

ISA 2:2 Now it will come about that
In the last days,
The mountain of the house of the LORD
Will be established as the chief of the mountains,
And will be raised above the hills;
And all the nations will stream to it. [3] And many peoples will come and say,
"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."
For the law will go forth from Zion,
And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. [4] And He will judge between the nations,
And will render decisions for many peoples;
And they will hammer their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.
Nation will not lift up sword against nation,
And never again will they learn war.

ISA 2:5 Come, house of Jacob, and let us walk in the light of the LORD. [6] For Thou hast abandoned Thy people, the house of Jacob,
Because **they are filled with influences from the east,**(**LEV 19:26; Deut 18:10**)
And they are soothsayers like the Philistines,
And they strike bargains with the children of foreigners. [7] Their land has **also been filled with silver and gold, (DEUT 17:17)**
And there is no end to their **treasures;**
Their land has **also been filled with horses,(DEUT 17:16)**
And there is no end to their **chariots.** [8] Their land has **also been filled with idols;**
They worship **the work of their hands,**
That which their fingers have made. [9] So the common man has been humbled,
And the man of importance has been abased,
But do not forgive them. (EXO 34:7) [10] **Enter the rock and hide in the dust**
From **the terror of the LORD** and from **the splendor of His majesty.** [11] The proud look of man will be abased,
And the loftiness of man will be humbled,
And the **LORD alone will be exalted in that day.**

ISA 2:12 For the LORD of hosts **will have a day of reckoning**
Against everyone who is proud and lofty,
And against everyone who is lifted up,
That he may be abased. [13] And it will be against all **the cedars of Lebanon** that are lofty and lifted up,
Against all the **oaks of Bashan,** [14] Against all **the lofty mountains,**
Against all **the hills that are lifted up,** [15] Against every high tower,
Against every fortified wall, [16] Against all **the ships of Tarshish,**
And against all **the beautiful craft.** [17] And the pride of man will be humbled,
And the loftiness of men will be abased,
And the LORD alone will be exalted in that day. [18] But the idols will completely vanish. [19] And men will go into **caves of the rocks,**
And into **holes of the ground**
Before the terror of the LORD,
And before **the splendor of His majesty,**
When **He arises to make the earth tremble.** [20] In that day men will cast away to the moles and the bats
Their idols of silver and their idols of gold,
Which they made for themselves to worship, [21] In order to go into the **caverns of the rocks** and **the clefts of the cliffs, (REV 6:15-17)**
Before the terror of the LORD and the splendor of His majesty,
When He arises to make the earth tremble. [22] **Stop regarding man, whose breath of life is in his nostrils;**
For why should he be esteemed?

OUTLINE

Description of Sins: JUDAH's Present corruption (5-11)

Opposite of the ideal (2-4)

World drawn to Zion	(2)	God's people conform to the world	(6)
World seeks spiritual benefit	(3)	Zion helps up material wealth	(7a)
Coming to Zion = world peace	(4)	Zion is full of Armaments	(7b)
World wants to know/obey God	(3)	God's people are inventing "no-gods"	(8)
World is received b-4 L's tribunal	(4)	God's people abandoned, denied forgiveness	(6, 9)

Ideal

[Hab 2:14](#) "For the earth will be **filled with** the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea.

Actual

Zion **filled with**

Influences from the east/soothsayers	(6)
Silver and gold/treasures	(7)
Horses/chariots	(7)
Idols/work of their hands/that which their fingers have made	(8)

Consequences of Sins:

The Day of the Lord (12-22)

There are two sides to the day of the Lord. There is what will be and there is what is. There is God's mercy and there is God's horrible wrath.

Coming Storms of Terror

Isaiah 2:5-22

"The terror of the Lord and the splendor of his majesty." This frightening phrase occurs three times (Isaiah 2:10, 19, 21) in this text. "The Day of the Lord" is an idea that occurs in four different places in chapter 2 (vs. 11, 12, 17, 20). It occurs 6 more times in the next 2 chapters. Isaiah cries out "For the Lord will have a day of reckoning" (vs. 12). On this day, God will be exalted (vs. 11, 17) and wicked men will be cast away to live in filth like unclean rodents (vs. 20).

