

Isaiah 10 - April 01, 2021

God Gets All the Glory

JD Farag

Good evening and welcome to our midweek Bible study. On Thursday nights, we're going through the Bible book by book and chapter by chapter and verse-by-verse, and tonight we find ourselves in the Book of Isaiah. We finished chapter 9 last week, and tonight, Lord willing, we're going to make it through to Chapter 10.

Then because it's the first of the month, we are at the conclusion of our time going to partake together of the Communion Table. We'd encourage you, those of you that are joining us online. If you want to take this time to get the elements ready so you can partake with us, as we know many of you do. What a blessing to us to know that, and so we welcome you. We're glad that you're joining us.

Why don't we pray before we get started? Tonight, I'm really looking forward to our time together in God's Word, an amazing chapter. I know I say that every week, but this is a really interesting chapter. Let's pray. We'll ask God to bless our time.

Loving heavenly Father, we need for you now to just settle our hearts and quiet our minds as only you can. Just enable us to focus and concentrate and really listen to what it is that the Spirit would say to us, your church. Lord, we want to have ears to hear. Lord, when you speak, we don't want just to be hearers of your Word. We want to be doers too. Lord, tonight I know that you're going to speak; you always do. It's not a question of if you're speaking or not. The question is, are we hearing and taking heed to your Word? So, Lord, bless our time together tonight and speak. Your servants are listening. We ask you for this in Jesus' name. Amen and amen. All right.

I want to talk to you tonight about both why it is and how it is that God is the only one who gets the glory. How cliché, right? I mean, we sing it, we know it, we read it, we hear it. But chapter 10 here in Isaiah provides us with profound life lessons in this regard and specifically as it relates to our own propensity to become arrogant and haughty, fancying ourselves as the ones who, in the strength of our own hand, are the ones that do it and should get the credit for it.

As we're about to see, the chapter starts with the 4th of four parts. We saw three of them in chapter 9. This is the 4th of four in which Isaiah is prophesying concerning God, using the Assyrians as an instrument of his judgment on his people.

Never think for a second that God takes delight in judging his people. He gives us so much time in his long-suffering, in his patience to repent, but there does come a time where God has to chastise, rebuke, correct, and judge.

He's about to do that, and he's about to use the evil, wicked... I mean, the evil of the Assyrians is unspeakable. That's not hyperbole; what they would do. We're going to get a glimpse of it tonight with what God says through Isaiah to his people. He's going to use the Assyrians as an instrument in his hand as he brings judgment now on his people. Here's what we're going to see. Assyria thinks they're the ones that have done it. They become haughty in it and arrogant because of it. Let's jump in.

Verse 1, "Woe [curse] to those who decree unrighteous decrees, who write misfortune, which they have prescribed." He's speaking to his people here. "To rob the needy [verse 2] 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, the widows and the orphans." This is what they were doing, and this is why God had to bring judgment upon them. It seems that the leaders of Israel were preying on and taking advantage of the weak and the vulnerable, the widow and the fatherless, and God takes note of it, which is why he will judge them for it.

Listen to what Jesus said to the Pharisees in Matthew's Gospel chapter 23:14. It's a little bit similar to the curse that Isaiah pronounces. He says, "Woe to you [a curse on you], scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" Why? Oh, "For you devour widows' houses and, for a pretense, make long prayers."

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Therefore, you will receive greater condemnation." Do you get the impression that God takes seriously the treatment of the weak and the vulnerable, the widow and the orphan?

Listen to James. You're familiar with this in his epistle, chapter 1:27. "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." Make no mistake about it. God takes note of our treatment of particularly the weak and the vulnerable, and he'll have the final word on it as we're about to see.

Verse 3, "What will you do in the day of punishment and in the day of desolation which will come from afar? To whom will you flee for help? And where will you leave your glory? Without me, they shall bow down among the prisoners..."

This is where we get a glimpse of the unspeakable evil of the Assyrians. This is not bowing down, honoring, worshiping. No. This is bowing down in humiliation and shame. Again, it's unspeakable. I don't want to go into it or get graphic. For those of you that are students of God's word, you know how evil the Assyrians were and what they would do. Again, unspeakable in the humiliation, and torment, the torturing.

