

Isaiah 9-10

- Isaiah 9-11 continue the book of Immanuel while revealing the prophecy found in the names of Isaiah's two son and Isaiah himself
 - Last week we saw the turn from gloomy prediction at the end of 8 to a hopeful scene in chapter 9
 - Speaking of a glory that would eventually visit the Galilee

[Is. 9:1](#) ¶ But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make it glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.

[Is. 9:2](#) The people who walk in darkness
Will see a great light;
Those who live in a dark land,
The light will shine on them.

[Is. 9:3](#) You shall multiply the nation,
You shall increase their gladness;
They will be glad in Your presence
As with the gladness of harvest,
As men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

- Here's one of many examples where specific details of the Messiah's life are included in OT prophecy
 - And yet they are virtually unrecognizable until the Messiah has been revealed
 - This is often the very purpose of prophecy
 - To verify or validate God's purposes at a future time by showing that God was at work long before the events of our day
 - Yet He hides the meaning to ensure it doesn't come to light prematurely
 - Here, we see Immanuel's arrival associated with glory for the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali, two areas that were until that time held in contempt
 - Nothing good comes from Nazareth (John 1:46)
 - But in these two areas of Israel we find Capernum and Nazareth, where Jesus grew up and ministered extensively

- Notice also the references to people there seeing a great light
 - As John describes Jesus
 - And the people will be glad in Your presence
 - Clearly Isaiah is alluding to Jesus - Immanuel - God with us
 - But to the one who doesn't understand the prophecy, Isaiah just sounds like he's describing the restoration of Israel after the Assyrian invasion
 - Remember this is in keeping with God's decree that Isaiah's ministry wouldn't produce a successful result in Isaiah's day
- But look a little more closely
 - Isaiah is also weaving in references to the second coming of Christ
 - The people who walk in darkness will see a great light

[Zech. 14:5](#)Then the LORD, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him!

[Zech. 14:6](#) In that day there will be no light; the luminaries will dwindle.

[Zech. 14:7](#) For it will be a unique day which is known to the LORD, neither day nor night, but it will come about that at evening time there will be light.

- He will multiply the nation...
 - Millennial kingdom??
 - But again, if you aren't made aware of the connection, it seems to be a description of how God frees Israel from an Earthly oppressor
 - In fact, look where Isaiah goes next:
- [Is. 9:4](#) For You shall break the yoke of their burden and the staff on their shoulders,
The rod of their oppressor, as at the battle of Midian.
- [Is. 9:5](#) For every boot of the booted warrior in the battle tumult,
And cloak rolled in blood, will be for burning, fuel for the fire.
- Here again, sounds like the overthrow of a tyrannical armed force
 - But this is not actually a description of God defeating the Assyrians

- There is another tyrannical force that God is vowing to destroy
- An Oppressor who is much stronger than Assyria and who holds many more captives than Assyria will ever hold

○ And this enemy is defeated by a child, Immanuel:

[Is. 9:6](#) For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;
And the government will rest on His shoulders;
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

[Is. 9:7](#) There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace,
On the throne of David and over his kingdom,
To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness
From then on and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

- Now look back at verse 4 in light of what we have just read
 - What yoke is being broken do you think?
 - What rod of oppression?
 - Ultimately, it refers to the bondage of sin to the enemy, Satan
 - And the establishment of the the Kingdom and the Davidic throne
- Now in verse 8 through the end of the chapter and even into 10, we enter into a new division of the book of Immanuel reflecting Isaiah's son Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz
 - The spoil speeds, the pray hastens
 - Here we have the bringing low the hautiness of man

[Is. 9:8](#) The Lord sends a message against Jacob,
And it falls on Israel.

[Is. 9:9](#) And all the people know it,
That is, Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria,
Asserting in pride and in arrogance of heart:

[Is. 9:10](#) "The bricks have fallen down,
But we will rebuild with smooth stones;
The sycamores have been cut down,
But we will replace them with cedars."

[Is. 9:11](#) Therefore the LORD raises against them adversaries from Rezin
And spurs their enemies on,

[Is. 9:12](#) The Arameans on the east and the Philistines on the west;
And they devour Israel with gaping jaws.
In spite of all this, His anger does not turn away
And His hand is still stretched out.

