WHAT IS PREVENTING US?

**DATE: 8/10/2016 Wed.**

**TEXT: Isaiah 2:6-22**

**INTRODUCTION**

We continue in **chapter 2** of Isaiah tonight

Isaiah can plainly see what has gone wrong with Judah and Jerusalem, even though the people are oblivious to their sinful condition

And he offered some **Help**

In addition, Isaiah is given great insight into what will happen later

And so offers some **Hope**

Beginning in **v. 2** he writes of the ***“last days”***

Some have debated the time frame of the ***“last days”***

But according to **Hebrews 1:2**, the last Days began at the incarnation of Christ

***“Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds”***

Just as important as *When* this will occur is …

*What* the people of God could expect

**v. 2 - *“the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains”***

Isaiah describes the Preeminence of the LORD’S Temple

(This a huge edifice)

This Temple is an entirely New Building

The Temple of Solomon had been built on the spot where Abraham had attempted to offer Isaac

The entire area was later known as Zion, a designation Isaiah uses many times throughout his prophecy

In the Bible, a ***“mountain”*** often symbolizes Stability and is often associated with Divinity and Gov’t

Isaiah’s description indicates that one day the Kingdom of the Messiah will be preeminent over all the kingdoms of the earth

The Gentile nations will desire to know God’s Truth and will stream to the House of God

**v. 3 – *“And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the Word of the LORD from Jerusalem”***

Resulting in an unprecedented time of peace

Although the Messiah is not named in this passage, later portions of **Isaiah** (**chapters 7, 9, 11, 53**) …

… will be quite specific about His character and the role He will play

In this instance, He fulfills the role of **Judge**

In light of what God will eventually accomplish in the Gentile world,

Isaiah challenges the house of Jacob (Judah and Jerusalem…Israel) to walk in the light of the Lord

**v.5** – ***“O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD”***

This portion of Isaiah regarding the Messiah’s future kingdom is repeated almost verbatim in **Micah 4:1-3**

Now we come to **vs. 6 -22** of **chapter 2**

In these verses we see Isaiah describing the sins that are preventing Israel from walking with God

And the Judgement that would come because of it

As we look at these verses I’d like to ask this Question

**“WHAT IS PREVENTING US?”**

What /was stopping Israel / is stopping America from repenting and turning back to the Lord?

**Isaiah 1:18 *– “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool”***

**II Chronicles 7:14 – *“If My people, which are called by My Name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land”***

According to God’s Word …Nothing except …

A Humble Heart and a Repentance Spirit

Let’s stand to read **vs. 6-22**

**~~~Prayer~~~**

First, let’s look at …

**I. THE SIN THAT PREVENTED THEM - vs. 6-9**

According to these verses, there were several things present in Israel’s society that was Preventing them from returning to a right relationship with the LORD

**Prevent** - *go before (someone) with spiritual guidance and help*

The request is put forth in **v.5 – *“O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD”***

The presumption is that they wouldn’t, because we see in

**v. 6a – *“Therefore Thou* (The LORD) *hast forsaken Thy people the house of Jacob,”***

Let’s look at what was Captivating Israel’s Attention

(Instead of God)

**A. Their Worldliness** – **v. 6b**

They had left the True God for their own Philosophy

***“because they be replenished from the east, and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers”***

Judah had become captivated by the false ways of the foreigners

3 things here …

**1.** They are filled with eastern ways

***“because they be replenished from the east”***

***“Replenished”*** – to be filled up / ongoing

Instead of Worshipping the One True God

Israel was taking up the Religions of their neighbors

Just like Israel, America is being caught up in the mysticism of Eastern religions

The Eastern Religions … Hinduism, Buddhism, transcendental meditation, Islam etc.

