

INTRO: I have a friend who started reading through the Bible for the first time a little over a year ago. He got to the story of Cain and Abel, 4 chapters in, where God rejects Cain's sacrifice. And this guy had an endearing way of asking direct questions, so he asked me, in a little more colorful language than is appropriate here, "Why is God so angry at Cain? What's the deal?" Sometimes we still catch ourselves reading the OT and asking, **What's the big deal?** Why is God so angry about this or that? Our text this morning might make us ask that same question. Why is God so upset, and how can he be so angry with the very people he has chosen to be His own? The answer, in a word, is pride – our pride. We'll see this morning that God has every reason to judge human pride, especially in the people that He has called by His own name. But we'll also see that pride, and God's judgment on it, are not the last word.

Our text this morning is Isaiah 2:1-4:6, and it's helpful to note the structure of the whole passage. It begins with a prophecy of God's righteous kingdom being established as the greatest kingdom of all. Then we get three sections of judgment on different kinds of pride, followed by another prophecy of God's kingdom coming and God making himself present with His cleansed and forgiven people. Three sections of judgment are bookended by two sections on salvation. The point is that **God establishes His paradise kingdom through the judgment He brings on all pride.** In Isa 2:1-5 the prophet tells us that God will establish His kingdom. But in chapters 2-3, Isaiah says that God will not establish this kingdom without judging 3 forms of pride. In 2:6-22, God will judge all self-reliance. In 3:1-15 he will judge all God-defiance. And in 3:16-4:1, God will judge all vanity. These are the three forms of pride – self-reliance, God-defiance, and vanity – that God will judge in His own people. Yet in 4:2-6 we see that this is not a judgment of condemnation. This judgment will not have the last word. It is a judgment of cleansing, because in 4:2-6 God will recreate paradise for His recreated people.

And in all of this, we'll see that the establishment of this kingdom began with the arrival and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But it doesn't end there. Scripture teaches what we might call a telescopic view of prophecy. There's an already-not yet perspective that pervades the prophets. Some aspects of prophecy have already happened; others have yet to be fulfilled. And Isaiah could toggle between the already and the not-yet very quickly, because it seems that God showed him the future as if it were telescoped, compressed, almost like it was the one eternal now that God alone really understands and experiences as such. So we could easily say that we're going back to the future. We're going back in history to listen to Isaiah tell us what God showed Him about the future. And we'll see that while God has already accomplished much of it, the best is yet to come.

1. GOD WILL ESTABLISH HIS KINGDOM (ISA 2:1-5)

In 2:1 we read the startling phrase "*the word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.*" Isaiah didn't just hear God's word. He saw it. The imagery Isaiah uses in chapters 2-4 is probably what he saw. And it appears that he saw a great mountain rising in the latter days to be established as the highest mountain of all. Mountains were ANE symbols of homes for the gods, because the mountains were the places where heaven met earth (Motyer, 54). Jehovah's mountain – Mt Zion in Jerusalem, where the temple was – will rise and be known as the greatest mountain. Every other religion and worldview will be discredited, and Israel's God alone will be revealed as true (Oswalt, 117). The question is, when would this happen? Isaiah says this will be "*In the latter days....*" So when is that? Well, Moses uses the same phrase in **Gen 49:1** when Jacob gathers his sons "*that I may tell you what shall happen to you in days to come.*" One of those things to happen in the latter days is **Gen 49:10** "*The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.*" That's about Jesus. Jesus took the scepter and began to reign when He brought the kingdom of God with him at his first advent, especially at his death and resurrection. And the obedience of the nations begins with the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles in the book of Acts.

Numbers 24:14 also uses the phrase "the latter days," where Balaam says "*Come, I will let you know what this people will do to your people in the latter days.*" But then comes Balaam's prophecy of Jesus Christ in v.17. "*I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near: a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel....*" The risen Jesus calls himself "*the bright morning star*" in **Rev 22:16**. And now Isaiah uses this

same phrase, “*the latter days.*” Peter uses this same phrase in **Acts 2:17** to introduce his quote of Joel 2:28 as his explanation of Pentecost. The phrase “in the latter days” isn’t found in Joel 2:28, but Peter uses it to interpret the timing of how Joel 2 was fulfilled at Pentecost. **Acts 2:17** “*In the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh.*” Peter thinks that the latter days of Isaiah have started with Jesus’ death and resurrection, which led to the outpouring of the Spirit (Beale, *NTBT*, 92-116).