Oh! How many times I have heard how the God of the Old Testament is a God of wrath while the God of the New Testament is a God of love, as if somehow either God (who does not change) has in fact now changed or even worse perhaps that there are actually two different gods presented as the true God in the pages of the Bible. I'll tell you right now, this sort of thinker is not going to like Isaiah 2. I have also found something very strange. When I tell people that we are preaching through Isaiah, I sometimes get these snide remarks like "Oh, you gonna' preach wrath to those people?"

Friends, I want you to be very clear of this. **We need to hear about the wrath of God.** God never sees it as a bad thing to scare a person out of hell! If you are not terrified of this great Day, you should be. Not talking about it isn't going to keep it from coming. If you are not deeply grieved and troubled to the core of your being about a church that refuses to talk about this anymore, then you had better quickly ask yourself why you don't care about it. We can no longer afford to keep silent about justice and a day of doom, for sin is crouching at the door of the church in ways that have not happened in any of our lifetimes or the lifetimes of our fathers or their fathers before them.

We live in extremely dangerous times. They are dangerous, not because other nations hate us or even because we are in a war or because our society is morally rotten apple, but because we have enraged and provoked a mighty Lion to anger with our sin and our rebellion and our foolishness. "The LORD roars from Zion, And from Jerusalem He utters His voice" (Amos 1:2). Even as we speak God roars from his holy hill with a thunderous voice. He is preparing himself, arousing himself, lifting himself up, stretching his arms, girding his loins, preparing for battle - for the hunt. He is hungry from waiting so patiently. The nations will not stand when God is goaded. And the church will not be allowed to continue in her blissful ignorance and marriage with the world forever.

Please church. Take this lesson from history. Before God drew Gentiles to himself, he had a chosen community that he turned into a mighty nation, though they were the least of all people. They made a pact with God where they swore to uphold his law. Isaiah 2:2-4 mentions an idyllic future, a *real* future that cannot be stopped. It must come to pass. In this future, the world is drawn to Zion (vs. 2) - to the church and to God's place where God himself resides. The world seeks true spiritual benefit (vs. 3). In this coming time there will be total world peace (vs. 4). The world wants to know and obey God and his law (vs. 3). And God will receive the world before his tribunal and holy court to pass judgments of justice and goodness upon them (vs. 4).

This is the ideal. But there was a *present* reality for Israel that Isaiah ironically says was exactly the opposite of this idyllic future. Isaiah juxtaposes the five things just mentioned here with the present truth of the matter. While the world would be drawn to Zion, **God's people were conforming to the world.** "For Thou hast abandoned Thy people, the house of Jacob, Because they are filled with influences from the east and they are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they strike bargains with the children of foreigners" (vs. 6). While the world will seek spiritual benefit, **Zion is busy seeking material wealth.** "Their land has also been filled with silver and gold. And there is no end to their

treasures" (vs. 7a). While world peace is going to be brought to Zion, **Israel is presently busy building up Armaments**. "Their land has also been filled with horses. And there is no end to their chariots." (vs. 7b). While the world wants to know and obey God in the future, **God's people are presently busy inventing their own idols**. "Their land has also been filled with idols; they worship the word of their hands, that which their fingers have made" (vs. 8). While the world is going to be received before God's holy court, **he has abandoned his people and he will deny them any forgiveness**. "For You have abandoned your people... the common man has been humbled. And the man of importance has been abased. But do not forgive them" (vs. 6, 9).

The prophet Habakkuk spoke of a time in the future. He said, "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab 2:14). Isaiah makes it very clear here (four different times in fact) that Judah is **filled** with everything but God. Verses 6, 7a, 7b, and 9 each say that the land is filled with various forms of vile corruption.

