Session 3 The Forerunner Message in Isaiah 9-10

1. understanding The context of Isaiah 9-10

*Turn to Isaiah 9. [Mike prays.] Well, this is our third session we are going to cover by the grace of God. Covering the full 150 chapters is going to take over three years, so I want to encourage you to be patient and to be on a marathon pace. What I mean by “be patient,” be patient with yourself in grasping the storyline, because if you are new to the book of Isaiah, which many people are, it takes a little bit of time to get familiar with some of the key fundamental points. Once you get familiar with it, the whole picture comes together.*

*I want to assure you it is not that hard, but at first it is like the little boy or girl at an elementary school. They are learning addition and subtraction so eventually they are going to be able to do multiplication. So the little guy is figuring out what is nine plus thirteen? He is thinking, “Ugh! why do I need to know that?” Well, eventually you are going to want to know what nine times thirteen is. “Like, I will never know that!” Yeah, you will, you really will.*

*The idea is, even having studied this, it can always be a bit foggy and fuzzy and unclear. “Like what? I can’t get the dates together, can’t get the storyline.” Once it starts coming together, and it takes time, the way this really works is when you can sit back and think about the details without looking at the notes. I do not mean to test yourselves; that is not my point. When I can sit back and think through these chapters, and I can move around the parts in my mind, then it starts connecting, but it takes a while to get there. So be patient with yourself.*

*Now you will notice the title is the Forerunner Message in Isaiah 9-10. Our goal is not to tear apart every verse in Isaiah, but to study with an eye on what the Holy Spirit will be emphasizing from this passage in the end-time church. We want to constantly be asking, “Holy Spirit, what are You emphasizing?” So we are looking at the details of Isaiah because we want to get the storyline and the future clear.*

*Not all the details of Isaiah have to do with the end-time storyline, but more of them have to do with it than a lot of people think. Much of the sin, much of the judgment, much of the supernatural activity of deliverance that happened in Isaiah’s day in part is going to happen in fullness at the end of the age, not just in Israel, but in the nations as well. The Lord is saying, as it were, “That is My storyline. That is My script. I put it in the Book. Study the details and you will see a familiar replay of this on a global level.”*

*So when I study these chapters, I feel the relevance because, though I am studying the sin in Israel’s day and how God felt about it, the Lord says, “I never change.” That is, “This is how I will feel in the end of the age as well when certain things happen, good or bad.”*

*Let’s look at the context for understanding Isaiah 9-10. Again, in a short session like on these Friday nights we cannot cover all the details. So my goal is to stir you up on these two chapters so that you will study them more in your free time.*

* 1. Isaiah 9-11 is similar to Isaiah 2-4. Each passage has three parts—first, a promise about Jesus’ millennial glory (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 glory (4:2-6; 11:1-16). The sin, judgment, and supernatural activity seen in history in such passages will be seen again in the end times yet on a global basis.

*First I want to point out that Isaiah 9-11 is one unit, very similar to what we just covered in Isaiah 2-4. Isaiah 2-4 was one unit. So Isaiah 9-11 is very similar; it is parallel in structure to Isaiah 2-4. There are three parts in each one of those passages.*

*First, there is a promise of Jesus in the millennial kingdom in glory. Then there is a warning of judgment with a description of sin. Then it is bookended at the other end by the third part with a promise of glory, of Jesus in the millennial kingdom. So it is glory, warning, glory. It is the same pattern as it was in Isaiah 2-4. I want you to know that because I want you to grasp the book. I want you to be able to feel like, “Hey, I am getting this book,” even though it will take a little bit of time for that to happen.*

* 1. 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 (such passages teach and warn future generations)  
     10:1-4 God’s warning to Judah to learn from the crisis in Israel  
     10:5-19 God chose Assyria as His rod and then He judged them  
     10:20-27 The salvation of a remnant (at various times in history and at the end of the age)   
     10:28-34 The Assyrian army approaches Jerusalem and is destroyed   
     11:1-16 The reign of the righteous King

*A quick outline for tonight: God sends a great light in the person of the coming King. He is wonderful, counselor. He sends the promise of the great light to the people of Galilee when they are in a time of military crisis. That is the point I want you to grasp. It is when they are in a military crisis that He says, as it were, “Hey, I want you to process the crisis by knowing the end of the story. A King is coming, and He is going to reverse it all. You are going to see it in your geographic area.”*

*Then the second part of Isaiah 9-11 is where God spells out His judgment on sinful Israel. It had its very powerful meaning back in Isaiah’s day. It is recorded in the Word as a warning for history. Today it is a warning for Israel and for the Gentile nations as well, because God never changes. He might say, “If that bothered Me then, it bothers Me now.” One thing that I am noticing, and I am sure all of us are, is that the Church and the world are getting more and more slack and easy related to morals and standards. The Lord would say, “My Book does not change.” So when I read these chapters of the sin, I am just realigning myself. This really does matter that we hold the line on issues.*

*So He is warning Israel, but He is really telling the rest of history to take the warning. Then He goes right to Judah and says, “I want you warned by what I warned Israel because, if I did it to Israel, I will do it to you. If I brought judgment to them for these things and I do not change, if you do the same things they did, the judgment will come on you.”*

*Then he highlights Assyria. Assyria was the very big and cruel world empire that covered much of the Middle East. I want you all to get that clearly. Assyria was the giant superpower of the day. It was for 300 years at that time. It was the big superpower that nobody could challenge, a really wicked, cruel nation. God said, “I am going to use that wicked nation to discipline My people.”*

*That is a very offensive thought to a secular mind and even to a religious mind. “How could You use an evil dictator and an evil nation to discipline Your people?”*

*The Lord might say, “I wake up My people, and I use them, and then I discipline the evil dictator. I use him and then I discipline him, but I do use him.” That is rather politically incorrect and disturbing. It is an idea we do not like, but the ultimate expression is that God is going to raise up the Antichrist, far more wicked than Adolph Hitler, far more wicked than Stalin, the most evil and powerful man in human history. God might say, “I raised him up. I am using him, and then I will destroy him when I am done with him. I am going to purify the Church, Israel, and the nations through his evil being unleashed, though with My boundaries on it. I will give him some big boundaries to unleash his evil as the optimum environment to bring love forth in the earth.”*

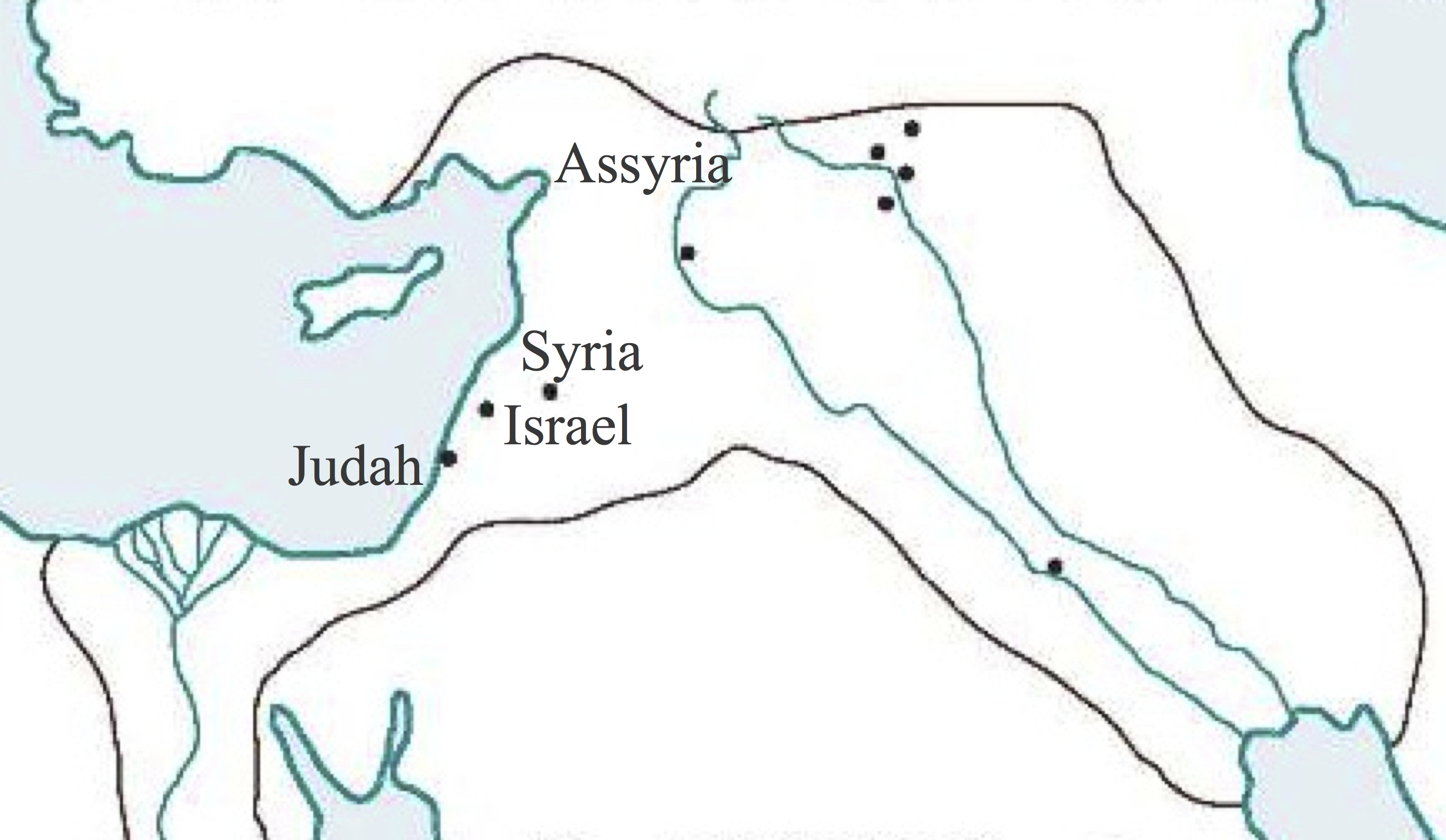
*It is like, “What?” Only the Wonderful Counselor has the wisdom to do that. Only the wisdom of that Counselor, and it is wonderful when the story is understood.*

