

March 18th, 2018

Grace in the Midst of God's Wrath

Focal Passage: Isaiah 9:8-10:34 (ESV)

BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

Mar 11 Joshua 1-4 Mar 15 Joshua 16-18
Mar 12 Joshua 5-8 Mar 16 Joshua 19-21
Mar 13 Joshua 9-11 Mar 17 Joshua 22-24
Mar 14 Joshua 12-15 Mar 18 Judges 1-2

Cross References: Romans 1:21-25, James 4:8-10, Romans 3:10-12, Romans 1:28-32, Deuteronomy 15:10-11, Psalm 68:5-6, Proverbs 19:17, Proverbs 28:17, Matthew 7:21-23, John 14:6, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Isaiah 40:22

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS OF THE PASSAGE:

- **God's wrath burns hot against sin (Ch. 9:8-10:4)**
- **The Lord will pour out His wrath on those who do not repent (Ch. 9:13-17).**
- **Christ is the only place to turn for refuge from the wrath of God (Ch. 10:3).**
- **God is just in using evil nations to accomplish His purposes while also judging them for their evil deeds (Ch. 10:12-16).**
- **The people of God will be preserved by His hand (Ch. 10:20-27)**

Lesson Idea: God is just to punish sin, and the wrath of His hand can only be stayed by His mercy and grace.

Note from John MacArthur's Commentary on Isaiah: Isaiah 9:8-10:4 is written as a poem. It tells of great warning calamities sent by the Lord that have gone unheeded by Israel. The refrain, "for all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still" recurs four times (9:12, 17, 21; 10:4). We see from this passage the unrelenting, righteous, and holy wrath of God against rebellion and sin.

Isaiah 9:8-21

8 *The Lord has sent a word against Jacob, and it will fall on Israel;*

9 *and all the people will know, Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria, who say in pride and in arrogance of heart:*

10 *"The bricks have fallen, but we will build with dressed stones; the sycamores have been cut down, but we will put cedars in their place."*

11 *But the Lord raises the adversaries of Rezin against him, and stirs up his enemies.*

12 *The Syrians on the east and the Philistines on the west devour Israel with open mouth. For all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still.*

13 *The people did not turn to him who struck them, nor inquire of the Lord of hosts.*

14 *So the Lord cut off from Israel head and tail, palm branch and reed in one day—*

15 *the elder and honored man is the head, and the prophet who teaches lies is the tail;*

16 *for those who guide this people have been leading them astray, and those who are guided by them are swallowed up.*

17 *Therefore the Lord does not rejoice over their young men, and has no compassion on their fatherless and widows; for everyone is godless and an evildoer, and every mouth speaks folly. For all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still.*

18 *For wickedness burns like a fire; it consumes briars and thorns; it kindles the thickets of the forest, and they roll upward in a column of smoke.*

19 *Through the wrath of the Lord of hosts the land is scorched, and the people are like fuel for the fire;*

no one spares another.

*20 They slice meat on the right, but are still hungry,
and they devour on the left, but are not satisfied;
each devours the flesh of his own arm,*

*21 Manasseh devours Ephraim, and Ephraim devours
Manasseh;
together they are against Judah.
For all this his anger has not turned away,
and his hand is stretched out still.*

Isaiah 10:1-4

*1 Woe to those who decree iniquitous decrees,
and the writers who keep writing oppression,*

*2 to turn aside the needy from justice
and to rob the poor of my people of their right,
that widows may be their spoil,
and that they may make the fatherless their prey!*

*3 What will you do on the day of punishment,
in the ruin that will come from afar?
To whom will you flee for help,
and where will you leave your wealth?*

*4 Nothing remains but to crouch among the prisoners
or fall among the slain.
For all this his anger has not turned away,
and his hand is stretched out still.*

DISCUSSION:

- **Ch. 9:8-12**

-What sins of Israel are referenced in these verses?