- The Lord is sending a message to Jacob (all tribes)
 - But it falls (naphal = brings down or fallen) Israel
 - And in verse 9, the people will know this is from God, but that knowledge won't save them
 - Just as in the day of Tribulation

[Rev. 16:9](#) Men were scorched with fierce heat; and they **blasphemed** the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory.

- Even as the Assyrians begin to conquer the north, they people declare in verse 10 that they can overcome in their own power
 - Pride is the most convincing liar
 - Their pride is met by the Lord pushing Israel's enemies all the more
 - Historically, the Assyrians push into Israel from the east, while the Syrians invade from the north, and the Philistines will invade from the south
- Even after the destruction is done, God's anger won't be exhausted, Isaiah says
 - And rightly so, because look at their response

[Is. 9:13](#) ¶ Yet the people do not turn back to Him who struck them,
Nor do they seek the LORD of hosts.

[Is. 9:14](#) So the LORD cuts off head and tail from Israel,
Both palm branch and bulrush in a single day.

[Is. 9:15](#) The head is the elder and honorable man,
And the prophet who teaches falsehood is the tail.

[Is. 9:16](#) For those who guide this people are leading them astray;
And those who are guided by them are brought to confusion.

[Is. 9:17](#) Therefore the Lord does not take pleasure in their young men,
Nor does He have pity on their orphans or their widows;
For every one of them is godless and an evildoer,

[Is. 9:18](#) ¶ For wickedness burns like a fire;
It consumes briars and thorns;
It even sets the thickets of the forest aflame
And they roll upward in a column of smoke.

[Is. 9:19](#) By the fury of the LORD of hosts the land is burned up,
And the people are like fuel for the fire;
No man spares his brother.

[Is. 9:20](#) They slice off what is on the right hand but still are hungry,
And they eat what is on the left hand but they are not satisfied;
Each of them eats the flesh of his own arm.

[Is. 9:21](#) Manasseh devours Ephraim, and Ephraim Manasseh,
And together they are against Judah.
In spite of all this, His anger does not turn away
And His hand is still stretched out.
And every mouth is speaking foolishness.
In spite of all this, His anger does not turn away
And His hand is still stretched out.

- As in the time of Tribulation, God's judgment doesn't result repentance
 - They do not turn back, which is "shub" or repent
 - This is not surprising, because Scripture makes clear judgment isn't for the purpose of conversion
 - It is the natural expression of a holy and just God against sin
 - What brings conversion?

[Rom. 2:4](#) Or do you think lightly of the riches of His **kindness** and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the **kindness** of God leads you to repentance?

- And in keeping with God's charge to Isaiah in Chapter 6, He's not ready yet to display kindness and bring repentance
 - That awaits a future day for Israel
- God purposes to cut off head and tail
 - It's a great picture of the two roles of leader and prophet among the people
 - The leaders are the "head" and they direct the people into sin and idolatry
 - People follow their leaders for better or worse

- And the prophets are the tail
 - In many wild animals, the tail is a signal for other animals
 - It lets the rest of the herd know if danger is approaching
 - The false prophets didn't warn the people of the leaders' sin and of God's judgment of sin
 - They gave no warning, so they are cut off as well
- And when the head and tail are rotten, everyone suffers
 - First, all had participated in the sin
 - The fact that some were led astray isn't an excuse in God's eyes
 - All are guilty
 - Secondly, our status or station in life doesn't mitigate our guilt
 - We might take pity in human terms for someone who is orphaned or widowed, but God doesn't assign special dispensation to those categories
 - All sinned against the covenant, He says, so all will be caught up in the judgment
- And as God eliminates leaders, the populace dissolves into civil war
 - Tribes fighting each other (devouring their own flesh)
 - And all against Judah
 - Remember the northern tribes were apostate
 - They had rebelled against God and His law back when they divided the Kingdom and opposed Solomon's son
 - They have been rebels from the beginning
- Moving into chapter 10, Isaiah adds a bit of social commentary against the leaders in his day, the men who would fall to this judgment

[Is. 10:1](#) ¶ Woe to those who enact evil statutes
And to those who constantly record unjust decisions,

[Is. 10:2](#) So as to deprive the needy of justice
And rob the poor of My people of their rights,
So that widows may be their spoil
And that they may plunder the orphans.

