

ISA 9:8 The Lord sends a message against Jacob,
And it falls on Israel. [9] And all the people know it,
That is, Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria,
Asserting in pride and in arrogance of heart: [10] "The bricks have fallen down,
But we will rebuild with smooth stones;
The sycamores have been cut down,
But we will replace them with cedars." [11] Therefore the LORD raises against them adversaries from Rezin,
And spurs their enemies on, [12] The Arameans on the east and the Philistines on the west;
And they devour Israel with gaping jaws.
In spite of all this His anger does not turn away,
And His hand is still stretched out.

ISA 9:13 Yet the people do not turn back to Him who struck them,
Nor do they seek the LORD of hosts. [14] So the LORD cuts off head and tail from Israel,
Both palm branch and bulrush in a single day. [15] The head is the elder and honorable man,
And the prophet who teaches falsehood is the tail. [16] For those who guide this people are leading them astray;
And those who are guided by them are brought to confusion. [17] Therefore the Lord does not take pleasure in their young men,
Nor does He have pity on their orphans or their widows;
For every one of them is godless and an evildoer,
And every mouth is speaking foolishness.
In spite of all this His anger does not turn away,
And His hand is still stretched out.

ISA 9:18 For wickedness burns like a fire;
It consumes briars and thorns;
It even sets the thickets of the forest aflame,
And they roll upward in a column of smoke. [19] By the fury of the LORD of hosts the land is burned up,
And the people are like fuel for the fire;
No man spares his brother. [20] And they slice off what is on the right hand but still are hungry,
And they eat what is on the left hand but they are not satisfied;
Each of them eats the flesh of his own arm. [21] Manasseh devours Ephraim, and Ephraim Manasseh,
And together they are against Judah.
In spite of all this His anger does not turn away,
And His hand is still stretched out.

ISA 10:1 Woe to those who enact evil statutes,
And to those who constantly record unjust decisions, [2] So as to deprive the needy of justice,
And rob the poor of My people of their rights,
In order that widows may be their spoil,
And that they may plunder the orphans. [3] Now what will you do in the day of punishment,
And in the devastation which will come from afar?
To whom will you flee for help?
And where will you leave your wealth? [4] Nothing remains but to crouch among the captives
Or fall among the slain.
In spite of all this His anger does not turn away,
And His hand is still stretched out.

Summary: When God has had enough, he has enough. Breaking the covenant is serious, as Israel was about to find out. Though Messiah has just been interjected into the text as an offer of hope to the remnant, God's anger will not be turned away. As bad as it is going to get, God's anger will not be turned away.

But righteousness exalts any nation, and sin is a reproach to all peoples. What then of our own nation? What if it turns out that we have many similarities to those in Israel? Are we to think that God will not care, that he will is not watching, that he does not act upon nations anymore? We need to heed the calling of the prophets both in the nation and in the church. There is still a way out. To whom will you flee for help?

God's Anger is Not Turned Away. To Whom Will You Flee For Help? *Isaiah 9:8-10:4*

I don't know about you, but sometimes it seems like the prophets get a little redundant in their message. **Chapter 9:8ff** sounds very much like **chapter 5** in both form and content. Why is it that God feels the need to keep repeating himself? Why not just make this book a whole lot thinner by saying it once and then moving on?

There are a couple of reasons why the same message is repeated over and over again. First, it should be obvious that that God reveals nothing to us that is unimportant. Everything God tells us is something that he thinks we need to know. He repeats himself in order to get our attention and to make it sink in. If certain messages are repeated over and over again, I think we are on safe ground to conclude that God thinks it is a particularly [important thing for us to learn](#).

Second, messages of coming doom are usually conditional for those who hear them. Almost every time they are delivered, the hope is that the people will listen to the message, turn and repent of their evil ways. Therefore, [even messages of doom show us the mercy of God](#). That's an interesting thought to consider. Think of *Jonah*. In great anger this prophet went to the city of Nineveh and told them these very few words. "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown" (*Jonah 3:4*). Jonah did not want the people to turn and repent because he knew that God would have mercy on them and Jonah hated these uncircumcised enemies of Israel. So he gave the prophesy in such a way that the message did not appear to be conditional. Jonah was surely a scoundrel.

