

Isaiah 2:6-4:6 - Where to place your trust on the day of the Lord

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[0:00] Good morning, church. The reading is taken from Isaiah chapter 2, from verse 6 through to chapter 4, verse 6.

! We will be sharing the reading the day of the Lord.! You, Lord, have abandoned your people, the descendants of Jacob. They are full of superstitions from the East.

They practice divination, like the Philistines, and embrace pagan customs. Their land is full of silver and gold. There is no end to their treasures.

Their land is full of horses. There is no end to the chariots. Their land is full of idols. They bow down to the work of their hands, to what their fingers have made.

So people will be brought low and everyone humbled. Do not forgive them. Go into the rocks, hiding the ground from the fearful presence of the Lord and the splendor of his majesty.

[1:11] The eyes of the arrogant will be humbled and the human pride 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.

For all the cedars of Lebanon, tall and lofty, and all the oaks of Bashan. For all the towering mountains and all the high hills.

For every lofty tower and every fortified wall. For every trading ship and every stately vessel. The arrogance of man will be brought low and human pride humbled.

The Lord alone will be exalted in that day. And the idols will totally disappear. People will flee to caves in the rocks and to holes in the ground from the fearful presence of the Lord and the splendor of his majesty.

When he rises to shake the earth. In that day, people will throw away to the moles and bats their idols of silver and idols of gold, which they're made to worship.

[2:25] They will flee to caverns in the rocks and to the overhanging crags from the fearful presence of the Lord and the splendor of his majesty. When he rises to shake the earth.

Stop trusting in mere humans who have but breath in their nostrils. Why hold them in esteem? See now, the Lord, the Lord Almighty is about to take from Jerusalem and Judah both supply and support.

All supplies of food and all supplies of water. The hero and the warrior, the judge and the prophet, the diviner and the elder, the captain of fifty and the man of rank, the counsellor, skilled craftsman and clever enchanter.

I will make mere youths their officials. Children will rule over them. People will oppress each other, man against man, neighbour against neighbour.

The young will rise up against the old and nobody against the honoured. A man will seize one of his brothers in his father's house and say, You have a cloak.

[3:34] You be our leader. Take charge of this heap of ruins. But in that day he will cry out, I have no remedy. I have no food or clothing in my house. Do not make me the leader of the people.

Jerusalem staggers. Judah is falling. Their words and deeds are against the Lord, defying his glorious presence. The look on their faces testifies against them. They parade their sin like Sodom. They do not hide it. Woe to them. They have brought disaster upon themselves. Tell the righteous it will be well with them, for they will enjoy the fruit of their deeds.

Woe to the wicked. Disaster is upon them. They will be paid back for what their hands have done.

Youths oppress my people. Women rule over them. My people, your guides lead you astray.

They turn you from the path. The Lord takes his place in court. He rises to judge the people. The Lord enters into judgment against the elders and leaders of his people.

[4:34] It is you who have ruined my vineyard. The plunder from the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing my people and grinding the faces of the poor, declares the Lord, the Lord Almighty?

The Lord says, The women of Zion are haughty, walking along with outstretched necks, flirting with their eyes, strutting along with swaying hips, with ornaments jingling on their ankles.

Therefore, the Lord will bring sores on the heads of the women of Zion. The Lord will make their scalps bald. In that day, the Lord will snatch away their finery, the bangles and headbands and crescent necklaces, the earrings and bracelets and veils, the headdresses and anklets and sashes, the perfume bottles and charms, the signet rings and nose rings, the fine robes and capes and cloaks, the purses and mirrors, and the linen garments and tiaras and shawls.

Instead of fragrance, there will be a stench. Instead of a sash, a rope. Instead of well-dressed hair, baldness. Instead of fine clothing, sackcloth.

Instead of beauty, branding. Your men will fall by the sword. Your warriors in battle. The gates of Zion will lament and mourn. Destitute, she will sit on the ground.

[5:52] In that day, seven women will take hold of one man and say, We will eat our own food and provide our own clothes. Only let us be called by your name. Take away our disgrace.

