

## **Dr. Robert Vannoy, Major Prophets, Session 3, Isaiah 2:1-4 from a Postmill and Amill Perspective Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

### **1. Abstract of Vannoy, Major Prophets, Session 3, Isaiah 2:1-4 from a Postmill and Amill Perspective, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

Robert Vannoy's lecture explores varying interpretations of Isaiah 2:1-4, specifically focusing on how Postmillennial, Amillennial, and Premillennial perspectives understand the prophecy. The lecture analyzes commentaries by J.A. Alexander and Delitzsch (Postmillennial), Young, Calvin, and Laetsch (Amillennial) to showcase their arguments regarding the role of the church, the spread of the gospel, and the establishment of peace. Vannoy critiques the Amillennial view, particularly its figurative interpretation and difficulty in aligning with a literal understanding of "the last days." He also addresses the challenge posed by the phrase "neither shall they learn war anymore" to a Premillennial interpretation. Ultimately, the lecture emphasizes the complexities of literal versus figurative interpretation in biblical prophecy, advocating for a careful consideration of scriptural context and usage when trying to derive meaning.

### **2. 20 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Vannoy, Major Prophets, Session 3 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Major Prophets → Major Prophets.**



**Vannoy\_MP\_Session  
n03.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Vannoy, Major Prophets, Session 3, Isaiah 2:1-4 from a Postmill and Amill Perspective

Okay, here's a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpt of Robert Vannoy's lecture on Isaiah 2:1-4, focusing on the different eschatological interpretations: Postmillennial, Amillennial, and Premillennial.

#### Briefing Document: Isaiah 2:1-4 Eschatological Interpretations

##### Main Themes:

- **Interpretative Frameworks:** The lecture explores three primary eschatological positions: Premillennialism, Amillennialism, and Postmillennialism, and how each interprets Isaiah 2:1-4. The core question revolves around how and when the prophecy of universal peace will be fulfilled.
- **Exaltation of the Church vs. Literal Fulfillment:** A key point of divergence is whether the prophecy refers to the exaltation of the church (spiritual/symbolic interpretation) or a literal, future fulfillment in Jerusalem (physical/literal interpretation).
- **Literal vs. Figurative Language:** The lecture grapples with the challenges of determining when biblical language should be interpreted literally or figuratively, especially concerning the "mountain of the Lord's temple" and the cessation of war.
- **The timing and nature of "the last days."** The amillennial view sees the "last days" as the time between the two advents, while the premillennial view sees it as a specific period before the millennium.
- **Critique and Defense of Premillennialism:** Vannoy presents a critique of both Postmillennial and Amillennial interpretations, arguing that Premillennialism offers a more consistent and less problematic understanding of the text.

## Key Ideas and Facts from Each Perspective:

### 1. Postmillennial Interpretation:

- **Core Belief:** The spread of the gospel and the growth of the church will gradually transform society, leading to an era of peace and righteousness *before* Christ's return.
- **Isaiah 2:1-4:** The prophecy is understood as the future exaltation of the church. The "mountain of the Lord's temple" symbolizes the church, and the "nations flowing to it" represent Gentiles converting to Christianity. The cessation of war is a consequence of this widespread conversion.
- **Key Figures:** J.A. Alexander, Delitzsch (Keil and Delitzsch commentary).
- **Quote:** "As the gospel goes forth and people from all nations come to Christ, the ultimate results will be the cessation of war and establishment of universal peace." (Referring to Alexander's interpretation)
- **Quote:** "It was fulfilled as Theodoret observes in the fact that the word of the gospel rising from Jerusalem, as from a fountain, flowed through the whole of the known world. But these fulfillments were only preludes to a conclusion which is still to be looked for in the future of what is promised in the following verses which is still unfulfilled." (Delitzsch)
- **Motivation:** This view provides strong motivation to spread the gospel.
- **Problem:** This view struggles with scriptures that say things will get worse and worse.

### 2. Amillennial Interpretation:

- **Core Belief:** The Millennium is a symbolic representation of the present church age. Christ reigns spiritually in the hearts of believers. The prophecy of peace is fulfilled in principle now, but will only be completely fulfilled in the eternal state *after* Christ's return.
- **Isaiah 2:1-4:** The "mountain of the Lord's temple" is a metaphor for the worship of the Lord, which will triumph over all other religions. The "latter days" refers to the Messianic days (the church age).
- **Key Figures:** E.J. Young, John Calvin, Theodore Laetsch.