The findings of a survey by the *Pew Forum on Religion and Public life* showed:

--Almost 1 in 4 American say they sometimes attend services of a different religion then their own

--24% of the public say they believe in reincarnation, and 23% believe in yoga as a spiritual practice

-- 15% of the public acknowledges having consulted a psychic or a fortuneteller

-- 25% of the overall public (and 23% of Christians) believe in astrology 

There is a vast Difference between what is being called Christian today in America and the Christianity of the Bible

**2.** They have ***“become soothsayers like the Philistines”***

A soothsayer is a modern day Future Teller

The Philistines were the enemies of Israel

America today is caught up in the occult as well

**Quote:** Jeff Harshbager, an ex-satanist gotten saved who now has a ministry that reaches out to occultist says, That American society is *“submerged in the occult”* He told The Christian Post in an interview that occult practices & belief are commonplace in American culture. *“Our society is submerged in the occult; Harry Potter has filled the minds of our children for a decade and vampirism meets our teens with the illusions of grandeur. Witchcraft went mainstream decades ago, and Wicca is its offspring,” “Christian witchcraft is on the up-rise and new age spirituality fills church pews”*

**3.** They learned the ways of the Heathen

***“they please themselves in the children of strangers”***

They became tolerant of the False Religions

Allowing them to practice in Israel

But God had explicitly told Israel not to get involved with their heathen neighbors

**Joshua 23:7 –** ***“That ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear by them, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them:”***

**I Kings 11:2 –*“Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods:”***

**II Corinthians 6:17 *– “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,”***

The Devil knows how to captivate someone’s attention

He makes everything look inviting

Madison Ave. does a great job for him

He’s doing it right now in America!

**I Thessalonians 1:9 –** ***“For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you,***

***… and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;”***

America has become a Nation of False Gods / Idols

Idolatry is anything that takes the place of the LORD

The next sin that was Preventing them was …

**B. Their Wealth – v. 7a**

***“Their Land also is Full with Silver and Golds, neither is there any end of their treasures;”***

Wealth is not evil in itself, but the mention of so much affluence here speaks of Materialism, Greed, and Covetousness that was taking place

Much like our nation today with its emphasis on the economy, processions, and money

Covetousness brings a curse into someone’s life

**Ecclesiastes 5:13, 17  - *“There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt” “All his days also he eateth in darkness, and he hath much sorrow and wrath with his sickness”***

**C. Their War Machine** – **v. 7b**

Was Preventing them

***“their land is also full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots:”***

This speaks of their great military strength

Most nations today are armed to the teeth with all manner of military might

Which shows they are not trusting in God but in their armaments for security

(Every year nations like Russia and North Korea parade their armament through the streets of their capitals)

The history of mankind has been marred with one war after another

War historians tell us that there has been very few years of peace through-out the centuries

The wars number in the thousands since records have been kept and the deaths number in the billions over the years

That is not difficult to believe

We are now nearing the end of 2016

I was curious to know how many wars have started in the world since 2011 and was quite surprised

Wikipedia records that 22 wars have started since 2011 involving over 30 countries

The regions include countries such as Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Syria, Sudan, central Africa, and Somalia

These are just the areas where new wars have started

Wikipedia also reveals that to date, there is presently 42 wars and military conflicts that are raging around the globe

What constitutes a Military Conflict or a War?

A state of open, armed, often prolonged conflict carried on between nations, states, or parties

One has been going on since 1918 and five have been ongoing since the 40's

Since 2011, there have been 31, 694 recorded deaths from these conflicts

Five of the wars, however, list the total deaths as unknown, Thousands more may have been killed

Man's answer to all this fighting and bloodshed was the establishment of the League of Nations after WW I

It didn't work / have you ever heard of WW II?

Then the United Nations was officially created after WW II in October, 1945

The purpose of the UN was to resolve conflicts between nations with diplomacy before military force was used

Dictators, however, have created obstacles to solving problems this way

Without any strong military force and support from the nations of the world, the UN has no muscle to back up threats of sanctions or force

The fact that resolutions agreed upon by participating nations can be vetoed by the likes of China, Russia, France, the United Kingdom, or the United States

… Has also weakened the UN into an organization of failure

The UN is also weak because it will not recognize any country as a terrorist state

Terrorists could care less about the UN because they are not interested in debate

They are only interested in control and destruction

War will continue to plague this planet until it will be on the verge of annihilation

We read in the book of Revelation that after the Rapture of the church, there will be terrible wars in the world

John describes this bloodshed by describing a rider on a red horse who had a great sword

This ***“great sword”*** is believed by many to be the use of nuclear weapons, which will kill one-fourth of the world’s population

**D. Their Worship** **– v. 8**

… Was Preventing them

***“Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands”***

This is the climax of their evil – ***“full”***

Their worship is corrupt

They worship their idols instead of God

They worship what they imagine God to be

***“they worship the work of their own hands”***

They have made God into their own image

And Not the God declared in the Bible

It is a damning indictment

Now notice, because of these things that Prevented them …

**E. Their Humbling - v.9**

***“And the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself: therefore forgive them not”***

You would think that God would be quick to forgive those that honestly humble themselves

But that is not what was going on here

There was plenty of worship going on in Judah, and plenty of people humbling themselves

But they were simply worshipping the wrong things, and humbling themselves for the wrong reasons!