In that day, the branch of the Lord will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of the survivors in Israel. Those who are left in Zion, who remain in Jerusalem, will be called holy.

All who are recorded among the living in Jerusalem. The Lord will wash away the filth of the women of Zion. He will cleanse the bloodstains from Jerusalem by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of fire.

Then the Lord will create over all of Mount Zion and over all those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night. Over everything, the glory will be a canopy.

It will be a shelter and a shade from the heat of the day and a refuge from the hiding place, from the storm and the rain. Thank you so much, Yvonne and Pesh.

[6:57] Let's pray as we come to God's word. Let's pray together. Father, we do thank you so much for your word to us, and we pray, please, that you would give us tender hearts to it this morning.

We're very conscious just how slow we are, not simply just to understand your word, but maybe even more to take it to heart and put it into practice. Yes.

And so, Lord, we pray that you'd be at work in me as I speak, all of us as we listen together to your word, that your will would be done and your name would be honoured and glorified. In Jesus' name. Amen. I'm very conscious that a long reading like that can leave us slightly confused or bewildered about what the passage is really about.

So I want you to take a look at chapter 2, verse 22, which really is a summary for us of Isaiah's point. If you get this, everything else this morning will fall into place.

[7:58] And in a sense, if you get this, it doesn't really matter what else you hear this morning, because this is the main point. At verse 22 of chapter 2, stop trusting in mere humans who have but a breath in their nostrils.

Why hold them in esteem? This is it. In a sentence, stop trusting mere humans. Stop regarding man.

That is the point of the passage. Isaiah is saying, listen, Judah, your problem is, you know, our problem this morning, my problem this morning, is that we think too highly of human strength.

Notice Isaiah's logic, right? Mere human weakness is seen in that verse, in the description of them. What are mere humans like?

Well, they are those who have a breath in their nostrils. In other words, don't trust in mere humans, because mere humans are creatures. They have but breath in their nostrils, because they are creatures, they are not the creator.

[9:09] Esteem does not belong to those who breathe breath, but to the one who gives breath. That's Isaiah's point. Now, maybe you, like me, have had a busy week, right?

So you've got lots of things in your calendar that you're trying to do, lots of things on your to-do list. Maybe you have that same approach that I have, where you write everything down that you're going to do in a day. You achieve one or two of them, and then leave at the end of the day really

frustrated at all the things that you haven't done.

And I was sat at my desk on Thursday morning, and I was praying. Thursday morning is kind of my big prep day normally for sermons, and so I was sitting at my desk praying on Thursday morning, and just thinking, if only I could just, if only I had just a little bit more time.

If only I could just cancel one or two things in my calendar this week, I'll be fine. And then I realised, oh, Steve, you've totally missed the point of your sermon, haven't you?

That the whole point is that you don't need more of you. That is the point, isn't it? Your big problem in life is not that you need more of you, you need more of the giver of breath, don't you?

[10:16] You need more of the Lord. And that's Isaiah's big point in this passage. So if you miss everything else, hold on to that. Stop trusting in mere humans. You need the giver of breath, not just someone who has breath.

But the way that Isaiah is going to teach that to us, he's going to give us three examples of human, I guess, power or pride that we find quite alluring, and he's going to show us how each of those are humiliated.

And what I think we'll find is that although Isaiah is writing about 2,800 years ago, 2,700 years ago, something like that, even though he's writing that long ago, these aspects of human pride still stand strong.

So he's going to unpick money, sex, and power. And he's going to tell you and me that those three things are not places to find shelter.

They are not things that we can trust in. He does them in the order of money, power, and sex, which doesn't quite ring as well as money, sex, and power, does it? But that's the order that we're going to look at them in.

[11:17] Money, power, and then sex. So let's first see money. Now, you might have the impression when you read the Bible, oh, these guys are all kind of like really antiquated and living in really backwards places, and they don't really know what life's all about.

