

High and Exalted (2): Good News and Bad News

(Isaiah 2)

I. Introduction

- A. I remember an old bit by Archie Campbell and Roy Clark on *Hee-Haw*
1. "I bought an airplane and learned to fly." That's good. "No, that's bad"
 - a. "I flew upside down and fell out of it". Oh, that's bad. "No that's good"
 - b. "I fell right toward a big haystack." Well that's good. "No, that's bad"
 - c. "There was big pitchfork in the haystack." That's bad! "No that's good"
 - d. "I missed the pitchfork." That's good. "No, I also missed the haystack"
 2. Studying church-n-culture on Wed; some aren't cultured enough for that
 - a. We've all had times when we had good news and bad news, right?
 - 1) **Dentist:** "Good news and bad news; good for you, bad for me"
 - 2) **Mechanic:** "You want the good or bad news first?" I can fix it
 - b. Preachers know all about this good news and bad news deal
 - 1) **Good News:** Ladies Class voted to send the preacher get-well card
Bad News: When the vote was 20-19 and there were two recounts
 - 2) **Good News:** Elders vote to send preacher on trip to Holy Land
Bad News: They are waiting until the next war breaks out
 3. Thing about good news and bad news; you can't always tell difference
 - a. Roger was laid off from his job in Pennsylvania. That was bad news.
 - b. That led him to move to Virginia, and he was eventually hired here
 - c. He might be wondering if he missed the pitchfork or the haystack!
- B. We continue today with our study of the book of Isaiah, "*High and Exalted*"
1. Chapter 2 is one of those good news and bad news situation for Judah
 - a. **Good News:** The kingdom of God's Messiah will be established
 - b. **Bad News:** But first God will shake the earth and judge His people
 2. **Isaiah 2** is actually a *Reader's Digest* version of the whole book
 - a. God is faithful and will bring about His coming kingdom and glory
 - b. But God's people Judah are not being faithful and will face His wrath
 - 1) Good news is "*You are a Mighty God, your deeds are so awesome*"
 - 2) Bad news when you aren't living the right life before Him

II. Good News: The Coming Kingdom ([Isaiah 2:1-2](#))

- A. Mountains were important in the religions of ancient people
 - 1. That makes sense; the mountain is where heaven and earth meet
 - a. Pagans worshiped Baal and Asherah on *"the high places"*
 - b. Samaritans (only Torah) built their temple on Mt Gerizim
 - 2. It was the same for the Jews; God called Moses from bush on Mt. Sinai;
 - a. After leaving Egypt, God gave Israel His law on the holy mountain
 - b. God's Temple, which represents his Presence, was on Mt. Zion
 - 3. God's final kingdom is represented as being above the mountains
 - a. It is above high places; all the nations (i.e. Gentiles) will come to it
 - b. Israel looked for the coming of the Messiah because of texts like this
 - 1) The texts on the Messiah spoke of including Gentiles. Missed it!
 - 2) Do miss truth because we come to text looking for what we want?
- B. It is pretty obvious that the time Isaiah predicts has not come in full yet
 - 1. Many come to God's temple to learn his ways ([2:3](#)). *Has that happened?*
 - a. God will *"settle disputes for many people"* ([2:4](#)). *Happened yet?*
 - b. People will get out of the war business entirely ([2:4](#)) *See that on CNN?*
 - 2. Isaiah invites Judah into this vision of living the kingdom of God ([2:5](#))
 - a. Walking in the light of God is having this view of His kingdom
 - b. How did Jesus teach us to pray kingdom-sized prayers? ([Matt 6:10](#))
 - 1) What does it mean when God's is done on earth as in heaven?
 - 2) I can't make the world do that, but I can try to do that myself
 - c. Isaiah invites Israel and invites us into the kingdom God reality
 - 1) Will the world come to God to learn all His ways? *No, but I can!*
 - 2) Will the world ever beat its swords into plowshares? *No, but I can!*
 - 3) Will our world ever let God settle all its disputes? *No, but we can!*
 - 3. Can living a kingdom life now speed it's ultimate coming ([2 Pet 3:11-12](#))
 - a. We can't just wait until the time God makes everything right at end
 - b. We have to live that kingdom reality in our lives now in the present
 - c. More the kingdom comes in me, the closer we are to kingdom come!

