Crossroads International Church Dr. Rick Griffith

11 October 2015 (SG60!) Message 3 of 5

NLT 45 Minutes

**Why the Heat?**

Title

***Isaiah 2:6–4:1***

**Topic:** Tribulation

**Subject:** Why would God make things difficult for his own people?

**Complement:** Replace your self-confidence with God-confidence.

**Purpose:** The listeners will repent of prideful self-confidence and entrust themselves to God.

**Meditation:** Isaiah 2:22

**Reading:** Isaiah 2:12-18

**Song:** Change My Heart, O God

# Introduction

### Interest: Sometimes God doesn’t make sense!

No Sense.

### Need: Do you think God always makes sense?

Scratch Head

#### Why does God allow ISIS to rampage the Middle East?

#### Why doesn’t God preserve the kids of godly parents?

#### Shouldn’t life be easier for us who love the Lord? Last week a gunman in Oregon murdered those who claimed to be Christians.

### The Bible often asks sensible questions—questions about God *not* making sense:

Bible

#### Why are wicked people so rich? Psalms 37 and 73 answer this.

#### Why does God use people who are even wickeder than us to discipline us? The book of Habakkuk answers this one.

#### Why do evil folks often live long but righteous people die young? Ecclesiastes answers this.

#### Today we’ll tackle another of these hard questions…

### Subject: Why would God make life hard for his own people—for you and me?

Subject

### Background: Things were bad in Judah and they were going to get worse.

Assyrian Threat

#### External: Assyria had conquered its way westward and was at Jerusalem’s gates around the time Isaiah wrote his book.

Christ’s rule Jerusalem

Isa. 1

#### Internal: The “court case against Israel” (Isa. 1) is followed by God’s promise of blessing on Millennial Jerusalem (2:1-5). Just after today’s text in 2:6–4:1 is another passage on Millennial Jerusalem (4:2-6), so today we look at the stuff in the middle.

2:1-5 v   
4:2-6

### Preview: Today we’ll see two reasons God sometimes makes life difficult for us.

2 reasons

### Text: Isaiah 2:6–4:1 answers the question…

(Why would God make life hard for his own people? The first reason he allows things to get bad is…)

# I. Our pride leads us to self-confidence (2:6-22).

MP

[We need *humility* that shows faith in *God*—not in us.]

## God would *judge Judah for their proud self-confidence*—in the near (586 BC) and far (Tribulation) Day of the LORD (2:6-22).

### Judah’s pride was in her eastern superstitions, divination, pagan alliances, materialism, and idolatry (2:6-8).

2:6a  
Rejected

#### What does Isaiah mean by God having “abandoned your own people” (2:6a)?

##### God promised unconditionally to bless his people based on his covenant with Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3)—so he would never totally reject them (cf. Jer. 31:35-37).

AC v. MC Chart

##### However, Israel’s covenant under Moses warned that disobedience would lead to God even exiling his people for a time. This time was coming!

#### Judah followed Eastern Religions (2:6).

2:6b  
Rejected

##### Who were these eastern people (2:6b)?

East Map

###### Some say they were Assyrians.

• Assyria

###### Isaiah 9:12 refers to the Arameans (Syrians) as “from the east” since they had migrated there from Mesopotamia.

• Arameans

###### Ultimately, these eastern concepts in both Syria and Assyria came from teachings that had migrated from even farther east as Hinduism spread from India.

• India

##### What kind of eastern practices did Judah follow (2:6b)?

###### Isaiah doesn't spell out these practices specifically.

###### Even the word “superstitions” (NIV) or “practices” (NLT) or “influence” (NAU) must be supplied, as it is not in the Hebrew text.

##### Do you have any association with eastern philosophy?

Eastern Thought

###### Do you practice yoga, thinking it is only an exercise? In reality, we know yoga is a Hindu practice to connect the human spirit with Brahmin, the high Hindu god. The idea is that through relaxation we can become one with this “god,” and discover in ourselves that we are god!

###### Do you watch movies that encourage you to place your confidence in yourself rather than God? This is an eastern practice.

