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## Turn Back the Battle: Isaiah Speaks to Christians Today by Elizabeth Kendal (Deror Books, Dec 2012)

### Chapter 1 Who will we trust? Isaiah 2:1-4:6

#### Questions for Discussion and Reflection

1. While peace and economic growth brought Judah great prosperity, they also contributed to her ruin. By 735 BC extravagant worldliness, idolatry, faithlessness, drunkenness, cruelty, corruption, arrogance and militarisation had become the order of the day (2:6–8; 3:14–15).

Could Judah be regarded as typical of the nations of the world in any age? Why?

2. In judgement and to aid Judah's rebirth/return/renewal, God took away all the things the people had come to depend upon and glory in (3:1–7; 3:18–4:1). He did this so that false idols might be cast down and the Lord alone might be exalted (2:11, 17 and 20).

Was God's intervention as much about mercy as it was about judgement? Explain.

3. Using Isaiah 2:2–4, discuss:
  - (a) the path/route/process that leads to radical social transformation (v2–3a);
  - (b) the pivotal element that enables radical social transformation (v3);
  - (c) the features of a radically transformed society (v4).
4. Isaiah chapters 2–4 contains two exhortations: one positive, 'Come . . . walk in the light of the Lord' (2:5); and one negative, 'Stop regarding [exalting / trusting in] man [humanity]. . .' (2:22).  
In short: 'Trust God, not man.'

How might you put this into practice in your own situation?

Prayer: *That I might exalt the Lord, who alone is worthy and able to save.*

My Lord and God,  
You created this world and everything in it: seen and unseen.  
All the wisdom necessary for life in this world is found in you,  
as is the strength to apply that wisdom and put it into practice.

Yet the world rejects you as Lord and scoffs at your wisdom.  
Trusting in its own wisdom and strength,  
humanity creates one disaster after another.  
The world is shrouded in human failure:  
conflict, corruption, chaos and collapse.  
Despite this, humanity, being too arrogant to admit that it is flailing and failing,  
arrogantly and stubbornly marches on to destruction.

Forgive me Lord for the times I resisted the wisdom of your word,  
simply because it didn't suit me.

Forgive me Lord for the times I hid myself in the crowd,  
or even denied you, to save myself from persecution,  
or even just a little embarrassment.

Forgive me Lord for the times I put my faith in human beings,  
human institutions, human means and various false idols  
devoted to destruction -- rather than in you.

Having suffered the consequences of my foolish choices,  
having seen the error of my ways;  
I now repent of my lack of faith,  
of my folly and short-sightedness,  
and of my failure to give witness to your truth --  
the remedy this world so desperately needs.

I commit to walk in the light of the Lord,  
not only for my own benefit,  
but so that through my witness others might come to see  
that the way of the Lord is good and right and true,  
and that you O Lord can be trusted.

I commit to exalting, not humanity, but the Lord who alone is worthy and able to save.

Lord bless my witness, so that through my words and my life,  
my family, my neighbours and others might be inspired to seek you and to trust you:  
this world's only hope and only Saviour.

*'That the earth might be filled with the knowledge and glory of the Lord  
as the waters cover the sea'. (Isaiah 11:9b; Habakkuk 2:14)*

Amen.

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