



ShalomAZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption

"The Only Way to Run From the Outstretched Arm is to Run TO the Outstretched Arm"

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts: Isaiah 9:7-16; Exodus 6:6; Psalm 37; Isaiah 7

Isaiah's prophecy in chapters 9 and 10 unfolds like a carefully structured poem. It has **four stanzas**, each ending with the same haunting refrain: *"For all this, His anger is not turned away, yet His hand is still outstretched."* That phrase is like a drumbeat echoing through a nation that won't listen. It tells us something profound about God: He is both righteous in judgment and steadfast in mercy.

The context is crucial. The **northern kingdom (Ephraim)** had aligned itself with **Aram** to resist **Assyria**, while **Judah's king, Ahaz**, trembled and considered his own alliance with Assyria. Instead of trusting God's word through Isaiah, both kingdoms were looking to human solutions. Isaiah steps in to declare that their real problem isn't military or political—it's spiritual. God's arm is outstretched, calling His people to return, but they are running the other way. In verses 7–16, Isaiah delivers the **first two stanzas** of this poem, revealing how the **word of the Lord falls upon Israel**, how the people **respond with arrogant defiance**, and how this defiance **infects their leadership**. Through it all, God's hand remains outstretched.

1. THE WORD THAT FALLS (Isaiah 9:7-8)

The passage begins with a divine declaration. God **sends a word to Jacob**, and that word "falls" or "lights upon" all Israel. Even though the kingdom is divided—north and south—God's purposes are not divided. His word is addressed to the whole people. This is not just a prophetic whisper; it is a heavy word that **lands** on them like a stone dropping into a still pond, sending ripples outward.

The message is clear: God is speaking, and His word has weight. The northern kingdom's alliances and strategies cannot shield them from the reality that the **Lord Himself** is the One they must deal with. The Assyrian threat isn't ultimately their biggest problem—their *refusal to hear God* is. This is where all divine discipline begins: God speaks. He sends His word, often before any calamity hits, giving His people the chance to respond. But as the next verses show, they don't respond with humility. They respond with **arrogance**.

2. THE PRIDE THAT ANSWERS (Is. 9:9-11)

"All the people will know—Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria—who say in pride and arrogance of heart: 'The bricks have fallen, but we will rebuild with cut stones; the sycamores are cut down, but we will replace them with cedars.'" (vv. 9–10). God allows shaking—walls fall, sycamores are cut down—but instead of pausing to ask, *"Lord, what are You saying?"*, the people answer back with pride. They shake their fists at heaven. "You knocked down our bricks? We'll build with stronger stones. You took our sycamores? We'll plant cedars."

This isn't the language of repentance; it's the language of **defiance**. They see God's discipline not as a call to return, but as a **challenge to overcome** in their own strength. It's self-reliance dressed up as resilience. The Lord responds by raising up enemies on every side: *"Therefore Adonai raises up Rezin's adversaries against them and spurs on his enemies—the Arameans from the east and the Philistines from the west—they will devour Israel with open mouth."* (vv. 10–11)

God Himself is behind the shaking. He is fortifying their enemies, not because He delights in destruction, but because their pride leaves Him no other path to get their attention. Yet even in this, the stanza ends: *"For all this, His anger is not turned away, yet His hand is still outstretched."*

The outstretched hand language deliberately echoes the **Exodus**—when God redeemed Israel “with an outstretched arm” (Ex. 6:6). The same hand stretched out to **save** is now stretched out in **judgment**, but still calling. The only way to flee that hand is to run to it.

3. THE LEADERSHIP THAT MISLEADS (Is. 9:12-16)

The people’s arrogance doesn’t stop at words; it shapes their leadership. Instead of leading the people back to God, the leaders reflect and reinforce the nation’s rebellion. *“Yet the people will not turn back to the One who strikes them, nor will they seek Adonai-Tzva’ot. So Adonai will cut off from Israel head and tail, palm branch and bulrush, in a single day. The elder and honorable man—he is the head. The prophet who teaches falsehood—he is the tail. The leaders of this people lead them astray, and those they mislead are swallowed up.”* (vv. 12–16)

The **head**, the elders and respected men, fail to lead with humility and reverence. The **tail**, the false prophets, wag behind the whims of the people, telling them what they want to hear. Leadership that should have shepherded the people toward repentance instead pandered to pride. This is a devastating picture: leaders and prophets who refuse to turn to God themselves cannot lead anyone else to Him. Their arrogance trickles down, and the people follow blindly into destruction.

Notice the emphasis in verse 12: *“Yet the people will not turn back to the One who strikes them, nor will they seek Adonai.”* This isn’t passive ignorance; it’s willful refusal. The shaking has a divine purpose—to bring them back—but they **refuse to darash**, to seek the Lord. God’s response is swift: cutting off head and tail in a single day. Leadership collapses when it refuses to acknowledge God’s authority.

CONCLUSION

Isaiah 9:7–16 paints a sobering picture: God sends His word, the people respond in arrogance, and leadership joins in their rebellion. But through it all, His hand remains outstretched. This is the mercy of God. Even in discipline, His heart is to restore. Maybe in your life there have been moments where the “bricks have fallen” or the “sycamores have been cut down.” Shaking has come—but how did you respond? Did you run to alliances, plans, or pride? Or did you stop to seek the One who allowed the shaking to get your attention?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What does it mean that the “word of the Lord fell upon Israel”? How is that significant?
2. How do we sometimes respond to God’s shaking with pride instead of repentance?
3. What are modern-day equivalents of saying “the bricks have fallen, but we’ll rebuild with cut stones”?
4. How can leadership—whether in families, communities, or nations—either lead people back to God or further into rebellion?
5. Where might God be calling you to stop resisting and return to His outstretched hand?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Abba, thank You that even when we resist, Your hand remains outstretched. Thank You for sending Your word to wake us up. Forgive us for the times we’ve answered You with pride instead of repentance. Forgive us for trusting in our strength, our alliances, or our leaders more than in You. Lord, we turn to You—the One who shakes not to destroy, but to save. Stretch out Your hand over us again in mercy. In Yeshua’s mighty name, Amen.