* 1. ***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.

*Now we are going to study Old Testament 101. Most of you know this, but, if you do not know this, you have to know this to make sense of the prophets. This is Old Testament 101. There was a civil war back in the Old Testament in Israel. The north and the south had a big war. Actually the hostility lasted 200 years, the north and the south. It was one generation after King David died. The north was called Israel. The south was called Judah.*

*Now when David was king, a generation earlier, they were just Israel, both together. When they had the division, Israel became the north, and they were by far the most sinful. They were never faithful to the Lord. They became a byword of what wickedness was. God through the prophets was always telling Judah—that is down where Jerusalem is, the household of David—“Do not be like Israel.” So you have to know this point because when you are reading it Israel and Judah are going back and forth because they were arch enemies and were so for most of 200 years. You have to know that.*

* 1. ***Assyrians***: The dominant 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).



*Then we have the Assyrians. I mentioned that they were the dominant empire in the Middle East. I am going to go ahead and put the PowerPoint slide up. I gave you a little map there. I want you to see this. It’s pretty easy. Assyria is the whole outlined area; I mean they were really big. There was nobody like them. Then you see Judah is in the south, and Israel is a separate nation from Judah. As for Judah, you know Jesus is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Judah is a tribe. Israel are the ten tribes. So Israel is just above Judah, and Syria is just above Israel.*

*Now Syria and Israel got together in a wicked coalition. They said to Judah, “You are going to do what we want or we are going to attack you.” They attacked Judah. They killed 120,000 people in one day when they attacked Judah. We will get to that in a little bit. I want you to grasp this.*

*So the Assyrian empire was the chief empire at that time for about 300 years. Then Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon defeated them. Then the Babylonian Empire ruled the general same area, not exactly, but mostly the same area. They were the superpower for a few years. Then Cyrus from Persia, or modern-day Iran, beat Babylon, same general area. Then Persia was the world empire for a couple hundred years, then Greece, and then Rome. I gave you just the layout here, because it is the same general area. Just every couple hundred years there was a new chief empire that was the big guy on the block in the Middle East. If you know that order when you are reading the prophets, you know which one you are interfacing with.*

* 1. 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.

*Isaiah 9-10 alludes to an escalating crisis. It is a crisis that is real, and it gets worse and worse and worse. That is what Isaiah is wanting them to know. That escalating crisis is a snapshot as well of the nations at the end of the age. It had real fulfillment in Isaiah’s day, but it was also pointing at a generation that would be the ultimate time when sin would come to fullness, God’s judgment would come to fullness, cruelty would come to fullness, the power of God would come to fullness.*

*So most of these snapshots in Isaiah are pointing to a time where it will be global fulfilment at the end of the age. So we are studying these details knowing that they were fulfilled in their day but they were pointing to a bigger, more dramatic time, the generation in which the Lord would transition planet earth to the age to come.*

*The only people in the earth who know the great king’s storyline are people that read the Bible. He would say, “The storyline is there. I gave lots of snapshots in the prophets of what it is like. Study them and get familiar.” Born-again believers are the only people in the earth that read their Bibles. There is a billion of us, but we need to study this masterplan to get clarity.*

*Again, when the parts start coming together, we can think about them without looking at our notes all the time, though I still have to look at my notes at various chapters. When I can think about them, then it really comes to together, but it takes a little bit of time to get that going.*

* + 1. In 734 BC, Israel in a coalition with Syria attacked Judah killing 120,000 (2 Chr. 28:6).

6For 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)

*Well, it was a twofold military crisis going on in the day that Isaiah was talking about. It was a twofold crisis. First, Syria and Israel. Look at the map. Remember Syria and Israel are right next door to each other. They are just above Judah. They became partners in crime. They did not like each other at all, just like today. Syria and Israel were archenemies. They became partners in crime. They went after and attacked Judah. One of the greatest slaughters in the history of Israel happened when that happened in 735 BC. 120,000 soldiers in Judah were killed in one day. I mean there were very few days in history that would have that kind of crisis. That is crisis number one going on in Judah, down in the south where the King Ahaz and Isaiah are, down in the south in Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the capital of Judah down in the south. This crisis was bigger than life.*

* + 1. In 733 BC, the Assyrian Empire invaded the northern Kingdom of Israel. In 721 BC, Assyria invaded Israel again, capturing her capital city Samaria and enslaving her people.

*Well, that was not the only crisis going on. Up north, Assyria, the big empire, came after Israel and Syria. Assyria was not the same as Syria. Assyria was an empire. It does not exist anymore, but it did for some hundreds of years. Assyria, the big empire, came after the nation of Syria and the nation of Israel who were partners in crime. I mean they had a couple waves of devastating invasion. So the people who lived in the land down south had 120,000 soldiers killed in one day. They had relatives twenty miles, forty miles, up north. I mean the families were all tied together, but they were in a civil war. And, they were getting beat up by Assyria. So there was blood and crisis and military conflict at every turn.*

*Now one thing that you will notice when you read these prophetic chapters is that military crisis is central to the conflicts, almost every time, not every time, but almost every time. At the end of the age, military crisis will be so much a part of the global crisis, though you do not hear so much about it. You know, you have that one verse, “wars and rumors of wars.” People think, “Okay, I got that down.” Well, it is a big part of God’s end-time plan, allowing evil to express itself with tremendous military crisis. There is bloodshed, economic problems, fear, and all kinds of things that go with that.*

*Revelation 6:4 talks about a world war. In Revelation 19, all the nations of the earth bring their armies together in Jerusalem. It is a military conflict in which the second coming storyline is told. It is important for us to understand that so we are prepared. It is not just, “Any minute now, Jesus is coming and we are done. The poor earth, well, praise God! You guys should have believed in Jesus! We are out of here.”*

*No, there is going to be intense, intense strife and violence and conflict escalating more and more as the nations get closer to Lord’s return. The godly, the righteous, and the unrighteous will all be confronted with it. There is just not a group that is going to avoid all of it. So Isaiah 9-10 is Isaiah saying to the remnant, “Let me tell you how to process this.”*

*So we look at how they processed it in Isaiah’s day, how Isaiah the prophet taught his disciples, because that is the pattern of how we should process it at the end of the age and how to teach people to process it. So Isaiah 9 and 10 are really key to that. I have a bit more of this on the notes here.*

1. God will send a great light to restore rebellious Israel (Isa. 9:1-7)
   1. 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 the face of the escalating military crisis. This led to disillusionment and rejection of political leaders and God. 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).

