

Isaiah 2:12-22
December 17, 2017

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: How are you self-assessing if you have fallen into the trap of trusting anything or anyone other than God? Do we even do that?

Q: Maybe the better question is “when” do you become aware that you have misplaced your trust? [God convicts me!]

Q: Why do you think it angers God when He sees us placing trust elsewhere? [Because we are no longer worshiping Him. If we’re not looking to God for all of our provisions, then there’s a good chance we’re not thanking Him for what we have either.]

Last week we studied the variety of ways that Judah turned away from God. Over time they misplaced their trust. We acknowledged that it wasn’t an event like waking up one morning and deciding to rebel against God, but rather a slow replacement by adopting worldly ways and choosing to trust in idols who had no power. They departed from Him.

Transition: We are going to learn that there is a price to be paid for trusting in anything other than God. All of us CAN enjoy the many blessings He gives us BY trusting and crediting HIM ALONE for our provisions, or else we face the CONSEQUENCES. The moment we begin to misplace our trust in something that is not of Him is the moment we have stepped onto the proverbial “slippery slope.” Today we will look at the CONSEQUENCES for placing trust in man instead of God.

BOOK (NIV 1984): The Future Consequences of Judah – The Lord’s Day of Reckoning

V.12:

- The LORD Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and lofty, for all that is exalted (and they will be humbled),

V.13:

- for all the cedars of Lebanon, tall and lofty, and all the oaks of Bashan,

V.14:

- for all the towering mountains and all the high hills,

V.15:

- for every lofty tower and every fortified wall,

V.16:

- for every trading ship and every stately vessel.

V.17:

- The arrogance of man will be brought low and the pride of men humbled; the LORD alone will be exalted in that day,

V.18:

- and the idols will totally disappear.

V.19:

- Men will flee to caves in the rocks and to holes in the ground from dread of the Lord and the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to shake the earth.

V.20:

- In that day men will throw away to the rodents and bats their idols of silver and idols of gold, which they made to worship.

V.21:

- They will flee to caverns in the rocks and to the overhanging crags from dread of the LORD and the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to shake the earth.

V.22:

- Stop trusting in man, who has but a breath in his nostrils. Of what account is he?

Process Observations/Questions:

Q V.12: Who will be the target of God’s consequences? [all the proud and lofty, all that is exalted]

Q: If “all the proud and lofty” are His target, what is His ultimate goal according to this verse? [They will all be humbled]

Observation: Isaiah states that it is the “Lord Almighty.” [This title denotes His military might and strength. When the Almighty One comes, nothing will be able to stand in His way.]

Q: What *feeling* do you get after reading these verses? [Let people engage – a sense of dread; a sense of “uh oh...they are really going to get it”]

Q V.13-16: Isaiah highlights all the things that will not be able to stand against the Lord Almighty. Let’s look at each one.

- V.13 What was significant about “all the cedars of Lebanon, tall and lofty, and all the oaks of Bashan? (Suggests wealth and fertile plains)
- V.14 What was significant about “all the towering mountains (suggests governmental authorities) and all the high hills”
- V.15 What was significant about “every lofty tower and every fortified wall?” (military defenses)
- V.16 What was significant about “every trading ship and every stately vessel?” (Man’s trade efforts typified by the merchant ships, the hub of which existed in the city of Tyre, north of Israel)

Summary: You can have all the wealth in the world, have seats in high places, the strongest military on the planet earth, and have the strongest economy or commerce globally, and having any of these things will not keep you safe for the end time!

Q V.17-18: What is God’s ultimate goal in as he disciplines His people? [To eradicate the arrogance and pride of man by humbling them. He is able to humble us because He has the power to take anything and everything we have. He will show that idols have no power. Once we are made low, we must recognize that humans never deserve exaltation, but only God deserves glory and honor and worship.]

Q V.19-21: When God brings His discipline, it will be terrifying. Isaiah describes how desperate they become. What do you see?

- Men fleeing to caves and holes in the ground.
- They will throw away all idols in whatever form they take.
- They will flee to caverns in the rocks and to overhanging crag

Q V.19, 21: Isaiah repeats a phrase twice. What is it? [“From dread of the Lord and the splendor of His majesty when He rises to shake the earth.”]

Q: Why do you think this phrase shows up twice? [He’s trying to emphasize that “on that day,” God will become a holy terror to His people. He wants to make sure they understand what’s ahead.]

Q V.22: What’s Isaiah’s strong admonition? [“STOP TRUSTING IN MAN! Of what account is he” compared to God!]

LOOK:

We need to go to our prayer closets and ask the Lord to reveal to us any areas in our lives where we are possibly trusting ourselves, or other things. Our desire is to worship God in all areas of our lives.