Wizard of Oz

Such movies have been around since *The Wizard of Oz*—a film that teaches that there is no such wizard who controls events. Rather, the lion has the courage in himself, the scarecrow can find confidence in himself alone, and the tin man already has a heart so he doesn’t need some higher power to give him one.

The only sensible one in the movie is Dorothy, who rebukes three men for not being man enough.

Women

Now all movies seem to promote the idea of women who tap into their own power and rule over men who don't tap into their own strength. When was the last time you saw a woman rescued by a man? No, she is a warrior right there along with the men, showing them that they can have as much self-confidence as she has—all an eastern idea.

Warrior Princess

#### What is divination like the Philistines (2:6c)?

2:6b  
Divination

##### The word for “divination” (**NÅnDo**) literally means “to practice witchcraft *or* soothsaying.”

##### The noun form means “cloud-mass” or “cloud of incense” formed when incense makes a cloud.

Incense Cloud

Cloud

##### In that cloud the Philistine witch would supposedly see the future.

Divination Courses

##### Community colleges now offer courses in divination.

#### The Jews also made unholy alliances (2:6d).

2:6d  
Alliances

#### What was wrong with having silver, gold, horses and chariots (2:7)?

2:7   
Wealth

##### Is wealth wrong? Not in itself!

##### However, they were plundering the poor (3:14) so that the poor were destitute while the rich got richer.

#### What is the attraction of idols (2:8)?

2:8  
Idols

##### These idols were brought into the north via Jeroboam and Jezebel [explain].

Baal Map

##### *The Life Application Bible* says it quite well. Idols give us power, pleasure, passion, praise, and popularity.

LAB

##### Bottom line—we like to be in control and don’t want to humble ourselves by giving control to God.

#### Do we practice idolatry today? We sure do!

Yoga

##### We worship our methods—yoga in the church, growth strategies, etc.

##### We worship our bodies—fitness, diets

Scale

##### We worship our autonomy—abortion, democracy

Social Justice

##### We worship our things—houses, cars, investments

### God’s response to Judah’s trust in herself would be to humble the nation both in the near Babylonian invasion and the distant Tribulation judgments (2:9-22).

SP  
9-22

#### Notice how many references appear here to humility verses pride, to being brought low compared to exalting oneself. I counted 26 times! But God will be exalted—I counted 10 times!

#### When would this humbling take place? Isaiah primarily writes the southern nation of Judah, as the people were looking to the north while God judges that northern nation of Israel for its idolatry. Isaiah saw the future but only as one entire event.

##### The question remained whether they would stop doing the same kinds of practices—or would they continue in them and also be judged?

Mountain Diagram

##### They continued, so 21 years after the fall of the north, 46 cities of the south were ravaged by the Assyrians—all the way up to Jerusalem, where the conquest finally halted under godly king Hezekiah.

Divided Map

##### Having a godly king isn’t enough, though. The people themselves are responsible for their own lives. Would they repent?

#### God is fair about his judgments—so he doesn’t just arbitrarily make pronouncements without giving his reasons. In this case, he gave the people warning over 100 years before he enacted his judgment.

#### However, he wisely didn’t tell them exactly when it would occur. Isaiah is like many prophets who only saw the future—but not *how far* in the future! This is how the phrase “in that day” functions (Isa. 2:17, 20; 3:7, 18; 4:1–2).

Judgment in that day

## God judges our pride and self-sufficiency too.

Cliff pride

### God seeks our attention through difficulty when our arrogance leads to self-confidence.

### We show pride in some of the same areas as Israel.

#### Pride: Why do we have pride in our pride? Isn’t all pride *bad*, whether “gay pride” or *self-*pride or pride in our work or any other type of pride?

Self-Suf  
(7 slides)

#### Self-sufficiency has become one of our new gods [explain slides].

#### Materialism: Last week a young agnostic woman asked her middle-aged Christian mother how a fellow Christian could justify paying US$2 million cash for a house on the California coast. What kind of response could anyone give to a question like that?

Subj

(So why would God make life hard for his own people? We have seen that often it is because our misplaced trust is in *us*—but other times this trust is in *others*, so what does the Lord do about us trusting other misplaced sources of our trust?)

