

Is. 9:8 ¶ The Lord sends a message against Jacob, And it falls on Israel.

What the Lord speaks in verses 8-12 is addressed specifically to the northern kingdom (Israel).

Isaiah 9:8 through 10:4 deals with the meaning of Isaiah's son's name mentioned in Isaiah 8:3, *Mahe-shalal-hash-baz*—"the spoil speeds and the prey hastens." We know from Isaiah 8:3-4 that *Mahe-shalal-hash-baz* was a symbolic name given to Isaiah's son to signify the destruction of Rezin and Pekah by Assyria. Because God's *hand is still stretched out* against His people (Isaiah 5:25; 9:12, 17, 21; 10:4), God's judgment will not subside until overwhelming darkness prevails over the northern kingdom. In Isaiah 9:8 through 10:4, Isaiah deals with the ever increasing intensity of this darkness.

Is. 9:9 And all the people know it, That is, Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria, Asserting in pride and in arrogance of heart

It is the pride and arrogance of the northern kingdom that will bring about the judgment addressed here. Note: The northern kingdom of Israel is made reference to as "*Ephraim*," as is validated by every chapter in the book of Hosea outside of chapters 1-3.

Is. 9:10 "The bricks have fallen down, But we will rebuild with smooth stones; The sycamores have been cut down, But we will replace them with cedars."

Israel's pride is made evident in that they considered themselves capable of repairing any damage directed their way.

Is. 9:11 Therefore the Lord raises against them adversaries from Rezin, And spurs their enemies on,

Because of the northern kingdom's pride and arrogance, God would raise enemies *from Rezin*, or *of Rezin* as the majority of translations render the phrase, pointing to *Assyria*, since *Assyria* overthrew *Rezin*, king of Aram (Syria), in 2Kings 16:9.

Is. 9:12 The Arameans on the east and the Philistines on the west; And they devour Israel with gaping jaws. In spite of all this His anger does not turn away, And His hand is still stretched out.

God would also raise up Israel's former allies, *The Arameans* (Syria) *and the Philistines*, as adversaries against the northern kingdom. They would become adversaries because they would join *Assyria* in coming against *Israel*. These nations would devour the northern kingdom *with gaping jaws*. Therefore, the devastation would be overwhelming. Still God's *anger does not turn away, And His hand is still stretched out*.

Again we see that when God spoke through a prophet, He would predict events in the near future to validate what He predicted concerning the distant future. The prophecy in verses 8-12 was most definitely a short-term prophecy fulfilled in Isaiah's day.

Is. 9:13 ¶ Yet the people do not turn back to Him who struck them, Nor do they seek the Lord of hosts.

Israel does not repent of her sin even though she experienced the devastation described in verses 8-12. Amazing! Instead, she stiffened her neck and refused to *seek the Lord of hosts*. Therefore, God would direct more punishment toward the northern kingdom.

Is. 9:14 So the Lord cuts off head and tail from Israel, Both palm branch and bulrush in a single day.

Because no repentance is seen in the northern kingdom, God will cut *off head* (the leader) as well as the *tail* (those who follow those who lead). The *palm branch* (the wealthy) as well as the *bulrush* (the poor) would both be subject to God's judgment.

Is. 9:15 The head is the elder and honorable man, And the prophet who teaches falsehood is the tail.

The *head* was *the elder and honorable man*, but *the prophet who taught falsehood* in the northern kingdom was *the tail*—because they were politically motivated in that they prophesied what the elders and honorable men wanted to hear rather than what God wanted proclaimed. Note: Later in Jewish history, during Jeremiah's day, *The prophets* in the southern kingdom of Judah did the same thing (Jeremiah 5:30-31; 8:10-11).

Is. 9:16 For those who guide this people are leading them astray; And those who are guided by them are brought to confusion.

This verse, along with the following verse, confirms that weak leadership in the northern kingdom brings ruin to all. Those who follow corrupt leadership *are brought to confusion*. It is for this reason that God desires that we follow after the *wise* (Proverbs 13:20). Even in the days of Jesus' earthly ministry it was the weak leadership of the nation that was responsible for the rejection of His Messiahship (Matthew 23:1-39).

Is. 9:17 Therefore the Lord does not take pleasure in their young men, Nor does He have pity on their orphans or their widows; For every one of them is godless and an evildoer, And every mouth is speaking foolishness. In spite of all this His anger does not turn away, And His hand is still stretched out.

