

Isaiah 2:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?

Analysis

The imperative 'Cease ye from man' commands abandoning reliance on human wisdom, power, or deliverance. The rhetorical question 'wherein is he to be accounted of?' dismisses human significance apart from God—man's breath is fleeting (Hebrew 'neshamah be'appo'—breath in his nostrils), emphasizing mortality and frailty (Psalm 144:3-4). This anticipates Jesus' warning against fearing those who kill the body (Matthew 10:28) and Paul's indictment of wisdom of this age as foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:20). True wisdom recognizes human limitation and God's supremacy.

Historical Context

Judah's temptation to seek alliances with Egypt or Assyria rather than trusting God demonstrated misplaced confidence in human power. Isaiah consistently warned against such political reliance (Isaiah 30:1-3; 31:1).

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. In what areas do we rely on human wisdom, connections, or resources rather than God?
2. How does recognizing human frailty ('breath in his nostrils') reorient our ultimate trust?

Interlinear Text

וְהָיָה כְּנֶפֶשׁ אִישׁ וְנִשְׁמָתוֹ בְּאֶפְרוֹ
Cease H2308 H0 H4480 ye from man H120 H834 whose breath H5397 is in his nostrils H639
כִּי בְמָה הוּא
H3588 H4100 for wherein is he to be accounted of H1931 H2803

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 17:5 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

Psalms 146:3 (Parallel theme): Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.

James 4:14 (Parallel theme): Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

Psalms 8:4 (Parallel theme): What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

Psalms 62:9 (Parallel theme): Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.

Genesis 7:22 (Parallel theme): All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died.

Genesis 2:7 (Parallel theme): And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Isaiah 40:15 (Parallel theme): Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.

Job 27:3 (Parallel theme): All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils;

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