This whole way of thinking about “the latter days” is confirmed in **Isa 2:2-3**. “*All the nations shall flow to it, 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. For out of Zion shall go the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*” The nations will flow up to God’s mountain, and they will do this, in v.3, because the law will go out of Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. Isaiah is talking about is God’s promise to Abraham, of being a blessing to all the families of the earth. This began to happen in Acts. Jesus told his disciples in **Luke 24:47** “*Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.*” (cf. Oswalt, 116-117). And the story of Acts is the story of the word of the Lord going from Jerusalem, to Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. The mountain is already rising. The kingdom is already spreading, and we’re a part of that as we proclaim the gospel in our lives and in this church.

So there is an “already” aspect to this prophecy; but there is also a “not yet” aspect to it, which we see in v.4. *He shall judge between nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks...and there will be no more war.*” They will turn their war instruments into farm implements. Now does this mean the whole world can look forward to a time when there will be a global economy based solely on agrarian economics? I don’t think so. This is gardening language; it’s fruitfulness language; it’s **Eden** language (Motyer, 54). God is going to take us back to what we lost in the Garden of Eden. There is coming a time when there will be no more war, no more curse, no more thorns, no more pain. We will be with God in His Paradise Garden Kingdom, the new heavens and the new earth, which will be opened to people from all nations, not just Israel. And in v.5, Isaiah is inviting Israel to walk to that mountain, to walk in the light of the Lord, because they are not now walking in that light. They are walking in their own light, which is really darkness. If God’s people are to participate in God’s kingdom, God will have to bring that kingdom through judging our sin, which leads us to our second point.

2. GOD WILL JUDGE ALL SELF-RELIANCE (ISA 2:6-22)

Pride as [syncretistic] pragmatism (v.6). The reason Isaiah invites them to walk in the light of the Lord in v.5 is that God has rejected them in v.6. *For you have rejected your people, the house of Jacob, because....* And then he gives a few reasons that God has rejected them in vv.6-8. The sins that God is talking about here are the sins of God’s people. These are our sins. And the first one he mentions is pragmatism. “*They are full of things from the east and of fortune-tellers like the Philistines, and they strike hands with the children of foreigners.*” It was worldliness. It’s eastern mysticism, a religious grab-bag of subjective ideas to cobble together your own unique brand of ‘spirituality’ that ‘works for you.’ It’s trusting in alliances with men – striking hands with foreigners, seeking political and military protection from the surrounding nations. But Israel was supposed to trust in God as her king, not foreign armies. And he mentions fortune tellers. They’re refusing to rely on God for the future. Now, we may not go the psychic boutique for a palm reading, but we can treat market analysts and political forecasters like fortune tellers, can’t we? We trust in Morningstar investment summaries and political pollsters who can predict the future and determine what we should be doing now.... So the Israelites were scrupulous about public worship in chapter 1 – they love going to church; yet the world had infiltrated the church with all of its ways and means, and God would not have it. The church is not allowed to do its business like the world does. Nor are we allowed to negotiate our relationship with the culture by an infinitely flexible pragmatism. American pragmatism should not rule the church, any more than eastern pragmatism should have ruled Israel. And the fundamental issue is trust. Do we trust self and man, or God in Christ?

Pride as prosperity (v.7a). In v.7, “*Their land is filled with silver.*” So they’re trusting in the pride of

prosperity. This probably alludes to **Dt 17:17** where God had said that of future king of Israel, *“he shall not acquire for himself excessive silver and gold.”* Under Uzziah’s reign, Israel and Judah had become more prosperous than at any time since Solomon, when silver was so abundant that it wasn’t even valuable. Israel was trusting in wealth. We are quick to trust in a savings account. You’ve seen that ING commercial with people walking around carrying their big orange number? That’s trusting in prosperity to make us self-sufficient. Pride.

Pride as security (v.7b). Again in v.7, *“Their land is filled with horses, and there is no end to their chariots.”* This probably also alludes back to **Dt 17:16** where God had said of the future kings of Israel, *“Only he must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since the lord has said to you, ‘You shall never return that way again.’”* Horses were military animals in the ANE. Chariots were the pinnacle of military technology. Their abundance would have seemed like a blessing. God must be smiling on us - look at all our horses and chariots. We’re becoming strong like the other nations. And that was just it. They were becoming self-reliant. They were finding security in something other than God’s power and commitment to rescue His people.

