

**Isaiah 2:6-11**  
**December 10, 2017**

**Open with Prayer**

**HOOK:**

Q: Have you noticed so far that Isaiah is addressing a whole nation of God's people, as opposed to a character or two? [Yes]

Q: I'm intrigued by that. I get that each of us are accountable before the Lord for anything we say and do. I get that a loving father will discipline us when we miss the mark. BUT...how does a whole nation miss the mark together? How does that happen?! [People started trusting in man, not God? Do people decide they didn't need God because they could take care of themselves? Did they have leaders that were poor examples, so the sheep followed?]

Transition: If you have been with us for our study of Isaiah so far, you understand that God's chosen people had basically broken their covenant with Him by turning away from Him. They no longer obeyed Him. They lost sight of their duty to come along beside those who needed help. They should have been pleading the case of the widow, or defending the cause of the fatherless. Instead, God's people became spiritually broken.

So last week we studied Isaiah's attempt to help his readers see the future restoration of Judah, which was filled with hope. But today we will see Isaiah express what their current spiritual condition looks like. It reads much like, "here is where you should be, but this is where you really are." Let's look at the next six verses. And as we do, we need to be thinking about how God's people slipped over the years to get in this kind of condition. How did that happen?

I think we'll have our answer after today's study. None of us want to find ourselves in the spiritual condition we'll soon read. It is my prayer that All of us CAN enjoy the blessings of our love relationship to Jesus BY avoiding the multiple WAYS God's people stopped trusting in Him.

**BOOK (NIV 1984):**

**The Present Condition of Judah – like pagan peoples**

V.6:

- You (the Lord) have abandoned your people, the house of Jacob. They are full of **superstitions** from the East; they **practice divination** like the Philistines and **clasp hands with pagans**.

V.7:

- Their land is **full of silver and gold**; there is no end to their treasures. Their land is **full of horses**; there is no end to their chariots.

V.8:

- Their land is **full of idols**; they **bow down to the work of their hands**, to what their fingers have made.

V.9:

- So man will be brought low and mankind humbled— do not forgive them.

V.10:

- Go into the rocks, hide in the ground from dread of the Lord and the splendor of his majesty!

V.11:

- The eyes of the arrogant man will be humbled and the **pride** of men brought low; the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.

**Process Observations/Questions:**

Q V.6: Why did the Lord abandon His people?

- They were full of superstitions from the East (Assyrian Empire)
- They practiced divination like the Philistines
- They clasped hands with the pagans

Q: Why are superstitions a problem? [It's misplaced trust, a form of idolatry. The Bible does not support the idea of things occurring by chance because nothing is done outside of God's sovereign control. Either He causes or allows everything in keeping with His divine plan.]

Q: Why are divinations a problem? [It's practicing sorcery. It's engaging the demonic to attempt to control people or circumstances. It goes against God's command (x-ref Lev 19:26; 20:6)]

Q: Why was "clasping hands" with the pagans a problem? [Another form of idolatry; they were willing to be influenced by pagans instead of the Lord.]

Observation: Isaiah highlights an irony here. 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.

Q V.7-8: Isaiah then describes the "fullness" of the land. What do you see? [It's full of silver and gold and is endless; full of horses and chariots. In other words, Judah had great wealth]

Q: But who was Judah crediting for their great wealth? [They mistakenly thought wealth came to them because of their worshiping idols. This probably led to pride and self-confidence.]

Q V.9: What are the consequences facing Judah? [man will be brought low and mankind humbled]

Q: Why would the prophet pray "Do not forgive them?" That's pretty bold! What's going on here? [Either Isaiah was aligning himself with God's holy hatred of sin, or he might be simply asking God to humble these proud people.]

Q V.10-11: Isaiah tells the people to run! Why? [The eyes of the arrogant man will be humbled and the pride of men brought low. Their sinful condition made judgment a necessity]

**Look at Some Practical Application:** We can see the WAYS the Israelites slipped into this dismal spiritual condition. And if it happened to them, it could happen to us. Where do you think they

went wrong? Let's figure this out. [Let people engage. Was this about poor leadership? Maybe they lost patience and didn't think the Messiah was coming?]

**Transition:** Isaiah has painted a depressing picture of Israelites who once walked closely with God and who are now so far away from Him that they don't even worship Him anymore. The Lord is not okay with that and there will be a price to be paid. Isaiah is getting ready to tell us what consequences the Israelites face for their unacceptable practices. Let's read v.12-22.

**LOOK:**

We experience God's discipline because of what you say and do. Anytime we rebel, there will be consequences. And we are reminded that God is the only One worthy of exaltation, not man and his achievements. The only reason we have life and breath is because God chose to give us this gift!

**Close in Prayer**

### **Commentaries for Today's Lesson:**

**Martin, J. A. (1985). Isaiah. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 1, pp. 1037–1039). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

#### 4. THE PRESENT CONDITION AND FUTURE CONSEQUENCES (2:6–4:1)

Judah's present condition (2:6–11) and its consequences (2:12–4:1) contrast with the glorious kingdom Isaiah had just described (2:1–5). As was true throughout much of Israel's history, the people were not obeying the Lord and therefore had to be disciplined by Him.

##### *a. Judah's likeness to pagan peoples (2:6–11)*

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 *'ānan*, "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 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).

**Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith (pp. 993-994). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.**

**2:9** Why would the prophet pray, “Do not forgive them”? First, Isaiah may have been aligning himself with God’s holy hatred of sin; divine justice would require that sinners not be excused without suffering the consequences of their disobedience. Second, the verb “forgive/bear” (*nasa*) is often translated “lift up.” The prophet might simply have been asking God to humble these proud people.

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