21They will pass through it hard-pressed…will be enraged and curse their king and their God… 22They will…see trouble and darkness, gloom of anguish; and they will be driven into darkness. (Isa. 8:21-22)

*It starts in Isaiah 9:1-7: God is going to send a great light. The part you have to grasp is that He is going to send the light. He is giving that promise to a geographic area in a very intense military crisis. One that is escalating. It has several rounds, several installments, that keep intensifying in this military crisis. When the military crisis increases, so does the economic crisis, then the food crisis, then the social dynamics, then the political dynamics. Everything is connected when there is a military crisis like that.*

*Well, let’s go to Isaiah 9:1. Actually, before we look at that, let’s go back two verses, to the two verses right before Isaiah 9:1. The commentators debate if those two verses belong with Isaiah 9:1. You cannot understand Isaiah 9:1 if you do not know the two verses before it. Okay, we will go back two verses. Isaiah 8:21-22, the two verses before Isaiah 9:1.*

*“They will pass through it…” You can read the whole text on your own. It is the time of escalating military crisis up in the north. It is up north of Judah; it is in Israel, the northern kingdom. It is the northern part of the northern kingdom, up in Galilee. Galilee is the northern part of the land. “They will pass through it…” “It” is the military crisis that is escalating. I have already given you a few of the dates there, not that you could grasp them at one glance. You know, you get the dates, look at them, and put them together. There are only a couple of them. The first Assyrian attacks at one level were in 733 BC. Then twelve years later they came at a devastating level to the group up in the north in the region of Galilee.*

*Now here is what happens in Isaiah 9:21. Here is Isaiah saying that they will pass through this thing, this season, hard-pressed. Here is the problem. They are going to end up enraged, and they are going to curse the political leaders, and they are going to curse God. They are going to get so angry in that crisis, the “people of God,” because they do not know what is going on. Of course they are living in compromise up north.*

*Verse 22, “They will see trouble…” They will see the darkness. The military crisis will increase. Assyria, the big, evil empire, will hit them hard. Well, they just hit Judah, and now Assyria is hitting them. They will see gloom, they will see anguish, and they will be driven into darkness. It means circumstantially and socially, the darkness of that gloom of war. Economically and emotionally, just social chaos is going to come. So that is the beginning of it.*

*They end up disillusioned, very angry and disillusioned. These are technically “the people of God,” though again they are walking in compromise. They do not have an up-to-date, real relationship with the Lord, but they have a religious heritage.*

*Isaiah is telling his disciples—because he has some right there in Isaiah 8, right before Isaiah 9 the chapter we are at. He is telling his disciples—“Hey, we are going to study the Word, we are going to know what God says, and we are going to view the crisis with a different perspective than the people in the north are. We are going to see what God sees about the future, not just what is being told by the broadcasters on the news stations. We are going to see God’s view.” So that is part of the exhortation here. We have to see what Isaiah taught his disciples about this great crisis.*

* 1. God will send a great light in the person of a coming King—Jesus (9:1-7).

1Nevertheless the gloom will not be [remain] on 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…2The 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)

*Okay, now we are back in Isaiah 9:1. He says, “Nevertheless…” What do you mean, nevertheless? What? The verse before, “They are going to see trouble, gloom, anguish, darkness.” “Nevertheless”—in the context of this confusion and crisis—thus says the Lord, talking to the people up in Galilee, this compromising part of the nation: the gloom will not stay there. The gloom is going to lift. This is a fantastic promise.*

*They were maybe saying, “Yeah, right, whatever. You know, it is easy for you to say the gloom is going to lift.”*

*Isaiah says, “Thus says the Lord: the gloom will not be upon you.” Which means it will not stay. You are not going to be in this crisis forever. God is disciplining you because God has a future for you. God has a plan to fill the earth with glory and love, and He wants you to be a part of it. The gloom will not be there upon her who is distressed. They were distressed in the military sense and a social sense.*

*At first God “lightly esteemed the land of Zebulun and Naphtali.” So the land of Zebulun and Naphtali is the northern part; that is the Galilee region. That is the north part of the north kingdom. You know the north kingdom is called the kingdom of Israel. The south kingdom is called Judah. So Zebulun and Naphtali are in the Sea of Galilee area. They were really being hammered by Assyria, the big, evil world empire. At least to them it was a world empire. We know it was just the Middle East; it covered most of the Middle East.*

*Notice here—I want you to catch this—at first God “lightly esteemed them, and then afterwards He heavily oppressed them.” I have that in the notes. Here is that what happened. Down later in the notes, I have it there. Round one, at first Syria came in 733 BC and really troubled them. When the Lord says, “I did not highly esteem you,” it basically meant, “I allowed the trouble to come. I took some of My protection off you. Then twelve years later I really let it get heavy when Assyria came.” Assyria came and actually wiped out the northern tribes, the northern kingdom, the ten tribes of Israel, wiped them out. You have heard the ten tribes of Israel were scattered to the nations. Here it is 2,700 years later, and we still do not know where they are.*

*That is what the Lord meant when He said, “and afterwards I am going to get heavy-handed up in the north, but that is not the end of the story because I am going to release a supernatural light of glory in the very place where the sin and the compromise were the worst and the judgment was the most severe. I am going to release the light of the glory of God.”*

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

*Now it says in verse 2, “The people who walked in darkness”—that is the people in Galilee, up in Naphtali and Zebulun, right around the Sea of Galilee—“they have seen a great light.” Isaiah wrote it like it was in the past tense. He was writing this about 700 BC. He was writing this some 700 years before Christ. He was writing it in that prophetic certainty, “They have seen it.” It was that sure that it was coming. He was forecasting that the most brutalized, despised, burned-out zone was going to be surprised by the glory of God. The mercy of God is bigger than their sin, and it is bigger than the burned-out district of the world that they are a part of. He has a word of restoration. God is going to redeem the whole thing. “Those who dwelled in the land of the shadow of death”—that is the same people up there in Galilee region—“upon them a great light is going to shine.”*

* 1. 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).

13…[Jesus] dwelt in Capernaum…in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, 14that it might be fulfilled…saying…16The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light….” (Mt. 4:13-16)

1Arise, shine; for your light has come...2For 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)

*Now we know that the people of Galilee were of Zebulun and Naphtali, those two tribes. Those are two of the twelve tribes of Jacob–Naphtali and Zebulun. Those were the ones right next to the Sea of Galilee. That was where they lived. They were very compromising, so under severe judgment.*

*We know that 700 years after Isaiah—just think of Isaiah as 700 BC. Actually he prophesied for about fifty years so say 700 to 750 if you just want to ballpark the numbers—so 700 years after this prophesy Jesus of Nazareth goes up to Naphtali and Zebulun, this burnt-over district that had judgment—I mean it had all kinds of a history of despair—and He made it His headquarters. That is remarkable that He would choose them instead of Jerusalem. Now it ends up they rejected Him at the end. He had some really strong words of judgment for them at the end of His ministry because they rejected Him.*

*Even when Jesus went there, it was not the complete fulfillment of this passage. Jesus was giving them an installment, a down payment, because the fullness of this passage will be when the glory of God comes to Israel, even up in the northern region. It is going to be the glory of Jesus at the second coming.*

*Now look at Isaiah 60, describing the glory when Jesus comes back as the great King, the Wonderful Counselor, the Prince of Peace. Isaiah 60, the glory of God—the light of God—will rest not just on Zebulun and Naphtali, but on the whole land.*

*So when Isaiah wrote Isaiah 60 I bet he thought, “Oh man, this is awesome! Lord, I wish You would have told me this back when I was prophesying in Isaiah 9.” I am assuming he got this a few years later, though I have no way of knowing.*

*I am going to ask when I meet him in the resurrection, “Hey, did you have Isaiah 60 yet when you wrote Isaiah 9? Were you blown away and said, ‘Oh my goodness! If I would have known that, I would have really preached it hard.’”*

* 1. ***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.
  2. Isaiah referred to two periods of intense trouble seen in the 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 deport the people as slaves.
  3. Isaiah 9:3-5 described three aspects to this glorious promise—the nation of Israel will be multiplied, restored in their relationship with the Lord (rejoicing before Him), and free from the yoke of military hostility. Thus, a new world order will be established as a result of the birth of the King (9:6-7).