"...and they shall fall among the slain. For all this [we read this in chapter 9] his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still." That's his mercy. Here, God through the Prophet Isaiah is saying because you have treated them this way in their time of need for help? So too, will I not be there for you in your time of need and help.

2 Chronicles Chapter 15 verses 1-2, now, this is one of those passages, this is one of those places in God's Word where I think we would do well to pay attention because there does come a point where God says, okay, have it your way.

We know it is the truth. It is a promise that he will never leave us or forsake us. Did you know there's a but there? And it's here in 2 Chronicles 15:1-2, "Now the Spirit of God came upon Azariah, the son of Oded. He went out to meet Asa and said to him, 'Hear me, Asa and all Judah and Benjamin. The Lord is with you while you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you. But if you forsake him, he will forsake you.'"

That should send chills up and down every single one of our spiritual spines, right? Because this is what happened to them then, and it can happen to us now. No, he will never leave us or forsake us. But if we turn our backs on him, he's not going to force himself on us. If we forsake him, he will forsake us.

Verse 5, now we turn a corner here, and instead of the woe to Judah, it's the "Woe to the Assyrian, the rod of my anger, and the staff in whose hand is my indignation. I will send him [verse 6] 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. Yet [this is Assyria now] 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."

And that's exactly what the Assyrians did. Here again, the implications of this can be difficult to grasp in the sense that God here uses the wickedness of man as the instrument in his hand to judge and correct his people. Let that sink out. God is allowing the Assyrians to invade Judah, and God is using the Assyrians to bring his judgment upon his own people. It's a little hard to get your mind around, would you agree?

Psalm 76 10, though, should help in understanding this and reconciling this. It says, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise you with the remainder of wrath you shall gird yourself." In other words, God may sometimes deem it fit to allow our enemies as the instrument, the rod of his correction in his hands to judge us, correct us, rebuke us, redirect us. That's what he's doing here with the Assyrians.

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"For he says, verse 8, "Are not my princes altogether kings? Is not Calno like Carchemish? Is not Hamath like Arpad? Is not Samaria like Damascus? As my hand has found, the kingdoms of the idols whose carved images excelled those of Jerusalem and Samaria, as [verse 11] I have done to Samaria and her idols. shall I not do also to Jerusalem and her idols? [verse 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.

For he says..." This is a sanctified mocking if I can say it like that. For he, speaking of the King of Assyria, this is God mocking him. 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."

You'll forgive the emphasis on "I." It's been referred to as an "I" problem. I will! I did! I have! Ay yi yi yi yi! Again, emphasis - mine. "My hand has found like a nest the riches of the people and as one who 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." Oh, you don't say?

Here again, I wanted to talk about tonight and spend some time on tonight because it's the main takeaway from this chapter. Assyria, the king of Assyria, thinks that it's him and that he's doing it in the power of his might. What we're about to see is that Assyria is in for a rude awakening.

It's kind of humorous here in verse 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!" Oh, my goodness!

Can you indulge me for just a moment, okay? This is the instrument taking the credit. Okay, let's use this. This is a good illustration. If you've got a better one, let me know after the Bible study. You go in for surgery and the surgery, praise the Lord, is a success. You're just so blessed, so thankful, so grateful. Thank you, Lord. Then you talk with the doctor, and you see the scalpel and the surgical instruments there on the table in the operating room. You go up to those instruments, and you begin to thank those instruments.

They have clinical terms for that, and you would probably be institutionalized. What are you doing? That was the instrument. I did it. I mean, how ridiculous would it be? You've got an ax, and you're chopping with it. The ax, after you're done chopping, stands up and takes a bow. Thank you very much. Thank you very much. Do you see the humor in it? Please tell me you see the humor in this. It's not just me, right? How absurd. How ridiculous.

That's the point. That's what Assyria was doing. Assyria was just the ax used to chop. Assyria was just the saw used to saw and the staff. Can you imagine? You'll forgive me, and maybe we need to spend just a little bit more time on this. If for no other reason other than me because this is me.