Most people think that they can worship whatever way they like and that is acceptable to God

That couldn’t be farther from the Truth!

**1.** They were more than happy to *“****bow down”*** and humble themselves for something of their choosing, something for their benefit

But just see how they behave when you tell them that there is only one way / the Bible way

And that their ways are wrong

**2.** The application is sobering

***“Therefore forgive them not”***

Their toleration of the foreign gods, covetousness, and of idols was sincere

But sincerely wrong

It may have been ennobling or helpful to society

But it rejected the Lord God, and was therefore unforgivable

**THE SIN THAT PREVENTED THEM**

**II. THE JUDGEMENT THAT AWAITED THEM – vs. 10-22**

The beginning of **chapter 2** described the Glory of the Messiah’s Reign in **vs. 1-4**

In **vs. 6-9** we see the Current Corruption of Judah

How will the earth be transformed from its Current Corruption to the Glory of the Messiah’s reign?

It will happen by the Victory of the Messiah in ***“the day of the LORD of Hosts***” –**v.12**

Because of the evils which existed in Israel, Judgment was coming upon the land which would be so severe that it would bring a great Humbling among the people

The Character of that Judgment is described here

**A. The Humbling of Judgement – vs. 11-17**

Someone can be Humbled willingly or unwillingly

One day every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord to the Glory of God the Father – **Rm. 14:11**

You can fall on the Stone (the Mercy of God) or let the Stone crush you (Your choice) – **Matt. 21:44; Lk. 20:18**

Whether willingly or unwillingly

First, look at the Humbling of Judgement to …

**1.** The Proud **– vs. 11, 12**

***“The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day” “For the day of the LORD of Hosts shall be upon every one***

***that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low”***

The term *“****day of the LORD”*** (used more than 25 times in the Bible) does not necessarily refer to one specific day

It speaks of *God’s time*

The idea is that right now we are living in the *day of man,* but the day of man will not last forever

One day, the Messiah will end *the day of man* and bring forth ***“the Day of the LORD”***

**Isaiah 13:11 *– “And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible”***

The Proud and Haughty will be Humbled in that Day

**2.** The Praise – **v. 17**

The Praise that will Result from the Humbling

***“And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day”***

The phrase ***“The LORD alone shall be exalted in that day"*** is repeated here from **v. 11**

The certainty of the exaltation of Jehovah-God is emphasized in the repeating of this statement

When man is Humbled, God will be Exalted

The Praise in that Day will not be all voluntary

**4.** Their Portrayal **– v. 13**

Here we see Who will be Humbled

***“And upon all the cedars of Lebanon…”***

The cedar, being so large, lofty, and grand, is used in the Scriptures to represent kings, princes, nobles and great men

**Ezekiel 31:3 –** ***“Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs”***

I believe Ezekiel may be describing Nebuchadnezzar

In **Daniel 4:20-22 w**e find Daniel describing Nebuchadnezzar’s dream to him

***“The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth;” “Whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation:” “It is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth”***

***“And upon all the oaks of Bashan”***

Bashan was an area that was east of the Jordan River

It was coveted for its rich, green pastures, which produced fine cattle

Bashan’s lofty oaks where also particularly celebrated

The sense here is no different than the ***“Cedars”***

This too is talking about the princes and nobles of the land

**Psalm 22:12 *– “Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round”***

This is a symbolic portrayal of the Humbling by God of those who are esteemed and exalted by man