But you have a look at verse 7 of chapter 2, and you see what life is like in Jerusalem. Their land is full of silver and gold. There is no end to their treasures. Their land is full of horses. There is no end to their chariots.

Their land is full of idols. They bow down to the work of their hands, to what their fingers have made. Jerusalem is full of money. Right? Jerusalem is a wealthy, successful city.

I mean, it has its problems for sure, but still it's a place where money can be made. Success is there to be had. And notice the repetition, the land is full, the land is full.

It's full of silver and gold. It's full of horses. And it's full of idols that their fingers have made. Now, don't miss the irony here, right? These people are so rich and so wealthy and so together that though they are mere creatures, mere humanity, they have become the creators of gods themselves.

[12:27] Do you see that? They are rich enough to think that they are self-made and that any spiritual gap that they feel, they can make something even to fill that gap for themselves.

Now, I think you read it like that and you think, wow, that could be a description of us today, couldn't it? Yeah, okay, money might be tight. The cost of living keeps going up, doesn't it? Jobs aren't as easy to come by as perhaps they have been.

But still, London is full of money, isn't it? It's full of cars as well, for sure. Not horses, but cars everywhere. And homes. And it's full of people filling the spiritual gap in their hearts with things that they have made with their own hands.

They're that successful. We don't even think of ourselves as creatures anymore. We think of ourselves as the creator of gods, even. That's why when I walk my dog at about 6.30 in the morning around the park, there are people hugging the trees.

Why? Well, because they are making gods. Doing yoga in the park. And notice everybody thinks like this. So, in verse 6 of chapter 2, the people of Jerusalem have basically become like the rest of the world.

[13:33] We're told that they're like people in the east. They're like the Philistines. They are holding hands with pagans. And basically what Isaiah is saying is, God's people think the same way as the rest of the world now.

This is basically the version of life that everybody believes. That if you've got enough stuff, if you've got enough money, life will be sorted. And any gaps you find, well, buy yourself some crystals.

Hug a tree. Now, you don't have to be rich to think like that. In fact, sometimes the very, very rich can see how shallow it is, clearer than some of the rest of us can.

But even so, don't we have to acknowledge that this is not a place of shelter in the storm. And notice that the big problem for this version of life, where basically life is about getting money and buying all that we need.

The big problem for that version of life is summarized in five words. The day of the Lord. That's the big problem with it. Take a look at verse 11 and 12 of chapter 2.

[14 : 36] The eyes of the arrogant will be humbled, and human pride brought low. The Lord alone will be exalted in that day. Verse 12. The Lord Almighty has a day in store for all the proud and the lofty, for all that is exalted, and they will be humbled.

Do you see what Isaiah is saying here? There is a day coming when the shallowness of money will be exposed by the greatness of God.

And on that day, they will be humbled, those who've trusted in it. Verse 17. The arrogance of man will be brought low, and human pride will be humbled. The Lord alone will be exalted in that day, and the idols will disappear.

And proud people who had all they could have ever wanted. They had all the money and all the horses they ever wanted. They had made gods for themselves, are now trying to hide in caves and under rocks.

Verse 21. They will flee to caverns in the rocks and to the overhanging crags from the fearful presence of the Lord and the splendor of his majesty when he rises to shake the earth.

[15 : 41] It's worth just slowing down, isn't it? Just to see this together. Notice what Isaiah is saying here. Isaiah is telling you, whoever you are this morning, however wealthy or otherwise you might feel, Isaiah is telling you, it doesn't matter.

There is a day coming when it will be exposed to you that what you have is an insufficient shelter on the day of the Lord.

And so it doesn't matter how successful you are, how many horses or cars you have, or what particular idols you have been able to make out of your money. You will stand before God who made you, and you will stand before him in the splendor and glory of his holiness, the breath giver. And if all you have is your money, then you're like Jeremiah with a pen trying to bat off balls from the balcony. You will be crawling under the rocks in shame. Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, it doesn't matter how much money you have.