Do you observe in these words any hint that God is going to relent if the people repent? I do not. Yet, this is exactly what happened. "Then the people of Nineveh believed in God" (*3:5*). The prediction of disaster was conditioned upon faith! The king of Nineveh proclaimed, "Who knows, God may turn and relent, and withdraw His burning anger so that we shall not perish?" (*3:9*). Then we learn, "When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do it" (*3:10*). So messages of doom almost always show us that God is a merciful God and that he does not delight in the death of the wicked. This is what he tells us in *Ezekiel*, "'Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked,' declares the Lord GOD, 'rather than that he should turn from his ways and live?'" (*Ezek 18:23*).

Finally, the repetition of the messages of doom in *Isaiah* serve [a literary purpose](#). Each time the message comes something new is added. Its like *Isaiah* is building an argument. He keeps reminding the jury of that which they have seen, even as he continually inserts new evidence to build his case. [Our task as readers in a different time is to be looking out for that which is new, while reminding ourselves of what we have heard before](#). Also, the continual pattern of this book is that after disaster is proclaimed, something new about grace – especially in the form of Messiah - is revealed to us. After the oracle before us today (*9:8-10:4*), another is given – this time towards Assyria. Then, as we have seen before, *Isaiah* breaks out an oracle of mercy towards the elect and this culminates in a new revelation about Messiah - that Jesse's shoot will rule over the people with perfect justice and in the Spirit of the Lord by [chapter 11](#).

I want you to be learning to read the Scripture in this way. Notice how in every prophet, be it once or many times, the destruction and devastation that is promised is always followed up by God's mercy in the form of the person of Jesus Christ. This is such a wonderful hope, and is something completely foreign to other world religions. Why? Because in those systems even if you placate the god, he might still reach out and destroy you. And none of those gods are looking for a way to save people in spite of themselves. This is what makes Christianity so fabulous and ultimately so truthful. You need to be looking for Messiah and how this glorious Branch shoots up in a land of desolation. This is your hope, and this is your life.

But this morning, our focus is not on Messiah for the most part. You will recall last week, how we saw a brief Messianic interruption in *9:1-7* - as *Isaiah* catapulted us some 700 years into the future. This was an unexpected interruption, and glorious one. But beginning in

verse 8 we are jarred back into the stark present day of Isaiah and the wicked nation that he preaches to. We must prepare ourselves then to again hear his word from the Lord.

Pride

As we begin to look at this text, let us ask ourselves *what we have seen before*, then we shall ask ourselves *what is new* about this text. *First, what have we seen before?* What is God repeating here? First, *God is speaking against* the people (*NEW: It is Israel and not Judah*). By now, this is old hat to us, and it is usually what people think of when they think of the prophet. Crusty old angry men who have nothing better to do with their time than speak non-unifying, non-loving words to a bunch of people they do not even know personally. (I wonder how a prophet would be received in our own churches today?) At any rate, Isaiah speaks against their sin and he predicts more coming disaster. He mentions a particular sin that I want to point out to us now. **Pride** is the first sin introduced in this text and we have seen this before as well. Turn to verse 9. We read here that the people, *"assert in pride and in arrogance of heart."*

We have not really talked about pride before, and so I think it is wise to spend some time looking at it. *What is this pride that is so evil?* There are several definitions of pride. The pride talked about here is not merely taking pleasure or satisfaction in an achievement or possession that you have. This sort of pride is positively necessary and good for people to have – so long as the next part does not go with it. Proverbs says, *"Children's children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children"* (Prov 17:6). This pride is obviously not a bad thing. The pride that Scripture condemns is an **arrogance** and **haughtiness**. It is an excessively high opinion of yourself. It is conceit. And worst of all, it is the sort of pride that puts you above both God and his word.

Proverbs has much to say about this pride as well. *"Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall"* (Prov 16:18). *"The proud and arrogant man--"Mocker" is his name; he behaves with overweening pride"* (Prov 21:4). *"I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech"* (Prov 8:13).

I am personally of the opinion that pride is a root of every single sin. The Psalms link pride with such things as violence (Ps 73:6), theft (Ps 62:10), cursing (Ps 59:12), lying, (Ps 31:18), and idolatry (Ps 10:4). Every time you commit a sin, you are puffing yourself up before you do it, arrogantly thinking that you will get away with it. Every time you sin you place yourself above others, tearing them down with your mouth or your hands or your feet. Pride is mentioned first in our passage because it is not only such a central sin of Israel; it is a very grievous sin to God. And this is why we have already seen Isaiah tell us in another chapter, *"The eyes of the arrogant man will be humbled and the pride of men brought low; the LORD alone will be exalted in that day. The LORD Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty, for all that is exalted (and they will be humbled)"* (Is 2:11-12).