As a pastor, pastors are the worst. I'm just being open with you. You know how it is after a sermon or Bible study, and one has likened it to the "glorification of the worm ceremony." Oh, Pastor, that was amazing. You are amazing. Thank you very much. I'm just the ax. I'm just the instrument. Woe unto me if I should ever fancy myself as the one who did it.

I am keenly aware, and I've shared this before. I really mean this, and the Lord knows my heart. I am keenly aware that there are many times where God has you hear a different sermon than the one I preached, and thank God for that. No, I mean that because see, here's what happens. I'm just the mouthpiece, just the instrument, just the ax in His hands, the saw, the staff, the rod in his hands. And so when I teach, the Holy Spirit takes... Well, when I get to heaven, maybe I'll hear about it.

But it's kind of like the Holy Spirit has a lot of work. It is the work of the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit takes that, and before it reaches your ears, your heart, He tunes it to you. Can I use this word?

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He edits it so that what you hear is what the Holy Spirit knows you need to hear. You come up to me afterward, you say, man, that was amazing.

I always use illustrations from the mainland, so you don't look at the person sitting next to you to see, oh, I wonder who he's talking about. Years ago, on the mainland, here I am, the "glorification of the worm ceremony." This precious saint comes up to me, and she says, oh, Pastor, I was just so blessed by the teaching, and God really spoke to me. I like to hear that. God really ministered to me, and so I was just kind of curious.

I've never done it since you'll see why here in a moment. I asked her this question: What was it exactly that I said that really blessed you and ministered to you? And she said, excuse me? You didn't say anything. It's what the Lord spoke to me. I think I left early that day. It's kind of like, no, I knew that! I know; I just was curious.

One time my wife, as only a wife can, and I think God knew my wife had to have a sense of humor to be married to me, but she's my best critic. Do you know how we say you are your own worst critic? Well, she's my best critic, so I never ask her anymore. She knows, and so sometimes she'll volunteer it. So, what did you think of the teaching? You know, I was very blessed. Oh, really? Tell me more. She says, what really blessed me about your teaching was when it ended. No, that's a good thing because it is a much-needed reminder that it's not me. It's not me. Hey, if God can speak through a donkey, he can speak through me.

I think pastors, and again, I'm speaking for myself. I hope you're not uncomfortable with my openness, but I think pastors would do well to be reminded that it is not you. Never think and never take the credit for that which the Lord alone has done. Maybe if I may say one more thing on this, I think this is the Holy Spirit. I think about this often quite often, actually.

We got this property, this building, an absolute miracle. There's no question about it, an absolute miracle. It was the Lord, and he did it in such a way that even if we wanted to, we could not take credit for buying this property. When it came time to renovate the building, God was so faithful to do it in such a way. When people would be sitting in this beautiful sanctuary, the people that would come to this building and they would look at me as the pastor and say, whoa, you're amazing. Don't do that.

If you only knew. You have no idea how many times I'm in the fetal position, literally again, not hyperbole. Oh, God, like I'm this great man of faith. What a visionary! Visionary, this is my vision? This was God, and I can prove it, by the way. I got the scars to prove it, actually. God did this in such a way that only he gets the glory.

Here's the thing. If I and the leadership of this church ever decided in our own pride, thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to just kind of, well, hey, I did have a part in it. Oh! Game over! No flesh will glory in his presence. God has blessed this ministry exceedingly abundantly, above and beyond anything that we could have ever thought or imagined. We have amazing people that God has called to this ministry. I'm told that the International Ministry is just growing like crazy all over the world.

If you were to ask me, I mean, first of all, I could have never come up with this. I could have never strategized, planned, projected, and plotted. It's kind of like God did it, and I'm just hanging on for the ride. I'm hanging on for dear life, having the time of my life watching God do what he's doing and staying out of his way.

Again, if you were to ask me, how is it that... I mean, come on! Look at you. I look at me! Every time I look in the mirror, I know what you mean. I mean, this makes no sense. Who would have ever known? You were, like, the last person on the planet. That's why God chooses the foolish things of this world to confound the wise.