You can be more specific though, can't you? Because I think there's a particular way that the splendor of our riches is exposed on the day of the Lord. Let me try and give you an example of what's going on here. Maybe you've had this experience where you've been to someone's birthday, and you've bought them a present.

[16 : 56] And you've given them the gift, right? And then someone else has turned up at the party, and they have given them a bigger gift, right?

And then you're like, you're humiliated, because the gift that you gave them doesn't seem as impressive as the gift that somebody else gave them. You see a thing in a church that we used to be in, where on Christmas morning, some of the kids would bring some of the presents that they received on Christmas morning.

And one of our kids stood at the front really proudly, and they got a toothbrush, right? I've been given a toothbrush, right? And then the kid next to them had a gigantic remote-controlled car. He's like, I don't know what I got. And was able to tell us exactly how much money it cost his parents as well, right? And so there is something about the glory and greatness of something else exposing the shallowness and smallness of the glory of what it is that you have.

And that's it here. You see, on its own, what you think might be glorious in your money and what you've got, that might seem impressive on its own, but you wait till you see the glory and the splendor of God himself.

[18 : 08] Then you will see how pathetic that is, and how small it is. The day of the Lord will be the day when the invisible glory of God will be revealed, and the splendor of his greatness will be exposed to all of us.

And in the light of his splendor, the splendor of your salary or your home or your saving will look dull and shabby, and will leave you running for the hills. And notice the detail in verse 20.

Notice what the people are doing. They are throwing away their idols that they have made. They're chucking them in the bin, because in the face of God's glory, they're seen as the rubbish they are. I don't even want this. Let's get rid of it. Again, it's just worth thinking, isn't it?

Have we reckoned with this? That there's a day coming when you will meet God in his glory face to face, and your nice new fit, your fancy car, your savings account, your aspirations for a better lifestyle will all be exposed as drab glory in the face of God's glory.

That's money. Secondly, power. Take a look at chapter 3, verse 1. See now, the Lord, the Lord Almighty, is about to take from Jerusalem and Judah both supply and support, all supplies of food and all supplies of water, the hero and the warrior, the judge and the prophet, the diviner and the elder, the captain of 50 and the man of rank, the counsellor, skilled craftsman, and clever enchanter.

[19 : 33] Notice here that God is stripping Judah of the people of rank, the people of power, the hero, the warrior, the judge, the prophet, all of them gone, removed and humbled. And instead, in verse 4, if you look down, God is making children rule us over them.

Not necessarily because literal children are going to be ruling over them. Rather, the point is that children are the definition of inexperienced, people who don't know what they're doing.

And so what follows is carnage, specifically verse 5, oppression. Young and old are fighting against one another. And it's not so much that God imposes foolish leaders on the people, rather they choose these leaders for themselves.

So in verse 6, they thrust leadership into the hands of anyone they can find, even if they know they can't do it. Look at verse 6. They're so impoverished now that they seize one of his brothers in his father's house and say, you have a cloak, you be our leader.

You take charge of this heap of ruins. And in that day, he'll say, I have no remedy. I have no food or clothing in my house. Don't make me the leader of the people. And the result is, in verse 8, that Jerusalem staggers and Judah is falling.

[20 : 41] They've become worse and worse as the whole place starts to fall apart under the leadership of people who don't know what they're doing. So much so, in verse 9, The look on their faces testifies against them.

They parade their sin like Sodom. They do not hide it. Woe to them. They have brought disaster upon themselves. The Lord doesn't intend to let it carry on, does he? So he drags them into court in verse 13.

And he pronounces judgment in verse 14 and 15. It is you who have ruined my vineyard. The plunder from the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing my people and grinding the faces of the poor, declares the Lord, the Lord Almighty?

And notice what's going on here. You can see, can't you, that Isaiah is promising the humbling of human power. Jerusalem and Judah do not be impressed, he says, with mere human power. Because the people of Judah, just like the residents of London, are absolutely besotted by power. And they assume that if the people of power were more like them, or were better, or were somebody else, everything will be okay.

