

Good evening and thank you for joining us! Would you please turn in your Bibles to Isaiah 9 please? Well it's December, and Christmas is around the corner. And I love the Lords' timing how tonight with Christmas being near we see one of the most favorite sections prophesying the birth of Jesus Christ.

Now remember the setting of Isaiah. From 729-609 BC, a period of 120 years, there existed one superpower among the nations.

The Assyrian shadow covered all Mesopotamia. The ports of Phoenicia - the trade routes out of Damascus - the hills of Samaria... all lay under the sway of Assyria.

Damascus was conquered by Assyria in 732 BC. Israel and its capitol of Samaria fell in 722 BC. King Hezekiah of Judah, and the Hebrew Prophet Isaiah, were next to face Assyria's troops. They did so outside the walls of the holy city of Jerusalem. That all took place AFTER this setting here.

Here's what happens in tonight's chapters... God uses the Assyrian troops to judge Damascus and Israel – then turns around and judges Assyria.

Tonight we're gonna study chapters 9-10 and the title of tonight's message is Justice and Mercy

Let's pray

So we're continuing with this prophecy regarding the nation of Assyria.

1 Nevertheless the gloom will not be upon her who is distressed,  
As when at first He lightly esteemed  
The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,  
And afterward more heavily oppressed her,  
By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan,  
In Galilee of the Gentiles. Zebulun and Naphtali were the 2  
northern tribes that felt “the gloom” - the full brunt of the Assyrian  
invasion.

Notice, Isaiah speaks of “the way of the sea” or the Via Maris.  
**SHOW PIC** This was a trade route that ran along the  
Mediterranean up the coast through the Galilee. This was the  
path marched by the Assyrian army. **CLOSE PIC**

Notice too Isaiah also calls these northern tribes the “Galilee of  
the Gentiles.” After the Assyrian invasion a larger Gentile  
population settled by the Sea of Galilee.

Zebulun and Naphtali were the first tribes to be trampled by the  
assyrrians. Yet Isaiah says these two tribes will be compensated  
for their trouble.

2 The people who walked in darkness  
Have seen a great light;  
Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death,  
Upon them a light has shined. Galilee will emerge from the  
“gloom,” and be given a special blessing. They will be privileged  
to see “a great light.” And what was the fulfillment of Isaiah’s  
promise?

Jesus made Galilee the base for His ministry. [SHOW PIC](#) Jesus did most of His miracles on the sea, along the shore, in the Galilean villages of Capernaum, Bethsaida, Chorazin. [CLOSE](#)  
[PIC](#)

Jesus was the great light that shined on the Galilee.  
3-5

3 You have multiplied the nation  
And increased its joy;<sup>[fn]</sup>  
They rejoice before You  
According to the joy of harvest,  
As men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

4 For You have broken the yoke of his burden  
And the staff of his shoulder,  
The rod of his oppressor,  
As in the day of Midian.

5 For every warrior's sandal from the noisy battle,  
And garments rolled in blood,  
Will be used for burning and fuel of fire. Each of these promises — the reference to great joy, the breaking of the yoke of burden and the rod of the oppressor, and the complete victory over all enemies has spiritual application to Jesus' work in our lives. These things are ours in Jesus.

And speaking of Jesus here we find another beautiful promise of Christ. We're gonna break v6 down

6 For unto us a Child is born,

**Unto us a Son is given;** Pause here. Jesus was fully human - a newborn child. But He was also fully divine, God's only Son, a gift to us.

It's hard to comprehend Almighty God laying aside His power and coming to Earth a frail, helpless child - trusting Himself to the care of a teenage mom. When our Holy God joined the ranks of humanity He entered through the lowest door.

Jesus is attracted to humility, because He was humble

**...6 And the government will be upon His shoulder.** Before Jesus slept in an earthly manger He sat on a heavenly throne. Jesus is King of heaven - so ruling Earth is not too much for Him to shoulder.

There are those who teach that the Church will usher in God's Kingdom. They envision the Church as a body with political muscle. But this is not what Isaiah tells us. The government will rest on Jesus' shoulders - not the church's. Our job is to prepare the way for Christ's return by our faithfulness.

