

Wednesday, July 19, 2023 • Read Isaiah 9:8–10:19

Questions from the Scripture text: Now against whom is Isaiah prophesying (v8-9)? What does Israel think they are doing (v10)? Although Israel thinks they're strengthening themselves, what is actually happening (v11-12b)? What refrain do we now hear repeated (v12c-d; cf. 5:25, 9:17, 9:21, 10:4)? Who is actually striking them, and how should they be responding to Him (v13)? Who will each have their part in the judgment (v14-17d)? Why? What will this still not resolve (v17e-f)? What will God's wrath give them over to in their interactions with each other (v18-21b)? What will this still not resolve (v21c-d)? What have they done as part of their provocation to the Lord (10:1-2) that will contribute to the nature of their punishment (v3-4b)? What will this still not resolve (v4c-d)? Who else will be punished (v5a)? What are they being used for (v5-6)? But what do they think they're doing (v7-10, 13-14)? But where will this self-glorifying literally end (v11-12)? What great mistake does all pride make (v15)? What will the Lord do to Assyria in response (v16-19)?

Why is humanism in the state and the church so dangerous? Isaiah 9:8–10:19 looks forward to the first serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these thirty-three verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **when man trusts his own solutions, he provokes God's wrath and leaves himself without help.**

This section in the book of Isaiah really runs through the end of chapter 11, with that messianic prophecy paralleling 9:1-7 as this Israel section (9:8–11:16) parallels the Jerusalem section (7:1-9:7) that we covered in the previous devotional. But we are taking up through 10:19, because the restoration of the northern kingdom will include their enfolding back into Judah at Zion, where indeed a remnant multitude of Gentiles will be enfolded into God's people at Zion. For this week, we consider the short-term consequences of the northern kingdom's alliance/dependence upon men (Syria/Aram). Their sin is fundamentally the same as Judah's in the previous section.

After the peak of northern kingdom power, Israel went rapid-fire through have a dozen declining reigns as the Lord began to judge them (v8). But they continued to tell themselves that they were rebuilding, and their best days were still ahead (v10). Sadly, they brought themselves into alliance with Syria's Rezin. Having surrounded themselves with those whom they styled as new allies, Isaiah seems them instead as having been devoured by new enemies (v11b) and old (v12a-b)?

The punishment they had been going through should have provoked them turn to the Lord (v13), but apart from grace, people respond to pain not with repentance but with pragmatism. It was especially the place of their civil and spiritual leaders to call them to repentance (v14-16). But what had they done? Forged an alliance with Syria! There are leaders who abuse their people directly (10:1-2), but the worst leader-abuse is to lead the people in the very sin by which they will all burn down (9:18-21b).

Because they have mistaken that the Lord is the real threat, not Assyria, they have sought for help that cannot possibly avail (10:3). They have neglected the only help that man can have (v4a-b). But Assyria has made the same mistake! They think that they are the great power to be reckoned with (v7-10, 13-14). What they have intended for the evil of their national self-exaltation, God had intended for the good of Israel's chastening (v5-6). But that doesn't get Assyria off the hook for their own wickedness!

Here is an important principle for understanding history: the Lord often uses the wicked as an instrument of chastening upon others. But the Lord also holds those wicked ones entirely accountable for their wickedness. He is both totally sovereign and perfectly just.

To judge Assyria, the Lord will give them over to a fatal mistake: boasting over-against not only Jerusalem but Jerusalem's God (v11b, cf. chs. 36-37). What Assyria says about the other nations' gods is true. And those who are suppressing the truth about the true God in their unrighteousness (cf. Rom 1:18) often point to the futility of idolatry and claim that the living God is the same, that Christ is the same. By doing so, they misplace the credit for their life, all that they have, and all they are able to do. This is what Assyria has done.

What shall we do? Let us acknowledge God's sovereignty over and through all others. Let us not over-fear men or under-fear God. Let us take every difficult providence as an opportunity to improve it by self-examination and repentance. Let our hearts give God all credit for any ability or success that we have, earthly, or spiritual. And let us remember that for every wrong done to us, the Lord will require a full accounting and exact a full vengeance.

What difficulties have you gone through? At whose earthly hands have they come? But Who has sovereignly ruled over all of it? What sorts of good intentions does He have toward you? How do you know?

Sample prayer: Lord, we praise You that You rule and overrule all things. Even the evil can only carry out the evil that they intend if You have intended it for good. And You will bring them all to complete justice. Forgive us for being so slow to receive your chastening or learn from it. Forgive us for the pride in which we have been impressed with ourselves, rather than with You. Leave us not like Ephraim or Assyria, but humble us before Yourself in Jesus Christ, in Whose Name we ask it; AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP130 "LORD, from the Depths to You I Cried" or TPH434 "A Debtor to Mercy Alone"

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Isaiah 9, verse 8, through 10 verse 19. These are God's words. The lord sent to word against jacob and it has fallen on israel. All the people will know Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria. Who say in pride and arrogance of heart, the bricks have fallen down, but we will rebel with hued stones.