Pride as infidelity (v.8). And all this pragmatism, and wealth, and military strength, had led Israel to worship other gods. If God had rejected them, it was because they had rejected Him first. They were cheating on Him. Oh, they kept up all the right sacrifices. They kept coming to church week after week. But their hearts were far from God. They were enjoying all the allurements of sophisticated world religions, wealth, and security, and it ruined their worship of God. It led their hearts away. But God would not let them go so easily.

God will judge our pride (vv.9-22). God would judge all of that self-reliance and draw His people back to Himself. That’s why he says in v.9 *“So man is humbled, and each one is brought low.”* They are humiliated by their worship of false gods, and they will be humbled by God’s judgment. Did you notice the repetition in vv.10-21? Ten times in vv.12-16 we read that God is *“against all/every”* (10x in vv.12-16, 2x each). Notice the repetition in vv.11 and 17 *“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.”* Instead of man exalting himself, God will exalt Himself. Instead of the creature suppressing and supplanting the Creator, the Creator will show Himself irrepressibly for who he really is, and His creatures will try to hide like insects running from the light into cracks and holes in the ground. And in vv.10, 19, 21, look at where these religious, prideful, prosperous, secure, pragmatic, self-righteous people will be hiding *“from before the terror of the Lord, and from the splendor of His majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth.”* They’ll be reduced to hiding in holes and caves and clefts.

This is the God we try to ignore. This is the God that we don’t want to believe is there. But He IS there. And soon, he will be HERE. And the hiding will be instinctive. People won’t stop and philosophize over what’s happening on the Day when God reveals Himself to all humanity. They will recognize the grave danger of a holy God who is angry over our sin. It will be as instinctive as insects running from light. God has a Great Day coming. It is His Day, the Day of Judgment and condemnation, and you can’t stop it by ignoring it. Verse 12 *“the Lord of hosts has a day... V.17 the lord alone will be exalted in that Day... V.20 In that day mankind will cast away their idols...”* Men will wish they had not worshipped and trusted in their pragmatism, or in their prosperity, or in their self-made security. They will realize that their idols of wealth, and security, and so-called sophistication are worthless against the power and judgment of the righteous God who is really there. But it will be too late. And there will only be one place to hide for safety – only in Jesus. The caves will give you up. The rocks won’t cover you. The holes in the ground will spit you out. Only Jesus will protect you in that day, because only Jesus has died to suffer the punishment due for our sins.

Fear of Man. The whole section ends with a pointed admonition. *“Stop regarding man in whose nostrils is breath, for of what account is he? Stop regarding man. Stop basing all your decisions on man’s rationale.* This is what God is angry about. They were fearing Assyrian military invasion, they were fearing Israel and Syria as smaller nations, and all this fear led them into idolatry rather than trust in God. And God’s way to

get God's people to stop fearing man is to tell them why they should fear God more. They should fear God because God has a Day when He will come out against all that is proud in men. And if you are found trusting in human wealth and strength and pragmatic alliances, you will be swept away in God's judgment, not matter how religious and secure you think you have made yourself. So fear God, not man. Rely on God, not self.

3. GOD WILL JUDGE ALL GOD-DEFIANCE (ISA 3:1-15)

God takes leaders away (3:1-7). God takes away Judah's leaders in vv.1-7 "*because [v.8] their speech and their deeds are against the Lord, defying his glorious presence.*" Absence of leaders is a judgment on God's people. In v.1, God says there will be a siege on Jerusalem – no food, no water. Then he will deplete all the leaders –military, judicial, and religious leaders, along with the pagan magicians who had infiltrated the ranks. And he will replace those leaders with immature leaders as a judgment – boys as princes; infants ruling in v.4. When there are no men willing to lead God's people – when churches have trouble finding men to lead, like in vv.6-7, that's a bad thing. And the thing for God's people to do in those moments is to look in the mirror, and ask why there is no one to lead? Have we slipped into a lifestyle of sin? That's what happened in Isaiah's day.

The reasons. The people are wicked (vv.8-11). "*Jerusalem has stumbled, and Judah has fallen, because their speech and their deeds are against the Lord, defying his glorious presence.*" And again in v.9 "*they proclaim their sin like Sodom.*" Isaiah compares Israel to Sodom, Look there in 3:9 "*Woe to them (Jerusalem and Judah – the New Sodom) For they have brought evil on themselves.*" Isaiah says the leadership vacuum is their own fault. They have no one to blame but themselves. Their defiant speech is against God, not just each other. Their words defy God's glorious presence. They act as if he can't see what they do or hear what they say; and God will not let them get away with that. And since God's people defied God's leadership, he will leave them without any leadership at all....There is still a streak of God-defiance in each of us. The essence of sin is acting like God doesn't see, hear, or care what we do. Every time we sin, it is a defiance of God's glorious presence among us.... But God makes a distinction even within the ranks of his own people. Look there in vv.10-11. "*Tell the righteous that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their deeds. Woe to the wicked! It shall be ill with him, for what his hands have dealt out shall be done to him.*" God knows how to protect the righteous even while he's punishing the wicked. He never punishes the wrong person, yet He is no pushover.

