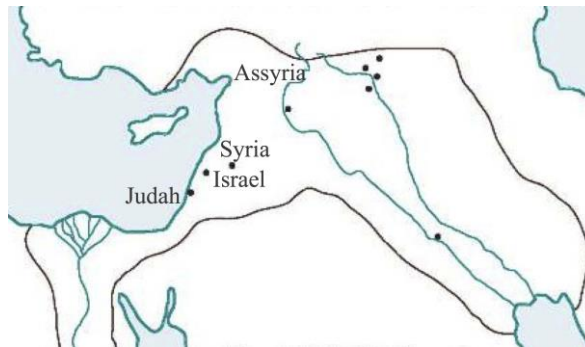


## ***Session 3 The Forerunner Message in Isaiah 9-10***

### **I. UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT OF ISAIAH 9-10**

- A. Isaiah 9-11 is similar to Isaiah 2-4. Each passage has three parts—first, a promise about Jesus’ millennial rule over the nation (2:1-5; 9:1-7), followed by a warning of judgment (2:6-4:1; 9:8-10:34), concluding with another promise of Jesus’ millennial rule over the nations (4:2-6; 11:1-16).
- B. The outline of Isaiah 9-11  
9:1-7 God will send a great light in the person of a coming King—Jesus  
9:8-21 God’s judgment on sinful Israel  
10:1-4 Judah is warned to repent to avoid the judgment that Israel was experiencing  
10:5-34 God’s judgment on Assyria after He used them as His tool of discipline  
11:1-16 The reign of a righteous King (11:1-16)
- C. **Civil war:** One generation after King David died, in 931 BC, Israel split into two kingdoms—the *Kingdom of Israel* in the north (with Samaria as its capital) and the *Kingdom of Judah* in the south.
- D. **Assyrians:** The dominate empire in the Middle East was the *Assyrian Empire* (911-606 BC); later it was the *Babylonian Empire* (606-539 BC); then it was the *Persian Empire* (539-331 BC); next it was the *Greek Empire* (331-146 BC), and then it was the *Roman Empire* (146 BC-AD 476).



- E. Isaiah 9-10 alludes to the escalating crisis of that time—it was centered around a twofold military crisis. There were great chaos and troubles throughout the region—military, economic, social, etc.
1. In 735 BC, Israel in a coalition with Syria attacked Judah, killing 120,000 people (2 Chr. 28:6).  
***“For Pekah [king of Israel]...killed one hundred and twenty thousand in Judah in one day, all valiant men, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. (2 Chr. 28:6)***
  2. In 733 BC, the Assyrian Empire first invaded the northern Kingdom of Israel. In 721 BC, Assyria invaded Israel again, capturing her capital city Samaria and enslaving her people.

## II. GOD WILL SEND A GREAT LIGHT TO RESTORE REBELLIOUS ISRAEL (ISA. 9:1-7)

- A. Isaiah described what would happen to Judah if they rejected the Lord's leadership and did not understand His plan as revealed by the prophets. They would end up distressed, angry, and hopeless in face of the escalating crisis. It would lead to disillusionment and rejection of their leaders (their king) and the Lord. The believing remnant (8:11-22) was to have a very different perspective of the escalating troubles (8:17-18) by looking beyond the distressful time to the light of a coming King (9:1-7).

<sup>21</sup>*They will pass through it hard-pressed...will be enraged and curse their king and their God...*

<sup>22</sup>*They will...see trouble and darkness, gloom of anguish; and they will be driven into darkness. (Isa. 8:21-22)*

- B. God will send a great light in the person of a coming King—Jesus (9:1-7). Isaiah predicted the end of gloom in Galilee. To Isaiah, the hope of the Messiah's earthly reign was a present reality that energized his life in the "now." His disciples were to grow in faith and not give in to despair (8:16-17, 21).

<sup>1</sup>*Nevertheless the gloom will not be [remain] upon her who is distressed, as when at first [733 BC] He lightly esteemed the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward [721 BC] more heavily oppressed her...<sup>2</sup>*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. (Isa. 9:1-2)**

- C. **A great light:** The people walking in darkness—the Israelites— would see a light (Mt. 4:13-16). Isaiah spoke of those who "have seen" a light (9:2). He spoke of the future as if it already happened. The remnant could walk in confidence in the fact of a coming light, even in a time of darkness (8:22).