**...6 And His name will be called** The idea isn't that these will be the literal names of the Messiah. Instead, these are aspects of His character, they describe who Jesus is and what He has come to do.

His first description is:

...6 **Wonderful**, The glory of who Jesus is and what He has done for us should fill us with wonder. We can never really look at Jesus, really know Him, and be bored. He is Wonderful and we'll spend eternity in amazement.

...6 **Counselor**, Jesus is the One we should always pick as our first resource as a counselor. Now of course Jesus may use the presence and the words of another Christian to help, but Jesus is our Counselor.

...6 **Mighty God**, Jesus is the LORD who reigns in heaven, the One worthy of our worship and praise.

...6 **Everlasting Father**, This tells us Jesus is the source and author of all eternity, that He is the Creator Himself. Now to be clear, Jesus is one with God, but Jesus Himself is not the Father in the Trinity.

...6 **Prince of Peace**. Jesus is the One who makes peace between God and man.

7 Of the increase of His government and peace

There will be no end,

Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom,

To order it and establish it with judgment and justice

From that time forward, even forever.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. Jesus will sit on the throne of David - which makes it a Jewish throne. Jesus brings

peace and justice. And as an Eternal King He establishes an everlasting kingdom.

There are those who claim God is through with Israel. The promises He made to the Jews have been inherited by the Church. But not so! Jesus is a Jewish King and His throne will be a Jewish throne.

8-10

8 The Lord sent a word against Jacob,  
And it has fallen on Israel.

9 All the people will know—

Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria—  
Who say in pride and arrogance of heart:

10 “The bricks have fallen down,  
But we will rebuild with hewn stones;  
The sycamores are cut down,

But we will replace them with cedars.” When Assyria first attacked the northern kingdom, they replaced the Hebrew king, Pekah, with a puppet king, Hoshea. But Israel was too stubborn to admit defeat. Israel tried to rebuild and refortify, they even solicited the help of the Egyptians.

11-13

11 Therefore the LORD shall set up  
The adversaries of Rezin against him,  
And spur his enemies on,

12 The Syrians before and the Philistines behind;  
And they shall devour Israel with an open mouth.

For all this His anger is not turned away,  
But His hand is stretched out still.

13 For the people do not turn to Him who strikes them,  
Nor do they seek the LORD of hosts. All that God brought on His  
people was an attempt to get their attention - motivate them to  
repent. Their only option was to repent, yet they resisted.

**SHOW PIC** Once an airplane pilot radioed the tower, "Pilot to  
tower, I'm 300 miles from land, 600 feet high, and running out of  
fuel, please instruct... over." The tower radioed back, "Tower to  
pilot, repeat after me, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your  
name..." **CLOSE PIC**

Too often folks run to God when they're out of options, instead of  
first running to Him.

14-16

14 Therefore the LORD will cut off head and tail from Israel,  
Palm branch and bulrush in one day.

15 The elder and honorable, he is the head;  
The prophet who teaches lies, he is the tail.

16 For the leaders of this people cause them to err,  
And those who are led by them are destroyed. It's wisely been  
said, "Never follow a leader until you know who the leader is  
following." In Israel it was the blind leading the blind.

17-20

17 Therefore the Lord will have no joy in their young men,

Nor have mercy on their fatherless and widows;  
For everyone is a hypocrite and an evildoer,  
And every mouth speaks folly.

For all this His anger is not turned away,  
But His hand is stretched out still.

18 For wickedness burns as the fire;  
It shall devour the briers and thorns,  
And kindle in the thickets of the forest;  
They shall mount up like rising smoke.  
19 Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts  
The land is burned up,  
And the people shall be as fuel for the fire;  
No man shall spare his brother.

20 And he shall snatch on the right hand  
And be hungry;  
He shall devour on the left hand  
And not be satisfied;

Every man shall eat the flesh of his own arm. Here Isaiah is describing the effects of siege warfare. See rather than risk the lives of their soldiers, often an invading army would lay siege to the city, cut off the supply lines, and starve out its opponent. This is what Assyria did to Israel.

