

was turned by the enemies of Christianity into an attack against it. They said, You said this is going to be fulfilled, there will be no more war. Nobody will even have to train for war. Look what's happened! That was all imaginary.

So the fact that Isaiah and Micah both give it and stress it seems to be pretty good proof that there is going to be such a time coming on this earth when there will be external peace and no external danger.

Let's turn to Isaiah again, and look at ch. 11. There you have a marvellous picture. I think one should look at the previous two verses. The previous two verses tell about the fall of the Assyrian empire. The Lord is going to lop of the boughs with great power, the lofty trees will be felled, the tall ones will be brought low. He will cut down the forest thickets with an ax; Lebanon will fall before the Mighty One. That was fulfilled in the downfall of the Assyrian empire which seemed as if it was going to conquer the whole world in Isaiah's day.

But in contrast to that, A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse. Here was this little kingdom in which the son of Jesse had reigned which seemed like a pretty big thing for a while, but now it's declining and the Assyrians are taking over more and more. Well, the time is going to come when from the stump of Jesse a branch is going to bear fruit, and the Spirit of the Lord will rest on him-- a marvellous picture of Christ. All take v. 2 as a marvellous picture of Christ. I don't think we should ask when v. 2 is to be fulfilled. Verse 2 is a picture of Him. He's going to be born of the House of David, and He's going to be a marvellous One with the spirit of wisdom and understand, etc.

He won't judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears. All this up to here is a picture of Him rather than a statement of a particular time. Then we read, But with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. That to some extent might be thought of as being fulfilled at his first coming, but it's rather general. It would seem to look beyond that. It would not necessarily require His personal presence for that verse.

But it goes on, "He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked." That seems to describe a specific event which the Lord is going to fulfill. Did He fulfill that with His parables, and with His wonderful teaching? Did that slay the wicked with the breath of His lips? How are we going to understand that?

I think Paul understood that verse in a certain definite way. If we turn to 2 Thess. 2, Paul speaks to people who had a misunderstanding that certain things had already happened, which he wants to say have not yet happened. He says (v.8) no, v. 7, "The secret power of lawlessness is already at work, but the One who now holds it back will continue to do so until he is taken out of the way." So Paul is looking forward to something future. KJV says "let" but it means to "hinder." We never use it that way today.