- D. The people of Galilee experiencing God's disciplining hand would enjoy God's light. The light of God's glory was seen there when Jesus made Capernaum His headquarters (Mt. 4:13-16). A greater measure of light will be seen there and throughout all Israel during Jesus' millennial reign (Isa. 60).

<sup>1</sup>*Arise, shine; for your light has come...<sup>2</sup>*For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth...but the LORD will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. (Isa. 60:1-2)**

- E. **Naphtali and Zebulun:** The land of Naphtali lay along the western shore of the Sea of Galilee and Zebulun was just west of that. These lands in northern Galilee were the first attacked by Assyria.

- F. Isaiah referred to two periods of trouble seen in northern area of the Kingdom of Israel. In 733 BC, Assyria invaded this area, and 12 years later many in Israel were deported in 721 BC.

1. **At first:** The Lord *lightly esteemed* Galilee in context to Assyrians invading them in 733 BC.

2. **Afterward:** The Lord *more heavily oppressed* Galilee in 721 BC, by sending the Assyrians to invade Israel, capture their capital city Samaria, and to deport the people as slaves.

- G. Isaiah 9:3-7 described what this light will be. A new world order will be established that includes the Lord restoring Galilee and putting an end to war (9:4-5) as a result of the birth of a King (9:6). Some believe 9:3-5 was fulfilled already when Jesus came to make His headquarters in Galilee.

*<sup>3</sup>You have multiplied the nation and increased its joy; they rejoice before You according to the joy of harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. <sup>4</sup>For You have broken the yoke of his burden and...the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian. <sup>5</sup>For every warrior's sandal from the noisy battle and garments rolled in blood will be used for burning and fuel of fire. (Isa. 9:3-5)*

1. **National salvation:** The complete fulfillment of this occurs when Israel is multiplied and rejoices before the Lord who sent a Son (Jesus) to become a King to restore Israel (Isa. 9:6-7). At that time, Israel will enjoy abundant harvests and military victory over all her enemies.
2. **Broken the yoke:** Isaiah compared this coming military victory to their victory over Egypt under Moses (Ex. 7-15) and over Midian under Gideon (Judg. 6-8). Both were supernatural military victories that were “against all odds.”
3. **Warrior's sandals:** The burning of military boots and the clothes of defeated soldiers speaks of a final victory where military equipment is no longer needed because war ceases (Isa. 2:4).

- H. The promises described in verses 2-5 depend on the coming of a King to rule the earth (9:6-7).

*<sup>6</sup>For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup>Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end...to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. (Isa. 9:6-7)*

1. The King would first appear as a Child who is born on earth—human and divine. The “child born” points to His humanity and a “Son given” to His deity.
  2. The names of the Child express the glorious nature of His person and reign.
  3. He is “Wonderful,” or one who fills His people with wonder. He is “the Counselor” who possesses wisdom to restore the nations. He is “Mighty God” who possess infinite power. He is the “Everlasting Father,” depicting how He represents Father's tender care and desire for relationship. He is the “Prince of Peace” who brings peace, and safety to all the nations.
- I. **Increase:** Jesus' government will progressively increase (9:7). Social improvements, or the healing of the nations, will be progressive. Infrastructure will be established in every sphere of society in each city. It will gradually increase in capacity, quality, and impact as leaders grow in wisdom.

### III. GOD’S JUDGMENT ON SINFUL ISRAEL (ISA. 9:8-21)

- A. The Lord had already “sent” His prophetic warnings of judgment to Israel through Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah from 760 BC onwards. Everyone in Israel knew of these warnings and were responsible.