The young men who were ill-informed by those in positions of authority failed to walk in a manner pleasing to the Lord. Consequently, several of them would die in the coming judgment, and God would have no *pity* on their wicked *orphans* and *widows*. Yet more judgment would come, for *His anger does not turn away, And His hand is still stretched out*.

Is. 9:18 ¶ For wickedness burns like a fire; It consumes briars and thorns; It even sets the thickets of the forest aflame, And they roll upward in a column of smoke.

More devastation results due to the *wickedness* (rebellion) of the people. This *wickedness burns like a fire* in the hearts and lives of all who partake of it. We see once again that the natural by-product of sin is self-destruction.

Is. 9:19 By the fury of the Lord of hosts the land is burned up, And the people are like fuel for the fire; No man spares his brother.

God's wrath results in the land being *burned* with *the people* serving as *fuel for the fire*. Consequently, civil war breaks out, for *No man spares his brother*.

Is. 9:20 And they slice off what is on the right hand but still are hungry, And they eat what is on the left hand but they are not satisfied; Each of them eats the flesh of his own arm.

Famine overtakes the land.

Is. 9:21 Manasseh devours Ephraim, and Ephraim Manasseh, And together they are against Judah. In spite of all this His anger does not turn away, And His hand is still stretched out.

Civil war results from the rebellion within the northern kingdom, for even though *Manasseh* and *Ephraim* were brothers (Genesis 46:20), they still devoured one another. The only thing that these two tribes (half tribes) had in common was their hatred for *Judah*. God's *anger* and *hand* of wrath *is still stretched out*.

Isaiah 10

Is. 10:1 Woe to those who enact evil statutes, And to those who constantly record unjust decisions,

Isaiah speaks judgment against those who enforce unjust laws within the northern kingdom.

Is. 10:2 So as to deprive the needy of justice, And rob the poor of My people of their rights, In order that widows may be their spoil, And that they may plunder the orphans.

The purpose of the unjust laws of verse 1 was to give the corrupt government officials the freedom to oppress the *needy*, the *widows*, and *the orphans*. The Law of Moses specifically prohibited this (Deuteronomy 24:14; Exodus 22:22). What cowards these leaders were, as will be confirmed by Isaiah 10:4!

Is. 10:3 Now what will you do in the day of punishment, And in the devastation which will come from afar? To whom will you flee for help? And where will you leave your wealth?

God, through Isaiah, asks the corrupt leaders three very specific questions. First, what would they do when the Assyrians invaded the land and left nothing but *punishment* and *devastation* in their wake? Obviously, they could do nothing! Second, *To whom* could they *flee for help* against the Assyrians? No one! These foolish leaders could not *flee* even to Judah because of their corrupt dealings with the southern kingdom. And third, what could they do to protect their *wealth*—*wealth* that had been amassed unjustly? Nothing!

Is. 10:4 Nothing remains but to crouch among the captives Or fall among the slain. In spite of all this His anger does not turn away, And His hand is still stretched out.

One thing is certain in life. The wicked most definitely will be humbled (Proverbs 29:1). Also read the following verses from Proverbs to taste what God says concerning the *wicked* (Proverbs 10:3, 16, 25, 30; 11:5; 12:21; 15:6; 24:16, 24-25; 25:5; 28:1; 29:2). These corrupt leaders will have no option *but to crouch among the captives Or fall among the slain* when the Assyrians invade the northern kingdom. The lack of truth and integrity in their character would make true cowards of them.

Notice that even though the punishment will be severe, God's *anger does not turn away, And His hand is still stretched out*. If you study Jewish history, you find that God's *hand remains stretched out*, for the Hebrew people, due to their special relationship with Jehovah (they are the *first-born* of the Father—Exodus 4:22), are receiving *Double for all their sins* (Isaiah 40:2; Jeremiah 17:18)—and will continue to do so until Jesus' Second Coming. In fact, compared to what the Jews will experience in the Tribulation, she has suffered little up to now! Can you imagine? Obviously, the *darkness* dealt with in Isaiah 8:22-9:2 will continue to increase until Immanuel, the light of the world and the glory of God, whose light was rejected at His First Coming, returns to save the believing remnant of the Jews at His Second Coming.