***“The Day of the LORD of Host”*** will humble even the Greatest of men!

**4.** Their Powers – **v. 14**

God’s Judgement will be …

***“Upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up”***

As I noted earlier that ***“mountains”*** are often symbolic of governments

Large and small (**“*hills”***) Nations will bow before God in Judgment

God is going to humble the Nations of the World

**5.** Their Protection **– v. 15**

***“Upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall”***

… speaks of the protection of a city

Man's protection will amount to nothing in Judgment

Whatever man as built, thinking it will protect them

… Will be of no value in the Day of Judgement

The Judgement will be upon …

**6.** Their Possessions – **v. 16**

***“Upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all the pleasant pictures”***

God will humble everything

The ships that traveled to foreign lands were especially large and grand

Carrying with them the products of man

Many thought the Titanic couldn’t be sunk either

***“Pleasant pictures”*** represent the valued possessions

… that were on those ships

Trade and Commerce

**Revelation 18:17, 19 *– “For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,” “And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by***

***reason of her costliness!”***

All of which will be humbled in the Day of Judgment

Brought to Naught

**The Humbling**

**B. The Hurling – vs. 18, 20**

***“And the idols He shall utterly abolish”  “In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats;”***

Another area of Judgment will be in the matter of Worship

False worship will be condemned

**1.** The Destruction**– v.18**

***“The idols He shall utterly abolish”***

Judgment will do away with idolatry

The Judgment of Israel’s captivity brought about an end to their idolatry

God’s Judgement on America will bring about an end to its idolatry

**2.** The Disgrace**– v. 20**

***“In that day a man shall cast his idols... to the moles and to the bats”***

Those who were trusting in idols, valuable as they might have been - made of gold and silver …

… Will see the vanity of them and case them away, so as not to get caught with them when God comes to Judge

They threw them as far away as they could

Into the dark, obscure places or holes, where the moles and bats live

Judgment will cause men not only to reject their idols

But also to discard them (Hurl) lest they be Disgraced by being found with them

**C. Their Hiding – vs. 10, 19, 21**

Man will be so ashamed of themselves at the coming of God and His Holiness

That instead of bowing down to Him

They will instead try to hide themselves in the Mountains

The suggestion is made that they should get ready for the Coming Judgement

**v. 10 - *“Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of His majesty”***

Of course the best way would be to humble one’s self before the LORD, and fall upon His Mercy

But they won’t, man is to Proud and Stubborn for that

Instead … **v. 19 - *“…they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth”***

People will hide in caves and any place that looks like it will provide protection from God

This will also be the practice of the unbelievers in the last days

**Revelation 6:16, 17 *–***says that they shall say

***“… to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:” “For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?”***

Then lastly, look at …

**D. Their Hopelessness – v. 22**

This last verse of the chapter sums up the case of Judgment

Showing us the hopelessness of man to escape God’s Judgment by the help of man

**1.** His Reliance is Hopeless **– v. 22a**

***“Cease ye from man”***

Stop putting your trust in man, for no man can deliver you from Divine Judgment

Only God can keep you from Judgment

During the Tribulation man will Trust the Anti-Christ

**2.** His Recourses are Hopeless **– v. 22b**

***“For wherein is he to be accounted of?”***

Nothing that any man has, will be enough to bring about an escape from Judgment

**I Peter 1:18, 19 *– “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;” “But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:”***

In the Gospel message, man has no works or merit for salvation,

And only the Mercy of God will bring escape from Judgment

That is true in every age of man

Jesus Christ is the Mercy of God

**CONCLUSION**

Let me close with this

**Quote:** Charles Spurgeon said – *“Brethren in Christ, let us think more of God and less of man. Come, let the Lord our God fill the whole horizon of our thoughts. Let our love go forth to him; Let us delight ourselves in Him. Let us trust in Him that liveth forever, in Him whose promise never faileth, in Him who will be with us in life, and in death, and through eternity. Oh that we lived more in the society of Jesus, more in the sight of God! Let man go behind our back, and Satan too. We cannot spend our lives in seeking the smiles of men, for pleasing God is the one object we pursue. Our hands, and our heads, and our hearts, and all that we have and are, find full occupation for the Lord, and therefore we must Cease from man”*

**THE SIN THAT PREVENTED THEM**

**THE JUDGEMENT THAT AWAITED THEM**

**WHAT IS PREVENTING US?**

**WAKE UP AMERICA!**