First we learn that she was "filled with influences from the east" (vs. 6). Various translations say "customs," "things," "superstitions" and "diviners" in place of the word "influences." Going to the east is often times a bad direction to travel in biblical imagery. When Adam was kicked out of Eden, he was placed in the east (Gen 3:24). Cain went out from the presence of the Lord into the land of Nod, east of Eden (Gen 4:16). When Lot chose his land, it was in the east – in Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 13:11). The tabernacle and temple, as patterns of Eden, had their doors on the east side. This means that when you were to approach God (enter the court and the holy place) you had to move westwardly.

That which is east of Israel is symbolized by each of these words we have just seen. Babylon (to the east of Israel) becomes the place where this is most expressed. In Revelation 18:22-23 we read, "Babylon, the great city, [will be] thrown down with violence... the light of a lamp will not shine in you any longer; and the voice of the bridegroom and bride will not be heard in you any longer; for your merchants were great men of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery."

Israel was, of course, forbidden from taking part in these ghastly practices. "Do not practice divination or sorcery" (Lev 19:26). "Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD, and because of these detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you" (Deut 18:10-12). Each of the things that Israel is filled with is restated in Isaiah's text through the means of poetic parallelism. Thus, "soothsayers like the Philistines" and "striking bargains with the children of foreigners" helps to explain in the fullest possible sense what it means to be influenced by the east.

Next we see that Israel was "filled with silver and gold" (vs. 7a). God is not against silver and gold *per se*. However, he knows that the love of money is itself a soothsayer of sorts. It speaks soothing lies to your heart and causes you to trust in it. Is not this why we are told, "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have" (Heb 13:5). Or "You cannot serve both God and Money" (Luke 16:13). The king was specifically warned in Deuteronomy 17:17 in this way, "[the king shall not] greatly increase silver and gold for himself." What Israel was doing was strictly forbidden by the very law that she said she would uphold. Thus, it was said of her, "there is no end to their treasures." This nation was extremely wealthy, extremely religious, extremely prosperous, extremely wicked.

She was "filled with horses" (vs. 7b). "There is no end to their chariots." These images are meant to show that Israel was not trusting in her warrior God any longer. These are symbols of war-craft. It was not *God* that was going to go to battle for her, but she herself. She was building up armaments. She was trusting in man. She was trusting in her power. She was trusting in her right arm, but not in God's. In these verses we see a foreshadowing of vs. 22 (our last verse). "Stop trusting in man."

Finally we discover that Judah was "filled with idols" (vs. 8). What is an idol exactly? The Heidelberg Catechism says, "**Question 95. What is idolatry?**" **Answer:** Idolatry is, instead of, or besides that one true God, who has manifested himself in his word, to contrive, or have any other object, in which men place their trust." This is exactly Isaiah's conclusion. Isaiah says, "they worship *'the work of their hands,' that which their fingers have made.*" The word used for idol here is *'elilim* which is a deliberate play on the word *'elohim* (God). *'Elilim* literally means "non-entities." They were trusting in 'no-gods' rather than in God. It is the ultimate form of stupidity and foolishness to trust in a nothing.

We really need to see both the forest and the trees here. The trees are the superstitions, the wealth, the military might, and the idolatry. In these very specific things, Israel placed her trust in man. But the forest is that Judah was filled up with everything except God. Its like rather than filling up her gas tank with gas, she filled up with salt water, poison, chocolate syrup and ketchup. This concoction isn't going to make the engine of the nation run at all. She was a dead heap of rusted out metal sitting on a highway going to nowhere and she though she didn't know it, a 18 wheeler was barreling down the road straight at her.

American Churches

At this point, I want to say this. I wish with all my heart that I knew how to address you who are sitting here now. I need you to understand the tenderness that a term like *beloved* or *dear children* communicates, because you need to be acutely aware of the importance of what I am about to say. For this hour, in this sermon, I am God's spokesman to you. To this I have been called. I must tell you what God has revealed in his word and I must seek to make it applicable to you today. I believe that the message that next comes in Isaiah needs to be spoken with an urgency that few can comprehend. You and I stand on the brink of total disaster in our time. I know that people of every generation say this. But we can actually comprehend how this can happen in ways never conceived of in past generations. We can ill afford to play games with God's holy word anymore.

