

Questions and Answers

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Periodically answers to questions that have been submitted to this website will be addressed in this section. It is not meant to be a forum for debate but for edification. Therefore the submitter's question may be edited to meet the stated objective of edification.

Submit questions to: webmaster@preceptaustin.org

Question: Does Precept Ministries International have an inductive Bible study on the book of Isaiah? If not could you make some recommendations?

Answer: As of December, 2005, Precept does not have an inductive study on Isaiah, but they are working on one so expect an offering sometime in the near future. Now a few thoughts about commentaries and Bible studies on the wonderful book of Isaiah.

Be a Berean: The first word as with all extra-biblical materials (including this website) is to be like the noble minded Berean believers who "received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so." ([Acts 17:11](#))

One's interpretation of Isaiah hinges at least in part on one's general approach to the interpretation of Bible prophecy. Suffice it to say that a number of the materials available on Isaiah take a **non-literal** approach. As has been stated many times on this website, the safest rule in interpretation of prophecy (and of all Scripture for that matter) is to interpret the passage literally, if that is possible. If the plain sense of the text makes good sense, do not try to make any other sense out of it or it will potentially be nonsense! A non-literal approach leads for example to a tendency to take the promises that were given specifically to the nation of Israel and interpreting them as being fulfilled in the New Testament church. This non-literal approach is especially significant in regard to the interpretation Revelation 20 where we see one "thousand" years repeated no less than six times! If one "thousand" is not one "thousand" then frankly it could be anything, one's interpretation depending on one's theological mindset (e.g., dispensational, reformed, covenant, etc). The one thousand year period is frequently referred to as the millennium, the time in which the prophetic promises given through Abraham to Israel are consummated. Isaiah gives numerous prophecies that correlate well with this millennial period and which are difficult to understand if one does not accept a literal millennium. There are in fact more prophecies regarding the millennium in Isaiah than in any other Old Testament book. This fact provides one with an excellent "touchstone" by which a commentary or Bible Study on Isaiah could be quickly evaluated.

Let's apply this "test" using Isaiah 2:2 which reads...

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.

Now let's see how two commentaries handle this passage, both of these resources being freely available on the internet...

Matthew Henry (circa 1706) writes the following note on Isaiah 2:2...

Now the prophet here foretels, I. The setting up of the **Christian church**, and the planting of the Christian religion, in the world. **Christianity** shall then be the mountain of the Lord's house; where that is professed God will grant his presence, receive his people's homage, and grant instruction and blessing, as he did of old in the temple of Mount Zion. The **gospel** church, incorporated by Christ's charter, shall then be the rendezvous of all the spiritual seed of Abraham. Now it is here promised, I. That Christianity shall be openly preached and professed; it shall be *prepared* (so the margin reads it) in the top of the mountains, in the view and hearing of all. Hence Christ's disciples are compared to a city on a hill, which *cannot be hid*, Mt 5:14. They had many eyes upon them. Christ himself *spoke openly to the world*, Jo 18:20. What the apostles did was not *done in a corner*, Act 26:26. It was the lighting of a beacon, the setting up of a standard. Its being every where spoken *against* supposes that it was every where spoken *of*. (Bolding added for emphasis)

Now compare how **David Guzik**, a modern evangelical commentator, handles Isaiah 2:2:

a. In the latter days: In context, the term latter days refers to the "time of the Messiah," when the Anointed of the LORD reigns over the *earth*. This speaks of the time many refer to as the *millennium*, the thousand-year reign of Jesus on this earth (Psalm 72, Isaiah 11:4-9, Jeremiah 23:5-6, Luke 1:32-33 and 19:12-27, Matthew 5:18).

b. The mountain of the LORD's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it: During the millennium, Israel will be the "superpower" of the

world. It will be the leading nation in all the earth, and the center of Israel will be the mountain of the LORD's house - the temple mount, which will be the "capital" of the government of the Messiah. All nations shall flow to the "capital" of the government of Jesus.

c. Come, let us go to the mountain of the LORD ... He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths: During the millennium, the citizens of earth will acknowledge and submit to the Lordship of Jesus. It will be a time of perfectly administrated enforced righteousness on this earth. (Bolding added for emphasis)

What is the difference between these two commentaries? It is striking and certainly you would agree, both cannot be correct. **Matthew Henry** fails to interpret this passage literally and essentially does away with this promise given to Israel and gives them to the Church! **David Guzik** interprets the prophecy literally and concludes that Israel will be the World Superpower in the Messianic Age, the 1000 year reign, the Millennium.

This highlights the problem with Bible studies and commentaries on Isaiah...

This example highlights the potential problem one encounters with Bible studies and commentaries on Isaiah. If you agree with the literal approach including a literal 1000 year period or millennium, then you need to be very careful what you chose to lead you through Isaiah's amazing book which has more prophecies about the millennium than any other OT book.

In summary, when you are considering consulting a commentary or a Bible study on Isaiah, take a moment and see how they treat Isaiah 2:2. It could save you a lot of time and frustration.

As an aside, Matthew Henry's Commentary is highly regarded by this website and is often quoted, so this assessment is not meant to discourage you from ever referring to this respected resource. The point is that you need to never let your discerning eye wander, but continue to be a Berean. You will find that in general most of the "older commentaries" (the one's freely available on the internet) will take an approach similar to Matthew Henry in the arena of Biblical prophecy.

For further study::

- **Isaiah Commentaries:** compilation of commentaries, sermons, etc. (See especially note on the Pulpit Commentary)
- **Literal interpretation:** the safest approach to interpretation is to interpret the passage literally.
- **[The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#)** excellent general commentary based on a literal interpretation of Scripture (for software see [Libronix](#), [Wordsearch 7](#), [Rejoice Christian Software](#); [Biblesoft](#); [QuickVerse Deluxe](#))
- **The Israel of God:** Addresses the question of whether the New Testament **Church** represents "**spiritual Israel**" or the "**new Israel**" as some have taught based on their interpretation of [Galatians 6:16](#). This is of more than passing pedantic interest, for some then go on to reason that the "**Israel of God**" or the "**Church**" has now replaced the Old Testament "Israel" and therefore God is finished with "Israel" in His prophetic plan. Is that what Paul is teaching in Galatians 6:16?

Submit questions to: webmaster@preceptaustin.org