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But of course, man wants to try to figure it out. What's the secret to the growth of the ministry? What kind of programs do you have? Programs? I don't have any programs. Yeah, but certainly you must have some sort of a 5-year plan or some sort of a strategy. No. Do you know what I do? I just stay out of God's way. This is God's church. This ministry belongs to the Lord, and the glory belongs to the Lord.

Whenever I have the opportunity to share, there is an occasion where I'll be with other pastors, and we'll go around, hey, what's God doing in your ministry? For me, this is quite a miracle unto itself, but I'm speechless. I don't know what to say. That doesn't happen very often, but I really don't know what to say because there's nothing I can say. Well, here's what we're doing. What are you doing? Nothing. Yeah, I mean that. Oh, but come on. Certainly, you're doing something. No! God's doing everything. But surely you must have... No!

See, here's what I know. God is looking for somebody who will just let him do what he wants to do and stay out of his way and not try to help him out. It's kind of like God saying, you want to help me? Don't help me. That will help me if you don't help me.

When your kids were small and so adorable, right? You've got this project, and they're like, oh, Baba, can we help? I'm like, okay, fine. They're just so adorable, and then you let them. They make such a mess of it, and you know that it's going to take you, like, 5 hours to do that, which you could have done in maybe 30 minutes had they not helped you out.

So many times, it's like God's just knocking, hello, JD, that's you with me! You're adorable. Can I help? No! No, don't help me. That will help me if you don't help me. See, I want to do something, and I just need you to let me, and if you let me, I will blow your mind. I will do things that if I told you about them, you wouldn't believe it.

When we first moved here, we started a Bible study even before the church was officially planted. This is 2004, a long time ago. If you would've come to me in 2004 and said that in the year 2021... First of all, if you would've told me about what the world is going to be like in 2021, I would have sent you to the institution.

But if you would have told me that in 2021 you are going to have this profound privilege of pastoring the most amazing church in the world, the most loving church in the world, and to the uttermost parts of the world, I would not have believed you. Here we are all of these years later, I look back on it, and the greatest thing that I did was nothing at all and just stayed out of God's way and let him have his way.

Then when you do that, and he has his way, he does exceedingly abundantly above and beyond, anything you could have ever imagined, then he's the only one that can take the credit for it. It would be laughable if you tried.

This is what I love about you because you know me, and you know it's not me. You know it's God! Again, after all, look at you, Pastor. I mean, it has to be the Lord. Yeah, but the pastor is smart and savvy and shrewd. Stop! No. Everything that has happened with this ministry has happened because God did it - in spite of us, in spite of me, not because of me.

Never imagine God looks at us and says, hey! You're kind of special. I think I'll choose and use you because I mean, you're special. No, he looks at you and says I could use that guy. I could use them because I know that when I do what I'm going to do through them, there's no way that they could take the credit for it. And they won't try to. That's why again, God uses and chooses the foolish to confound the wise. We're only the instruments in the hands of the Master.

Verse 16, "Therefore, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, will send leanness among his fat ones and under his glory he will kindle a burning like the burning of a fire. So, the Light of Israel will be for a fire and his

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Holy One for a flame. It will burn and devour his thorns and his briars in one day. And [verse 18] 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.

Then [verse 19], the rest of the trees of his forest will be so few in number that a child may write them. And it shall come to pass in that day, [listen very carefully] 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..." They're going to learn their lesson the hard way.

"...the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God. 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. For the Lord God of hosts will make a determined end in the midst of all the land. Therefore [verse 24] thus says the Lord, God of hosts, 'O, my people who dwell in Zion do not be afraid of the Assyrian.'" Hang on to that. I want to come back to that.

If I'm in Judah at this time and the Prophet Isaiah proclaims this and prophecies this and declares this and says this, don't be afraid of Assyria? Isaiah, with all due respect, as a prophet of God, they're on their way. They're coming, and they're going to invade us. They're going to leave a wake of destruction in their path, as they always do, and you're saying, don't be afraid? We are paralyzed in fear. No, don't be afraid, and here's why.

