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**Isaiah 2:5** .....

A. Introduction

1. Enlightenment is very much an 'in word' these days
  - a. the subject of Oprah came up in our adult class last week
    - (A) so it is timely to share some comments on her:
    - (B) Marcia Nelson, in the book, 'The Gospel according to Oprah' points out some of the commendable aspects of Oprah's spirituality, which arose from her baptist upbringing; such themes as forgiveness, generosity, self-examination, gratitude and community.
    - (C) unfortunately, that is not all; she has also endorsed non-Christian views on her program, as in her recent endorsement of the book by Eckhart Tolle, 'A New Earth' which, in the author's words, is 'a revival for the present age of the oldest form of recorded spiritual teaching: the sutras of ancient India.' – that is, a mixture of Hinduism, Buddhism and watered-down Christianity – this is the New Age Movement which denies a personal God.—{2}.
  - b. that is the enlightenment which the world finds acceptable these days; a spirituality without religion; a self-centred worship without dogma or doctrine.
  - c. Isaiah's call to Judah, and to us this morning, has a far different – and far more satisfying – foundation
2. the text: **Come, house of Jacob, and let us walk in the light of the Lord.** (Isaiah 2:5)
  - a. this verse immediately follows the tremendous promise of the coming righteous peace of Isaiah 2:2-4 which we considered in our last message
  - b. No ... you can relax – we are not going to go through this book of Isaiah verse by verse; none of us has the stamina!
  - c. today's text takes that prophetic light of the Lord shining in the preceding promises, making it relevant in two ways
  - d. firstly, Isaiah, in the light of God's great and exalted plans for Judah, and prods them to stir from their contentment in living at the lowest, possible spiritual level
    - (A) God's plan for Zion is for exaltation, blessing, peace
    - (B) so, once again, Isaiah uses that gentle word, 'come'
    - (C) addressed, not to Israel – prince with God – but to Jacob – that deceiving twister, Jacob

- (D) Jacob, who heedless of the heights of the wonderful plans of God, enjoys living in the spiritual depths of sin
- (E) how often we are quite content to live on the lowest spiritual level possible yet still claim to be Christians, whereas God has promises and plans for us of tremendous spiritual blessing!
- e. secondly, Isaiah uses that preceding prophetic truth, as a motivator for Jacob to seek to change; namely,
  - (A) the words of the heathen nations in Isaiah 2:3, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths.'
  - (B) this fulfils what God foretold through Moses:
  - (C) They have made Me jealous with what is not God; They have provoked Me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with those who are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation, (Deuteronomy 32:21)
  - (D) this prophecy now being fulfilled in the preaching of the gospel of salvation to all mankind. Paul says: 'I say then, they {i.e., the Jews} did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them {i.e., the Jews} jealous.' and then he continues, 'if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them.' (Romans 11:11, 14)
  - (E) the lost heathen will desire to walk with the Lord; that should motivate God's people to do so as well
  - (F) God sometimes startles His people to their senses
  - (G) in Revelation 2:5 he threatens the church of Ephesus with the removal of their candle-stick; what will God have to do with the church in our country, before we realize how seriously wrong things are, and so that we will walk with Him?

3. we shall look at this text, Isaiah 2:5, as follows –

- a. Come, house of Jacob, and let us walk in the light of the Lord ...
  - (A) ... in the light of His truth
  - (B) ... in the light of His will
  - (C) ... in the light of His countenance

- B. One: Walk in the light of the Lord – in the light of His truth.
1. Pilate cynically asked Jesus, 'what is truth?'
    - a. our society questions the existence of objective truth, of absolute truth – truth it says is subjective, it is relative
    - b. but God's word holds another position; listen:
      - (A) Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; For You I wait all the day. (Psalms 25:5)
      - (B) But the Lord is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth quakes, And the nations cannot endure His indignation. (Jeremiah 10:10)
      - (C) Jesus said, 'Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.' (John 17:17)
      - (D) And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)
      - (E) and again, Jesus said, This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. (John 17:3)
    - c. there is an absolute truth
      - (A) that truth that is part of God's nature
      - (B) that truth that is found only in God
      - (C) that truth that is revealed in the word of God
        - (1) the spoken and written word of God, his revelation to mankind given through the prophets; the Bible
        - (2) but ultimately, truth is the living Word of God, Jesus of Nazareth, who came to earth, the express image of God, truly showing God's true nature
      - (D) and that truth is the source of salvation
  2. walking in the light of the Lord – in the light of His truth
    - a. means that through God's written word
      - (A) we understand who God is
        - (1) that He is Creator of heaven and earth
        - (2) that He is the Self-Existent One

- (B) we understand what God's nature is
  - (1) that He is holy, majestic above all His creation
  - (2) that He is eternal, without beginning or end
  - (3) that He is righteous, intolerant of sin
  - (4) that He is love, showing mercy and grace

- b. but means also that through God's living Word, Jesus
  - (A) the Christ; the Son of God entering into the world
  - (B) we have a living demonstration of truth

- (1) in his words
  - (2) in his actions
- (C) who as he trod the dusty roads of Galilee and the city streets of Jerusalem
  - (1) sought for himself disciples
  - (2) those who would learn the light of the truth of God
  - (3) and then, as today, gave the invitations

- c. Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, 'I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.' (John 8:12)
- d. 'I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness.' (John 12:46)

### 3. walking in the light of the Lord – in the light of His truth

- a. ultimately means believing in and following Jesus Christ
- b. not merely as one of a number of examples as many teach
- c. but as the One sent from the Father, who did all things to please God, both prophetically
  - (A) 'I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your Law is within my heart.' (Psalms 40:8)
  - (B) and in practice, 'He ... prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done."' (Matthew 26:42)

### C. Two: Walk in the light of the Lord – in the light of His will

- 1. the Holy Spirit is given to every believer that he or she may discern what is the will of God
  - a. the mission of the Holy Spirit is given in John 16:13-14, among other places: '13 But when He, the Spirit

of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.'