[21 : 47] Now we think like that, don't we? We assume, don't we, that what we really need is human power. We live, don't we, in a country that we have had six prime ministers in ten years.

It's incredible, isn't it, when you think in the previous 19 years we had three. Why is it? Well, I think basically we're persuaded that human power is the answer to our problems, if only we can put it in the hands of the right person.

I think that's what we think, isn't it? It's why at work you think, if only my boss was better, if only I had a different boss, then it would be better. If only I had a different teacher at school, then it would be better.

If only the right person is holding power. But actually for Isaiah's Judah, God is systematically undermining human power, not out of spite, but to try and stop them from trusting in mere humans. And so for you and me, that assumption that we have, that if only power was held by a better person, that life might be better. I mean, it might be true in some ways. It might be better to have a better boss.

[22 : 50] It might be better to have a new job. But if you're trusting in mere humans, then you need to understand that human power will ultimately, and is ultimately, frustrated. Really though, I think it's a danger, isn't it, that we map Judah and Jerusalem onto national power here.

But actually the truth is, as you read a Bible, you're not really meant to read Israel into the United Kingdom. Really, it's better to understand Israel to be a picture of the church in the future.

And so actually what's going on here really is not just human power in the nation. Really we're to think about human power in the church amongst God's people.

And there too you can see, can't you, where basically we often think and assume that it is human power in the church that we really need. Prideful power.

And God unpicks that, doesn't he, by sending us people to lead us who are like inexperienced children who don't know what they're doing. And you probably don't need me to spell out how that works out in the church today.

[23:56] And the detail here is worth noticing as well. If you look again at verses 14 and 15 of chapter 3, you can see, can't you, how this power is humbled. Notice how God speaks about the leaders of the people.

The Lord enters into judgment against the elders and the leaders of his people. It's you who have ruined my vineyard. The plunder from the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing my people and grinding the faces of the poor, declares the Lord Almighty?

Do you see all these my's? These are my people, says the Lord. My vineyard. You see, you and I, we assume that our power, or human power, is independent somehow.

That we have the right to do what we want, to go where we want, to be who we want to be, to pursue our own goals. And God says, uh-uh-uh-uh-uh-uh-uh-uh-uh. It's my power.

These are my people. It is my plans that govern the world. And you will find yourself in my court, in judgment for how you've handled my power that has been delegated to you.

[25:00] And so stop trusting in mere humans. Stop thinking you're enough. Because any power you have really ultimately belongs to God. You have it on loan, and he will take it back from you and hold you to account for it.

Finally, sex. Sex. Now, notice with me, there's a repeated pattern in chapter 3. This, I think, is one of the challenges that we're going to find going through Isaiah, is there are lots of little patterns within the passages.

And I'm trying to deal with it in reasonably large chunks, so that we're not still looking at Isaiah in, you know, 2035 or whatever it is. Okay, so we're going to move through it reasonably quickly.

But you might notice that there's a pattern in chapter 3. So, that the folly of the leaders is exposed by God, and so then they scramble around to find anybody who will be their king. Right?

That's what's going on in those previous sections. And then what happens in the second half of chapter 3 is that the folly of human sexuality is exposed, or the shallowness of a sexualized culture is exposed, leaving the people in chapter 4, verse 1, looking for anybody with a pulse to marry.

[26:04] So, it's this kind of pattern of essentially just doubling down on the mistake. Now, the focus in this second half is on the women of Jerusalem, but I don't suppose it is just a problem that the women are facing.

I think what Isaiah is doing is he's using the women as an example to expose a broader issue in the city. So, in verse 16, the Lord describes what's going on.

The Lord says, the women of Zion are haughty. They are walking along with outstretched necks, flirting with their eyes, strutting along with swaying hips, with ornaments jingling on their ankles.

Here, the image is of a woman walking the streets of Jerusalem. This woman is rich. She's not poor. She is strutting with sexual self-confidence, with her neck held high, so that you can see the chains around her neck.

The power of the woman in the perfume ad, isn't it? Who has everything that she could want. It's the strut of the Oscar winner on the red carpet, or the dance of the influencer.