Part of the pride of the people of God in our text is explained in the following way. Look at verse 10. It is in their pride and arrogance that they say, *"The mud bricks have fallen down, but we will rebuild with smooth stone, the common sycamores have been cut down, but we will replace them with mighty cedars"* (Isa 9:10). This is the reason, we are told, why God is going to raise up against them adversaries and spur their enemies on. In other words, this is a very evil thing in the sight of God.

Some of you might wonder what verse 10 actually means? *Here, we come to something new* and we should be at least aware of this fact. Isaiah is preaching here, not the Judah, but to the northern kingdom of Israel. *Verse 8, "The Lord sends a word against Jacob, and it falls on Israel."* This is new. Isaiah has not singled out Israel before now. Though we do not know the exact date of this oracle, we get the impression that it is after Israel has

begun to feel the mighty hand of God's wrath against them. It is the lesser cultures of the [Arameans](#) to the east and the [Philistines](#) to the west that are the precursor to the real destruction that will come soon from the [Syrians](#). But Israel has not listened to the prophets at all. Even after the nations have begun their onslaught against them, Israel prideful and arrogantly says that they will make things better than they were before. She says, "I will keep sinning, and I will rebuild and God will not be able to do anything about it. This disaster isn't from God. We will not listen to him. He is not powerful. He is not there for us. We are the master of our own ships. And we will take control of our own destiny."

This is the meaning of replacing common trees with mighty cedars, of mud bricks with hand tooled stone. This is the heart and manifestation of pride and arrogance. Even in the midst of disaster, the prideful one will not admit defeat but will fight to the end like a wounded lion until he is finally destroyed. He will even do it thinking that what he rebuilds will actually be better than what came before – just as cedars are more spectacular than common trees and hewed stone is more beautiful than mud bricks.

Now, we *have seen* before that Isaiah is preaching against a nation. And we have seen how this sort of a message is applicable to any nation that exalts itself against God. We get more of this in our passage, and so I am compelled by the word to spend some time rehashing this for our own times. Though Israel is God's special chosen nation, the proverbs still tell us, "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people" ([Prov 14:34](#)). This truth ought to make all nations of the earth sit up and listen and understand from history that if they are at all like Israel was in this time, that they too must repent of their sin, acknowledge the Most High God of Heaven and Earth, cease doing evil and start to do good.

As we have already seen, Nineveh was a city just like our own Washington DC in the United States of America. It was powerful and mighty. But God would not tolerate her wickedness and threatened to destroy her if she did not repent. So what the prophet says to Israel is also applicable to any nation.

What do we see that Israel was like as a nation from this text? There are four main things and we will look at each in turn. You have [national disaster](#) ([vs. 8-12](#)), [political collapse](#) ([13-17](#)), [social anarchy](#) ([18-21](#)), and [moral perversion](#) ([10:1-4](#)). If a nation finds itself having any of these warning signs, then her people must quickly turn and repent – for if they do not, as we will see shortly, God will take swift and sudden vengeance and the results will be devastating and atrocious.

National Disaster

We have already looked this morning at the idea of national disaster to some degree. Israel had clearly had their bricks and fig trees torn down by other nations. Nations were beginning to not only threaten the sovereignty of Israel, but to attack their sovereignty with skirmishes here and battles there. Isaiah puts it starkly this way, "They devour Israel with gaping jaws, with open mouths" ([vs. 12](#)). Understand what is being said here. God is letting these nations feed upon his own people, and their hunger will not be satisfied. They will just keep attacking and fighting until Israel lies in ruin.

I speak to you now as both fellow Christians and citizens of a common nation. Something has begun to happen in our own land, which a generation ago was not present. Terrorists have attacked us on our own soil. In the past, our enemies attacked our overseas interests. But today, they have landed on American soil and they seek to destroy us. But do not let yourself think that it is only a few disgruntled Muslims that hate our nation. I tell you that though the World Trade Center attacks were Islamic attacks, these are not the only national disasters going on. Oklahoma City was not done by an Islamic radical, but a Midwestern

white American. Waco Texas was not a Midwestern white American or a Muslim, but our own government murdering our own children – and this doesn't seem to bother anyone. Perhaps its because after 40,000,000 legal murders in the past 30 years, we no longer care. The point is, whether you want to make an argument that some or all of these things have happened before, even a century before, they are happening now. And national disasters like the ones named above are signs that God is troubled with a nation. It goes further than this, for they are signs (if Isaiah 9 can be applied to us in the same way), that God is bringing this trouble upon a nation. Do not be fooled. God is behind it. Listen carefully to the disturbing words of Amos, "When a trumpet sounds in a city, do not the people tremble? When disaster comes to a city, has not the LORD caused it?" (Amos 3:6). Why would God begin to do such a thing? Because he wants us to repent and to turn our lives to him. And he expects that we will take the warnings seriously and do just that, before it is too late.