- b. this agrees with the OT promise, 'I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.' (Ezekiel 36:27)
  - c. and we find it fulfilled in the NT saints,
    - (A) If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. (Galatians 5:25), and,
    - (B) Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? (1 Corinthians 3:16)
  - d. but, and here is a warning, for there are many Christians who get snared by cults such as New Age, there are abroad today other spirits, spirits seeking to misdirect our lives
  - e. how do we distinguish such spirits from the Holy Spirit? 'Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.' say 1 John 4:1, then goes on to give one criteria, that false spirits will deny that the Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, Son of God incarnate
  - f. God has given us a another touchstone to test spirits: His law and commandments reveal the light of His will:
    - (A) Those who love Your law have great peace, And nothing causes them to stumble. (Psalms 119:165); false spirits want us to stumble; Holy Spirit, to stand
    - (B) Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path. (Psalms 119:105)
    - (C) For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light; And reproofs for discipline are the way of life (Proverbs 6:23)
    - (D) So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. (Romans 7:12)
2. Am I saying that we are bound by the law – definitely not
- a. the law cannot bring salvation: 'because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.' (Romans 3:20)
  - b. nor is it the means of perfecting our salvation: '2 This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?' (Galatians 3:2-3)

- c. let me point out that while the will of God underlies all of the OT laws, that some of those laws were limited in scope:
  - (A) there were the laws of the land, how Israel was to be a nation ruled by God in justice, a testimony to nations; laws that have no applicability outside that theocracy
  - (B) there were the health and dietary laws, designed that God's people should thrive in that land; the NT makes clear that these do not apply under the new covenant
  - (C) there were the laws of sacrifice and festivals which were types and shadows, being consummated in Christ as is carefully explained in the book of Hebrews
- d. but there were also laws describing God's moral will, such as the ten commandments, which the NT reiterates
  - (A) either explicitly, as e.g., of idolatry and blasphemy
  - (B) or implicitly, as e.g., "If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself,' you are doing well." (James 2:8) as summing up the second part of the ten 'words'
- e. so God's commands, as found in His word, give the road map whereby we can test that we are indeed being led by the Spirit of God in God's will: the Spirit who inspired the word of God, will never lead us contrary to that word
- f. by seeking to walk in the light of His will, we can then ...

D. Walk in the light of the Lord – in the light of His countenance

1. Now here is an incredible truth

a. the Holy One, the Almighty, the Creator, the Sovereign Lord of the Universe

Join all the glorious names

Of wisdom, love and pow'r

That ever mortals knew,

That angels ever bore:

All are too poor to speak His worth,

Too poor to set my Saviour forth.<sup>—{3}</sup>.

b. Join all those names to this thought, that this self-same God desires to have fellowship with you and me; and us? 'I'm too busy, Lord, this morning for more than a minute.'

2. The Lord God wants to spend time with His people
  - a. that is what walking in the light of His countenance means
  - b. **How blessed are the people who know the joyful sound! O Lord, they walk in the light of Your countenance.** (Psalms 89: 15)
  - c. David in writing Psalm 23 knew what it was to walk in the light of God's countenance – you can trace that walk through verse after verse: in God's supplying his needs
    - (A) **The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want**
    - (B) in God's giving him rest, restoration, direction
    - (C) **He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake**
    - (D) in every aspect of life, even **'the valley of the shadow of death,'** God is with him, God comforts him
    - (E) and one day he would walk through the door from one part of his life into another,
    - (F) **and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.**
  - d. so that in another Psalm he could sing out with joy, **'The Lord is my light, my light and my salvation!'** (Psalm 27: 1)
  - e. this is what it is to walk in the light of His countenance
  
3. On the great assemblies of the people of Israel
  - a. the high priest and his sons were told to give this blessing
  - b. **'The Lord bless you, and keep you; The Lord make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace.'** (Numbers 6:24-26)
  - c. a blessing asking God's continued presence with His people
  - d. in that last evening with his disciples, Jesus taught them many things – in John 15 the subject was the mutual abiding of the Lord Jesus with His people
    - (A) that His people might bear fruit, and, as he said,
    - (B) **'These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.'** (John 15: 11)
  - e. **There is joy in the Lord, There is love in His Spirit, There is hope in the knowledge of Him**<sup>{4}</sup>.
  - f. these are the fruit of walking in the light of the LORD

4. To Jacob or to Israel – this invitation is given
  - a. to the unforgiven and to the forgiven sinner
  - b. to come to the Light of the World, Jesus Christ, Saviour
  - c. and begin for the first time, or take up anew, to walk in the light of the LORD: in His truth, His will, His countenance.

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2. Adapted from ‘Church of Oprah,’ by James Emery White in his Serious Times web-site, May 13, 2008 – Kerux illustration #12978
3. Isaac Watts (1674-1748)
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