Listen, "He shall strike you with the rod and lift up his staff against you in the manner of Egypt for yet a very little while. And the indignation will cease, as will my anger in their destruction." In other words, I'm going to allow them to come, and judgment will come, and yet a very little while, my anger will be satiated, and my indignation will cease. And the Lord [verse 26] of hosts will stir up a scourge for him like the slaughter of Midian [again, a reference to Gideon, we talked about that last week] at the rock of Oreb. As his rod was on the sea [speaking of Moses at the Red Sea], so will He lift it up in the manner of Egypt. It shall come to pass in that day, [verse 27] 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."

Some commentators have suggested that better translated; this would be because of the Anointed One. Why is that important? Why do I emphasize that? He's not doing this because of them. He's doing this because he has a covenant with them. He's made a promise to them. He is not going to let the Assyrians completely and utterly destroy them. The Assyrians have a limit to that which God will allow them to do as the instrument of judgment and correction, the rod of correction, in his hand. And they can do no more.

They can do no more. God will limit the enemy in our lives. God will only allow the enemy to do that which God will allow him to do to correct us, discipline us, chastise us. Why? Because he loves us. If he didn't love us, he wouldn't bother. That's how we know we're his children, the writer of Hebrews says.

I mean, right? You know, you're a child of God when you get a spanking because you're his child, right? If I'm in a restaurant, which I'm not anymore. Everything's take-out now, but let's just say for the purpose of illustration. I'm in a restaurant, and I'm sitting across from a family with young children. They are so disorderly, and they're running around. They're throwing food all over the place, and Mom and Dad aren't doing anything.

Let's just say again, for the purpose of illustration. I would never do this. I don't think I would do this, but I get up from the table, and I give those children a good spanking. You can't do that. Why? Because they're not your kids. Oh. Let's say that you see somebody get up and give them a spanking. Oh, you must be the parent. Yeah, because that's my kid, and I'm disciplining them. That's how you

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know. I mean, other than the genetic similarities. I mean, they look like you, chip off the old block. Thank God for my wife's gene pool with our children.

That's how you know, and that's how we know that we're his because he chastises us. Don't despise the chastening, the discipline of the Lord. It's because he loves you. He loves you so much. He loves his people. Again, never think for a moment that God takes delight in this. It's not that God wants to do this. God has to do this.

When our children were young, we used to tell them... You've said this to your kids, right? This is going to hurt me a lot more than it's going to hurt you. Like children at that age, believe you when you say that it's going to hurt you more than it's going to hurt me. What? And then we'll say something like this. I'm doing this because I love you, to which the child usually responds, I wish you would love me less. But if you think about it, if you didn't love them, fine. Go ahead! I don't care. I don't love you. Do you want to destroy your life? Fine. Go ahead. That's a horrible way to say it.

Sometimes I wonder, do we see God that way? Do we misunderstand the correction, the rod of correction in our lives? Sometimes I know in my own life, I've misunderstood, misinterpreted the correction of God as God being angry with me. God's not angry with me. God loves me. He loves me enough to correct me and discipline me.

My problem was, and it took me a long time to learn this. What I was greatly erring in doing was I was looking at my heavenly Father through the eyes of my earthly father, who was always angry, disciplined in anger. So, I just naturally assumed that whenever I got disciplined, I thought God was angry with me.

He's not angry with me. He's not angry with you. He loves you so much. He loves his people, and he will restore them, and a remnant will return. This is a correction and a redirection. Did you catch where Isaiah says to them that you will never rely on anyone else ever again?

We just got done in 2 Chronicles, where King Asa is confronted. Do you know what he did? He basically did the same thing that the other kings did. He made an alliance, relied upon the king of Syria, made an alliance with them, depended on them and not the Lord. By the way, that was 2 Chronicles 15. When you get to 2 Chronicles 16, I want to say it's about verse 9. It's a passage, a verse I'm sure you're familiar with. You've heard it before.

It goes something like this. Don't you know that the eyes of the Lord are searching to and fro throughout the earth, looking for hearts fully devoted to him so he can be strong on their behalf? That was through a prophet, a prophecy, to King Asa after he had made this alliance with and relied upon and gave the credit to Syria instead of the Lord.