-How are the sins of pride and arrogance at the root of all sinful behavior? (**Romans 1:21-25**)

Note: *We see in verses 9-10 that Israel believes that even after they have been hit with devastation and judgement from the Lord, they will still be able to rebuild their nation by the work of their own hands. Their “**pride and arrogance of heart**” caused them to look inwardly for hope, rather than to God. Pride and arrogance blind us from seeing our inadequacy, and tell us we do not need the help of the Lord. It is our pride that would have us believe that we can live in contradiction to the righteous commandments of*

God Almighty, and come out on the other side without facing His wrath and Judgement.

- **Ch. 9:13-17**

-What should have been Israel’s response to being “**struck**” by the Lord? (**James 4:8-10**)

-What was God’s response to a lack of repentance?

-What do **verses 16-17** tell us about the scope of wickedness in Israel? (**Romans 3:10-12**)

- **Ch. 9:18-21**

-What do these verses teach us about the nature of wickedness? (**Romans 1:28-32**)

- **Ch. 10:1-4**

-What do these verses tell us about God’s thoughts toward the needy, and those who exploit them? (**Deuteronomy 15:10-11, Psalm 68:5-6, Proverbs 19:17, Proverbs 28:17**)

Note: *God is in the business of saving hopeless sinners (**Romans 5:8, Ephesians 2:1-9**). He has mercy on the poor and needy, and His wrath is great against those who do not. As the people of God, who have been mercifully saved from His wrath by His grace, may we always be advocates for the downtrodden and oppressed.*

-What is your answer to the questions posed in **V. 3?** (**Matthew 7:21-23, John 14:6**)

Note: *The only place we can turn for refuge from the wrath of God is to the Son of God. What an incredible thing it is that God has provided the means by which we are to be saved from His wrath (**2 Corinthians 5:21**). This speaks to our complete inadequacy to redeem ourselves, and God’s divine power and sovereignty in saving sinners.*

Isaiah 10:5-34

*5 Woe to Assyria, the rod of my anger;
the staff in their hands is my fury!*

*6 Against a godless nation I send him,
and against the people of my wrath I command him,
to take spoil and seize plunder,*

*and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.
7 But he does not so intend,*

*and his heart does not so think;
but it is in his heart to destroy,
and to cut off nations not a few;*

*8 for he says:
"Are not my commanders all kings?"*

*9 Is not Calno like Carchemish?
Is not Hamath like Arpad?
Is not Samaria like Damascus?*

*10 As my hand has reached to the kingdoms of the idols,
whose carved images were greater than those of
Jerusalem and Samaria,*

*11 shall I not do to Jerusalem and her idols
as I have done to Samaria and her images?"*

*12 When the Lord has finished all his work on Mount Zion
and on Jerusalem, he will punish the speech of the
arrogant heart of the king of Assyria and the boastful
look in his eyes. 13 For he says:*

*"By the strength of my hand I have done it,
and by my wisdom, for I have understanding;
I remove the boundaries of peoples,
and plunder their treasures;
like a bull I bring down those who sit on thrones.*

*14 My hand has found like a nest
the wealth of the peoples;
and as one gathers eggs that have been forsaken,
so I have gathered all the earth;
and there was none that moved a wing
or opened the mouth or chirped."*

*15 Shall the axe boast over him who hews with it,
or the saw magnify itself against him who wields it?
As if a rod should wield him who lifts it,
or as if a staff should lift him who is not wood!*

*16 Therefore the Lord God of hosts
will send wasting sickness among his stout warriors,
and under his glory a burning will be kindled,
like the burning of fire.*

*17 The light of Israel will become a fire,
and his Holy One a flame,
and it will burn and devour
his thorns and briers in one day.*

*18 The glory of his forest and of his fruitful land
the Lord will destroy, both soul and body,
and it will be as when a sick man wastes away.*

*19 The remnant of the trees of his forest will be so few
that a child can write them down.*