It is time for Christians to arise, as our great Lion King is even now arising. We must cast off our sins and throw ourselves upon God's mercy, begging him for repentance, pleading with him for forgiveness. If we do not tear our clothes from our bodies and sit in heaps of ashes for our sin, I greatly fear what God is going to do to us. I fear it because I read about it here, in these pages. And I do not like what I see.

You must understand the words that lie open before you now. You must let them penetrate into the deepest part of your soul. You must not let them escape until you have acted upon them. You must not delay, or you will find as Judah found that it will be too late. Do you not understand that for God's people, the day came when they could do nothing about the disaster that was predicted for them? No amount of pleading with God on the day of his fury would help. There would be only weeping and gnashing of teeth and the sudden and terrifying day that Babylon rode into Jerusalem, killed her people, raped her women and took a very few captive into a foreign land. This was God's judgment upon his own people, his wife, his child, his friend. It was God's will for it to

happen. It was God's plan for it to take place. It was God showing the world that he would not be mocked forever. Do you seriously think that God has changed?

Judah's story is only a shadow of what will take place in the future. Each time a nation falls, it is a reminder that there will come an end to our days on this earth. The passage from [verse 9-21](#) basically teaches that though God has given man his day, his day is very soon to pass away. God will then take it upon himself to have His Day. Though God apparently is inactive now, soon he arises to come and perform His work of judgment.

I cannot express to you the horror of the words of verse 9 and 12. You have to experience them for yourself. And only the Holy Spirit can teach you what you need to know. In [verse 9](#), Isaiah is making a prophesy through a command: do not forgive them. The whole passage from [verse 6-9](#) is really **nothing but a prayer of lament and imprecation to God against the people**. So it says, "The common man has been humbled and the man of importance has been abased. **But DO NOT FORGIVE THEM.**" Let those words ring in your ears. **"Do not forgive them."**

How many people today simply expect that God will forgive? Worse, how many people place *demands* upon God that he must forgive or he is not really a God? Worst of all, we demand that God forgive and we demand it even though we refuse to do nothing about our end of things. We continue on in our sin, our idolatry, our wealth, our false worship and superstitions, all the while saying "God will forgive." But Isaiah prays, **"do not forgive them."**

All of this sickening talk about God being love forgets that love is itself just. **God must** - out of the necessity of his own being - **punish sin**. If no one else pays for sins, God is left with only one option. **You will pay for your sin**. This is exactly what you deserve! And it is quite loving for God to do this. Judah found this out first hand, did she not? It left a permanent mark upon this people that exists to this very day.

It troubles me just how much we take for granted that Jesus Christ has paid for sin in our day. In some ways, we do this rightly. But I fear that even in this, far too many of us compromise God's justice. To think that Jesus died for *all sin of all people in all the world* and yet to think that God is still going to punish some of these same people on the day of the Lord makes absolutely no sense. It makes a monstrosity out of justice. It mocks the payment that was already made. **What god is going to continually judge and punish the same sins over and over and over again?** What God is going to punish Jesus Christ and then the person for whom Christ already took his punishment? The love of God is that when God takes away sin and deals with it, it will not be punished ever again. And praise God for it!

There is a reason why Isaiah 2 is particularly important for us here this morning. The punishment, the Day of the Lord in this passage is future and it is ultimately for all people. Judah's own punishment as a nation was only a small taste of what is to come for this world. And we are in this world. There is not a one of you here this morning that can get away with just expecting Jesus Christ to forgive your sins because he is a God of love. If you do not place your whole hearted trust in the death of Christ to take away your punishment, then all that is left for you is Isaiah's vision here. God will not forgive. **To not forgive was the demand of the law itself.** "[God] will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations" (Ex 34:7). Sons will pay for their fathers sins, something that we see happening all around us even today. If the process is not stopped, you can only spin out of control into chaos and ruin.