MPI

# II. God removes what we trust so we’ll trust him (3:1–4:1).

MP

[The Lord *takes away* the props that we lean upon so we lean on him.]

## God promised to humble Judah by removing all they trusted so they’d trust in him (3:1–4:1).

3:1

### Food and water would become scarce (3:1).

### Proud men parading sin and oppressing others would bring disaster (3:2-15).

3:2-15

CEO desk

#### This includes being proud about sin that should cause us shame (3:9).

Sodomites

#### The result of provoking God to his face will be Jerusalem stumbling and falling (3:8)

Romans

### Proud women profiting from their husbands’ crimes would be shamed (3:16–4:1).

3:16–4:1

## God also lovingly removes our sources of trust.

Fist

### We trust our *leaders* (3:2-7), so God gives us bad ones—so we’ll trust him instead!

### We trust our own *wisdom* instead of his Word (3:8), so we also stagger and fall.

### We trust our *senses* as we parade our sexual sin like Sodom (3:9), and also bring disaster on ourselves.

### We trust our *laws* that allow us to crush people (3:15) even as Planned Parenthood crushes babies and sells their parts right now.

Subj

(Why does God sometimes make life hard for you? It is to…)

# Conclusion

MI

### Replace your self-confidence with God-confidence (Main Idea).

### Why does God allow things to get difficult for us (MPs)?

#### Our pride leads us to self-confidence (2:6-22).

#### God removes what we trust so we’ll trust him (3:1–4:1).

MPII

MPI

### So *how* do you replace your self-confidence with God-confidence? After all, pride so cleverly disguises itself!

Pride’s Disguises

#### Be humble.

Be humble

##### What, or who, ultimately, do you trust?

##### Do you have self-confidence or God-confidence?

Be encouraged

##### But *how* can we curb pride?

• Give God credit

###### Give *God* credit (He is Creator so there is no “self-made man”).

###### Give *others* credit (there is no “turtle climbing up the fencepost”).

Turtle

• Give others

###### *Listen* to others (Susan helped me to show humility).

Listen to others

#### Be encouraged.

##### Isaiah told me to “tell the righteous it will be well with them, for they will enjoy the fruit of their deeds” (3:10 NIV).

3:10

##### God hasn’t settled his books yet.

### Prayer

Prayer

# Preliminary Questions

**Verses Questions**

# Context: What did the author record just prior to this passage?

### The “court case against Israel” (Isa. 1) is followed by the promise of God’s blessing on Millennial Jerusalem (2:1-5).

### Just after today’s text in 2:6–4:1 is another passage on Millennial Jerusalem (4:2-6), so today’s text looks at the stuff in the middle.

# Purpose: Why is this passage in the Bible?

### God is fair about his judgments—so he doesn’t just arbitrarily make pronouncements without giving his reasons.

### In this case, he gave the people over 200 years warning before he enacted his judgment.

# Background: What historical context helps us understand this passage?

### Isaiah primarily writes the southern nation of Judah, as the people were looking to the north while God judges that northern nation of Israel for its idolatry.

### The question remained whether they would stop doing the same kinds of practices—or would they continue in them and also be judged?

### They continued, so 21 years after the fall of the north, 46 cities of the south were ravaged by the Assyrians—all the way up to Jerusalem, where the conquest finally halted under godly king Hezekiah.

### Having a godly king isn’t enough, though. The people themselves are responsible for their own lives. Would they repent?

# Questions

### What does Isaiah mean by God having “abandoned your own people” (2:6a)?

#### God promised unconditionally to bless his people based on his covenant with Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3)—so he would never totally reject them (cf. Jer. 31:35-37).

#### However, Israel’s covenant under Moses warned that disobedience would lead to God even exiling his people for a time. This time was coming!

### Who were these eastern people (2:6b)?

#### Some say they were Assyrians.

#### Isaiah 9:12 refers to the Arameans (Syrians) as “from the east” since they had migrated there from Mesopotamia.

#### Ultimately, these eastern concepts in both Syria and Assyria came from teachings that had migrated from even farther east as Hinduism spread from India.