[Is. 10:3](#) Now what will you do in the day of punishment,
And in the devastation which will come from afar?
To whom will you flee for help?
And where will you leave your wealth?

[Is. 10:4](#) Nothing remains but to crouch among the captives
Or fall among the slain.
In spite of all this, His anger does not turn away
And His hand is still stretched out.

- Remembering that the word woe means judgment, Isaiah declares their is inevitably going to be judgment against those who do evil
 - In the case of northern Israel, the evil took the form of evil statutes
 - In contrast to God's holy Law
 - And unjust decision making
 - In contrast to God's perfect justice
 - Isaiah lists some of their injustices and evil laws, and then he asks how they hope to escape God's wrath?
 - Where do you go for rescue?
 - And how do you preserve your wealth, which was a source of power for these people
 - They will simply fall with the rest
 - In verse 2, we have the tie to Isaiah's son
 - The phrase: widows are their spoil and orphans their plunder uses two Hebrew words placed together
 - Shalal bazaar, which immediately reminds us of Isaiah's son Maher Shalal Hash Baz
- Now Isaiah begins to transition to the next theme associated with his second son Shear Jashub (A remnant returns)

- The new section begins by addressing Assyria's role in God's plan and their own failures and coming judgment

[Is. 10:5](#) Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger

And the staff in whose hands is My indignation,

[Is. 10:6](#) I send it against a godless nation

And commission it against the people of My fury

To capture booty and to seize plunder,

And to trample them down like mud in the streets.

[Is. 10:7](#) Yet it does not so intend,

Nor does it plan so in its heart,

But rather it is its purpose to destroy

And to cut off many nations.

[Is. 10:8](#) For it says, "Are not my princes all kings?"

[Is. 10:9](#) "Is not Calno like Carchemish,

Or Hamath like Arpad,

Or Samaria like Damascus?"

[Is. 10:10](#) "As my hand has reached to the kingdoms of the idols,

Whose graven images were greater than those of Jerusalem and Samaria,

[Is. 10:11](#) Shall I not do to Jerusalem and her images

Just as I have done to Samaria and her idols?"

- God begins declaring woe against Assyria as well
 - They were God's appointed instrument for judgment against Israel
 - That's an assumed thought by itself
 - God directed an entire nation of people to do His specific will
 - He sent it against a godless nation (Israel) as an expression of His fury
 - Passages like this are important counsel for us, because they remind us that God's power in the course of human affairs is limitless
 - We cannot set boundaries upon God by teaching that He loves us too much to impose Himself upon us
 - As if unrestrained human liberty and right of free choice may be a litmus test for or definition of love
 - God defines love as grace, which by its very nature interrupts the normal course of human events
 - Here we see God directing human activity in a very specific way

- But in verse 7, God declares that Assyria failed to live up to their commission
 - They do not intend nor plan in their heart to do as God directed
 - That is to bring down Israel alone
 - God's plan was focused on the Northern kingdom only
 - But Assyria chose to go too far and attempted to cut off many nations, including Judah in the south
 - Specifically, they assume in verse 9 that all kings and all kingdoms are the same, so all are valid target
 - But they were wrong
 - God only intended that Israel would be their target
 - So in verse 11, the Assyrians decided that Jerusalem as no different than Samaria (Israel's capital)
 - But there was a world of difference
 - Samaria was a house of idol worship
 - But Jerusalem was and is God's holy city
 - When Assyrian made the mistake of assuming all earthly kingdoms are equal, they sinned
 - We can make the same mistake today
 - Though the earthly government of Israel today is not living in a way that pleases God, nevertheless the nation is still special to God
 - We must never make the distinction of assessing Israel's worth by judging the actions of the people or the political entity
- Now we might ask did Assyria understand that their commission from God was directed at Israel?
 - In 2Kings 18, when the king of Assyria's representatives were speaking with king of Judah in Jerusalem, they mention their commissioning from God

[2Kings 18:25](#) "Have I now come up without the LORD'S approval against this place to destroy it? The LORD said to me, 'Go up against this land and destroy it.'""