Each of us has responsibly in this regard. As Christians, we must continue to repent of our own sins, never letting pride creep in and beginning to think that we are better than other people. As citizens we need to exercise our right to vote, to write letters to the editors, to make phone calls to Washington, to get involved in programs that will help put an end to things like abortion and other things like this. It is not enough that we say "my hands are innocent of this blood." We must each do *something* and I fear we must do it soon. May the Holy Spirit show you where you might be able to make a difference to help bring a nation to repentance.

Political Collapse

Verses 13-17 show us the political collapse of the nation. Again we get the idea from **verse 13** that God has already begun to visit trouble upon Jacob. "The people have not returned to him who struck them, nor have they sought the LORD Almighty." So we read that God is going to "cut off the head and the tail from Israel, both palm branch and reed in a single day" (**vs. 14**). What does that mean? Isaiah tell us. "The head is the elder and the honorable man, and the prophet who teaches falsehood is the tail" (**vs. 15**).

God is going to make the entire political/religious system of the nation of Israel collapse under the weight of its own prideful rebellion. **Pride does indeed come before a fall. Verse 16**, "For those who guide this people are leading them astray; and those who are guided by them are brought to confusion." Now look at **verse 17** closely. It is really the stunning verse of this entire section to me. "Therefore the Lord does not take pleasure in their young men, nor does He have pity on their orphans or their widows." Why? Because "every one of them is godless and an evildoer, and every mouth is speaking foolishness."

I want you to consider very carefully how this works. Think about what you have just read. (**READ VERSE AGAIN**). The rulers of the people lead many astray. This brings confusion to the masses. They people are no longer able to think clearly on issues of morality and social justice and truth and goodness and beauty. This is a classic trickle down scenario. Now think. **Verse 16** talks about what we have seen before – God is angry at the political and moral leaders of the nation. But **verse 17** says that the leaders have so deceived the people, so corrupted them, that God is now also burning hot with anger against the most "innocent" of the society. This is stunning. God does not take pleasure in the young men, and he does not even take pity on their orphans or their widows. Why? Because everyone of them is godless and an evildoer and their mouths speak nothing but foolish lies.

From the greatest to the least in the nation, there is evil. From top to bottom, it is corrupt. As go the leaders, so go the people. I greatly fear that in our own day, we are reaping the fruits of a generation of horrible and wicked godless leaders. Our national and many state governments are totally corrupt. I dare say that at least a very powerful minority of people

at these levels serve us not out of duty or conscience, but out of a lust for power or money or fame. And God despises such arrogance and pride.

Do you really think that our present leadership would have created something like term limits to curb the tide of corruption in men's hearts? Of course not. Do they care about Presidents perjuring themselves? Do they care about immoral laws being passed apart from legal process? Do they have the best interest of the people in mind? Do they even believe in such a thing? Are they ruling by principles or opinion polls? How many other examples could be offered of our politicians passing laws not for the majority of the people, but for special interest groups that have money and the ability to help get the person re-elected? How many times do we hear candidates for president say one minute that they believe one thing and the very next minute say exactly the opposite? Where have all the Statesmen gone? There was such a thing one in this country you know? Things have not always been as they are today. Politics was (ironically like the pastorate) at one time a very highly valued profession and greatly exalted in the minds of the public. But today, they bring ever greater shame and disgrace upon a nation. And in this particular arena, we are very much like Israel.

But the consequences of all this is that much more troubling, for this reason. The people become like their leaders. And Now we have an entire generation of people (if not two) that are uneducated, unable to think, ignorant of truth, relativists, hedonists, influenced in their decisions increasingly by emotion and media, living however they feel like, doing whatever they want to anyone they please... and this is very, very troubling. It becomes increasingly difficult to raise up moral leaders when the society at large is increasingly immoral. And so the cycle becomes increasingly more difficult to break.