- **Quote:** "We may answer both these positions as follows. In so far as men learn of the Lord and are taught of him, they will seek to apply in their lives the principles of his government. Consequently, even at the present day, in so far as men believe the gospel and seek to practice it in their lives this prophecy finds fulfillment. At the same time it must be remembered that sin is still present, and it will not be until the complete removal of sin in the Second Advent of the Lord that this prophecy will be realized in its completeness." (Young)
- **Quote:** "I reply that peace exists among us just as far as the kingly power of Christ is acknowledged, and that these two things have a mutual relation. Would that Christ reigned entirely in us, but he doesn't. So we still have these problems." (Calvin)
- **Quote:** "The Christian from Alabama and the Christian from Ohio, one wearing the southern gray and the other in northern blue were fighting against each other in bloody battle. Yet both were brethren in Christ, both members of his kingdom of peace, both wanting faith in their common Savior, and both enjoying the peace procured for them by the Prince of Peace and praying for the spiritual welfare of each other." (Laetsch)
- **Problems:** The complete fulfillment is pushed to the eternal state.
- Has a difficult time explaining how the words of this prophecy are fulfilled presently.
- Must qualify the fulfillment, and see at least in some sense a figurative fulfillment.

### 3. Premillennial Interpretation (Vannoy's Preferred View):

- **Core Belief:** Christ will return *before* the Millennium (a literal 1000-year reign on earth). During this period, He will rule from Jerusalem, bringing about a time of peace and righteousness.
- **Isaiah 2:1-4:** The prophecy should be understood more literally. Jerusalem will be exalted, becoming the center from which the Lord will rule. The cessation of war is a future, tangible reality during the Millennial kingdom.
- **Key Arguments:** The language of the text ("They will beat their swords into plowshares...") does not contain qualifications suggesting partial or merely "in principle" fulfillment.
- Taking Jerusalem literally aligns better with the Micah context of the prophecy.

- The premil view avoids problems of the other two positions.
- **Response to Objections:** Addresses the objection that Revelation 20 describes a war at the end of the Millennium, arguing that the Hebrew phrase in Isaiah 2:4 ("neither shall they learn war anymore") implies a "lack of continuation" of war, not necessarily a "never again" scenario.
- **Literal vs. Figurative:** While advocating for a more literal approach, Vannoy acknowledges that some figurative language may still be present (e.g., the exact extent of Jerusalem's geographical elevation).
- **Problem:** Critics point to Revelation 20 to say that the Millennial position in Revelation 20 speaks at the end of the Millennial period Satan's being loosed, and there is a war.

#### **Additional Points:**

- **Literal vs. Figurative Interpretation:** The lecture emphasizes the difficulty in establishing a simple rule for determining when to interpret scripture literally or figuratively. Context and scriptural usage elsewhere are crucial considerations.
- **Geographical Elevation of Jerusalem:** J. Barton Payne believes in a literal, miraculous geological change involving the elevation of Jerusalem.

**Overall, the lecture provides a detailed overview of the various interpretations of Isaiah 2:1-4, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of each eschatological position and emphasizing the challenges of interpreting biblical prophecy.**

## 4. Study Guide: Vannoy, Major Prophets, Session 3, Isaiah 2:1-4 from a Postmill and Amill Perspective

### Isaiah 2:1-4: A Study Guide

#### Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. According to J.A. Alexander, what does the "mountain of the Lord's temple" symbolize?
2. What is Delitzsch's view on the fulfillment of Isaiah 2:3, and how does it relate to the gospel?
3. According to E.J. Young, why can't Isaiah 2:1-4 be attributed to a Millennium following Christ's return?
4. How does Young qualify the fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah 2:1-4 in the present age?
5. According to Calvin, what is the "excellent remedy" for putting an end to quarrels, and how does it relate to the gospel?
6. How does Calvin respond to those who use Isaiah 2:4 to promote anarchy and condemn all forms of war?
7. How does Theodore Laetsch illustrate the fulfillment of Isaiah 2:4, even amidst conflict, using the example of the American Civil War?
8. What is Vannoy's critique of the amillennial interpretation of Isaiah 2:1-4?
9. What are the three options for interpreting Isaiah 2:2, particularly the phrase "be raised above the hills," regarding Jerusalem?
10. How does Vannoy address the objection that Isaiah 2:4's "neither shall they learn war anymore" contradicts the premillennial view, considering the war at the end of the Millennium in Revelation 20?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. According to J.A. Alexander, the "mountain of the Lord's temple" is symbolic of the church, signifying its future exaltation and the accession of the Gentiles. He sees the Gentiles coming into the church as fulfilling the prophecy that "all nations will flow to it."