- Actually, the Assyrian's statement was wrong
 - God had not sent them to destroy Jerusalem, only Israel
 - But the Assyrians weren't making that distinction
 - Remember, God would not allow Judah to disappear for the sake of Immanuel
- So God declares judgment against the Assyrians for acting presumptuously

[Is. 10:12](#) ¶ So it will be that when the Lord has completed all His work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, He will say, "I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria and the pomp of his haughtiness."

[Is. 10:13](#) For he has said,

"By the power of my hand and by my wisdom I did this,
For I have understanding;
And I removed the boundaries of the peoples
And plundered their treasures,
And like a mighty man I brought down their inhabitants,

[Is. 10:14](#) And my hand reached to the riches of the peoples like a nest,
And as one gathers abandoned eggs, I gathered all the earth;
And there was not one that flapped its wing or opened its beak or chirped."

[Is. 10:15](#) ¶ Is the axe to boast itself over the one who chops with it?
Is the saw to exalt itself over the one who wields it?
That would be like a club wielding those who lift it,
Or like a rod lifting him who is not wood.

[Is. 10:16](#) Therefore the Lord, the GOD of hosts, will send a wasting disease among his stout warriors;

And under his glory a fire will be kindled like a burning flame.

[Is. 10:17](#) And the light of Israel will become a fire and his Holy One a flame,
And it will burn and devour his thorns and his briars in a single day.

[Is. 10:18](#) And He will destroy the glory of his forest and of his fruitful garden, both soul and body,

And it will be as when a sick man wastes away.

[Is. 10:19](#) And the rest of the trees of his forest will be so small in number
That a child could write them down.

- God declares a dramatic and comprehensive judgment Assyria
 - The actual judgment is described in detail in Isaiah 37
 - Here Isaiah simply promises it will come and it will be total
 - He begins by allowing Assyria's own thoughts and words to stand in judgment against the nation

- First, they attribute their own success to their strength and wisdom
 - Numerical strength and military might
 - And the human wisdom in their libraries and wise men
- Secondly, they attribute their success to their wealth, which they obtained largely from plundering other nations
 - And there was nothing the other nations could do or say about it
 - Assyria's domination was complete in its day
- But then in verse 15, God replies
 - This dialog is reminiscent of the conversation found in Job in some ways
 - God says can the tool boast of its power?
 - When the axe lies on the ground, does it have power?
 - Only when an arm picks it up and uses it does it have power
 - And it's power is in direct proportion to the strength of that arm
 - Assyria was like an axe or saw or club or rod
 - It did what the Master determined it should do
 - But if that tool begins to take credit for its work, it offends the Master who wields it
 - Therefore, God judges Assyria in a way that highlights their sin
 - God is often shown to do this in Scripture
 - He selects a form of judgment that underscores the nature of the sin
 - Assyria was proud and sure of its own might, so God took away its might
 - Look at Isaiah 37:35-36:

[Is. 37:35](#) 'For I will defend this city to save it for My own sake and for My servant David's sake.'"

[Is. 37:36](#) ¶ Then the angel of the LORD went out and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians; and when men arose early in the morning, behold, all of these were dead.

- Notice in Isaiah 10:17, the destruction of Assyria comes at the hand of the Holy One of Israel
 - Who is that? Christ Himself
 - Now look at Isaiah 37:35-36
 - Who accomplishes the destruction of the Assyrian army?
 - The Angel of the lord, Christ
 - In one day, the bulk of the Assyrian, the source of their might and pride, is gone
 - For the sake of Judah, for Immanuel
 - Now in verse 20, Isaiah makes a fascinating transition

[Is. 10:20](#) Now in that day the remnant of Israel, and those of the house of Jacob who have escaped, will never again rely on the one who struck them, but will truly rely on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel.

[Is. 10:21](#) A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God.

[Is. 10:22](#) For though your people, O Israel, may be like the sand of the sea,
Only a remnant within them will return;
A destruction is determined, overflowing with righteousness.

[Is. 10:23](#) For a complete destruction, one that is decreed, the Lord GOD of hosts will execute in the midst of the whole land.

[Is. 10:24](#) ¶ Therefore thus says the Lord GOD of hosts, "O My people who dwell in Zion, do not fear the Assyrian who strikes you with the rod and lifts up his staff against you, the way Egypt did.

[Is. 10:25](#) "For in a very little while My indignation against you will be spent and My anger will be directed to their destruction."