### What kind of eastern practices did Judah follow (2:6b)?

#### Isaiah doesn't spell out these practices specifically.

#### Even the word “superstitions” (NIV) or “practices” (NLT) or “influence” (NAU) must be supplied, as it is not in the Hebrew text.

### What is divination like the Philistines (2:6c)?

#### The word for “divination” (**NÅnDo**) literally means “to practice witchcraft *or* soothsaying.”

#### The noun form means “cloud-mass” of “cloud of incense” formed when incense makes a cloud.

#### In that cloud the Philistine witch would supposedly see the future.

### What was wrong with having silver, gold, horses and chariots (2:7)?

#### Is wealth wrong? Not in itself!

#### However, they were plundering the poor (3:14) so that the poor were destitute while the rich got richer.

### Why do people worship idols that they have made (2:8)?

### When would the LORD humble Judah for exalting herself (2:9-22)? When would this “day of the LORD” take place?

#### “(2) The day of the Lord (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’” (Wiersbe, *Be Comforted*, 32).

### Will the people hiding in the rocks (2:19, 21) be fulfilled in the Tribulation’s sixth seal (cf. Rev. 6:15-17)?

# Tentative Subject/Complement Statements

Humble yourself instead of exerting self-confidence.

# Possible Illustrations

### Pride: Why do we have pride in our pride? Isn’t all pride *bad*, whether “gay pride” or *self-*pride or taking pride in our work or any other type of pride?

### Materialism: Last week a young agnostic woman asked her middle-aged Christian mother how a fellow Christian could justify paying US$2 million cash for a house on the California coast. What kind of response could anyone give to a question like that?

# Possible Applications

### Do you have any association with eastern philosophy?

#### Do you practice yoga, thinking it is only an exercise? In reality, we know yoga is a Hindu practice to connect the human spirit with Brahmin, the high Hindu god. The idea is that through relaxation we can become one with this “god,” and discover in ourselves that we are god!

#### Do you watch movies that encourage you to place your confidence in yourself rather than God? This is an eastern practice.

##### Such movies have been around since *The Wizard of Oz*—a film that teaches that there is no such wizard who controls events. Rather, the lion has the courage in himself, the scarecrow can find confidence in himself alone, and the tin man already has a heart so he doesn’t need some higher power to give him one.

##### The only sensible one in the movie is Dorothy, who rebukes three men for not being man enough.

##### Now all movies seem to promote the idea of women who tap into their own power and rule over men who don't tap into their own strength. When was the last time you saw a woman rescued by a man? No, she is a warrior right there along with the men, showing them that they can have as much self-confidence as she has—all an eastern idea.

### What is the attraction of idols (2:8)?

#### *The Life Application Bible* says it quite well.

#### Bottom line—we like to be in control and don’t want to humble ourselves by giving control to God.

### How do we practice idolatry today?

#### We worship our bodies—fitness, diets

#### We worship our autonomy—abortion, democracy

#### We worship our things—houses, cars, investments

### C. S. Lewis noted, “Pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world” (The Problem of Pain, 91; cf. http://www.patheos.com/blogs/daylightatheism/essays/the-problem-of-pain/).

# Original OT Survey Volume 2 Notes

**Why the Heat?**

***Isaiah 2:6–4:1***

**Exegetical Outline (Steps 2-3)**

# *Exegetical Idea*: The purpose God warned of the near (586 BC) and far (Tribulation) Day of the LORD judgment was to exhort Judah to turn prideful rebellion into humble repentance (2:6–4:1).

# I. The reason the LORD will humble Judah in the near (586 BC) and far (Tribulation) Day of the LORD judgment was because of the people’s proud self-confidence (2:6-22).

## The evidences of Judah’s pride were her eastern superstitions, divination, pagan alliances, materialism, and idolatry (2:6-8).

## The response of God to Judah’s trust in herself would be to humble them both in the near Babylonian invasion and the distant Tribulation judgments (2:9-22).

# II. The way the LORD will humble Judah will be to take away everything that Judah trusted instead of trusting in the LORD (3:1–4:1).