No flesh is going to glory in my presence. Oh, you're relying on them. You're giving credit to them. It actually worked out. It actually succeeded, which is even worse. It was a strategy that actually worked. But the problem was, is that he made this alliance with this enemy nation.

This is exactly what Assyria does. They turn on God's people and destroy God's people. You're making a deal with the devil, man, and you do so to your own peril. I love you so much, I've got to teach you a lesson, and this is the only way that I can do it. I have to allow the Assyrians to come against you.

I think of that Proverb. I can't think offhand of the chapter and verse, but it goes something like this. When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, He makes even his enemies live at peace with him. That goes the other way, too, right? When your ways are displeasing to the Lord, he'll allow the Assyrians in your life to come against you, and he'll use them as the rod of correction in your life.

Verse 28, "He has come to Aiath, he has passed Migron." Now picture this. The Assyrians are coming. It's like this wave as they approach Judah. "He has passed Migron; at Michmash he has attended to his equipment. They have gone along the ridge. They have taken up lodging at Geba. Ramah is afraid,

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Gibeah of Saul has fled. Lift up your voice, O daughter of Gallim. Cause it to be heard as far as Laish, O poor Anatho."

In other words, all of these cities as the Assyrians descend on the way. "Madmenah has fled, the inhabitants of Gebim seek refuge. 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. [They are there!] 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. He will cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon will fall by the Mighty One."

Oh, the imagery here, the mighty cedars of Lebanon. My birthplace. I guess the best comparison for us, modern-day, would be in California. What are they called? Redwood, right? Pray for me. It's even worse than that, actually—those big, mighty redwoods. We had an online member, actually brought me a wonderful gift - a small piece of redwood and then pictures. I don't know how old they are. The trunks of these trees are like this big. They would fill the sanctuary here - huge.

That's what the cedars of Lebanon were. Why do I point that out? Because of what God is saying, yeah, I know that the Assyrians look mighty and large and strong. In fact, they're already here. I'm going to cut them down like the cedars of Lebanon. I'm going to humble them, and we know what happens, right? 185,000 men descend on Judah. They're encamped round about Jerusalem.

God, true to his Word, because he has a covenant with Israel, and he made a promise to David that the Savior of the world would come from his lineage. What the Assyrians were trying to do is not only depose the king, they were trying to completely destroy Jerusalem. God can't let that happen because God has a covenant. Because of who he is in spite of them - in spite of them. He's not doing this for them. He's doing this again because he has a covenant with them.

Let's just take a moment here and picture this in our mind's eye. Isaiah has just said to them, do not be afraid of the Assyrians. And here they come. We're hearing about all these towns running for their lives. They're on their way, and now they're there.

And God says, I'll take care of this now. I'm going to take care of this for my glory. I'm going to do this because of who I am. An angel of the Lord is sent and kills all 185,000 of these men that had descended on Judah from Assyria. The detail and the narrative are that the Israelites wake up in the morning, and there are 185,000 dead Assyrians all around the city. That's why you're not to be afraid.

I want to, before we partake together of Communion, draw a parallel here. As I spent some time with the Lord this last week, it's something that preparing for Sunday's update, which once again was really intense. You might say that the Assyrians, our Assyrians, are advancing against us to destroy us. It's just a matter of time. They are on their way. It's happening.

The Lord ministered to me that like with them then; it's the same for us now. Do not be afraid of them because if the truth be known, and I think if we're honest with ourselves and we're in good company, by the way. Throughout Scripture, so many times, Joshua comes to mind. Do not be afraid. Be strong and of good courage. Do not be afraid. Do not fear. Yeah, but do you know what they're coming with next? It's the stroke of a pen away. It's the click of a mouse away - that's what's coming.

The Assyrians are coming, and they're seeking to destroy us. They're so evil what they're planning. And God says, no, no, no, no! Don't be afraid. I'll take care of them. Yeah, but they are here! 185,000! I know, how cool is that? Watch me now. God's going to have the final word. God's going to have the final word because, in the end, it is God who gets the glory.