Those who just expect God to forgive have actually undermined the very meaning of mercy. God is not compelled to have mercy on anyone, let alone everyone. Mercy is

absolutely the opposite of justice. So, if we want God's mercy, the only way to get it is to repent before it is too late.

People in our day do not like talk like this, of that I am much too aware. But I'm not the one who said it. Consider for a moment the command in [verse 10](#) to flee from the wrath to come. "Enter a rock, and hide in the dust from the terror of the Lord and from the splendor of His majesty." First, I want you to think about trying to obey this command. How exactly is a rock going to hide you from an omnipresent God? As one commentator says, "In preaching as he does here, Isaiah is going contrary to modern psychological theories which assert that it is unwise and even wrong to use fear as a motif in preaching and teaching. How different God's appraisal of preaching!"¹ The last judgment that is in view here is set before us as a terrible reality. Hide in the rocks. Hide in the dust. Hide anywhere you can, if you can, in order to escape the wrath to come. "This is the only motif in preaching that will prevail with sinners. Then men might begin somewhat to understand the hatred that God has for sin and to turn from their evil ways to flee to Christ for refuge. The only way to run from God is to run to Him."² I implore you even now, there is a rock that you may flee to that will hide you from the wrath to come. His name is Jesus Christ, the rock of ages, our cleft in to hide us from the presence of a holy God. But it means a total lifestyle change, thinking change, and way of life change. It is impossible to hide under this rock until one is willing to forsake the pleasures and sins of this world. If God's love will not compel you, perhaps his wrath will.

Isaiah makes it clear here. [The Lord of hosts will have a day of reckoning \(vs 12\)](#). Let that verse sink in. [A day of reckoning](#). The bible says that everyone who is proud and lofty will be thrown down. Everyone. There are no exceptions. Everyone who is lifted up, he will be brought low. Everyone. There are no exceptions.

Do we need to drive this point home more? Is it not enough that the church in our day hates to talk about the wrath of God? Consider our society and then much of the church in America, especially those dominant ideas that are so rapidly changing the very landscape of our sanctuaries and sermons. [ONLINE CHURCH???](#)

Though I do not know when the Day of the Lord will come, I do know this. Those things that so captivated Israel have become the morbid fascinations of our society. And it was not always like this. Consider how Americans were trained to read and write and think for scores of years in this land. It was with the Holy Bible. This lasted in public schools until just a few short years ago.

But now, we are enamored with "influences from the east," both as a society and in the church. There is no end to our eastern ways. Psychic hotlines? Buddhist temples? Hindu gods? Divining the future? Meditation techniques that are meant to leave this physical existence behind? Earth worshipping tree huggers? Sparks of the divine? God in everything? Holistic healing? Environmentalism? I tell you that at no time in world history has the west made it a point to blend her religion with eastern ways.

But the church is just as guilty as the world. New Age Philosophy permeates our churches. [We hate doctrine](#). That is an *eastern* way of thinking. [We love mystery \(and contradiction\)](#). That is an *eastern* way of thinking. It comes straight out of Buddhism. They call them cones (what is the sound of one hand clapping?). A cone is a logical contradiction that we are supposed to just let our minds accept, in doing so we come closer to the eternal oneness. [We hate science](#). That is an eastern way of thinking! (I'm not talking about scientism, but science itself, the ability to hypothesize and test and

¹ Young, *Isaiah book 1*, p. 122.

² *Ibid.*

figure out things via the scientific method. This is a particularly Christian gift to our world. As is education, medicine, astronomy, hospices/care for the poor, and so many other things that we just take for granted in this nation, but that Christians are abandoning left and right as they hope that the east will be able to give them something more than what they have now.