3You 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. 4For You have broken the yoke of his burden and…the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian. 5For 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)

*So he gives them the big picture view of what is going to happen. Now here is the problem we have with this big picture view of Isaiah. We like the big picture view, kind of. I mean we like that it exists, but we think a real helpful view is “The glory is coming this year. Not in 2,700 years, it is this year. The glory is going to make my life strong now.”*

*Isaiah would say, “Well, that happens sometimes. If you know the divine narrative, and you are part of the people of God, the long-term victory is yours forever. You are just not anchored in the big story of who you are and what family you are a part of.” Now Isaiah was such that when he saw the big picture, even though his own generation was troubled, he was excited because he saw himself as part of the covenant community eternally. So whatever gain in victory happened, even years down the road, was his forever. He anchored himself into that.*

*Some folks, particularly Westerners, are saying, “No, we want glory now or it does not count.”*

*The Lord might say, “Well, no, really it does count. You just do not see clearly.”*

*You have to see it the way Isaiah saw it and then you will be encouraged even when facing trouble and turbulence and military crisis in the future knowing it is only for a minute. The eternal glory that you are a part of and the family you are a part of it really is your story and it is your inheritance. It takes a while for individual believers to shift into that place where they see themselves in that larger storyline. Until they do, they think, “Well, pie-in-the-sky glory down the road! Who cares?”*

*The Lord would say, “Of course you care! You just do not know who you are.”*

*Let’s move on to Isaiah 9:3. Now Isaiah gives three details that actually only come to fullness at the end of the age. These details happened a little bit in past history, but they only come together, all of them, one time. So this clearly has its ultimate fulfillment when the Lord returns. Although a lot of these promises have short-term installments and partial fulfillments along the way, they are pointing to the grand, glorious story. Again Isaiah is saying that if you see that story you will be able to endure the crisis with a very, very different perspective. If you do not see that story, then you are going to be filled with gloom and you are going to be enraged at God, enraged at the King, and filled with despair because you see no hope, you see no bigger storyline than the one right in front of you in your own small, little world.*

* + 1. ***Multiplied the nation***: Israel will be multiplied numerically, financially, emotionally, etc.

*So in verse three, he is talking to the Lord, and he says, “You have multiplied the nation.” There is coming a time where the nation of Israel will be greatly multiplied supernaturally. It is going to increase their joy.*

* + 1. ***Rejoice before You***: Israel will one day be fully restored in their relationship with the Lord. This includes Israel’s national salvation (Rom. 11:26). Israel’s rejoicing is connected and compared to the joy of an abundant harvest and a military victory where they divide the spoil.

*Number two detail, they are going to rejoice before the Lord. The whole nation will have a vibrant relationship with the Lord where they as a nation—even up in the north, in the burned-out district in the north—are going to be rejoicing in the Lord which we find in verse 3. We find in verse 6 the Lord is that Child who is born and that Son who is given. His name is Jesus. This is not just God in general. They are going to be rejoicing in Jesus of Nazareth.*

* + 1. ***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.”

*Verse 4, the third detail. These things are really going to happen. They are not going to happen just to Israel, because what happens to Israel is a picture of what is going to be happening globally. Again we look, and we want to see the whole story. We want to catch the Israel story really clearly. We want to see the global story, because these sorts of things will be happening in Asia and Africa and Latin America, the islands of the earth. So we are taking a step back; we are looking at the storyline, grasping details and hints from the only One who knows the storyline and that is the King Himself.*

*Here is the third detail, verse 4. First, one, God multiplies the nation. Number two, they rejoice before the Lord. This is Israel with a vibrant relationship with Jesus. Number three, they have broken the yoke of the burden of the military oppressors. Now it is interesting. Not only are they going to break the yoke, but that means no more military attack or oppression ever again, ever again. The yoke is broken forever. This has not happened yet. This is yet future.*

*It is as in the day of Midian. That was the battle of Gideon and Midian, if you can remember those two together. Gideon, Judges 6 -7, fantastic story. There are the Midianites with this big army. Gideon has thousands in his army. God says, “Your army is too big. I want your army small.”*

*Gideon thinks, “What are You talking about?”*

*At the end of the story, the Lord says, “I want your army to be 300 men. They can be hundreds of thousands, it does not matter. I want it to be against all odds. I want you to go to battle with them.”*

*Gideon thinks, “Go to battle?”*

*He says, “Yeah, just go to battle, blow your trumpet, and everybody shout. That is all you have to do. Blow your trumpet and shout. Take your little pitcher with your little fire in it and just wave your little fire stick up there or whatever. You do that, and I will supernaturally destroy an army, a vast army. It is going to be a supernatural victory against all odds.”*

*So that is what verse 4 is telling us: that, Israel, you are going to break the yoke of military oppressors. It is going to happen in the way it happened with Gideon. Against all odds, suddenly in one day, by the supernatural power of God. When it is a-thousand-to-one odds against you, it is the battle of Midian. That is the storyline of where we are going.*

*So even when we see the Antichrist rise up as he comes, as he comes in great power, nations are trembling, the believing community in the earth—both Jews and Gentiles—can say it is going to be like the battle of Midian. The Lord is going to come as the greater Gideon and supernaturally against all odds He is going to triumph over the evil one like the battle of Midian. So no matter how intense it gets, this is our storyline. This is our grid right here. It is the battle of Gideon, the battle of Midian that is yet in the future. That is how God is going to intervene and stop the Antichrist.*

* + 1. ***Warrior’s sandals***: The burning of military boots and the clothes of defeated soldiers speaks of a final victory wheremilitary equipment is no longer needed because war ceases (Isa. 2:4).

*Verse 5, it is going to be such a successful route when the Lord does this against-all-odds victory that they are going to burn all the military equipment because there is no use for it, there is no need for it because war will be over then. So that is the good news. Verse 5 basically means the time is coming when war on planet earth, well, it is talking about Israel, but we know war on planet earth is going to be over.*

*Verse 5 is talking about war being over. Verse 4 is talking about how against all odds the people of God are going to be delivered by the greater Gideon, the supernatural Jesus against the vast armies. He wins with no problem. I mean, they just blew a trumpet; that is all they had to do. As we know from the Scripture, all Jesus is going to do is blow on the Antichrist and He will destroy him.*

* 1. The promises described in 9:2-5 depend on the coming of a King to rule the earth (9:6-7).   
     The King would be a “Child who is born” (humanity) and a “Son being given” (deity; Ps. 2:8).

6For 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. 7Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end…forever. (Isa. 9:6-7)

*Now the promises we have just looked at in Isaiah 9: Verse 2, a great light is coming. Verse 3, the land is going to multiply and they are going to rejoice in the Lord. Verse 4, against all odds as in the battle of Gideon, the battle of Midian, God is going to triumph. Verse 5, all the military equipment is going to be thrown away and cast aside because it is not necessary, as there is no more war. How are those glorious promises going to happen?*

*Verse 6, Isaiah says, “I have been waiting to tell you.” He says, “It is the most unlikely way! A Child is going to be born. Down south in Judah, in the southern kingdom, a Son will be given. The government will be on this Child.” Meaning the authority to solve the problem of all the military conflict, all of the peace problems, all the natural resources, all the supply of food and agriculture and everything the government to solve, it is all going to be on the shoulders of this Boy.*

*When it says “a Child is born”—see it is one thing for God to come to earth. You know a lot of religions have a supernatural being or an angel coming down or something like this. So in the ancient mindset they had the idea of the gods coming to earth—Isaiah said, “No, He is going to be born as a baby. He is going to be human.”*

*They are thinking, “Born? I mean we can bear the idea of God coming down, but not conceived in a womb. Are you kidding me?”*

*Fully human, yet He is the Psalm-2-promised Son at the Father’s right hand. He is the Son. As well, He is fully God with the government, the authority, and the responsibility to solve all the problems in the earth so that there is no more war. There is multiplication. The nations are rejoicing in the Lord, with Israel at the center of it, in His leadership. Now here we have this on all the Christmas cards: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Beloved, I want you to understand these are titles related to Jesus’ government in the end-time conflict, solving all the problems, and that is the idea. Now He is wonderful all through history, but He is going to be seen as awesome to the nations. You know the passage we looked at last week: He will be seen as beautiful or wonderful. It will absolutely strike wonder in everybody’s hearts the ways that He solves the problems of the earth when He comes.*

*Well, He is not only wonderful, just magnificent, doing supernatural things, He is also Counselor. His wisdom, every decision He makes is perfect. He is mighty God. He has got the power, the Genesis 1 power, to back up every one of His plans that He has as a Counselor. He manifests the heart of the Father. He is such a perfect representation of the Father’s tenderness, the Father’s desire for relationship, the Father’s closeness. He is going to bring peace and safety in all of His decisions. That is the Man who is coming.*

*He is going to fulfill all the promises in verse 2-5: the glory of the light, the nation being multiplied and rejoicing in the Lord, the battle of Midian driving out the enemy, and the yoke of the enemy being broken and thrown away forever.*

* + 1. ***His Name***: His names express the nature of His person, and reign. He is *“Wonderful,”* or one who fills His people with wonder and awe. He is *“the Counselor”* who possesses wisdom to restore the nations. He is *“Mighty God”* who possess infinite power to fulfill all of His plans. 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.
    2. ***Government***: The King has the power and responsibility to heal the nations, remove sin and darkness from the planet, and fill the earth with God’s glory in a way which expresses that He is wonderful, wise, powerful, tender, and peace-loving. Ask the Lord for grace to communicate these things about Jesus in context to making known His end-time plans to people who are fearful, offended, confused, or skeptical in context to His end-time government or leadership.
    3. ***Increase***: Jesus’ government will progressively increase (9:7). Social improvements will be progressive. Infrastructure will be established in every sphere of society in each city.