[27:05] You could say, couldn't you, from this week, it's Sydney Sweeney selling sports betting. This it is. It's a powerful woman, and everyone turns to stare. Everybody is in awe of her, except God.

And so in verse 17, he exposes the folly, just like he did with the leaders. Hebrew boffins will tell you that verse 17 is hard to translate, and so our NIV translators have gone with what they think is the least offensive faithful version of the translation, saying the Lord is shaving their heads at the end of verse 17.

But the ESV, which I think is probably better, puts it as laying bare their secret parts. What's going on here is that God is stripping them and exposing them for who they are.

And that's what goes on, isn't it? Verse 18, as bit by bit, God snatches away their jewellery. In that day, the Lord will snatch away their finery, the bangles and the headbands and crescent necklaces, the earrings and bracelets and veils, the headdresses, the anklets and sashes, the perfume bottles and charms, the signet rings and nose rings, the fine robes and the capes and the cloaks, the purses and mirrors and the linen garments, the tiaras and shorts.

So that verse 24, instead of fragrance, there'll be a stench, instead of a sash, a rope, instead of well-dressed hair, baldness, instead of fine clothing, sackcloth, instead of beauty branding. It's a brutal image.

[28 : 36] Bit by bit, God is unpicking this sexual prowess, necklace by necklace, Gucci bag by Gucci bag. What looked impressive, now is laid naked to the crowd, begging for attention from anybody who's left alive.

I remember when I was training for ministry, there was an older lady and her husband who I would visit. They were probably in their late 80s at the time and I was in my 20s.

The wife would often make inappropriate comments and she was really a very broken woman. And she said to me in one of her more reflective moments, she said, listen, Pastor, what you need to understand is I used to be somebody.

I used to be the person that people would notice. People would look at me in the street. People would give me their attention. I would walk into a room and everybody's eyes would be on me because I was the most beautiful person in the room and everybody looked at me.

And now nobody does. Nobody comments. Not even my husband notices me anymore, she said. And that's it here, isn't it?

[29 : 52] The power of human sexuality, the beauty of the human body, the allure of the gym and the spa, fading, stripped away by God. And Isaiah says, listen, women of Jerusalem, men and women of Jerusalem, men and women of London, do not place your hope in the power of your sexual attraction.

Do not place your hope in your body. Looks, relationships, sex will not give you a place to stand on the day of the Lord. You know, the wall paint of makeup that you put on when you head out the door will not impress Jesus.

And what you need most is not a new outfit, it's not a new husband or any husband, it's not a wife, it's not a better look. That is trusting in mere humans.

And on the day of the Lord, that will not help you. Notice how Isaiah speaks, the coming day of the Lord is like a storm from which you need to find shelter.

But we've seen this, haven't we, with the children, which is why in chapter 2 people are diving into caves and hiding under rocks. And the point of the chapters is that money, sex and power are terrible shelters in the storm of God's judgment.

[31 : 07] you might impress others with your money, your sexual attractiveness or the power that you have, but it will be no shelter on the day of the Lord.

But the message of the passage as we see it as a whole is not just negative, it's not just stop trusting in mere humans, there is a positive flip side to it. Really, the positive is so humbly trust in the Saviour Jesus, humbly trust in the Saviour Jesus.

Let me read chapter 4 verses 2 to 6 to you again. If you've zoned out or lost the passage in your Bible, please find it again. And let me read this to you because this is where we want to end. Verse 2 of chapter 4.

In that day, the branch of the Lord will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of the survivors in Israel. Those who are left in Zion will remain in Jerusalem, will be called holy.

All who are recorded among the living in Jerusalem, the Lord will wash away the filth of the women of Zion. He will cleanse the bloodstains from Jerusalem by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of fire.

[32 : 12] Then the Lord will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night. Over everything, the glory will be a canopy.

It will be a shelter and a shade in the heat of the day and a refuge and a hiding place from the storm and rain. Now notice, right, we are back in that day.