The leaders mislead (3:12-15). Yet as guilty as the people were, the leaders themselves were no better. In fact, the reason the people are so wicked is that the leaders had not led them in the word and way of the Lord. Look there in v.12 "*Oh my people, your guides mislead you and they have swallowed up the course of your paths.*" The leaders had made it so that the people couldn't even see the path of righteousness, to walk on it. God's word was to be a lamp to their feet and a light to their path, but the leaders failed to shine the light, and the path disappeared from view. So God would hold the leaders accountable in v.14. "*The Lord will enter into judgment with the elders and princes of his people [what a fearful thing to hear!]: It is you who have devoured the vineyard, the spoil of the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing my people, by grinding the face of the poor?*" declares the Lord of Hosts. The leaders were guilty of corruption and extortion. And is that not true of the health and wealth preachers today? They would squeeze every penny from the poor widow to get rich off of their weakness and then build their own religious empires. That is not Christianity. God will judge that kind of leader, if not in this life then in the next. The last thing any leader should want is for the Lord to enter into judgment with us. A godly leader doesn't just sit around eating the grapes of the vineyard. He tends the vineyard, feeds it, waters it, digs a hedge of protection around it, builds a wall around it, and sometimes he has to prune it. He works hard in the vineyard so that it bears good fruit, and not rotten fruit and thorns. And ultimately, a godly leader works hard in the vineyard because he fears the Lord more than he fears men.

4. GOD WILL JUDGE ALL VANITY (ISA 3:16-4:1; "in that day")

In v.18 we again read the phrase "*In that day...*" (cf.4:1). This is a mini-day of the Lord, the day of Jerusalem's siege from 3:1, the Day of the Lord that happened in 586BC. And just as the Lord took away food, water, and

leadership in 3:1-2, here he is taking away all the good gifts that he had given Judah and he replaces them with an opposite curse. This is called the *lex talionis*, the law of retribution, where the punishment fits the crime. The Living God is a God of poetic justice. Now, v.16 refers to the daughters of Zion, so many interpreters have said that the first part of chapter 3 judges the male leaders and the second half of chapter 3 addresses the women of Judah, maybe the wives of the male leaders. That might be, but in 4:4 God talks about washing away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and yet makes no mention of forgiveness for the male leaders. So I'm inclined to think that all of Judah, both men and women, are included in "the daughters of Zion," just like the idea of Israel as God's wife includes both the men and the women. Vanity is not just a sin of the fairer sex.

So the Israelites, both men and women, were consumed with their own vanity. Remember that this is the word that Isaiah saw in a vision. So he probably saw all of Judah, men and women, illustrated like a bunch of vain women decked out in expensive jewelry, expensive clothing, expensive perfume, fancy accessories, and all the rest. But notice, it's not the jewelry and clothing and perfume that God is condemning. Those were God's good gifts to Israel. It's the prideful attitude that Israel had developed with all those good things. In v.16, it's because *the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with outstretched necks, glancing wantonly with their eyes, mincing along as they go...*" It was the vanity of their mindset that moved God to take away his good gifts. So God replaced their flawless skin with scabs. Instead of gorgeous clothes, they'd be exposed in all their shame and nakedness. He would replace their perfume with the stench of rot. Their well-set hair would fall out. And instead of the honor of marriage, seven women would beg to be called by the name of a single man. These are siege conditions. Jerusalem would be left like a desperate woman on the street begging a man to count her part of his household, even if she had to provide her own food and clothes. That's what God would do to Judah.