1. God’s judgment on sinful Israel (Isa. 9:8-21)
   1. Isaiah gave a message describing God’s judgment on the pride and oppression in Israel (9:8-21).   
      The Lord had already “sent” His warnings of judgment to Israel through Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah from 760 BC onwards. Everyone in Israel knew of these warnings and thus was responsible.

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

*So now we have the really cool part of the story. I mean it is like, “Whoa!” We are going to be very brief on this part, but I am giving you the kind-of-broad strokes. Again you want to study it, not that you could study it all between now and next week. You are just saying, “Note to self: I am going to make some time to study this,” because, again, the end-time script is embodied in these little “cameo shots” through history. You put them all together and you have a far clearer script at the end.*

*Again our goal is not to have to look at every point and ask, “Now how?” That is good, and I know all about that. I have lived in that, and I still live in that season. It really works, though, when you can close your eyes because you are familiar with the information, and you can say, “Holy Spirit, how does this work in here?” You are talking to the Lord while you are in worship, and the pieces start coming together. Your heart gets encouraged. Then just layers and layers of dullness and unbelief get exposed. Then we are empowered, and then this storyline gets in us. Then, when the trouble happens, we actually are anchored because the storyline is not just a mental thing; it got into us somehow because we thought it through and we meditated on it and we searched it out.*

*I think that is one of the reasons that the Lord put it all throughout the Bible. He was saying, as it were, “I do not want you to have a quick, kind-of-drive-by look at it. I want you to search it out because, if you search it out, it is going to mark you. If it marks you, it is going to stabilize you in pressure. You are going to have understanding if it marks you. I do not want you to get it in one minute. I want you to wrestle with it. I want you to think on it. I will give it to you, but you must come after it. In that process it is going to mark you, and then it will stabilize you, and you will stabilize others with understanding and confidence and faith.”*

*Well, Isaiah goes on about His judgment on Israel. Now he is back to the group up north, the northern kingdom. The Lord says, “You are still My covenant nation, but you guys are really stepping over the line.”*

*I mean, they were worshipping demons, burning babies. They were oppressing the poor. I mean they were really, really bad. They were just telling God, “We want nothing to do with you, really. I mean we really do not.”*

*The Lord would say, “Well, the problem is that I want everything to do with you. I am in covenant with you, so I am going to wake you up. You are not going to like it, but when you come to your senses, you are going to be glad I woke you up.” That is kind of the Father’s storyline.*

*So Isaiah starts to talk about the message that God sent to him. This is verse 8, “The Lord sent a word against Jacob, and it has fallen on Israel. All the people will know it—Ephraim and Samaria—It is in their pride they make this statement, “The bricks have fallen down, but we will rebuild them with hewn stones. The sycamore trees are cut down, but we will replace them with cedars.” Verse 13, “For the people do not turn to the Lord.” The very God who is striking them, they will not turn to Him or seek Him and repent. So that is what is going on.*

*First I want you to catch this: that, verse 8, the Lord could say, “I have sent the word. I have already sent it over and over. I have sent it through Hosea. I sent it to Amos.” Those were prophets who came just a little bit before Isaiah, maybe a decade or two before. They had been saying all these things. These were not new words that, verse 9, Isaiah was saying. All the people in Israel knew it because Hosea and Amos had been preaching it for a couple of decades. Everyone knows the storyline, so you cannot say you are uninformed. He said that the story had been sent, it had been given out clearly, and He sent it out that the word of the Lord against them. Now notice this He gives four names the word of the Lord came against: Jacob, Israel, Ephraim, and Samaria.*

* 1. In verses 8-9, Isaiah refers to Israel by four different names— as *“Israel”* (Jacob’s covenant name), *“Jacob”* (father of the 12 tribes), “*Ephraim”* (its largest tribe), and *“Samaria”* (capital city of Israel).

*Now all four of those names speak of the same people. I want you to get that. Jacob is Israel because Jacob had twelve sons, twelve tribes. Ten of them went together, so they called those ten “Jacob.” They also called the Israel Ephraim. Why? That was the biggest tribe. It was the most prominent. So sometimes, instead of saying Israel, they say Ephraim because that was the biggest group. Sometimes they say Samaria because that is the capital city. like saying Washington D. C. Like, “In Washington D. C. they decided…” which would mean America has decided. So when you see those names, do not be thrown off by them. They were very common names, all four of them, for Israel.*

* 1. In verse 10, Israel’s pride was expressed in claiming that if things were destroyed by a military crisis, they would replace them with things that were even better. They would overcome any disaster and accomplish bigger and better things through their hard work, yet without needing to seek God (9:13).
     1. ***Bricks***: If their enemy knocked down their walls made of mud-bricks, they would rebuild them with expensive and beautiful hewn stone.

*Now here is their pride. Their pride is just out of control. They said, “When we build a wall with mud bricks and the military invasion comes, Isaiah, that you are warning us about and you say it is going to get worse and worse, if they tear down the brick walls, it is okay. We will replace the mud brick walls with costly expensive stones. We will get the best stones. We will make it bigger and better and stronger–you wait and see.”*

*Isaiah said, “That is really not the right attitude.”*

* + 1. ***Sycamores***: If their homes built of sycamore wood were destroyed in a national crisis, they would rebuild them with more expensive and stronger wood from the cedars of Lebanon.

*“We build our houses with sycamore wood, and lumber. If the enemy comes and tears it down, it is okay. We will get cedar–twice as expensive, twice as strong, more beautiful. We will have bigger and better homes. We are not afraid of judgment. We are not afraid of crisis.”*

*Isaiah was saying, “Man, you are out of control. You have no idea what you are talking about.” So I got a little bit on that here in the notes.*

* 1. ***Escalating crisis:*** In 9:8-21, God caused an escalating crisis to unrepentant Israel—it included disastrous *military conflicts* (9:11-12), the breakdown of their *political infrastructure* (9:14-16) and *social services* (9:17), with the loss of *moral standards* in society (9:18), the *land scorched* by fires (9:19), and *social anarchy* (9:19-21). As Israel continued to refuse to repent, so God’s discipline continued to intensify more and more as reflected by Isaiah’s cry, *“For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still*” (9:12, 17, 21; 10:4).

*So the problem was that they would not repent. They would not stop and seek the Lord. The problems were escalating. Beloved, look at America right now. Look at Israel right now. Look at Egypt right now. Look at the United Kingdom. Look at Russia. Look at China. There is more and more moral depravity. There is more and more “In Your face, God, with Your moral standards!” More and more hubris and confidence in who they are to be mighty and stand strong themselves. It is happening all over the earth. I mean America is leading the way, but so are those other groups. It is like, “We will do what we want with the sanctity of life and sex and marriage. We do not care about anything God says. We are in control.”*

*God says, “No, no!” The pressures are intensifying and intensifying, and yet nations are kind of doubling down in their resistance against God, just like Israel did. God would say, “Go read Isaiah 9. I am never changing. I am the God of Isaiah 9. I have the glory planned, but I am not going to change My standards and My definition of what love is. I am going to hold the line on them.” That is what Isaiah 9 is about.*

* 1. We do not know the exact date of all these events. It was probably after the Assyrians first attacked Israel in 733 BC, but before Assyria devastated them in 721 BC, leaving scorched land (9:19).
  2. Isaiah spoke this message in Judah so that they would see the consequences of Israel’s sin to instruct them in the fear of God by grasping that the Lord disciplining His covenant people Israel meant He would discipline Judah. Judah was given this opportunity to learn from Israel’s crisis.
  3. Judah need not fear the armies of Israel and Syria who were attacking them, for God’s judgment will destroy these armies. This message gave hope to Judah in seeing God’s judgment 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.
  4. 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.