***<sup>8</sup>The LORD sent a word against Jacob, and it has fallen on Israel. <sup>9</sup>All the people will know—Ephraim and...Samaria—who say in pride...<sup>10</sup>“The bricks have fallen down, but we will rebuild with hewn stones; the sycamores are cut down, but we will replace them with cedars...”<sup>13</sup>For the people do not turn to Him who strikes them, nor do they seek the LORD of hosts. (Isa. 9:8-13)***

- B. Isaiah gave a message describing God’s judgment on the pride and oppression in the northern kingdom—Israel (9:8-21). In verses 8-9, Isaiah refers to Israel by different names such as “Jacob” (father of the ten tribes), Ephraim” (its largest tribe), and “Samaria” (capital city of Israel).
- C. We do not know the exact date of all these events. It was probably after the Assyrians attacked Israel in 733 BC, but before Assyria devastated Israel in 721 BC, leaving scorched land (9:19).
- D. Israel’s pride was expressed in claiming that, if things were destroyed by a military invasion, they would replace all that was destroyed with things that were even better. They would overcome any disaster and accomplish bigger and better things through their hard work without needing to seek God. If the enemy knocked down walls made of mud-bricks, they would rebuild them with expensive stone. If homes built of sycamore wood were destroyed, they would rebuild them with more expensive and stronger wood from the cedars of Lebanon.
- E. Isaiah did not travel north in the midst of the military conflict to deliver this prophecy. He spoke it to people in Judah so that they would see the consequences of Israel’s sin in order to instruct Judah in the fear of the Lord by grasping that the Lord severely disciplining His covenant people—Israel—meant He would surely discipline them as well. Judah was being given an opportunity to learn from Israel’s crisis.
- F. Judah need not fear the armies of Israel and Syria who were attacking them, for God’s judgment will destroy Israel’s armies. This message gave hope to Judah in seeing God’s intervention against their arch enemy Israel. Isaiah explains why Israel’s attack against Judah failed; it was not because of Ahaz’s alliance with Assyria, but because God was judging Israel because she would not obey.
- G. The Lord sent military invasions into Israel—the Assyrians from the north and the Philistines from the south (9:11-12). This demonstrated God’s sovereign control over the nations.

***<sup>19</sup>Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts the land is burned up...no man shall spare his brother...<sup>21</sup>For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still. (Isa. 9:19-21)***

1. Because Israel did not repent (9:13), the Lord caused their political infrastructure to collapse (9:13-17), resulting in suffering for all, even orphans and widows (9:17). Israel refused to repent so the Lord allowed social chaos and fires that burned up the land (9:18-21).
2. God’s discipline continued to intensify as Isaiah cried out—“For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still” (9:12, 17, 21; 10:4).

#### IV. GOD’S WARNING TO JUDAH TO LEARN FROM THE CRISIS IN ISRAEL (ISA. 10:1-4)

- A. Judah is warned to repent to avoid the judgment that Israel was experiencing (10:1-4). Isaiah’s earlier prophecies about Judah’s judgment for its pride and oppression will come to pass unless they repent (2:6-4:1). Smith points out that Isaiah speaks to Judah as seen by his use of “you” in 10:3 (his audience) and the shift from declarations of judgment and military invasions (9:8-21) to woeful laments with warnings for oppressing the poor (10:1-2). In addition, there are no references to any northern city or ruler as in 9:8-21.

<sup>1</sup>“Woe to those who decree unrighteous decrees...<sup>2</sup>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. <sup>3</sup>What will you do in the day of punishment...? To whom will you flee for help? <sup>4</sup>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. (Isa. 10:1-4)*

- B. The Lord’s short term plans for Judah and Israel are not identical. Israel will be devastated by Assyria (10:4, 9, 11), but Judah would be spared this devastation.
- C. **Decree:** They established oppressive laws to enrich themselves at the expense of the helpless.
- D. **The day of punishment:** A day of disaster is coming to Judah without any to help them. This happened when Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and took many people into captivity (606-586 BC).
- E. **They will bow down:** The leaders who enriched themselves at the expense of the helpless will suffer the same fate as everyone else being taken away into slavery as captives or lying among the slain. Before God’s judgment, social status, wealth, and political authority are useless.