Our infatuation with eastern ways is extremely discouraging. Our land and our churches are filled with it and we do not even know it, probably because in being filled with it we can't see beyond it to the God we have replaced. Do I really need to go into the other things that Isaiah mentions? We all know that Americans and the American church have more wealth than all the world combined. We know we consume more products, take in more money, export more goods, feed more people than anyone else in the world. But I hope we also know that in our great blessing, many of us have become addicted to the sin of loving money, even as we are addicted to our military strength and the idols of our age: technology, news, tabloids, celebrity, entertainment, athletics, sex, and in some ways, literal idols that we each have in our homes, on our walls, and on our desks. Friends, what is our fascination with Jennifer Aniston and Brad Pitt if not idolatry, the desire to be just like them rather than just like God? What is our desire to have our sanctuaries look just like gymnasiums if not the worship of the culture, perhaps even the worship of evangelism rather than the worship of God? How is this not idolatry? What is the replacement of the sermon with short movie sound bytes if not the love of antiintellectualism and entertainment? How is this not idolatry? Or how about the internet church I visited this week. A total disembodied techo-experience. Gnostic church. How is this not idolatry?

How can we possibly think that the church does not need to repent in our day when everything about us looks exactly like Judah (perhaps worse?) and God threatened and then acted upon them with wrath? I don't understand Christians in our day, quite frankly. How can they say they love him, yet hate his word? How can they love [Isaiah 2:1-4](#) but not [2:5-22](#)? How can they take the love without taking the rest of him? Is God some cafeteria smorgasbord where you can just ingest any part of him you like while leaving the rest on your plate? How is it that we hate doctrine when God tells us to love it? Why do we hate to talk about him when we are commanded to tell our very children about him – all the time?

Yes, we live in dangerous times, don't we. God says here that he IS going to take all of our worthless idols and he will bring them down. He uses the image of [cedars of Lebanon \(vs. 13\)](#) to suggest the strength of the people. He uses the image of the [mountain \(vs. 14\)](#) to show how he will bring down our highest aspirations that set themselves up against him. Our highest [towers](#) will not keep him from climbing in to get us. Our strongest [walls](#) will not keep God out of our cities. Our wealth will be brought to nothing as is reflected in the commuter ships of great sea prowess '[the ships of Tarshish.](#)' [Our idols will completely vanish \(vs. 18\).](#)

This does not mean that these things like the trees of Lebanon, high mountains, silver or gold, horses or chariots, or even the ships of Tarshish will cease to exist. I bring this up to keep you from the Gnostic impulse that seeks to hate the very things that are in this world, as if their very existence is our problem. Rather, it is the way we use these things that will vanish.

God Exalted

Ultimately, though, we must not even think of this day as being primarily about us – about man's destruction. Instead, it is about God vindicating himself against us. The day of the Lord is terrible. But it is terrible for this reason. Those who hate God cannot stand in the presence of '[the splendor of his majesty.](#)' Three times this is said. It is

always put in conjunction with **the terror of the Lord**. Somehow, to be terrified of God is to be terrified, not merely for what he can do to you – but to be terrified for who he is.

Who is God? **He is all-powerful one**. He is able to do anything he wants as long as it does not conflict with his character. He is able to build and to tear down, to create and to destroy at will. God can do whatever he pleases when he pleases. He is bound by no one. He alone in this universe is completely free of all external restraints.

God is the all-knowing one. Be terrified of God because God knows exactly what you do in secret. Nothing is hidden from his eyes. No one escapes his notice. It only seems like God does not know what is happening because at the present time he is being gracious to those he should destroy. The Psalmist has said, **"They have said, 'The LORD does not see, Nor does the God of Jacob pay heed.' Pay heed, you senseless among the people; And when will you understand, stupid ones? He who planted the ear, does He not hear? He who formed the eye, does He not see? He who chastens the nations, will He not rebuke, Even He who teaches man knowledge? The LORD knows the thoughts of man, That they are a mere breath"** (Psalm 94:7-11).