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

*Well, he goes on in verse 11-19. He talks about how military invasion is going to keep increasing.*

* + 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).

*It is going to create a breakdown in the political infrastructure. Then that is going to cause a trouble for the orphans and the widows and the helpless of society. Then that is going to escalate to social anarchy and chaos. Then after that there are going to be wildfires burning the land all around. That is the description Isaiah gave. You can just look at the newspapers across many nations. These kinds of things are happening. Yet Isaiah says, “They will not,” verse 13, “They will not seek the Lord.”*

*They say, “If we get busted, we will get together and build it twice as strong as it was before.”*

* + 1. 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).

*Verse 21, here is a phrase that is used four times in this passage. This is a terrifying phrase. He uses it three times for Israel and one time for Judah. It is the refrain. It is a prophetic. It is terrifying if you know what it means. He gives this statement of their sin and His judgment. Then Isaiah says, for all of this—this judgment that God just gave in light of their rebellion—in spite of all of this judgment His anger is not satisfied. His anger is not turned away. but His hand is outstretched still. That is bad—outstretched to trouble them more.*

*Each time the trouble and the sin got worse, the judgment got more severe, they doubled down and four times God says, “For all of this My anger is not gone even though I gave you judgment. Rather My outstretched hand is going to bring greater intensity to get your attention.” Four times in a row. This is literally like a prophetic statement over many nations. In light of all of this you think you can rebuild everything? Really? Your society is caving in, your social infrastructure is broken, you are on the verge of military crisis, you got wildfires all over the nations, hurricanes, earthquakes, social anarchy, and the nations are not bowing down to repent. He said that in the light of all of this—God was speaking through Isaiah—He said, “I never change.” This is the storyline for every nation of every generation, but the end of the age really pay attention to Isaiah 9.*

1. Why Isaiah 10 is included in our study on the forerunner message
   1. Isaiah 10 gives us a clear picture of how God will respond to Israel and the nations in the end times.   
      I acknowledge that the events in Isaiah 10 have a fulfillment in ancient history. Many recognize Isaiah 10 as a part of one message contained in Isaiah 9-11—a message that is bookended by two   
      end-time passages (9:1-7 and 11:1-16). Thus I included it in this study on the forerunner message.

*Isaiah was looking at Judah, you know, because he was down in Judah prophesying all of this. He had prophesied about Israel and the people of Judah, and they were shaking in their boots. Isaiah could have said, “Why do you think I am telling you this? I am not up there telling the Israelites. I am down here in Judah. I am saying it in front of you. Why? Because I want you to understand that if God will do that to the covenant people up north—because they are your brothers, though you have been fighting for 200 years. They are your covenant brothers—If God will do it to His covenant people up north, He will do it to His covenant people down south.”*

*If God will do this in the days of Isaiah, He will do it at the end of the age. If God will do this in Israel, He will do it in America, He will do it in China, He will do it in Russia, because He never changes. He has one definition of love; He is love. He never moves away from love. That is His agenda: to fill the earth with the glory of God, the light of the gospel, the light of that Son and that King, that Prince of Peace which is love.*

* 1. Isaiah 10:20-27 has a double fulfillment—in ancient Israel and at the end of the age. I see two points in this passage that have a potential end-time fulfillment—related to the remnant and “the Assyrian.”

1. God’s warning to Judah to learn from the crisis in Israel (isa. 10:1-4)
   1. Judah is warned to repent to avoid the judgment that was on Israel (10:1-4). Isaiah had prophesied   
      about judgment coming to Judah for its pride and oppression (2:6-4:1). Gary Smith points out that Isaiah speaks to Judah as seen by his use of “you” (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.

1“Woe to those who decree unrighteous decrees…2To 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. 3What will you do in the day of punishment…? To whom will you flee for help?   
4Without 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)

*Now the Lord looks over and says, “Okay, Judah, you better listen and learn because you are next.” Judah is kind of trembling.*

* 1. ***Decree***: They established oppressive laws to enrich themselves at the expense of the helpless.
  2. ***The day of punishment***: A day of disaster is coming to Judah without any nation to help them.   
     This may have happened when Assyria attacked Judah’s fortified cities (701 BC; Isa. 36:1) or   
     when Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and took many people into captivity (606-586 BC).
  3. ***They will bow down***: The leaders who enriched themselves at the expense of the helpless will suffer the same fate as everyone else by being taken away into slavery as captives or lying among the slain. In the midst of God’s judgment, social status, wealth, and political authority are useless.
  4. 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.

1. God chose Assyria as His rod and then He judged them (Isa. 10:5-19)
   1. God would judge the wicked Assyrians that He used as a tool to discipline His people (10:5-6). 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.

5“Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger… 6I will send him against an ungodly nation [Judah]…   
I will give him charge, to seize the spoil, to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets…” 12…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)

*Now He says, as it were, “Now let’s talk about the big elephant in the room.” The issue nobody wants to talk about, verse 5, Assyria. Okay, if instead of Assyria you want to make it personal, put Nazi-Germany and Adolph Hitler. Put Stalin. Put Mao Zedong. Put a dictator that we know up close and personal in history. I mean like, ugh! You see, as long as it is Assyria, they are really far away, we do not know them and we do not care. It is Babylon; we know, but we do not care. They were evil, cruel, godless, demonized men who were bloodthirsty. God says this most terrifying thing, verse 5, “Assyria, wicked Assyria, you are the rod in My hand. I put you in My hand,” verse 6. Just plug your ears on verse 6! I mean I read verse 6 and I think, “Ugh, ugh!” I mean that is why I love this stuff because it just shakes me; it shifts me. This is real because it is going to happen again. The Antichrist is going to be a man far more powerful than Hitler or Stalin or Mao Zedong in China and those kinds of guys.*

*He said, verse 6, “I will send him against an ungodly nation.” The ungodly nation He is talking about right there is Judah. He said, in effect, “I have already sent Assyria to the north. I am sending him down south.”*

*Isaiah was saying this, and the guys down south where Isaiah lived in Jerusalem were saying, “I thought you were one of us?”*

*He would say, “I am, but I am a kingdom-of-God guy first. Assyria is coming after us in the south. The north is trembling and broken, but the Lord is coming after us.”*

*This idea that God would send Assyria to “an ungodly nation,” both Israel would say and Judah would say, “The Assyrians are more ungodly than we are.”*

*God would say, “Yeah, I know. I am going to really discipline him greatly when I am done with him. He is more ungodly, but he is exactly what I am going to use to completely get your attention.”*

*This idea, I think, is one of the most offensive doctrines in the Bible: that God exercises His sovereignty to raise up evil men to afflict His people. Then He breaks those evil men and makes them pay for what they did because it is their own evil. God does not make them do evil, but He gives them more space to do the evil they have, and then He judges them. This is one of the most difficult doctrines.*

*As long as the Antichrist is just a name, you know, like “The Mark of the Beast” is a movie, it does not matter. He does not have a name or a face, and he is some guy far away, and people think, you know, “Cool.” When there is a real man and he is really killing people, and God’s prophet is saying that God raised him up, well, I am just praying that you guys are the voice and I am behind you making handouts and helping you guys say all of that stuff! I do not know if I will see it in my day, but I want to be the Handout Guy helping other people say it because that is going to be intense. I cannot think of anything more intense than that.*

*He said this a number of times in the prophets. He said it about Assyria. He said it about the king of Babylon. He said it about several other ones. He said, “I raised them up. They are My tool.” Ugh! Look at verse 6, “I gave him charge to seize the spoil of My people.” To steal all of their property, to steal their money, and to steal their crops. Wow! “I gave him charge to take the prey, to take prisoners from your land.”*

*“God, You let him take us prisoner?”*

*“Yes.”*

*“Lord, I thought we were on the same team!”*

*“We are, but I relate to My people on My terms. I have a kingdom of love, and I am preparing the earth for love. I want My people connected with this, so I am going to stir the righteous and the wicked in this process.”*

*He said, “I am going to give him charge,” verse 6, “to tread them down like mire. I am going to give this evil man the authority to put his boot in the back of their neck in the mud and tread them down.”*