Is. 10:5 ¶ Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger And the staff in whose hands is My indignation,

Even though the Gentile Empire of Assyria would serve as both a *rod of God's anger* as well as a *staff of indignation*, in verses 5-34 we find that God will judge the Assyrians because they overstepped their boundaries in relation to the degree to which they punished the Hebrew people. In other words, even though God commissioned Assyria to punish the Jews, Assyria was more severe in its punishment than God desired. God would, therefore, judge Assyria. God will later judge the Babylonians for the same reason (Jeremiah 50:11-18) after they take the southern kingdom into captivity in 586 BC (2Kings 25:1-21; Jeremiah 52:1-30). Consider too what happened to Nazi Germany during WWII after attempting to exterminate every Jew on the planet. Zechariah 1:15 says it well:

“But I am very angry with the nations who are at ease; for while I was only a little angry, they furthered the disaster.”

No matter where you go in history, one principle remains consistent. God promises to *bless those* Gentile nations who *bless* the Jews, yet *curse* those Gentile nations who *curse* the Jews (Genesis 12:3). Listen up America!! In fact, listen up world!!

Note: Even though God's anger and wrath will be displayed against His people, a remnant will survive and return (Isaiah's son, *Shear-jashub*, whose name means, “a remnant will return,” is addresses in the notes associated with Isaiah 7:3, 16, and 8:18). This section (Isaiah 10:5-34) makes it very clear that God will never allow His people to become extinct. Read Jeremiah 31:35-37, along with Jeremiah 33:19-22, and you must agree that anyone would be out of their mind to think they could do away with the Jews.

From Isaiah 10:5, it is evident that Assyria was a *rod* and a *staff* in God's hand. In fact, He actually chose *Assyria* as the means through which He would punish the Hebrew people. We must realize, however, that even though God chose *Assyria* to come against the Jews, He did so while giving every person in that empire a free will to choose whatever he or she desired. Consequently, every leader in *Assyria* who made decisions did so with a free will, void of programming from God. But consider this. God, in His foreknowledge, understands how every person will respond in every situation of life. He can, therefore, place individuals in leadership roles (Romans 13:1) who will accomplish His purpose without removing their right of choice. What an amazing God we serve!

Is. 10:6 I send it against a godless nation And commission it against the people of My fury To capture booty and to seize plunder, And to trample them down like mud in the streets.

God commissioned Assyria to go *against His people, ...a godless nation* (the northern kingdom), for the purpose of punishing them. The Assyrians realized this, but in their attempt to overthrow

Judah (after they had overtaken the northern kingdom), Rabshakeh, an Assyrian, stated that the *Lord...approved* of their coming *against* Jerusalem (2 Kings 18:25). He was mistaken in one very important area. Even though God ordained that Assyria overthrow the northern kingdom, He had not sanctioned that Assyria overthrow the southern kingdom. There is a principle set in stone when it comes to reading and interpreting God's words: Regardless of what God has said, it must be interpreted in the context in which it was stated. Another principle is set in stone: Everything that anyone says concerning God's words must be taken through the Scriptures to determine if it is truly what He has stated. Rabshakeh was dead wrong, for he had taken God's words out of context and misstated His purpose for political advantage. We will see later that the Assyrians paid a huge price for overstepping God's boundaries and intentions.

Is. 10:7 Yet it does not so intend Nor does it plan so in its heart, But rather it is its purpose to destroy, And to cut off many nations.

Assyria exceeded what God desired in that, after overthrowing the northern kingdom, it not only came against the southern kingdom, but against a variety of Gentile *nations* as well (confirmed in verses 9-11).

It is apparent that Assyria failed to carry out God's perfect will in this matter. She overstepped her boundaries, proving that nations (as well as individuals within nations) can reject God's will by making decisions based on their own desires and wishes (read Matthew 23:37). This confirms that man is anything but a preprogrammed being incapable of choosing his own destiny.

Is. 10:8 For it says, "Are not my princes all kings?"

The king of Assyria makes reference to the *kings* that he has overthrown as "*my princes*"—his own *princes*.

Is. 10:9 "Is not Calno like Carchemish, Or Hamath like Arpad, Or Samaria like Damascus?"

The king of Assyria begins to list the cities he has conquered—*Calno, Carchemish, Hamath, Arpad, Samaria* (722 BC), and *Damascus* (732 BC) — significant cities indeed.

Is. 10:10 "As my hand has reached to the kingdoms of the idols, Whose graven images were greater than those of Jerusalem and Samaria,

The king of Assyria was unwise enough to believe that the gods (*graven images*) of the cities he had conquered were greater than the God of *Jerusalem and Samaria*. His improper theology will bring about his demise.

Is. 10:11 Shall I not do to Jerusalem and her images Just as I have done to Samaria and her idols?"