[Is. 10:26](#) The LORD of hosts will arouse a scourge against him like the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb; and His staff will be over the sea and He will lift it up the way He did in Egypt.

[Is. 10:27](#) So it will be in that day, that his burden will be removed from your shoulders and his yoke from your neck, and the yoke will be broken because of fatness.

[Is. 10:28](#) ¶ He has come against Aiath,
He has passed through Migron;
At Michmash he deposited his baggage.

[Is. 10:29](#) They have gone through the pass, saying,
“Geba will be our lodging place.”

Ramah is terrified, and Gibeah of Saul has fled away.

[Is. 10:30](#) Cry aloud with your voice, O daughter of Gallim!
Pay attention, Laishah and wretched Anathoth!

[Is. 10:31](#) Madmenah has fled.

The inhabitants of Gebim have sought refuge.

[Is. 10:32](#) Yet today he will halt at Nob;

He shakes his fist at the mountain of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.

[Is. 10:33](#) ¶ Behold, the Lord, the GOD of hosts, will lop off the boughs with a terrible crash;

Those also who are tall in stature will be cut down
And those who are lofty will be abased.

[Is. 10:34](#) He will cut down the thickets of the forest with an iron axe,
And Lebanon will fall by the Mighty One.

- Notice first how Isaiah opens this passage
 - In that day
 - This is a term that references a future day, not the day of Assyria
 - I realize that may sound counterintuitive to us, since it seems to emphasize the same day not a different day
 - But in the Hebrew phrase, it can be interpreted as “In that day to come,” where the word “that” references a special day everyone awaits
 - In other words, it references the day of Christ’s Second Coming
 - We can know this is the intended focus by the fact that Isaiah has come back to the theme of a remnant again
 - In fact, in verse 21 he references the name of his second son, Shear Jashub
 - Look at the language that follows as well
 - None of the remnant will ever again rely on the one who struck them, meaning the enemy Satan

- They will instead rely on Christ - obvious not what happened in the destruction of Assyria...it's still to come
- Then God emphasizes again the difference between the entity of Israel and the prospects for any given individual within the nation
 - The entity of Israel is assured a future in glory
 - But as to whether any given individual in the nation shares in that future is an open question
 - Some will, many will not
- And then Isaiah gives an indication for why that will be, for why some are there but others are not
 - It's because God will bring a righteous destruction against the nation, beginning with the Assyrians and later the Babylonians and Romans and ultimately the Antichrist
 - And the destruction will be complete in the sense that it no one in the land can escape it, and the entire land will be consumed
 - But not that all Jews will be destroyed...he just said that a remnant will remain
 - Throughout the rest of this passage Isaiah uses terminology that also appears later in chapter 28 when Isaiah describes the coming Tribulation
 - So this is a preview of that coming day of judgment for Israel
 - But it's also clear that Isaiah is speaking primarily about the distress of the Assyrian invasion of Judah
 - And He tells Judah and Jerusalem not to be distressed when they face that trial, because the Lord will come to their aid as Isaiah describes in Chapter 36
 - But look at Isaiah and God ultimately is connecting the two events
 - The Assyrian Army is a picture of the Antichrist's forces in his day
 - The trials and distress of the Assyrian attack on Jerusalem are a picture of the Antichrist's attack and siege of Jerusalem in the last days

- The Assyrians are sent by God to bring His judgment against Israel, but they go too far and wish to put an end to Jerusalem
 - Just as the Antichrist is appointed to bring judgment against Israel in that future day, but he goes too far and seeks to destroy the Jews altogether
- God promises to rescue Judah against the Assyrian army and does so for the sake of Immanuel
 - So that Judah will be around to receive the Christ Child in His first coming
- Likewise, God promises to preserve Jerusalem against the might of the Antichrist's forces
 - So that Jerusalem will survive to receive the return of Christ who comes in response to the Jewish call (Zech 12)
- God saves Jerusalem from the Assyrians by bringing Christ as the Angel of the Lord to slay the Assyrian army in a single blow
 - Christ returns on the clouds with a sword in His mouth to destroy the armies of the Antichrist with a single word
- Obviously, Isaiah is positioning the events of Assyrian in his day as a prophetic picture of what will happen to Judah in a future as well
 -