*Ugh! I look at this and I say, “Isaiah, no! In the name of Jesus! I believe the Word, but Isaiah…” I am sure it is the Word, so help me! Anyway I am just saying that those verses make me tremble. I do not look at those and think, “Oh, yeah, that is kind of cool.” What? Just go say that somewhere.*

*Verse 12, “and when the Lord has performed all of His work on Mount Zion”—Mount Zion and Jerusalem are overlapped—“When I perform My work in Jerusalem,” meaning when I have used him to get your attention and discipline you. When the Lord says, “When I perform My work,” that means “I woke you up by discipline.” Because, Judah was almost as sinful as Israel was. He went on, “Then once My work is done and you wake up, I will judge him. I will destroy him and move him from the earth, but not until he has performed My work in Jerusalem. Jerusalem, I am coming after you now!” He went on, “You have seen what I did in Israel. Israel was decimated. You are next, but if you repent, if you will agree with Me, none of this has to happen.”*

*Now again,* ***that*** *is the message. We say to Jews and Gentiles, to Americans, Europeans, Asians, Africans, Latin Americans, “Repent.” This is a message that forerunners will say from this chapter here.*

* 1. God controls the destiny of nations. Isaiah spoke of a God who is over history. He applied this truth of God’s sovereignty to the historical process. It has significance for our life too. Isaiah wanted Judah to trust God even in the face of the powerful Assyrians, knowing that even the mightiest nations are under His control.
  2. Isaiah described the nature and extent of God’s judgment on Assyria (10:7-19).

*Then Isaiah described the nature and the extent of how the Lord was going to judge Assyria. He broke all that down.*

1. The salvation of a remnant (Isa. 10:20-27)
   1. I see a double fulfillment in 10:20-27—in ancient Israel and at the end of the age. I see two points in this passage that have a potential end-time fulfillment related to the *remnant* and *“the Assyrian*.”
   2. God promised to save a remnant of Israel (10:20-23). This promise was partially fulfilled in history and will be completely fulfilled when Jesus returns. The salvation of a remnant is a very important theme in Isaiah’s end-time perspective. Isaiah often used the phase *“in that day”* to indicate that he was referring to events or trends that would be relevant in the generation the Lord returns. I see 10:20-23 as prophesying about events that were partially fulfilled in history and will be completely fulfilled in the end times.

20…in that day that the remnant of Israel, and such as have escaped of the house of Jacob, will never again depend on him who defeated [struck] them, but will depend on the Lord…in truth. 21The remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the Mighty God. 22For 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. 23For the Lord…will make a determined end in the midst of all the land. (Isa. 10:20-23)

* + 1. ***Remnant of Israel***: This was fulfilled in part when some survived the Assyrian dispersion (721 BC) and when some returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel (536 BC). Paul quoted Isaiah 10:22 to show that a remnant existed in his day who were faithful to God as believers in Jesus (Rom. 9:27). The “never again” dimension (10:20) will not be fulfilled until Jesus saves the remnant when He returns.
    2. The remnant is specified as being people from the ten tribes or the Kingdom of Israel in the north of the land. They are referred to as “the remnant of Israel” (10:20), “the house of Jacob” (10:20), the remnant of Jacob (10:21), and Israel (10:22).
    3. The promise in 10:20-23 was spoken to those who lived in Zion or Jerusalem (10:24).
    4. ***The destruction decreed***: Judah was smitten, but spared total destruction. God in His wisdom decreed this. The Judge of all the earth (Gen. 18:25) defies human logic by His decisions to release judgment. The Lord has determined to release specific judgments on His people that shall result in His people choosing to look to Him and to walk in righteousness.

*So we are just kind of breezing through Isaiah 10 to give you the broad strokes. Isaiah 10:20-27 is really encouraging. It is encouraging with kind of an asterisk.*

*He said, “I am going to restore Israel.” That is kind of the overall picture; that is really good. “I am going to restore a remnant.” This is kind of His main message because—look at verse 24—He is talking, and He says, “O My people in Zion!” That is Jerusalem. So Isaiah is talking to Judah right now, down in Jerusalem. He is not talking to the north. Remember, the north is in a military conflict. He is not going up there, and they do not have email, and they do not have cell phones. So he is down south, but undoubtedly some of his message gets up there just because of the human movement back and forth.*

*In verse 24 he is talking to the people in Jerusalem. That is Zion. He says verse 20, “In that day.” Whenever we have an “in that day” passage—and Isaiah uses that term more than anybody, by far more than anybody—the “in that day” passage refers to the time when God shows His power in an unusual way in terms of power for judgment or power for deliverance, either way. It is when God shows His power in an unusual way. The “in that day” passage—though they are moments of unusual demonstrations of power in history, power that is beyond the norm of judgment or of victory—they are pictures, they are cameos of the end of the age drama. So whenever you see “in that day,” almost every time—I do not know of an exception, though there might be one exception—stop and say, “Okay, this was a snapshot in Isaiah’s day of unusual power of judgment or liberty or deliverance, and it is a cameo, it is a snapshot of what is coming.”*

*He says, “In that day the remnant of Israel will depend on the Lord.” They will return, so that is national salvation. This is fantastic. Verse 22, here is the negative. The remnant idea is both positive and negative. It is positive because God says, “I will save some.” It is negative because He is also saying, “The remnant is not the majority.” Like, ugh! You want God to say, “the whole nation.” When He says “the remnant,” He means that the majority are not going to respond. It will be less than majority. No one knows the number. The word remnant means a smaller response to God than we want. A remnant means, “…but they will respond.”*

*So you kind of think like, “Hmm.” Eventually the whole nation gets saved. In all the nations of the earth there is a remnant of people responding to the Lord.*

*The Lord says, “I will have a people in Israel. I will have a people in all the nations of the world. The remnant will return.” Here is the phrase—ooh, look at this, verse 22! Ouch!—“The destruction decreed shall overflow with righteousness.” What the Lord is saying through Isaiah is, “I have decreed a certain amount of destruction and trouble for Jerusalem. I have decreed a certain amount. In My wisdom it is going to overflow with righteousness, when you see the big picture. It will produce righteousness. You might not see it, but in My wisdom, I have decreed trouble that is going to result in righteousness.”*

*That is the phrase we just looked at a few moments ago in verse 12 when He said, “I am doing My work on Mount Zion. Then when I am done with My work on Mount Zion, I will wipe out the Assyrian.”—the Antichrist—“Once I finish doing My work through him of disciplining them, then I will get rid of him.” That phrase is one of God’s prophetic statements: that He decrees destruction. There might be many definitions of what “destruction” might mean. It is trouble. It is trouble, and He decrees it with an overflow of righteousness. Because the big-picture fruit is that, when the whole story is told, righteousness comes out of it, and His wisdom for that decree is proven as wise.*

* 1. The Assyrian will strike Judah, and then the Lord will strike the Assyrian (10:24-27). The promise of God saving a remnant from Israel in 10:20-23 is connected to 10:24-27 by the word “therefore” (10:24).

24Therefore… “O My people, who dwell in Zion [in Jerusalem], do not be afraid of the Assyrian.   
He shall strike you with a rod and lift up his staff against you, in the manner of Egypt. 25For yet a very little while and the indignation will cease, as will My anger in their destruction.” 26And the Lord of hosts will stir up a scourge for him like the slaughter of Midian [under Gideon]… as His rod was on the sea [under Moses], so will He lift it up in the manner of Egypt. 27It shall come to pass in that day 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. (Isa. 10:24-27)

* + 1. ***Dwell in Zion***: This promise was spoken to those who lived in Zion or Jerusalem (10:24). Those in Jerusalem (the Kingdom of Judah) were encouraged by knowing that God would graciously save a remnant in the rebellious Kingdom of Israel and so He would do the same for them.
    2. ***He shall strike you***: The Assyrian would strike Judah with a rod and staff *“in the manner of Egypt”* to enslave them as Pharaoh enslaved and heavily oppressed the Israelites (10:24).
    3. ***The Assyrian****:* Isaiah seems to have highlighted one particular Assyrian king that he referred to as “the Assyrian” (10:24). In Isaiah’s day, the only Assyrian king who attacked “those who dwelt in Zion” or Jerusalem was Sennacherib (in 701 BC). Yet he did not strike Jerusalem “with a rod in the manner of Egypt” to enslave them. Rather, Jerusalem was supernaturally delivered from Sennacherib when the angel of Lord killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers (Isa. 37:36). Sennacherib did not “strike them with a rod;” he did not even enter Jerusalem.