There are different kinds of vanity, aren't there? There's physical vanity – clothes and physique. There's social vanity – having the right connections, being invited to the right parties. There's political vanity – having clout. There's economic vanity – the vanity of wealth and house and car and fine food. There's technological vanity today – making sure we have all the latest gadgets. There's academic and intellectual vanity – making sure we have all the right books and know all the right authors and can speak intelligently to all the right issues. There's even religious and moral vanity – always wanting to be recognized for taking the moral high road, always wanting others to know how committed you are, how spiritual you are, how selfless and moral you are. Maybe you repented of your physical or social vanity when you were converted and you no longer struggle with it. But are you sure you haven't just traded one kind of vanity for another? Have you traded in your physical and social vanity for a more sophisticated kind of religious and moral vanity? The point is, whatever we use to prop up our sense of self-importance, God will take away, so that we rely on Him alone, and so that we exalt Him rather than ourselves. And that leads us to our fifth and final point, that there is an afterward to this judgment, a purpose for it. It's a redeeming judgment.

5. GOD WILL RE-CREATE PARADISE FOR HIS RE-CREATED PEOPLE (ISA 4:2-6)

4:2 *"In that day the branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious."* God will re-create the true beauty of His people after He has taken away their vanity and their God-defiance and their self-reliance. But it is a God-given, God-created beauty, not a self-generated beauty. The Branch of the Lord here is the people of God. But it is the people of God as a Remnant of One, Jesus. The Branch of the Lord elsewhere in the prophets refers to the coming Messiah, the Son of David, the king who would finally be worthy of the name. Jer 23:5 *"The days are coming, declares the lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land."* (cf. Jer 33:15). **Zech 6:12** *Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: for he shall branch out from his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord... And there shall be a priest on his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both. And the crown shall be in the temple of the Lord....* (cf. Zech 3:8).

Here in Isa 4, the Branch seems to stand in as the representative of God's people, re-created in their beauty. God had just been denouncing his people for their vanity, and in 3:24 He said there would be "branding instead

of beauty.” But now there will be beauty and glory and even fruitfulness. But it will be a beauty and glory and fruitfulness IN the beauty and glory and fruitfulness of the Branch. The Branch itself will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride of the survivors of Israel.” The branch and the fruit are parallel. They are both references to the Messiah. The branch is beautiful, the fruit of the land will be Israel’s pride. Israel will find her beauty and significance in the Branch. Jesus is our beauty. Jesus is our glory. And it is the fruit He bears in us, by His Spirit, that is our pride. Our pride is not in our self-reliance. Our boasting is not in God-defiance or in our own vanity. We boast in the Lord. He is our pride. Our pride is that God has condescended to incorporate us into the Branch, into Jesus, who alone makes us bear good fruit. We are beautiful, fruitful, glorious branches only as we are grafted in to the Ultimate and True Branch, the Vine, Jesus.

You see the exchange. God takes away our self-reliance, our God-defiance, and our vanity; and he replaces it with the beauty and glory of good fruit in the Branch, Jesus. These are the major themes of the Bible, and they go all the way back to Genesis. What was God’s original commission to mankind? It was to be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. What was Adam’s sin? It was self-reliance, which led him to God-defiance. And what is the promise here in Isa 4? It’s the reversal of Adam’s sin, and the restoration of the original mandate to be fruitful. But it will only happen in the Branch, in the Messiah, in Jesus. And when we trace it out, we can see that these themes continue into the NT. Jesus is the vine, we are the branches, without him we can bear no good fruit (John 15). He appoints us to bear much fruit, and so prove to be His disciples. The fruit we bear is the good fruit of the Spirit in **Gal 5:22-24**. And this is how we recover the original glory of mankind. This is how we are re-created in the image of God in order to enjoy the New Creation with Him after we die – it’s by being incorporated into the Second Adam, the Branch, Jesus, by a faith that repents of our self-reliance and of our God-defiance and of our own efforts to restore the beauty we lost in Adam.

But it is not easy. It’s not comfortable. Notice how God takes away our self-reliance and God-defiance in vv.3-4. *“And he who is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy, everyone who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem, when the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodstains of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and by a spirit of burning.”* This spirit of judgment and burning is not a destroying fire. It’s a purifying fire. It’s like we already saw in **Isa 1:25** *“I will turn my hand against you and will smelt away your dross as with lye and remove all your alloy.”* God burns away our self-reliance and God-defiance, and he has to, because there is still self-reliance and God-defiance in all of our hearts, even as God’s people. But if we know what’s good for us, then we should welcome that fire, because there is a holiness without which no one will see the Lord (Heb 12:14). This spirit of judgment and burning is like the activity of God’s Spirit that John the Baptist preached in **Matt 3:11** *“He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire....”* This spirit of fire and burning is sent to us from heaven by the same Jesus who died for our sins and was raised for our justification. Jesus is the one who sends that Spirit into us, to wash and cleanse us. And that’s part of the promise of the New Covenant in Ezek 36:25, 27 *“I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. ...I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.*