III. Bad News: The Day of the Lord

- A. This vision of God's coming kingdom contrasts with those in kingdom then
 - 1. Isaiah kingdom is one where people come seeking God's ways
 - a. The kingdom that he describes in Judah is very different (**Isa 2:7-8**)
 - b. What strikes you about this description of Judah as God's kingdom
 - 1) They are not seeking God's mountain but the high places of pagans
 - 2) They don't beat swords into plowshares; they stockpile chariots
 - 3) They don't seek God's law; they look like the nations around them
 - 2. They thought they were special; pride blinded them to the truth (**2:11**).
 - a. Adam and Eve wanted to be like God rather than following God
 - b. Judah wanted to be God's kingdom without accepting God's rule
 - 1) They wanted to be chosen people; they wanted to live like pagan
 - 2) They wanted God on Sunday and have their wild Saturday nights
- B. Isaiah introduces one of the most common prophetic themes (**Isa 2:12**)
 - 1. The "*Day of the Lord*" always refers to a time when God judges a people
 - a. Isaiah pointed to fall of Babylonian; Joel to a terrible locust plague
 - b. Jesus uses it to describe fall of Jerusalem (*using Isaiah's language*)
 - c. Peter uses it to describe the ultimate judgement at the end time
 - 2. Judah looked like the pagan nations around her, and she was proud
 - a. But pride always goes before a fall: Judah would fall like the nations
 - b. All the things she was proud of would be completely leveled
 - c. At the end of the day, the only thing lifted up will be God (**2:17**)
 - 3. Judah thought the Day of the Lord was going to be good news for them
 - a. Saw it as soon-to-come-time when God would "*judge the nations*"
 - 1) It was destruction for their enemies. For them it was party time!
 - 2) No part of prophet's sermon got more "*amens*" than preaching this
 - b. Day of the Lord would be bad news and worse news (**Amos 5:18-20**)
 - 1) God wasn't just coming to judge the nations—He would judge all
 - 2) They were acting like the nations; they would be judged like nations
 - c. In the words of great theologian Rambo, God says "*I'm coming for you*"

IV. Conclusion

- A. Does God's kingdom always refer to the same thing on Bible? Yes and No
1. Israel was God kingdom; now the church is God's kingdom ("keys")
 - a. Sometimes it's heaven ("*Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven*")
 - b. And what did Jesus mean by "*the kingdom of God is within you?*"
 2. Word "kingdom" (*basileia*, where we get *basilica*) mean domain or rule
 - a. The church is where God's domain is seen today in an outward way
 - b. His rule or domain must begin in our hearts ("*kingdom is within you*")
 - c. God's ultimate rule/power will be seen in the new heaven and earth
 3. Fred has an old saying he shares (he got it from Ben Franklin, over lunch)
"If you are too busy to prepare for heaven, then you might be too busy to go"
 - a. We must be preparing for that heavenly domain now as we live
 - b. We live God kingdom rule today— we ask, "*Build kingdom here*"
- B. What does Isaiah say happens when "*mountain of the Lord is established*"
1. **First**, kingdom people go to mountain to learn His ways (**Isa 2:3a**).
 - a. Why is it so hard to get our people (and our kids) to Bible classes?
 - b. Are we just doing them wrong? Are we just having them too early?
 - 1) Do we need to turn things around and have worship, then class?
 - 2) Do we act like kingdom people in other ways as we seek to learn?
 2. **Second**, kingdom people are conduits for the word of God (**Isa 2:3b**)
 - a. Where does the word of God go out to others from? Jerusalem
 - b. Kingdom people are those who share the word of God with others
 - 1) Do we invite people to church? Engage in religious conversations
 - 2) Are we people that not only live the kingdom but speak about it?
 3. **Third**, kingdom people let God settle disputes and seek peace (**Isa 2:4**)
 - a. Paul said the kingdom is not about eating and drinking (or fighting)
 - b. It's not about grudges or feuding and gossip (**Eph 4:31-32**)
 - 1) Kingdom people are those who seek the way of peace
 - 2) Will we beat all our swords into plowshares or sharpen them?
- C. We are called to the top of God's mountain (**Psa 24:3-4**) Will you go?