The sycamores are cut down, but we will replace them with cedars. Therefore you always shall set up the adversaries of resin against them and spur his enemies on The syrians before and the Philistines behind they shall devour israel with an open mouth. For all this as anger is not turned away.

But as hand is stretched out, still For the people do not turn to him. Who strikes them nor do? They seek ye all the way of hosts. Therefore you halfway will cut off. Head and tail from israel, palm branch and bull rush and one day. The elder and the honorable is the head.

The prophet who teaches lies, he is the tale. For the leaders of this people, cause them to air. Those who are led by them. Are destroyed. Therefore, the lord will have no joy in their young men nor have mercy on their fatherless and widows For everyone as a hypocrite and an evil doer.

And every mouth speaks falling. For all this, his anger is not turned away. Put his hand is stretched out. Still For wickedness burns as the fire, it's a devour the briers and the thorns and kindle in the thickets of the forest. They shall mount up like rising smoke. Through the wrath of yahweh of hosts.

The land is burned up. When the people shall be as fuel for the fire. No, man shall spare his brother and he shall snatch on the right hand and be hungry. He shall devour on the left left hand, and not be satisfied. Every man shall eat the flesh of his own arm.

Manassas, sort of our Ephraim and Ephraim, and NASA. Together, they shall be against judah. For all this in his hand, his anger is not turned away. But his hand is

stretched out, still Low to those who decree unrighteous degrees. Who write misfortune, which they have prescribed 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. What will you do in the day of punishment? Than the desolation, which will come from afar. To whom will. You flee for help? And where will you leave your glory?

Without me, they saw 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 World do a series of the rod of my anger and the staff. And his hand is my indignation.

I will send him against an ungodly nation and against the people of my wrath. I will give him charged to see the spoil to take the prey and to tread them down like the Meijer of the streets. Yeah, 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 for Jesus, are not my princess. All together, kings is not counter like carcamish, does not come out. Like our fat is not some area like Damascus. That is my hand has found the kingdoms of the idols.

His carved images, excelled those of judea and Samaria. And as i have done to some area and her idols, shall I not do also To jerusalem and her idols. 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, 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 of robbed their treasuries.

So, i had put down the inhabitants, like a valiant man. 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, There was none who moved his wing nor moved his mouth with even a peep 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,

Shall the ax boast itself against him who chops with it? Or shelf, a saw exalt itself against him, who saw us with it, As if a rod could wield itself against those who lifted up, or as if a staff could lift up as if it were not wood. Therefore, the lord yahweh of hosts will send leanness among his fat ones.

And under his glory, he will kindle. Of burning, like the burning of a fire. So, the light of israel will be for a fire. And this holy one for a flame, it will burn and devour. His thorns, and his priors in one day. And it will consume the glory of his forest and of his fruitful field.

That soul and body. And they will be as when a sick man wastes away. And the rest of the trees of his forest will be. So few in number That a child? May write them. So far the reading of gods inspired and And they're into word. The section actually the section as a whole, Is from chapter 7 through chapter 16.

But we had the judgment against judah. In. Uh, chapter 7 verse 1. Through chapter nine, verse 7. And then we had the The judgment against israel and chapter 9, verse 8, through chapter 11, verse 16. And at the end of each of those sections and that opening portion of chapter 9, in the Judith section, which concludes the judas section, there's a prophecy.

Of the king, the forever king. Who is yahweh? There's a prophecy of king jesus. And then at the end of the israel section from 98 to 11 16, there's a prophecy of the forever king. And one of the things that happens in the israel section, is that the prophecy of the forever king is also for them.

The northern kingdom that has been cut off from the line of david. Now, for many generations, it's also a prophecy that how he would bring israel and judah back together that they would be restored. As they're brought under the son of david. And so, we are going to actually save from where we left off in chapter 10 verse 19.

We're going to say from 10 verse 20. Uh, to the end of chapter 11. For next week because it's talking about israel coming to zion. And, Uh, so we'll Deal with the reunion of the Of the tribes. And Uh, the messianic prophecy will take that by itself. So that leaves us with from nine verse 8, to chapter 10 verse 19 and the lord.

First pronouncing a judgment against israel. And then, Pronouncing judgment against the one through whom. He brings the judgment against israel. Because Assyria is being used to judge Israel. But a Syria themselves are wicked and arrogant. And so, the lord is going to devastate and humiliate them. Not only for the wickedness and arrogance.

In themselves. But, Because they're wickedness and arrogance is against the lord. And we'll see that in two different ways. So, first the judgment against the northern kingdom itself. You probably noticed as we were going through this refrain. Uh, in verse 12 of chapter 9, for all this as anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out.

Still Verse 17 for all this as anger is not turned away, but it's anger. But his hand is stretched out still in verse 21. For all this as anger is not turned away. But his hand is stretched out still and then chapter 10 and verse 4 for all this, his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out.

Still The lord brought many judgments. Upon the northern kingdom and rather than repent. They resorted to their own devices, both externally and internally. So there they resort to their own devices externally and they're really impressed with their plans. The lord has brought them some military ruins, some economic economic ruinment and their response.