This is the day of the Lord, the day when money, sex and power will be humiliated. But notice there is something on that day that is standing strong. It's called the branch of the Lord. The glory of that

branch is not outshone by the glory of God, but holds up in that day.

The branch of the Lord will be beautiful and glorious, we're told. And it provides pride for the people who have remained in the land, who have stayed trusting the Lord and stayed faithful to Him.

Now the amazing thing here is, and if you can get this, this is wonderful and brilliant, right, the branch of the Lord seems to be a man. Right? You can see that because he is in Jerusalem and the branch of the Lord is bearing fruit in the land.

[33 : 21] And how can that be? The whole chapter, the whole section has been, stop trusting in me, of humans. And then at the end it is, here is a man called the branch of the Lord who is bearing fruit in Jerusalem, the glory of which is lasting, the glory of the coming Lord.

Who is this? Well, in verse 4, this man is able to wash away the filth of the people. The stains of moral mess and abusive power are cleansed.

And he does it by a spirit. Literally, here is the divine spirit of judgment and fire. So this mere man is the branch of Yahweh, the Lord God, and he is working in the power of Yahweh, the power of God, the spirit.

And in verse 5, he does the creative work of God, Yahweh. A creative work which involves building something which will be covered in cloud and fire.

The tabernacle, a new place to meet with God. Smoke and fire where God's people can assemble in his presence under a canopy and a shelter, a canopy of glory where in verse 6, his people will find shelter and refuge from the heat and the rain.

[34 : 32] Now, Isaiah is speaking seven, eight hundred years before Jesus and it's prophetic language. He is writing about what he has not yet seen.

And yet, you and I, because we read this as New Testament Christians, we go, that's Jesus. that's Jesus. A mere man who comes in the power of the spirit to do God's creative work of creating a place to meet with him, a place of smoke and fire where we can find shelter from the storm that is to come.

This is Jesus who in his full humanity is empowered by the spirit to cleanse and to forgive so that in the one person of the divine son in his humanity, we might find a place to meet with God himself. Shelter that's strong enough to stand the rain and the sun and the glory of God because it is the glory of God. Let me just try and bring it all together if I can.

All of us in this room, however old or young we are, whatever our background is, all of us will stand before the Lord on the day of his coming. The storm of judgment is coming and you and I will stand before our creator and if our hope is in money, sex or power we'll be exposed and destroyed for the fools that we've been.

[35 : 56] But there is a place of shelter, a person of shelter and it is the man, Jesus Christ, who is God the Son. And if you and I have met with him and come to trust in him, if we have met with God in the person of Jesus Christ and received his cleansing and forgiveness, then on that day we will be safe from the storm of God's judgment.

And so what you need, what I need, is not more of me but more of him. We need to trust him. We need to draw near to him.

We need to listen to him. We need to lean on him. We need to shelter in him. There's a prayer written by a Puritan that I found so helpful and my mind often runs to it and it picks up these themes of Isaiah 2, 3 and 4.

Let me just read it to you and then we'll pray together. He writes this, he says, I hasten towards an hour when earthly pursuits and possessions will appear vain, when it will be indifferent whether I have been rich or poor, successful or disappointed, admired or despised, but it will be of eternal moments that I mourn for sin, that I hungered and thirst after righteousness, that I loved the Lord Jesus in sincerity, that I gloried in his cross.

May these objects engross my chief concerns, he says. That's it, isn't it? That's why Isaiah says, stop trusting in mere humans because there's a day coming when all of those things will appear vain and it will be of eternal moment whether you've taken shelter in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[37 : 58] Let me pray as I close. Amen. Heavenly Father, we hasten towards an hour when earthly pursuits and possessions will appear vain, when it will be indifferent whether we've been rich or poor, successful or disappointed, admired or despised, but it will be of eternal moments that we have mourned for sin, hungered and thirsted after righteousness, loved the Lord Jesus in sincerity and gloried on his cross.

May these objects, we pray, engross our chief concerns as we ask in the name of Jesus. Amen.
Amen.