They laid siege for three years. Nobody in, nobody out. They waited on the city to starve, and the residents resorted to cannibalism.

21 Manasseh shall devour Ephraim, and Ephraim Manasseh;



Together they shall be against Judah.

For all this His anger is not turned away,  
But His hand is stretched out still. Even after all Israel endures  
she's still unrepentant. And God's judgments continue

Chapter 10 starts with Isaiah speaking a warning to the wicked  
leaders of his day. 1-4

1 "Woe to those who decree unrighteous decrees,  
Who write misfortune,  
Which they have prescribed

2 To rob the needy of justice,  
And to take what is right from the poor of My people,  
That widows may be their prey,  
And that they may rob the fatherless.

3 What will you do in the day of punishment,  
And in the desolation which will come from afar?  
To whom will you flee for help?  
And where will you leave your glory?

4 Without Me they shall bow down among the prisoners,  
And they shall fall among the slain."

For all this His anger is not turned away,  
But His hand is stretched out still. God is angry at Israel and He  
used the Assyrians as His instrument of judgment.

Israel refused to humble themselves and admit God was dealing  
harshly with them because of their sin. But again, just because

God used Assyria to judge Judah, that didn't mean God would never judge Assyria. That's what we see now  
5-6

5 "Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger  
And the staff in whose hand is My indignation.  
6 I will send him against an ungodly nation,  
And against the people of My wrath  
I will give him charge,  
To seize the spoil, to take the prey,  
And to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Remember in chapter 8 one of Isaiah's sons was named "Maher-Shalal Hash-Baz." which means "seize the spoil, take the prey." God will use an Assyrian siege to vent His wrath.

7 Yet he does not mean so,  
Nor does his heart think so;  
But it is in his heart to destroy,  
And cut off not a few nations. God uses nations without either their consent. Mighty nations are merely a pawn in the hand of God.  
8-12

8 For he says,  
'Are not my princes altogether kings?  
9 Is not Calno like Carchemish?  
Is not Hamath like Arpad?  
Is not Samaria like Damascus?  
10 As my hand has found the kingdoms of the idols,  
Whose carved images excelled those of Jerusalem and Samaria,

11 As I have done to Samaria and her idols,  
Shall I not do also to Jerusalem and her idols?’ ”

12 Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Lord has performed all His work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, that He will say, “I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his haughty looks.” The Assyrian invasion had been a wake up call for Jerusalem. But unlike Samaria it was God’s will to defend Jerusalem and humble Assyria.

13 For he says:

“By the strength of my hand I have done it,  
And by my wisdom, for I am prudent;  
Also I have removed the boundaries of the people,  
And have robbed their treasuries;  
So I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man. Assyria’s goal was a single global empire and economy, which is why they abolished national borders and treasuries. This will be the goal of Antichrist - a one-world government and economy.

14 My hand has found like a nest the riches of the people,  
And as one gathers eggs that are left,  
I have gathered all the earth;  
And there was no one who moved his wing,  
Nor opened his mouth with even a peep.” Until the Assyrian army came to Judah no nation had mounted even a mild resistance. They’d all surrendered without “a peep.”

15 Shall the ax boast itself against him who chops with it?

Or shall the saw exalt itself against him who saws with it?  
As if a rod could wield itself against those who lift it up,  
Or as if a staff could lift up, as if it were not wood! They didn't  
realize it, but Assyria was nothing more than God's tool of  
judgment.

16-17

16 Therefore the Lord, the Lord[fn] of hosts,  
Will send leanness among his fat ones;  
And under his glory  
He will kindle a burning  
Like the burning of a fire.

17 So the Light of Israel will be for a fire,  
And his Holy One for a flame;  
It will burn and devour

His thorns and his briers in one day. Here's a picture of Messianic  
judgment. The "Light of Israel" and "Holy One" are names for the  
Messiah.