So God promises to cleanse us of all our remaining dross and impurity. He has started that now in His people, and he will complete it when Christ returns. And in the meantime, we have this wonderful promise in Isa 4:5-6 where Isaiah uses exodus imagery to promise us the presence of God with us in this wilderness world. The symbol of God’s presence, the cloud by day and the fire by night, will accompany us. That’s not literal, of course. It’s the promise that God’s presence will be just as real with us as it was with the original Israelites who made the exodus out of Egypt. Yet this cloud is also associated with Mount Zion, with the glory cloud of the temple. What’s different and better is that the glory cloud will not just fill the temple as it did in the OT. It will fill the whole mountain. God’s glory will be over all His people, not just the priests. It will be over all of us. We will a cloud by day, fire by night, just like in the Exodus (Ex 13:21). God’s presence is with us now by His Spirit, and we will be with Him forever in eternity. And he will shield us by the blood of Christ from the

heat and storm of God's judgment. Christian, understand that God is with you. His Spirit is with you – with us, together. And He is a refuge for us from the heat and storm and rain – both the spiritual trials we face here in this life, and the destructive judgment of God Himself that's coming on all the world. The Spirit of Christ is a refuge for us from the harsh realities of a wilderness world, and from the judgment that God will send on all who don't repent of their self-reliance and God-defiance. Jesus is our shelter. Hide in him. When Satan accuses you, hide in Him. When the world threatens to undo you, hide in Him. The One who is burning away your dross is the same One who is your refuge.

CONCLUSION

God is establishing His kingdom, and he is doing it by judging all self-reliance, all God defiance, and all vanity. He is purifying a people for Himself, eager for good deeds, eager to reflect the glory of His holiness back to Him. And soon he will send Jesus to accomplish the final judgment of all those who continue to defy His glorious presence. And then He will gather his own to Himself, He will finish the good work he started in them, and He will recreate the world as a perfect habitat for his glorified people to live with Him forever. We all endure the judgment of God in one way or another. We either endure His judgment of purification, or His judgment of condemnation. The only way to avoid the judgment of condemnation is to be grafted into the Branch of the Lord, Jesus Christ, by repentance from sin and self-reliance, to find our life in Jesus alone. He is the only one who is beautiful and glorious in God's eyes. He is the only one who can make your life truly fruitful before God. He alone is the shade from the heat of God's anger, and the refuge from the judgment storm to come. Jesus alone can lead us into the new creation, the New Jerusalem, the city that *“has no temple, and no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light the nations will walk, and the king of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day – and there will be no night there... There flows the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the lamb through the middle of the street of the city, and on either side of the river, the tree of life. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and the lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of the lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever”* (Rev 21:22-22:5). The great business of the Christian life is to walk toward that city. Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord. Let's pray together.

“Zion has become Everest...,” and “Isaiah reverses Babel. The nations in all their diversity – a sign of the curse – becomes one holy humanity as they listen to the proclamation of Torah in the temple, and then depart to transform weapons of warfare into tools of peace” (Dempster, D&D, 173, 174).

OTBT OF CITY. DBI “City” 150-154; “Jerusalem” 436-437; “Zion” 980-981.

Gen 4:17 Cain builds the first city named Enoch, after his son. Nimrod builds Babel and Nineveh in Gen 10:8-12; Humanity builds Babel in Gen 11 “to make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth”. Gen 14 Melchizedek is priest-king of Salem; Gen 19 Sodom; Dt 12 Jerusalem (yet Dt 26:5 “Jerusalem per se is not the higher reality toward which God's people are ultimately to look. However Jerusalem serves as a pattern for that ultimate city of God” DBI 152); 2Sam 5-6 David and Jerusalem;

NT BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF CITY/ZION

NDBT, 414-416 “City, Citizenship”;

Gal 4:21-31, we are children of the Jerusalem above.

Phil 3:20-21 our citizenship is in heaven.

Heb 11:8-16, Abraham was seeking the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

Heb 12:21-22 We have come not to Mount Sinai, but to the heavenly Jerusalem, to Mount Zion.

Heb 13:14 Here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.”

Rev 17-18 THE contrast between spiritual Jerusalem and spiritual Babylon

Rev 21-22 The New Jerusalem comes down from heaven, has no temple, sun, moon, or night. Tree & River of life.