You can see in verse 10 is The bricks have fallen down but we will rebuild hume stones. The sycamores are cut down but we will replace them with cedars. Their Um, With their motto is. Make ephraim great again. And build back better. About their pride in themselves and said their plan is actually to get in league with the syrians and with the philistines And with this coalition, they can defeat Assyria and then the then they can worry about Syria and philistia Uh but where they see themselves forming an alliance verse 12, the prophet sees them being devoured, you know, forming alliance with Syrians and philistians.

Uh philistines. In fact. That common knowledge runs down through history, even to this day. Uh, that you don't form alliances. Uh, with such nations. Uh, we like forming alliance with. Um, The soviets or chinese, or Really any of the wicked nations which currently is all of the nations. Um, There are others, who would Probably rightly say that about america.

Today. Uh, which only serves her an interest. So Where, where the northern kingdom sees themselves forming. An alliance in verse 12. Um, The syrians before and the listings behind. Isaiah saying they're going to devour. Israel, with an open mouth. Also, their civil and religious leaders. Who are in it for themselves and trying to manipulate others.

All they do is a vertically, they provoke god, all the more and to be. They set an example for how the rest of the people will be Uh, so whether it's the young men who are aspiring to these, Positions of rule and state and church or even the fatherless.

And the widow, all of them become two-faced hypocrites, all of them become evildoors By having those who are powerful, be ruthless and crowd in themselves. They make the entire nation. Offensive to god from top to bottom. The, the whole of them. And so, god's wrath continues. To burn against them.

And this language then of burning characterizes the section that starts in verse 18. With the burning of the wickedness. And god's wrath is going to burn up the land, where wickedness is spreading like a wildfire. And not only, Will they not be able? Get relief by their wickedness, as they turn on one another.

But even when, the only thing they have left is their own self to consume. They won't be able to get relief. And so, you have the It's a snatching on the right. Hand devouring, on the left hand, there still don't have helps. So what does he say? In verse 20, every mental eat the flush of his own arm.

And he's going to turn all of the people of god. Upon. Upon one. Another is going to give them over. To their wickedness so that they become one another's. Instruments of destruction. All of this, why? Because rather than, Um, trust in the lord, they trust in themselves and so he was going to say to whom will you flee for help Here, you fled to yourself, you've lead to Syria, you fleet to Philistia you lead to The the up and coming.

Cutthroat young men, you've you turned to all of these and they all continue to value because you should have repented before me. And when the lord is their enemy and they have nowhere else to turn, Where then will they be able to go? So, they didn't trust in the lord, they didn't.

Obey or serve the lord. Those who were put in. Positions of authority rather than ruling and judging. According to the lord's law, they decreed unrighteous Uh, decrease. Rather than being used by god to give justice to all rich and poor alike, they robbed the poor and the needy. Of his justice and they prayed upon widows and rob the fatherless.

Etc. So they didn't trust in the lord. They didn't consider their lives as an assignment to serve the lord. They didn't rule and live according to the law of the lord. And this is why. Uh, god's wrath. Continues. And doesn't turn away from them because they did not turn back to him and then there's a Syria.

And we mentioned that, there's Uh, two ways that Assyria Such as bright against god. One is. One that a series should have known but he is of course pressing the truth and unrighteousness like all. Unbelievers, do you? He's an ax, a saw, a rod, and a staff, and he's acting.

Um, as if he has Within himself to do. Um, all the things that he is proud of having done. Uh but this actually goes from being implicit, whatever we're proud. Our pride is against god because we're before his face. We don't have anything that we didn't receive And if you received everything, good.

As a gift from god, then why would you be proud instead of grateful? But then it goes from being implicit to actually being explicit when he lumps We all way of hosts the god of jerusalem in. With all the rest of the city's and their idols. That he's destroyed.

And not only now, is he failing to recognize that? He's just a man, he's just a creature. He's just breathing dirt. No more powerful in and of himself than a piece of wood. And he's not just failing to recognize that. Now, Declaring himself boasting. In his pride, even against The god of jerusalem.

And we will see. How that turns out for him in chapters 36 and 37? When you get the actual speeches of the rib shaker, On behalf of the king of this area. And when he attacks the god of israel, And says, don't let Hezekiah make you hope in yahweh.

Well. It will receive. As his pride deserves. God, opposes proud. But gives grace to the humble. Some of my dear children. When we find ourselves afflicted, let us turn to the lord. Let us use the opportunities that we have to examine ourselves and find those things. Of which we most need to repent.

Let us be careful against pride. But each of us in the place that we have in the home and in the church and community, Let's take it as an assignment from the lord to be done, according to his word. And not to advance ourselves. Or our own agenda. And let us.

Let us remember not only to. The trust in the lord and to turn to him and repentance. But also to give him. All of the honor. To give him all of the credit. For any good that comes out of us. Last, we provoke him to wrap. Like israel did or like Assyria did?

Let's pray. Finally, thank you for this portion of your word. We thank you. Most of all. That christ is, The king is acted perfectly towards you. And that you have given him to be ours. And that you have given us to be his Grant that by your spirit. We would trust in him.

Turn to him or pent of our sins. Serve him. And give him all the credit, all the glory. And do all the same with you. Our god. Whom we know in your song, our lord jesus. And through whom we ask this. Amen.