## Food and water will become scarce (3:1).

## Proud men who paraded their sin and oppressed others would bring disaster (3:2-15).

## Proud women who profited from their husbands’ crimes would be shamed (3:16–4:1).

**Purpose or Desired Listener Response (Step 4)**

The listeners will repent of prideful self-confidence and entrust themselves to God.

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

# Introduction

### Interest: Sometimes God doesn’t make sense!

### Need: Do you think God always makes sense?

### The Bible often asks sensible questions—questions about God *not* making sense:

### Subject: Why would God make life hard for his own people—for you and me?

### Background: Things were bad in Judah and they were going to get worse (historical and “Day of the Lord” issues).

### Preview: Today we’ll see two reasons God sometimes makes life difficult for us.

### Text: Isaiah 2:6–4:1 answers the question…

(Why would God make life hard for his own people? The first reason he allows things to get bad is…)

# I. Our pride leads us to self-confidence (2:6-22).

## God would *judge Judah for their proud self-confidence*—in the near (586 BC) and far (Tribulation) Day of the LORD (2:6-22).

### Judah’s pride was in her eastern superstitions, divination, pagan alliances, materialism, and idolatry (2:6-8).

### God’s response to Judah’s trust in herself would be to humble the nation both in the near Babylonian invasion and the distant Tribulation judgments (2:9-22).

## God judges our pride and self-sufficiency too.

(So why would God make life hard for his own people? We have seen that often it is because our misplaced trust is in *us*—but other times this trust is in *others*, so what does the Lord do about us trusting other misplaced sources of our trust?)

# II. God removes what we trust so we’ll trust him (3:1–4:1).

## God promised to humble Judah by removing all they trusted so they’d trust in him (3:1–4:1).

### Food and water would become scarce (3:1).

### Proud men parading sin and oppressing others would bring disaster (3:2-15).

### Proud women profiting from their husbands’ crimes would be shamed (3:16–4:1).

## God also lovingly removes our sources of trust.

### We trust our *leaders* (3:2-7), so God gives us bad ones—so we’ll trust him instead!

### We trust our own *wisdom* instead of his Word (3:8), so we also stagger and fall.

### We trust our *senses* as we parade our sexual sin like Sodom (3:9), and also bring disaster on ourselves.

### We trust our *laws* that allow us to crush people (3:15) even as Planned Parenthood crushes babies and sells their parts right now.

(Why does God sometimes make life hard for you? It is to…)

# Conclusion

### Replace your self-confidence with God-confidence (Main Idea).

### Why does God allow things to get difficult for us (MPs)?

#### Our pride leads us to self-confidence (2:6-22).

#### God removes what we trust so we’ll trust him (3:1–4:1).

### So *how* do you replace your self-confidence with God-confidence?

#### Be humble.

##### What, or who, ultimately, do you trust?

##### Do you have self-confidence or God-confidence?

##### But *how* can we curb pride?

###### Give *God* credit (He is Creator so there is no “self-made man”).

###### Give *others* credit (there is no “turtle climbing up the fencepost”).

###### *Listen* to others (Susan helped me to show humility).

#### Be encouraged.

##### Isaiah told me to “tell the righteous it will be well with them, for they will enjoy the fruit of their deeds” (3:10 NIV).

##### God hasn’t settled his books yet.



**Rick Griffith**

11 October 2015

Message 3 of 5

**Why the Heat?**

***Isaiah 2:6–4:1***

# Introduction

### Sometimes God doesn’t make sense!

### Why would God make life \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for his own people—for you and me?

# I. Our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ leads us to self-confidence (2:6-22).

## God would *judge Judah for their proud self-confidence*—in the near (586 BC) and far (Tribulation) Day of the LORD (2:6-22).

### Judah’s pride was in her eastern superstitions, divination, pagan alliances, materialism, and idolatry (2:6-8).

### God’s response to Judah’s trust in herself would be to humble the nation both in the near Babylonian invasion and the distant Tribulation judgments (2:9-22).

## God judges our pride and self-sufficiency too.

# II. God \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ what we trust so we’ll trust him (3:1–4:1).

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# Conclusion

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### So *how* do you replace your self-confidence with God-confidence?

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##### What, or who, ultimately, do you trust?

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##### God hasn’t settled his books yet.