The variable the king of Assyria failed to consider was that Jehovah God, the true God, greater than any idol or so-called god, was Jerusalem's God—making Him greater than any of the *idols* (gods) of the cities the Assyrians had previously conquered. The king of Assyria also failed to realize that the northern kingdom, whose capital was Samaria, held to a corrupted form of Jehovah worship—the worship of the *golden calf* (1 Kings 12:28-29). It also promoted *Baal* worship (1 Kings 16:31-32). This caused God to ordain the overthrow of the northern kingdom by the Assyrians.

A righteous king also ruled in Jerusalem. *King Hezekiah*, a man of faith, had brought about major religious reforms as well as reinstated *temple* worship in the southern kingdom (2 Kings 16:20; 18:1-20:21; 2 Chronicles 29:1-32:33). Assyria, therefore, though capable of overthrowing the northern kingdom, could never overthrow the invisible God dwelling within the temple in Jerusalem.

Note: It is obvious that the king of Assyria incorrectly concluded that Jerusalem could be taken with the same ease as the northern kingdom because, in his mind at least, they worshipped the same God. As has been stated, Jehovah worship was present in the northern kingdom, but it was corrupted by the idolatry associated with the golden calf. The southern kingdom, Judah, was void of such idolatry in King Hezekiah's day. Assyria would find that this "variable" made Jerusalem a much tougher opponent, in fact, an impossible opponent. This improper theology eventually resulted in the loss of the Assyrian king's life (2 Kings 19:35-37), the *king* being *Sennacherib*.

Is. 10:12 ¶ So it will be that when the Lord has completed all His work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, He will say, "I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria and the pomp of his haughtiness."

Because of what *the king of Assyria* had done (as described in the previous verses—comparing God to the dumb idols of other nations), God would *punish* him for his *arrogant heart*. After all, it was God Himself who had caused *Assyria* to succeed in battle. God's punishment of *the king* (and the Assyrians) would not come about, however, until the Lord had finishing punishing *Jerusalem* for here past sins, a punishment that would result in the city walking in obedience.

Is. 10:13 For he has said, "By the power of my hand and by my wisdom I did this, For I have understanding; And I removed the boundaries of the peoples, And plundered their treasures, And like a mighty man I brought down their inhabitants,

The Assyrian king's arrogance and pride (which bled over into the Assyrian people) caused him to incorrectly conclude that his own *power...and...wisdom* had brought about his successes. As God's word confirms, calamity and *destruction* always overtake the prideful (Proverbs 16:18).

Is. 10:14 And my hand reached to the riches of the peoples like a nest, And as one gathers abandoned eggs, I gathered all the earth; And there was not one that flapped its wing or opened its beak or chirped."

The king of Assyria took much pride in the ease with which he had conquered nations, for it was much like taking *eggs* from a bird's *nest*.

Is. 10:15 ¶ Is the axe to boast itself over the one who chops with it? Is the saw to exalt itself over the one who wields it? That would be like a club wielding those who lift it, Or like a rod lifting him who is not wood.

Assyria was nothing more than a tool in God's hand. In other words, the power that allowed the tool to function originated with God—not the tool. As a tool never boasts over the man who uses it, Assyria should never boast about her position of dominance. In fact, take God out of the equation and Assyria was nothing more than a tool lying dormant, incapable of *wielding* itself. Oh that the nations of today might realize this principle and submit to the Creator!

Is. 10:16 Therefore the Lord, the God of hosts, will send a wasting disease among his stout warriors; And under his glory a fire will be kindled like a burning flame.

God would destroy the Assyrian armies, not by means of another army, but by *a wasting disease* commissioned by His own hand (as is confirmed by Isaiah 37:36-38).

Is. 10:17 And the light of Israel will become a fire and his Holy One a flame, And it will burn and devour his thorns and his briars in a single day.

God's wrath would *burn and devour* the Assyrian army *in a single day* (as is confirmed by Isaiah 37:36-38).

Is. 10:18 And He will destroy the glory of his forest and of his fruitful garden, both soul and body; And it will be as when a sick man wastes away.

The phrase, "*the glory of his forest and of his fruitful garden,*" points to the leaders of the Assyrian army. They (the commanders, officers, and etc.) would be destroyed in one day.

Is. 10:19 And the rest of the trees of his forest will be so small in number That a child could write them down.

Such a large portion of the Assyrian army would be destroyed *That a child write...down* the names of those who remain.