What do we do? Again, as Christians, we repent. We repent for ourselves, for the church and for our nation. We represent the nation to God. As citizens we search our own hearts and get involved in the political process, in the arts and media, in any arena we can in order to help make a difference. We read books rather than watch TV. We concentrate our efforts on becoming people of integrity and morality and honor and chastity and prudence and goodness and gentleness. We insist that truth has a place in this culture and we stand up for it whatever the cost. We love our enemies. We teach in schools. We do exactly what the cultural mandate of Genesis 1 tells us to do. We act like image bearers who are redeemed by the living God and who have the only hope for peace in this world.

Social Anarchy

Vs. 18-21 tells us about the social anarchy of Israel. Fortunately, the things mentioned here are not anywhere as pervasive as the other two are in our day. Look at how bad things had gotten in that land and consider it a mirror of what could happen in our own. These are horrors beyond imagining for most of us and this goes to show that we still live in a time of God's continual kindness and patience and goodness, and we ought to be thankful while using this as a warning for things that we do not want to see come upon us. The most difficult thing in the world for you to do is to take a message like this seriously and actually leave this building and go do something. So I challenge you to consider very seriously what you are about to hear.

Vs. 18, wickedness is an all consuming fire in the land. **Vs. 19**, "no man spares his brother." When everyone is self-serving, human relations not only break down but are utterly destroyed. (Just watch one episode of Jerry Springer if you can stand it to see the how quickly we are traveling down even this road). People devour each other, even their own siblings. **Verse 20**, "They slice off what is on the right hand but still are hungry, and they eat what is on the left hand but they are not satisfied. Each of them eats the flesh of his own arm." Not many things are left in our society that shock people. Hopefully, this

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one still is. Cannibalism is used – probably symbolically for what the people were doing to each other socially and morally. But the crazy thing is, once the destruction actually came, cannibalism was no longer symbolic. People were quite literally eating their own infants because there was no food to be had because God was punishing them so severely. This is what happens when good people do nothing.

Back on the symbolic level, have you ever thought about the way that people treat each other in the high corporate world or in the world of power or competition as cannibalism? Do you want to be guilty of such a perverse sin as that? Then watch yourselves carefully. Make sure that you do not treat your brother with contempt. Do not seek his ruin, but his benefit. Do not look to destroy one another in matters of Christian liberty, but seek after God's kingdom instead. Do not destroy what God has made for the sake of food. Seek to help each other when in need. Learn to understand when a person needs help though they do not ask you for it. Don't hide your need from your fellow Christian. Make it as easy as possible for them to help you and to treat you kindly. Let us put on the love of Christ with each other – so that it will never be said of us that we have become like Israel in Isaiah's day.

Moral Perversion

Finally, [10:1-4](#) talks about the moral perversion of the nation. We have seen this before, but it is repeated again. God pronounces woe upon those who decree evil statutes. "[Woe to those who enact evil statutes and who constantly record unjust decisions.](#)" God hates and detests unjust judges. He really, really does. I think it is because being a judge is related particularly closely to one of God's main attributes. Such judges are a direct mockery of God who is himself the High Judge, the Wise Judge, the Perfect Judge, and the Righteous Judge. Judges who "[record unjust decisions](#)" and pass unfair law, who "[deprive the needy of justice and rob the poor of their rights – especially 'in order that widows may be their spoil and that they may plunder the orphans'](#)" are an abomination in the eyes of God. If don't know if any of you know a judge, but if you do I ask that you some time take them aside and remind them of the extremely high calling that they have. If you are a young person here and you love the law – consider becoming a judge. God knows we need Christians in this arena more than perhaps any other. In just the past 5 or so years in our own society, evil people have found a way of not only blocking justice through wicked decisions, but of actually rewriting laws that is not within their right to do in the first place.

[Isaiah 10:1-2](#) did not used to be such an important text for Americans. I fear it may be one of the most relevant in the whole bible for us now. This is out and out moral perversion and God hates and detests those who practice such things. One conclusion of this for each of us here is that if something is legal, that does not make it right. And if something is illegal, we do not have a right to practice it until due means have been used to see the law changed. Vigilante citizens are no better than vigilante justices. [May God be gracious to all governments and nations in our day that have one or more of these marks upon them.](#)

I say this to conclude our time together in this way. Two things strike me about this passage of God's word. I have saved this until now. Four times we learn here that for all of these things, "[God's anger does not turn away.](#)" You see, if God does not act towards us in a way that we do *not* deserve (that is out of mercy and grace), then his anger will not be turned away. It is horrible to think that God will not stop the destruction of a nation until it is complete. Once He starts, he finishes. We need God to be gracious to us lest he break out in anger against us.