2. Delitzsch believes that the fulfillment of Isaiah 2:3, where the word of the gospel rises from Jerusalem, has only been a prelude. He looks forward to a conclusion in the future of what is promised in the verses that follow, which remains unfulfilled.
3. Young argues that Isaiah 2:1-4 is attributed to the latter days, which he identifies as the Messianic days, meaning it's already in the present age. He states the blessings taken are spiritual and are a result of the Holy Spirit in connection with the preaching of the gospel.
4. Young qualifies the fulfillment by stating that to the extent that people learn of the Lord and apply His principles, the prophecy finds fulfillment in their lives. However, he acknowledges that because sin is still present, complete fulfillment won't occur until the Second Advent.
5. According to Calvin, the "excellent remedy" is the gospel of reconciliation, which removes enmity between people and God. This reconciliation brings people into peace and harmony with each other, leading Christ's people to be meek and devoted to the pursuit of peace.
6. Calvin replies that the prophet speaks metaphorically about the kingdom of Christ, which leads men through mutual kindness to become reconciled to each other. He explains that the passage refers to relationships between believers, not actual warfare in the literal sense.
7. Laetsch uses the example of the American Civil War, where Christians from both the North and South were fighting, yet shared a common faith in Christ. He suggests that despite their conflict, they still experienced oneness in Christ and the peace He gave in their hearts, fulfilling the prophecy spiritually.
8. Vannoy critiques the amillennial interpretation for not doing justice to the language of the text in Isaiah 2:4. He argues the passage is not about something partially fulfilled, but what will happen when people receive the law of the Lord as it goes forth from Zion, and the Lord judges the nations and rules.
9. The three options are: (1) an extreme figurative interpretation that it's not Jerusalem at all but the church, (2) a modified figurative understanding that it is Jerusalem but refers to its prominence, and (3) a completely literal interpretation that it is Jerusalem and refers to a geographical elevation.

10. Vannoy argues the combination of the negative "lo" + imperfect verb + "od" in Hebrew suggests a lack of continuation, not necessarily "never again." He contends that Isaiah 2:4 describes a cessation of learning war, which has always been a part of human history, and that this doesn't rule out a future war at the end of the Millennium.

## Essay Questions

1. Compare and contrast the postmillennial and amillennial interpretations of Isaiah 2:1-4, focusing on their understanding of the role of the church and the timing of the prophecy's fulfillment.
2. Discuss the challenges that amillennial interpreters face in reconciling the "latter days" mentioned in Isaiah 2:2 with their understanding of the prophecy's fulfillment.
3. Analyze the arguments for and against taking Isaiah 2:2 ("the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as chief among the mountains") literally versus figuratively, considering the context and other scriptural uses.
4. Evaluate Vannoy's critique of both the postmillennial and amillennial positions on Isaiah 2:1-4, and explain why he finds the premillennial view to be the most consistent interpretation.
5. Explore the implications of each of the three eschatological views (premillennial, amillennial, and postmillennial) on the Christian's engagement with social justice issues and the pursuit of peace in the world.



## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Eschatology:** The study of end times or "last things," including events like the Second Coming, the Millennium, and the final judgment.
- **Premillennialism:** The belief that Christ will return before a literal 1,000-year period (Millennium) of peace and righteousness on Earth.
- **Amillennialism:** The belief that the Millennium is a symbolic representation of the present church age and that Christ will return after this period to establish the eternal state.
- **Postmillennialism:** The belief that Christ will return after a long period of peace and righteousness on Earth, brought about by the spread of the gospel and the efforts of Christians.
- **Metonymy:** A figure of speech in which a thing or concept is referred to by the name of something closely associated with that thing or concept.
- **Latter Days:** A term used in biblical prophecy to refer to the time leading up to the end of the age, often associated with the Messianic era.
- **Millennium:** A period of one thousand years, often associated with a time of peace and righteousness.
- **Theonomy:** A theological position that advocates for the application of Old Testament law to modern society.
- **Pacifist:** The belief that war and violence are unjustifiable and that disputes should be settled peacefully.
- **Dispensation:** A period of time in which God deals with humanity in a particular way, according to a specific covenant or set of principles.