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *Be Comforted* (pp. 23–25). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

The Day of the Lord (Isa. 2:6–3:26). This is that period of time when God will send judgment to the nations and purify Israel in preparation for the coming of His King to reign in Jerusalem. The Day of the Lord is described by John (Rev. 6–19), by the prophets (Isa. 13:6ff; Ezek. 30; Joel 1:15; 2:1ff; Zeph. 1:7ff; Zech. 14:1ff), and by the Lord Jesus (Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21). It will be a time of terrible suffering; the environment will be devastated, and millions of people will die. (Note the repetition of the phrase “in that day”: Isa. 2:17, 20; 3:7, 18; 4:1–2.) To the prophets, “the Day of the Lord” was foreshadowed by events in their own day. In the Book of Isaiah, Assyria’s conquest of the Northern Kingdom and invasion of Judah, and the Babylonian Captivity of Judah both picture the coming “Day of the Lord.”

(1) *Why will God judge His people?* Because of their idolatry, covetousness, pride, and exploiting of the poor (2:6–22). Instead of holding to the truth of God’s Word, they were adopting “superstitions from the East” (v. 6, NIV), not unlike many “religious seekers” today. The growth of Eastern religions in the modern Western world is a phenomenon that is both frightening and challenging. Even nonreligious people are practicing Eastern forms of meditation and relaxation, following techniques that are being taught in university classes and business seminars.

The prosperity of the nation made the leaders proud and covetous. Instead of trusting the Lord, they trusted their wealth and war equipment, not realizing that neither would deliver them in the coming day of judgment. The leaders were exploiting the poor, crushing them like grain in a mill (3:13–15). God will not allow His people to be proud and self-confident but will humble them and cut them down like trees in the forest. “The Lord alone shall be exalted in that day” (2:11, 17) when men flee from His wrath and discover the worthlessness of their idols and the consequences of their sins (vv. 19–22).

(2) *How will God judge His people?* By taking away from them everything they were trusting, including food and water, leaders and soldiers, and judges and prophets (3:1–15) The entire support system of the nation would disintegrate, and there would be no remedy. Nobody would want to hold office except women and children. (In Judah’s male-dominated society, this would be a humiliating calamity.) The national leaders in Isaiah’s day were charting a course that was out of the will of God and would ultimately bring disaster, but the righteous remnant would be protected by God (vv. 10–12).

Martin, J. A. (1985). *Isaiah*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 1039). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

The Lord’s day of reckoning (2:12–22)

When the Lord comes to establish justice on the earth human values will be reversed. Things that people had considered important will be considered unimportant and some things that people thought were insignificant will be highly valued.

2:12–18. God **has a day** (cf. “day” in v. 17) **in store**, a scheduled time of reckoning for sinners. **The LORD Almighty** (*Yahweh šebā’ôl*) is an appellation used of God 62 times in Isaiah’s book; 52 times alone and 10 times in the title “the Lord (*’ădōnāy*), the LORD Almighty.” It denotes His military might and strength. When this Almighty One comes nothing will be able to stand in His way. **Proud people will be humbled** (cf. vv. 9, 11, 17), and even the great cedar

trees in the forests **of Lebanon**, north of Israel, and oak trees (cf. 1:29) in **Bashan** (meaning “fertile plain”), east of the Sea of Kinnereth (later named Galilee), will be no match for the Lord. **Mountains**, perhaps suggesting governmental authorities (cf. comments on 2:3), and their military defenses represented by towers and **fortified** walls, cannot oppose Him (vv. 14–15). He will also demolish man’s trade efforts typified by the merchant ships, the hub of which existed in the city of Tyre, north of Israel (v. 16). Everything that seemed to **man** in his **arrogance** to be permanent and secure will be swept away. **The LORD alone will be exalted** (cf. v. 11) when He demolishes Judah’s **idols** (cf. v. 8). This may refer to the time when the Babylonians captured Judah in 586, but the ultimate judgment will be in the future at Christ’s Second Advent.

2:19–22. When the Lord’s vengeance comes, people will try to escape by fleeing into **caves** (cf. vv. 10, 21). They will be terrified because God will **shake the earth** (see comments on Hag. 2:6–7). Carrying their **idols** made with **silver** and **gold** (cf. Isa. 2:7) will hinder their escape, so the people will toss them aside to **rodents and bats** (v. 20). Once again Isaiah’s sense of irony is strong: things highly valued will be thrown aside to detestable creatures that people hate. In verse 21 Isaiah again spoke of people hiding in caves away from God’s terror (cf. vv. 10, 19a) when **He will shake the earth** (cf. v. 19b).

Then the prophet called on Judah to **stop trusting in man** (v. 22; cf. Ps. 118:8–9). Man is merely like a vapor. His **breath** can be snuffed out quickly. Therefore to trust in him is nonsensical, for man is easily removed (Isa. 2:9, 11–12, 17). In view of God’s coming judgment Judah should begin to turn to Him in the present. God’s glory should cause them to live righteous, holy lives and thus escape His severe judgment.

Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith (p. 997). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

2:22 God created humanity in His image (Gn 1:26), and the psalmist affirmed that God crowned man with glory (Ps 8:5). Isaiah was not speaking about a person’s intrinsic worth or importance in God’s eyes. The issue here was reliance on other people who might not be realizing the dignity God had conferred on the human race. Isaiah was only reminding people that they should not trust in gold, armies, idols (vv. 7–8), other proud people (vv. 11, 12, 17), or the structures people erect to give them security (vv. 15–16). God alone is worthy of trust; relying on human devices is a waste of time.