#### V. GOD’S JUDGMENT ON ASSYRIA (ISA. 10:5-34)

- A. 10:5-34 speaks of God’s judgment on Assyria after He uses them as His tool to discipline His people (10:5-34). Assyria was a cruel enemy that was *sent by* God. Habakkuk was troubled by this idea (Hab. 1:5-17). God chose the wicked empire of Assyria to discipline His people. Afterwards, He destroyed them. God controls the destiny of nations. Isaiah wanted Judah to trust God even in the face of the powerful Assyrians, knowing that even the mightiest nations are under His control.

<sup>5</sup>“Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger... <sup>6</sup>I will send him against an ungodly nation [Judah or Israel]... I will give him charge, to seize the spoil, to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets...”<sup>12</sup> ...When the LORD has performed all His work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, that He will say, “I will punish...the king of Assyria.” (Isa. 10:5, 12)

- B. Many assume that the most powerful nations are blessed by God. Isaiah spoke of a God who is over history. History is not to be interpreted by seeing who has more wealth, prestige, power, etc. Isaiah applied this truth of God’s sovereignty to the historical process. It has significance for our life too.
- C. Isaiah describes the nature and extent of the judgment to come on Assyria (10:5-19). The Assyrians marching triumphantly to invade Jerusalem are, in reality, jumping into a fire (10:16).

- D. The promise of Israel's restoration and a remnant who is faithful to the Lord (10:20-27): The main purpose of this message is seen here where Isaiah addresses His audience in Zion (10:24).  
*<sup>20</sup>...In that day that the remnant of Israel...will depend on the LORD...<sup>21</sup>The remnant will return...to the Mighty God. <sup>22</sup>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...  
<sup>24</sup>O My people...in Zion, do not be afraid of the Assyrian. He shall strike you with a rod ...  
<sup>26</sup>The LORD...will stir up a scourge for him [the king of Assyria] like the slaughter of Midian...  
...so will He lift it up in the manner of Egypt.<sup>27</sup>...in that day that his burden will be taken away... and his yoke from your neck, and the yoke will be destroyed because of the anointing oil. (Isa. 10:20-27)*
- E. **Midian:** As in 9:4, Isaiah again encouraged the residents of Jerusalem to believe that they would survive the attack of the Assyrians and all future hostile nations since the Lord supernaturally delivered their forefathers from the Egyptians and the Midianites (under Gideon's leadership).
- F. **Remnant:** Isaiah shifted from the destruction of Assyria to God's plan to save a remnant (10:20-21). The divinely-planned destruction will bear righteous fruit (10:22-23). The idea of the remnant has a negative and positive side to it. It is negative because it implies that a small number will faithfully respond to the Lord, but it is positive because some will survive judgment. This was fulfilled in part when some survived Assyria and when some returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel (536 BC). Paul quoted 10:22 to point out that a remnant of faithful ones existed in his day (Rom. 9:27-28).
- G. **Destruction decreed:** Judah was smitten but spared total destruction. God in wisdom decreed this. The Judge of all the earth (Gen. 18:25) defies human logic by His decisions to release judgment.
- H. The Antichrist is referred as "the Assyrian" (Mic. 5:5). The Assyrian King Sennacherib attacked Jerusalem in 701 BC to destroy it. Jerusalem was supernaturally delivered from him and his armies by the angel of the Lord (Isa. 37:36). Some see him as a type of the Antichrist attacking Jerusalem.  
*<sup>4</sup>And He [Messiah] shall stand and feed His flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD His God...He shall be great to the ends of the earth...<sup>5</sup>When the Assyrian [the Antichrist] comes into our land, and when he treads in our palaces... (Mic. 5:4-5)*
- I. Isaiah described the path of Assyria's triumphant march to Jerusalem (10:28-32). Assyria invaded Israel in 733 BC and 721 BC and then attacked many fortified cities in Judah on the way to Jerusalem in 701 BC. The Lord had not yet completed His work in disciplining Judah (10:11-12).
- J. But soon afterwards, the Lord destroyed Assyria (10:33-34). This was seen in part in 701 BC when the angel of Lord killed 185,000 Assyrians and when the empire fell to Babylon about 100 years later (606 BC). This points to the ultimate deliverance of Israel by Jesus at His return (2 Thes. 2:8).  
*<sup>8</sup>And then the lawless one [Antichrist] will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. (2 Thes. 2:8)*