I was reading in Exodus this week and was reminded of those first Israelites in the wilderness. Do you remember when God told Moses, "[I have seen these people,' the LORD said to Moses, 'and they are a stiff-necked people. Now leave me alone so that my anger](#)

may burn against them and that I may destroy them" (Ex 32:9-10). This is the natural state of all of us. Who can stand when God is angry?

The Word of God

The second thing that strikes me about this passage is that all of the things that have come upon Israel are this doing. It begins by saying, "The Lord sends a word against Jacob and it falls on Israel" (vs. 8). As he says so many times throughout the course of the Bible, God makes it quite plain here that his word is both powerful and effective to accomplish whatever he wants it to accomplish. This word comes from God. It is God's word. And he sends it to fall upon the people as an ax falls upon a tree.

This word is a word that "all the people will know" (vs. 9). From history we know how the Jews finally responded to the exile and destruction of their land and temple. They understand – finally – that this was God's doing to them. From the least to the greatest, the people knew that this word was from the Lord. It was not an accident that they were destroyed, it was God's doing and he made them understand it.

What God does specifically here is send armies. God spurs them on and incites them against his own people – this is how mad God is at their sin. But "In spite of this, His anger does not turn away and his hand is still stretched out" (vs. 12). God cuts off the elder and the false prophet. God does not take pity on the orphan or the widow. He destroys them all. And "in spite of all this His anger does not turn away, And His hand is still stretched out" (vs. 17). God burns the land by his own fury (vs. 19), and the people are like fuel for the fire. And "In spite of all this His anger does not turn away, and His hand is still stretched out" (vs. 21). God sends a day of punishment and a devastation that will come from afar (vs. 10:3). "Nothing remains but to crouch among the captives or fall among the slain" (vs. 10:4). And "In spite of all this His anger does not turn away, And His hand is still stretched out" (vs. 4).

All of this leads to a final thought. I would be remiss to leave you only my personal advise on how you can help stem the tide of our national moral abyss. For all their worth, laws themselves still have no power to make you do them. That's why even when you hear of the disaster that came to Israel you may not actually be spurred on to do anything. For this disaster is nothing but a consequence of not obeying the law.

Isaiah asks a question at the end of our text to the people of Israel in 10:3. He says, "To whom will you flee for help? And where will you leave your wealth?" This very question foreshadows the Messiah in 11:1. For in Messiah, we have the answer. Just like Israel in the wilderness, we need a Moses to mediate for us. After God told Moses that he would destroy Israel and start over with him, how did Moses respond? Knowing how frustrated Moses got with those people, it is sort of surprising to notice that he didn't just say, "OK God. Sounds great to me!"

No, Moses responded in this way, "Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom you swore by your own self: 'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever.' Then the LORD relented" (Ex 32:13-14).

Moses did two things. He interceded for the people. And this is what you and I need. We need an intercessor to curb the tide of God's wrath against us. This mediator is Jesus Christ who is the only mediator between God and man. But Moses also invoked the covenant. Moses knew that he could not sway God from his anger alone. He knew that only God's own word could be used to turn aside God's anger.

God had sworn an oath by himself to make Abraham into a mighty nation. This is totally unconditional as far as Abraham was concerned. God would do everything required to make sure this would happen. The nation of Israel was only a type of the nation that would come. So now, all who believe in Jesus Christ are called "Abraham's offspring" (Rom 4, 9). We are children of the promise.

And in Jesus Christ, we have a new covenant put into effect. This covenant sees the fulfillment of all the promises made in the Old Testament. In Christ all the promises are yes and amen. His death inaugurated the new covenant in his blood. So I ask you again. "To whom will you flee for help?" God is against sinners. But God is also for Christ and he promises that any to turn and flee to Jesus will be saved from the wrath to come.

In the gospel you have the power to obey the law, because in the gospel all of the promises are now yours, these laws are now written on a heart of flesh. When you consider how great your own salvation is, how can you be anything but thankful and how can you want to do anything but see God glorified and exalted in this world? This is the power of the Christian message. This alone is the power of the Christian message. This Christian message is Jesus Christ. May God be pleased to bless the hearing of this word for his people. May this word drop us to our knees, but may it also create in us life and hope and faith in the goodness and mercy of God towards us. Now, go out and praise God.