## 5. FAQs on Vannoy, Major Prophets, Session 3, Isaiah 2:1-4 from a Postmill and Amill Perspective, [Biblicalelearning.org](http://Biblicalelearning.org) (BeL)

### FAQ on Isaiah 2:1-4 and Eschatological Interpretations

- **What is the central prophecy in Isaiah 2:1-4?**
- Isaiah 2:1-4 speaks of a time in the "last days" when the mountain of the Lord's house (Zion/Jerusalem) will be established as the highest of the mountains, and all nations will stream to it. From Zion, the law/word of the Lord will go forth, and God will judge between nations, leading them to beat their swords into plowshares and learn war no more, resulting in universal peace.
- **What are the three main eschatological perspectives on this passage?**
- The three main perspectives are Premillennialism, Amillennialism, and Postmillennialism. Premillennialism sees the prophecy as being fulfilled literally during a future millennial kingdom after Christ's return. Amillennialism interprets the prophecy as being fulfilled spiritually in the church age, with a complete fulfillment in the eternal state. Postmillennialism believes the prophecy is gradually being fulfilled as the gospel spreads and transforms society, leading to a future golden age of peace *before* Christ's return.
- **How do Postmillennialists interpret Isaiah 2:1-4?**
- Postmillennialists like J.A. Alexander and Delitzsch believe the exaltation of Zion symbolizes the exaltation of the church. As the gospel goes forth and people from all nations come to Christ, this will eventually result in the cessation of war and the establishment of universal peace. They see the spread of the gospel as the means to achieve these conditions through the regeneration of hearts. They view Isaiah 2:4 as something that should motivate believers towards spreading the gospel so these things will take place.

- **How do Amillennialists interpret Isaiah 2:1-4?**
- Amillennialists, such as E.J. Young, interpret the prophecy as being fulfilled in principle during the church age, starting with the founding of the church in Jerusalem and the spread of the gospel to all nations. However, they believe that the complete fulfillment will only occur in the eternal state after the Second Coming of Christ, due to the continued presence of sin. Although they are aware of the problem with other Scriptures that talk of the world getting worse before Christ's return, they still hold that peace will only truly be achieved in eternity.
- **How does Calvin approach the interpretation of Isaiah 2:1-4, and what potential pitfall does he address?**
- Calvin, also an Amillennialist, sees the prophecy related to the church. He believes that when Christ brings Gentiles and nations under his dominion, it leads to peace, as the gospel of reconciliation removes enmity between humans and God, thereby fostering harmony among people. Calvin also addresses the potential misuse of this passage to promote pacifism and anarchy. He clarifies that the prophecy speaks metaphorically about the kingdom of Christ and doesn't negate the right of authorities to use the sword for justice and protection.
- **What are some of the problems with the Amillennial and Postmillennial views of Isaiah 2:1-4?**
- One problem with the Postmillennial view is that it does not account for other scriptures suggesting the world will get worse. One problem with the Amillennial view is that it locks the interpreters into a position between the two advents of Christ, and must qualify the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. They must view that the prophecy is a figurative fulfillment. Both struggle to explain how the "last days," mentioned in the passage, apply to the current church age or the eternal state and can fall into excessive spiritualization, ignoring the literal aspects of the prophecy.

- **How do Premillennialists respond to the claim that Isaiah 2:4 contradicts the end-time wars described in Revelation?**
- Premillennialists reconcile Isaiah 2:4 with the end-time wars by arguing that the phrase "neither shall they learn war anymore" (or similar translations) implies a *cessation or lack of continuation* of war during the millennial kingdom, not necessarily its *absolute absence forever*. They point to the use of the Hebrew combination "lo' + imperfect verb + 'od" which suggests a temporary halt rather than a permanent end. Therefore, the war at the end of the Millennium, as described in Revelation 20, does not negate the general state of peace during the Millennial Kingdom.
- **What are the different perspectives on whether the "mountain of the Lord's house" in Isaiah 2:2 should be interpreted literally or figuratively?**
- There are varying perspectives on whether the "mountain of the Lord's house" should be taken literally or figuratively. Some Amillennialists interpret it purely figuratively, symbolizing the prominence of the church. Others, including some Premillennialists, take it literally as referring to Jerusalem but interpret the phrase "raised above the hills" figuratively, denoting Jerusalem's future prominence and importance in the world. A more literal interpretation suggests a physical geological uplift of Jerusalem in the end times, a view held by figures like J. Barton Payne. Determining which parts of the prophecy are figurative versus literal is a complex interpretive challenge.