When Jesus returns He'll judge the future Assyrian, aka the  
Antichrist. Paul wrote in **2 Thessalonians 2:8 how Jesus And then  
the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume  
with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of  
His coming.**

Here's a clue to what John the Baptist meant when he said  
Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire - what fire?  
According to Isaiah, fires of judgment.

18-19

18 And it will consume the glory of his forest and of his fruitful field,

Both soul and body;

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

19 Then the rest of the trees of his forest

Will be so few in number

That a child may write them. The vast Assyrian army starts out as a forest. Its soldiers are as numerous as trees. In the end it's as barren as a hill ravaged by fire.

But here's the beauty to a dark prophecy-we see God promise the the returning remnant of Israel

20 And it shall come to pass in that day

That the remnant of Israel,

And such as have escaped of the house of Jacob,

Will never again depend on him who defeated them,

But will depend on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. This was Israel and Judah's problem. They tried to strike alliances with whoever was in power. They trusted in man rather than God.

This is Israel's dilemma today. Israel has looked to the United Nations, and Camp David, and to all the President's men who've tried to negotiate a peace. Israel needs to trust in God, and not in men.

21-22

21 The remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob,

To the Mighty God.

22 For though your people, O Israel, be as the sand of the sea,

A remnant of them will return;

The destruction decreed shall overflow with righteousness.

23 For the Lord GOD of hosts

Will make a determined end

In the midst of all the land. God used Assyria to judge Israel, but not to destroy Israel entirely. God always leaves a remnant of His people. They're the heirs of His promises. And God's promises never fail.

24-26

24 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD of hosts: "O My people, who dwell in Zion, do not be afraid of the Assyrian. He shall strike you with a rod and lift up his staff against you, in the manner of Egypt. 25 For yet a very little while and the indignation will cease, as will My anger in their destruction." 26 And the LORD of hosts will stir up a scourge for him like the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb; as His rod was on the sea, so will He lift it up in the manner of Egypt. God will destroy Assyria just as He did Egypt. Recall Moses raised His rod, and the waters closed over the Egyptian army. Likewise, in one bold stroke, the entire Assyrian army perished. In one night, God cut down 185,000 Assyrians.

27 It shall come to pass in that day

That his burden will be taken away from your shoulder,

And his yoke from your neck,

And the yoke will be destroyed because of the anointing oil.

The rest of the chapter is Isaiah's play-by-play of Assyria's invasion. They entered Judah from the north and closed in on Jerusalem.

28 He has come to Aiath,  
He has passed Migron;  
At Michmash he has attended to his equipment. Michmash is 7½ miles north of Jerusalem. Their army is marching south at a furious pace.

29-30

29 They have gone along the ridge,  
They have taken up lodging at Geba.  
Ramah is afraid,  
Gibeah of Saul has fled.

30 Lift up your voice,  
O daughter of Gallim!  
Cause it to be heard as far as Laish—

O poor Anathoth!<sup>[fn]</sup> Anathoth was the hometown of Jeremiah, and was only 3 miles outside the northern wall. These were the northern suburbs of Jerusalem -Jerusalem is in sight.

31-32

31 Madmenah has fled,  
The inhabitants of Gebim seek refuge.

32 As yet he will remain at Nob that day;  
He will shake his fist at the mount of the daughter of Zion,  
The hill of Jerusalem. Nob is the northern-most mountain that makes up Jerusalem. Today “Nob” is called “Mount Scopus.” “Scopus” or “scope” means “to look.” It was the northern look-out. Today, it still serves as an intelligence outpost for Jerusalem. It looks east toward the Arab countries.

According to our text this was the northern high ground the Assyrians used to look out over the city of Jerusalem and shake their fist in threats and anger.

33 Behold, the Lord,

The LORD of hosts,

Will lop off the bough with terror;

Those of high stature will be hewn down,

And the haughty will be humbled.

34 He will cut down the thickets of the forest with iron,

And Lebanon will fall by the Mighty One. The LORD promises that

His judgment will extend even against those of high stature. A

mighty forest seems invincible and seems as if it will stand

forever, but the LORD can cut it down.