

Lesson 7 Isaiah 8 – 10:4

Signs of God's Presence and His Measurement Standards

Memory verse: “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”). Matthew 1:23 NIV.

Isaiah married the virgin, and the legal documents were duly witnessed and sealed. He even announced that their first child would be a son and his name would be Maher-shalal-hash-baz, which means “quick to plunder, swift to the spoil.” Since Isaiah’s sons were signs to the nation (8:18), this name was significant. It spoke of future judgment when Assyria would conquer Syria and invade both Israel and Judah, and when Babylon would take Judah into exile. A child would start speaking meaningful sentences about the age of two. In 732 BC, about two years after Isaiah’s son was born, both Pekah and Rezin were dead (Is. 7:1), and Assyria had conquered Syria and begun to invade Israel (2 Kings 15:29). The army was “quick to plunder and swift to take the spoil.”

Darkness prevailed in the land when people turned to the occult to try to understand what is going on in their life. God asked His people, “When someone tells you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? (Is. 8:19).

Isaiah’s son, Shear-jasub means “A remnant shall return,” and the return of the Jewish remnant to their land is a major theme in these chapters (10:20–22; 11:11–12, 16). When Assyria conquered the northern kingdom of Israel (Ephraim), the nation was never restored but became what we know as Samaria. If they had listened carefully to God, they will know that there is still hope for them.

Isaiah continued the theme of light and darkness (Is. 8:20–22) by announcing, “There will be no more gloom” (Is. 9:1 NIV). The Redeemer will come and bring to the world the dawning of a new day (v. 2; Luke 1:78–79; John 8:12). We know that this prophecy refers to Christ because of the way it is quoted in Matthew 4:13–15. The geographical areas named in Isaiah 9:1 were especially devastated when the Assyrian army moved in, but these areas would be especially honoured by the ministry of the Messiah. Jesus was identified with “Galilee of the Gentiles” (Matt. 4:15 NIV), and His loving ministry to the people brought light and joy.

In the later section from Isaiah 9:8 to 10:4, it focuses on the Northern Kingdom, and it ties in with the section concerning the Messiah (Is. 9:2-7). It explains why Ephraim’s plans against Judah would fail. They would not fail because of Ahaz’s alliance with Assyria but because God would frustrate them. Ephraim would not go into captivity because she lacked sufficient military strength but because she failed to measure up to the standard God had set for her.

The warning is clear, if God cannot bring us to repentance through His Word, then He must lift His hand and chasten us. If we do not submit to His chastening, then He must stretch out His hand and judge us. God is longsuffering, but we dare not tempt Him by our careless or callous attitude. “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Heb. 10:31).

Scripture reading: Isaiah 9:1 - 7

Things to learn: 1) Making wrong choices 2) The Messiah Revealed 3) God’s measuring standards

Discussion Questions:

- 1). How did Isaiah use vivid contrasts in verses 5 to 22 of chapter 8 to show the rulers of Judah their wrong choices of trusting Assyria instead of trusting the Lord?
- 2). In the gloom of chapter 8, what is the promise of a blessing to come in verses 1 to 9 of chapter 9?
- 3). In what ways did the Northern Kingdom fail to measure up to the standard God had set for her as revealed in chapter 9:8 to 10:4?