*20 In that day the remnant of Israel and the survivors of
the house of Jacob will no more lean on him who struck
them, but will lean on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in
truth. 21 A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to
the mighty God. 22 For though your people Israel be as
the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will return.
Destruction is decreed, overflowing with righteousness.
23 For the Lord God of hosts will make a full end, as
decreed, in the midst of all the earth.*

*24 Therefore thus says the Lord God of hosts: "O my
people, who dwell in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrians
when they strike with the rod and lift up their staff
against you as the Egyptians did. 25 For in a very little
while my fury will come to an end, and my anger will be
directed to their destruction. 26 And the Lord of hosts
will wield against them a whip, as when he struck Midian
at the rock of Oreb. And his staff will be over the sea, and
he will lift it as he did in Egypt. 27 And in that day his
burden will depart from your shoulder, and his yoke from
your neck; and the yoke will be broken because of the
fat."*

*28 He has come to Aiath;
he has passed through Migron;
at Michmash he stores his baggage;*

*29 they have crossed over the pass;
at Geba they lodge for the night;
Ramah trembles;
Gibeah of Saul has fled.*

*30 Cry aloud, O daughter of Gallim!
Give attention, O Laishah!
O poor Anathoth!*

*31 Madmenah is in flight;
the inhabitants of Gebim flee for safety.*

*32 This very day he will halt at Nob;
he will shake his fist
at the mount of the daughter of Zion,
the hill of Jerusalem.*

33 Behold, the Lord God of hosts
will lop the boughs with terrifying power;

the great in height will be hewn down,
and the lofty will be brought low.

34 He will cut down the thickets of the forest with an axe,
and Lebanon will fall by the Majestic One.

DISCUSSION:

- **V. 5-6**

-What do these verses tell us about God's purposes for Assyria?

Note: Here we see God sovereignly using one wicked nation (Assyria) to be His tool of judgement against the "**godless nations**" of Israel and Judah. It may seem odd to us that God would use a nation as evil as Assyria to bring judgement on His people, but we can plainly see in Scripture that that is exactly what He is doing. This speaks to God's power and might over all nations. God sits "**enthroned above the circle of the earth; its inhabitants are like grasshoppers**" (Isaiah 40:22). There is no nation on earth so powerful that God cannot use them as putty in His hands.

- **V.7-20, 24-34**

-What was the intent of the Assyrian's hearts in conquering Israel and Judah? (**V.7-11**)

-How would the Lord respond to Assyria after they had been used to judge Israel and Judah? (**V. 12-19**)

-How do we reconcile God's usage of Assyria as a tool of judgment, and His wrath against the sins of Assyria as they carried out judgment on Israel and Judah? (**Romans 9:14-23**).

Note: V. 15 makes clear to us the incredible pride and arrogance of Assyria. Although they were only a tool in the hand of God, out of their arrogance they did not see fit to glorify Him, but rather, they believed **they** were worthy of glory among the nations. God's wrath burns hot against this kind of assault on His glory, and although it was His purpose to use Assyria to judge His people, He would also destroy Assyria due to their arrogance and pride.

- **V. 20-23**

-What hope does God give the people of Israel in the midst of all this chaos?

-What does verse 20 tell us about how God uses chaos in the lives of His people?

-Who is the remnant, and how are they preserved? (**Romans 11:5**)

-What does God keeping a remnant of Israel for Himself tell us about His faithfulness?

Note: Although Israel continually rebelled against the Lord, He remained faithful to His covenant with Abraham by preserving a remnant of Israel. **Romans 11:5** tells us that the remnant (like all of God's people) are, "**chosen by grace.**" In these verses, Isaiah reminds the people of God that He is their means of salvation, and that He will preserve His people, even as they have been rebellious and unfaithful.

APPLICATION:

- ✓ What does this passage teach us about God?
- ✓ How might understanding God's wrath change the way we think about sin? How might it change the way we evangelize?
- ✓ How might these truths encourage and strengthen you this week?

Lesson by Steven Richardson