One last thing, and then we'll partake together. I was thinking about Ezekiel 38. We talk about this a lot. This prophecy, where there's this alliance of nations that invade Israel with Russia, Iran, and Turkey at the helm, and they come against...

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What reminded me of it was when Isaiah the prophet declares that it's going to happen in one day, and it did. It was actually within one night. The same thing is going to happen when Ezekiel 38 is fulfilled. You've got this great horde; this alliance of nations, superpowers, nuclear superpowers that are coming against little Israel like the Assyrians then.

And God says, no, no. I'll take care of this. Watch me now. There's an interesting detail at the end of Chapter 38 because God says, here's why I'm going to do it. I'm going to do this, this way so that they will know that I - I am the Lord God. That's why I'm going to do it! So, there is no mistake, so we are clear - I did that! No, it's the Israeli Defense Force. No. I did it! I did it! I! I am the Lord God!

This will be the last, last thing, and then we will part bread. Just bear with me. I believe this is the Lord. Throughout the Old Testament, when God would have, particularly Moses, have Aaron say to the people, I am the Lord your God who delivered you out of Egypt. Stay with me on this.

Have you ever asked yourself where the emphasis was? Because I mean, it's just words, the word of God, certainly, but it's words on the pages of our Bible. So, the emphasis can be I am the Lord, your God. I am the Lord your God. Or I believe the emphasis is on "I."

The king of Assyria says, I, I did this. No! I, I am the Lord, your God. I, I am the Lord your God who delivered you out of Egypt, so we're clear - I am the one who gets all the glory! I am the Lord, your God.

Well, I tried not to go too long. We're not in a rush, right? You brought your pajamas and your toothbrush. It won't be that much longer. I'll have you out of here by 11. Those of you online, what - 2 am, 3 am? I don't know what the time zone is.

I like Luke's gospel account of the Last Supper as we affectionately refer to it. Here we are a few days away from that one day of the year where we celebrate the resurrection of the Risen Savior, where the whole world is cognizant of to one degree or another - the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Here we are tonight, celebrating what they celebrated as the Last Supper, the Passover. The Passover, because Jesus fulfilled the Passover prophecy. So here they are in that Upper Room, and they're going to partake together. It's the last time they will celebrate Passover together.

Luke writes, verse 14, "When the hour had come, he sat down and the 12 apostles with him. Then he said to them, 'with fervent desire, I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.'" We're going to talk about this on Sunday, but he has told them that he's going to go to the cross. He has to go to the cross. He has to die on that cross.

But he also tells them that he will rise again, and he even goes further and says, and after I am risen from the dead, I'm going to meet you in Galilee. That's a very important detail. You'll have to come on Sunday to find out why that's an important detail. It's a very important detail. He has just got done telling them that he's going to go to the cross. By the way, it has completely rocked their world and shaken them to the core. It has caused so much consternation on their part.

"He says, 'I say to you, [verse 16], I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.' Then he took the cup and gave thanks and said, 'Take this and divide it among yourselves for I say to you [This is the second time now] I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God comes.'" Do you sense from this that Jesus eagerly, fervently waits for that time, that day, when what we're going to do tonight finds its ultimate fulfillment?

"And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'" For those of you here, if you'll take and just peel back the top layer, you'll have the bread and just hold onto it for a moment. Those of you online just hold onto the bread for just a moment before we partake.

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I suppose this is as good of a time as any to briefly mention the significance of the Passover. It was that 10th plague that came upon Egypt. The Israelites were told to take a lamb and inspect it, put it on trial for four days and not slay that lamb until the 14th. But for four days - take it in on the 10th day. Four days: the exact number of days that Jesus was on trial. Now, at the end of the four days, that lamb had to be without blemish, without spot, without wrinkle—a picture of a prophecy about Jesus being without sin.

Then they were to take that lamb, and they were to break the body, the skin, not the bones. No bones could be broken, and no bones of the Savior were broken. Only the skin, the body, so the blood could come out. (Interesting, and we'll talk about this in a moment.) His body was broken and bled in seven (the number of completion) locations. His body had to be broken for us.