36The angel of the Lord went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead. (Isa. 37:36)

* + 1. It is possible that the Assyrian attack on Jerusalem mentioned here—“in the manner of Egypt”   
       by “the Assyrian”—might also point to the end times. The prophet Micah referred to the Antichrist as “the Assyrian” (Mic. 5:5). Thus, some see Sennacherib as a type of Antichrist since they are both defeated in a supernatural way when attacking Jerusalem.

4And He [Jesus] shall stand and feed His flock in the strength of the Lord…now He shall be great to the ends of the earth; 5And this One [Jesus] shall be peace. When the Assyrian comes into our land, and when he treads in our palaces, then we will raise against him… (Mic. 5:4-5)

* + 1. ***Yet a very little while***: The indignation or divine discipline toward Jerusalem was soon to cease. This was fulfilled in 701 BC after an angel killed the Assyrian army. The phrase “a little while” was used by the Lord when referring to the time when He shakes all nations   
       (Hag. 2:6-7).

6For thus says the Lord of hosts: “Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; 7and I will shake all nations …” (Hag. 2:6-7)

* + 1. ***Like the slaughter of Midian***: The Lord promised to scourge or whip “the Assyrian” in a way that was comparable to how He *“slaughtered the armies of Midian”* under Gideon and how He used “His rod on the Red Sea” to destroy Pharaoh’s armies in the days of Moses. This occurred in part when the Lord sent an angel who killed 185,000 Assyrians (Isa. 37:36).
       1. As in 9:4, Isaiah encouraged those in Jerusalem to believe that they would survive the attack of “the Assyrian” since the Lord had supernaturally delivered their forefathers in Egypt (under Moses) and from Midian (under Gideon). This same encouragement will be valuable in the end times.
       2. In Gideon’s battle against Midian, panic took hold of Israel’s enemy, causing them to fight each other (Judg. 7:22; Ezek. 38:21; Zech. 14:13).
    2. ***Assyria’s yoke will be destroyed***: “In that day” the Lord promised to break the Assyrian’s yoke from Jerusalem’s neck (10:27). Jerusalem was supernaturally delivered from Assyria in 701 BC when an angel killed 185,000 Assyrians. The ultimate deliverance of Jerusalem from the Antichrist called “the Assyrian” will be when Jesus returns (2 Thes. 2:8).

*He says, verse 24, “O Zion”— Jerusalem—“do not be afraid of Assyria. Do not be afraid of the Assyrian.” He is not your trouble. He will strike you. Know that but do not be afraid of him.*

*They might say, “Well, if he is going to strike us, we ought to be afraid of him.”*

*He might say, “Your trouble is Me. I am your trouble.” Not, “I could get rid of Assyria in one minute.” But, “I want you. I want the nations. I want My glory in the earth. I am the trouble if you will not say yes to Me. If you say yes to Me, then I will show abounding mercy. The Assyrian is the wrong storyline. He is just a rod in My hand that I am using.”*

*Again, this is going to be a narrative that the forerunners will keep bringing to the center of the national and international conversation: that the problem is not the Antichrist, at the end of the day; it is God’s zeal for glory and love to fill the planet. That is a good problem, meaning He will not back down. We love that He will not.*

*He says, “I will stir up a scourge. I will whip him” He goes on, “In My timing, I will overthrow him like I did in the Gideon story. I will do the Gideon story on him.” “In that day,” verse 27, “I will break him too. I will break everyone that resists My nation and My people, but not until My decreed destruction has righteousness flowing out of it.”*

*Well, I think we covered it all. There are a few more thoughts here, and you can look at it at your own time.*

1. The Assyrian army approaches Jerusalem and is destroyed (Isa. 10:28-34)
   1. Isaiah foresaw Assyria’s triumphant military march from the north to invade Jerusalem (10:28-32). Isaiah described the approach of the Assyrian army throughout various towns starting from Aiath about 15 miles north of Jerusalem. Geba was about six miles from Jerusalem. Ramah was about 5 miles from Jerusalem, Gibeah about 3 miles away. Gallim, Laishah, Anathoth, Madmenah, and Gebim were small towns on the way to Jerusalem. Nob was less than one mile north of Jerusalem.

28He has come to Aiath [15 miles north of Jerusalem]… 29They have taken up lodging at Geba. Ramah is afraid, Gibeah of Saul has fled. 30Lift up your voice, O daughter of Gallim…O poor Anathoth! 31Madmenah has fled, the inhabitants of Gebim seek refuge. 32As 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. (Isa. 10:28-32)

* + 1. The date of the Assyrian invasion of Judah described here is not specified, but since Jerusalem is highlighted (10:32), it seems best to see this as a description of the invasion in 701 BC.
    2. The Assyrian king “shook his fist” in a taunting or threatening way at the city of Jerusalem (10:32).
    3. Isaiah described King Sennacherib’s final approach to Jerusalem as coming from Lachish   
       (Isa. 36:2; cf. 2 Kgs. 19:8) which was southwest of Jerusalem (instead of him coming from   
       the north as described here in 10:28-32). Assyria attacked the fortified cities in Judah during this campaign against Jerusalem in 701 BC. Here in 10:28-32, Isaiah may not have intended to give all the cities that Sennacherib’s troops marched by. His main objective seems to have been to highlight the Assyrian army as invincible.
    4. The approach of the Assyrian army caused the villages of Raman and Gibeah to be filled with fear and to run in panic as the army advanced closer to them.
  1. The Lord promised to judge the Assyrian Empire (10:33-34). The Assyrian Empire was conquered by the Babylonian Empire in 606 BC, about 100 years after attacking Jerusalem in 701 BC.

33Behold, the Lord…will lop off the bough with terror; those of high stature will be hewn down…  
34He will cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon will fall by the Mighty One. (Isa. 10:33-34)

* + 1. Isaiah described Assyria’s destruction in terms of trees being cut down—even the cedars of Lebanon. The mighty forests of Lebanon were under the rule of Assyria. Lebanon was known as having the most beautiful, strong, and tall cedars in the Middle East. Ezekiel also referred to the Assyrian destruction as the cutting down of the cedars of Lebanon (Ezek. 31:3).
    2. Though Assyria would trouble Jerusalem, the Lord will cut them down as a lumberjack cuts down trees. The cutting down of Assyria’s leaders of high stature is compared to cutting the mighty trees in Lebanon. This was a felling as great as cutting down Lebanon’s vast forests. This assurance was given to those in Jerusalem just as the Assyrians stood before their walls.
    3. Isaiah provided details on Jerusalem’s deliverance from Assyria in 701 BC in Isaiah 36-37.

*Well, let’s just end with that. Let’s stand before the Lord. [Congregations claps.] If you got the guts to clap for that one, you are something. I look at this and I say, “Lord I want to do this. I am just like, ‘Ugh, ugh, ugh!’ Yes, Lord, I want to do this.”*

*In my flesh I do not want to say that stuff. Do you? Well, guess what?! You are being trained to do that. You are being trained not just to say it but also to train the next generation to say it. It is not just the negative; it is the glory. It is not just the glory, but it is the negative, too. If we do not tell the whole story, we are not telling the truth.*

*A lot of folks have a little angry spirit, so they overdo the negative. A lot of folks are running a popularity contest for their ministry, so they only tell the positive. Maybe God commissions people to do one or the other; certainly He could do that. I am just talking about the general way of man. One group is a little mad, so they overdo it. The other group is trying to get applause and a crowd of everybody happy, so they overdo it the other way. Again, God might have somebody just zeroed in one verse or the other as they are commissioned. I know that as for me and my house I want to tell the whole counsel. I want to tell the whole story.*

*Lord, here we are before You, and we say yes to Your leadership. Lord, Isaiah 9-10 is still out there a little bit. We want to get it; we want to get it. I ask that You would bring this storyline together in this beloved community of people. Lord, as they wrestle through it and say, “I cannot figure it all out,” help them bring the story together.*

*Beloved, it will come together in a few minutes— I mean maybe some months—but it will come together. It really will.*

*So Lord, I ask You for the spirit of revelation, I ask for the spirit of impartation. I ask for the spirit of courage and the spirit of faith for love, faith for love, faith for glory. We love Your leadership, Jesus! Oh, we love Your leadership, Jesus!*