is of a time of peace and worship of God. How is this epoch compatible with possible interpretations of the millennial reign of Jesus Christ alluded to in our doctrinal statement (see footnotes 1-3 ‘**On Last Things**’ in our **doctrinal statement** under **what we believe** at www.gracepointfellowship.org)? See also Revelation 20:1-9, Philippians 2:10, and 1 Corinthians 15:23-38.
- The inception of the Messianic age in Isaiah 2:4 ends the age of war (see also Isaiah 9:5; 11:6-9). In light of this, what does it mean to “pray for the peace of Jerusalem” (cf. Psalm 122:6)? What works of the remnant result in the exaltation of God in this epoch? How should the future then affect our behavior now (cf. Isaiah 2:5ff)?

Transformation exercise:

Meditate on Isaiah 2:3. Set 10 minutes aside tonight and consider what God has taught you about your salvation that exalts Him in terms of *sāgab*. Then consider a time that God has taught you through His discipline that has exalted Him as well. Give thanks for both.