They would take as a type - that would foreshadow as this prophesy the coming Savior, who would be that Passover lamb. Because if they took this lamb without blemish, without spot, without wrinkle, and slayed that lamb. They then took the blood of that lamb and put it on the doorposts of their house there in Egypt: the top; there was a basin at the bottom; then the left; and then the right: in the shape of a cross. Before, the Romans had ever come up with a cross as a form of crucifixion-cruel form, by the way.

So, when the angel of death came, and the angel of death came, and took the firstborn son. (Interesting connection there as well.) But if you had the blood of the lamb in the shape of a cross on the door of your house, that angel of death would pass over you, and you would be saved. This would be a foreshadow of the coming Savior of the world who would fulfill that Passover prophecy.

As we partake together, we partake of this in remembrance of what he did, his body broken for us. Would you partake with me? Thank you, Lord. Lord, thank you so much for giving us this to do in remembrance of you, particularly at a time like this where we remember your crucifixion, your burial, and your resurrection. Lord, thank you for going to that cross for us instead of us.

Luke goes on to write, "Likewise, he, speaking of Jesus, also took the cup after supper saying. 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood which is shed for you.'" Again, for those of you here, if you'll take and peel back the remainder of the packaging and those of you watching online, if you'll just again hold on to the cup.

Again, we hold in our hands a symbol—this time not of the body, the broken body of Jesus, but the blood of Jesus. Jesus says to them that this blood is the blood of the new covenant. My blood is shed for you. Why? For the remission of sins. There is no remission of sin without the shedding of blood. I'm going to shed my blood in your stead. This is the blood of the new covenant. He says I want you to do this in remembrance of me, and they would have got it.

Because the Passover celebration to this day in Israel is huge. Watch I-24 News. It's all about the Passover. It is such an important feast. Again, the blindness on the part of Israel. They just can't see it. They're blind to it. That whenever they celebrate the Passover, they are celebrating Jesus Christ, who fulfilled the Passover.

Here's the blood. Now seven places the number of completion because it is a picture of the finished completed work on the cross. Do you want to count them just really quick? Both feet: 2; hands: 4; He was whipped - back: 5; the crown of thorns on the head, deep into the skull [6]; then the 7th and final place that he bled from was from his side.

When the soldier was commanded to thrust the sword into his side to make sure he was dead, out of his side came two elements: blood and water - two elements present at birth – that was the birth of the church—the bride from his side as the second and final Adam just as God took from the first Adam, the rib from his side for his bride, so, too, with the second and final Adam. With Adam, sin

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entered the world, and Jesus, as the second and final Adam, came into the world to pay for that sin. As with Adam, a bride from his side so too with Jesus, a bride from his side was birthed.

I don't know if it's possible to overstate the importance of that which we are celebrating tonight. As we partake together of this cup, we do not only remember him but also that this symbol in our hands represents his shed blood that has paid in full for all of our sins.

Would you partake with me, and once you do, please stand? Let's have the worship team come up before I pray. Have they left the building? I wasn't too bad. Don't look at your watches yet. Thank you, Lord. Loving Father in heaven, I think that when I pray this and say this, I do so with everyone's agreement in this Bible study tonight. Yet there is no way; it's impossible for us to thank you enough for what you did for us.

Lord, thank you for purchasing us, paying in full the price. Thank you for dying on the cross, defeating death in your resurrection. Thank you for the good news that soon and very soon, you're coming back to take us out of this world. We believe it is sooner than any of us can imagine. What we did tonight was a much-needed reminder because it's very easy for us to forget with the busyness, the stress, and the pressures of life—especially now in this world that we're living in with the Assyrians at our door.

We need this to remind us that there is a remnant and that you will have the final word. Just as you have defeated death, you will defeat the enemy of our soul. Just as you said to them then, in celebrating that Passover with them, you are eagerly awaiting that day when what we did here tonight will be fulfilled in your kingdom. So, too Lord, do we eagerly await, fervently desire. It's just too high for our understanding that that day, very soon, we believe is coming. What we did here tonight, we're going to do with you at your table at the wedding feast of the lamb.

Oh, Lord, come quickly. Maranatha! In Jesus' name. Amen