The Lord is the ever-present one. It is much worse than that he knows what we do in secret. He is actually right there when we do it! How can you not be terrified of such power and presence as this? How can you sit in your chair and go home to your televisions and jobs and families and not be affected by this? Yet, we all know that many are not. They do not heed the warning because they do not know this God.

There is a day coming that will mark the moment in history when God says **he will be exalted**. God is going to lift up his name that has been trodden under in the mud for so long. I praise God that he is not silent forever. The longer I live in this world, the more I long to see true justice take place, to see vengeance carried out by one who has no hypocrisy. There is nothing more glorious in this world than that fact that God will not let injustice go on forever. If he did, he would not be worthy of worship, for what judge can be called good who never dispenses with punishment for those who murder innocents and preach violence and false peace?

The prophets are strange. From one moment to the next, you never know what they are going to say. Will it be a message of total peace? Will he tell us about God's wrath? Will he tell us about ourselves? Will he interject grace in the middle of law or law in the middle of grace? **Isaiah 2:5-22** does take place immediately after the good news of verses 1-5. At least we have hope there. But for these many verses that we look upon today, there is a message we must be moved by, quite apart from grace. There is a time when grace will no longer be available to wicked people. Today is not that time.

Chapter 2 ends with a stern command. **"Stop trusting in man."** Why? **Because the "breath of life is in his nostrils."** Our minds quickly go back to Genesis. Genesis 2:7 says, **"The LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life."** In other words, man's life is given to him by another. **Mankind does not have aseity**. Of all the reasons that can be given and that have been given for fearing God and not trusting in man, this one alone is given by the prophet. Only God is self-existent. Only God necessarily exists. When man is told to hide in the dust (**vs. 10**), he is being told to go back from where he came. For man is, after all, nothing but dust. God alone gives us the breath of life. Life does not reside in us naturally.

Job's response ought to be ours. He said, **"For as long as life is in me, And the breath of God is in my nostrils My lips certainly will not speak unjustly, Nor will my tongue mutter deceit"** (Job 27:3-4). Job both acknowledged that he is not God, that he himself is finite and then he acted upon this by not sinning in other ways. That is Isaiah's exact call here.

Therefore, friends, why should we esteem ourselves, the works of our hands, the idols that we make, the religions that we invent, the ships that we build, the armies that we raise, the walls that we erect, the towers that we create? They are nothing. They are worse than nothing. They are the opposite of God – when that is what we put our trust in.

Stop trusting in man, for why should he be esteemed? Instead, we must go back to verse 5. To cease from man is to trust in Christ. Isaiah 2:5 says, “Come, house of Jacob, and let us walk in the light of the LORD.” Jesus said, “I am the light of the world, he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12). To cease from man is to enter the Rock, not the crags in the hills where you cannot escape, but it the Rock of our salvation, the Stone that causes men to stumble, the capstone, the Rock of ages.

The one who refuses the hiding place in Christ may not find refuge in any other place. Martin Luther said, “*The chief point of this chapter is that Christ will reign through the Gospel over everything lofty on earth, whether external or internal, whether secular or spiritual. All these things will have to yield and be subject to Him, with the result that He alone will remain Lord, King, and Priest forever.*”³

Let me finish with a verse that I pray the Holy Spirit will place into your heart. Isaiah later proclaims this message. “A man will be as a hiding place from the wind, And a cover from the tempest, As rivers of water in a dry place, As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land” (Isa 32:2). This *man*, is Jesus Christ. The rejection of the light of the gospel leads to the acceptance of darkness. Put no more confidence in the flesh today. As the Psalmist prayed, so to I pray for each of us, “Lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For Thou hast been a refuge for me, A tower of strength against the enemy. Let me dwell in Thy tent forever. Let me take refuge in the shelter of Thy wings” (Ps 61:2-4).

Selah.

³Luther, M. 1999, c1969. *Luther's works, vol. 16 : Lectures on Isaiah: Chapters 1-39* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works. Vol. 16 (Is 2:22). Concordia Publishing House: Saint Louis