

Israel's Doom Declared—Isaiah 9:8–10:34

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Introduction

It is not unreasonable to characterize the book of Isaiah as one of the most significant prophetic works in the Word of God. Its Messianic thrust and its prominence within God's overall scheme of redemption may be fairly described as unexcelled or even unequalled. The passage under consideration might, at first glance, appear out of place since the larger context (chapters 7–12) in which this passage is found is strongly Messianic in character. When viewed from a broad historical perspective, however, it may be easily recognized as an eloquent and powerful manifestation of God's providential arrangement of world events in the fulfillment of His eternal purpose.

This section of Isaiah consists of two major divisions. In 9:8–10:4, the focus is on Israel's crimes and the resulting punishments. Isaiah begins by announcing both the source and the destination of his message. It is "the Lord" who has sent this word, and it has "lighted upon Israel." The passage is written in the form of a song or poem which contains four stanzas. The same terrible refrain appears at the end of each stanza: "For all this His [God's] anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still" (9:12, 17, 21; 10:4; cf. 5:25).¹

In 10: 5–34 Isaiah prophesies concerning the nation of Assyria and its role in carrying out God's intentions. A vivid description of Assyria's character is provided and is, at the same time, shown to be the reason for its eventual downfall. Chapter 10 concludes with a word of hope to Israel, a word of doom to Assyria.

The Sins of Israel Delineated

There is some disagreement as to whether the numerous indictments in this passage are directed exclusively at the northern kingdom, or if they may also encompass the people of Judah. Some have pointed out that the term "Jacob" (2:3, 5–6) refers to Judah rather than Israel, and the term "Israel" (9:14) is used in reference to both kingdoms.² The mention of Ephraim and Samaria (v. 9), however, designates the northern kingdom as the primary recipient of this prophecy.

The sins which Isaiah describes seem to center around pride and worldliness. The people have apparently been the victims of some recent calamity (perhaps a reference to the invasion of Tiglath-pileser in 2 Kin. 15:29), but have learned nothing in the way of humility as a

result. Though “the bricks are fallen” and “the sycomores are cut down” (Isaiah 9:10), the people simply boast that they will rebuild with superior materials. Their self-sufficient attitude is evidenced by the fact that they consider themselves fully capable of surpassing the value and durability of whatever glory had been previously lost. Bricks will be replaced with hewn stone, and cedar will replace sycamore. Their solution was utterly secular and short-sighted.

Isaiah’s prophecy makes it abundantly clear that the misfortunes of Israel have been and will be a result of God’s patient efforts to turn them away from their wickedness and back toward Him (9:13, et al.). God’s design, initially, is to warn, to correct, and to discipline the people. The nation of Israel, however, is apparently so consumed with self-interest and arrogance that the people fail even to consider the possibility that the hand of God is involved in their situation. As a result, they fail to see any need for repentance. The measures God has taken to chastise the people are wasted because they are applied to a nation whose spiritual senses are dull, unresponsive, and unholy.

A key factor in the present condition of the people is identified in 9:16: “For they that lead this people cause them to err.” While it is undeniable that God has always held individuals accountable for their own behavior, God has also ordained roles of leadership in matters civil, moral, and spiritual. Those who find themselves in positions of leadership bear considerable responsibility for the degree of influence they wield and for the character of the people who follow them. The leaders of both kingdoms (but particularly the northern) had been corrupt and unreliable for years, leading the people to their own destruction, chiefly through idolatry. The situation described here by Isaiah is parallel to that which was observed by our Lord in Matthew 15:14: The blind are leading the blind, and both will surely fall.

The result of faulty and ungodly leadership combined with sufficient time is practically inevitable. In 9:17–18, the extent of the corruption is outlined, and some very serious charges are leveled against the people: (1) “Every one is profane and an evil-doer,” and (2) “every mouth speaketh folly.” In other words, the people are guilty of godless thought, godless actions, and godless speech all of which are the inevitable expressions of evil hearts.³ So prevalent and wanton is the wickedness of Israel that Isaiah uses the figure of a raging fire to describe how it has spread from individuals (“briars and thorns”) to consume the whole nation (“thickets of the forest”).

A principal manifestation of the depravity which characterizes the people is seen in the eventual breakdown of even the most fundamental human ties and affections. Brother will turn

against brother in fits of what can accurately be referred to as national cannibalism (9:19–20). The two tribes of the northern kingdom which should have been closest (Ephraim and Manasseh) will seek to devour one another. Their mutual enmity and strife will be surpassed only by their hatred for Judah, their brethren to the south (9:20–21).⁴ This prophecy, at least in part, is borne out in the record of 2 Kings 15.

Finally, perhaps as a corollary to the previous declaration concerning the leaders in general (9:16), Isaiah takes aim at judicial and legislative leaders in particular. In the first two verses of chapter 10, a woe (i.e., an impending judgment) is pronounced against those “that decree unrighteous decrees” and those who “write perverseness.” Evidently the entire legal system is guilty of perverting the very things it has been charged with protecting and promoting. Justice, liberty, and purity are now the exceptions rather than the rule of law. The magnitude of the problem is seen in its effects on the people at large. One of the crucial functions of the legal system was to protect the rights of those classes of people who were powerless to protect themselves: the poor and the needy. Yet the needy are turned aside from justice, and the poor are denied their right to be heard. If this condition were not serious enough, Divine wrath is further incurred by the fact that widows and orphans are the favorite prey of powerful judges and lawyers. Those who are most helpless and innocent are being oppressed, robbed, and taken for everything they have (10:1–2).

Further Punishment Promised

As noted earlier, the people of Israel have already experienced some degree of chastisement from God which was designed to correct them, but the message has gone completely unheeded (9:10, 13). Their wickedness has simply multiplied and expressed itself in numerous offensive ways. Hence the refrain which characterizes the first part of this passage: Because of the sin and impenitence of the people, God’s “anger is not turned away, but His hand is stretched out still.” That the hand of God is stretched out to smite will be made abundantly clear, as each denunciation of sin by the Israelites is followed by the promise of further punishment.

In 9:11–12, God responds to the arrogant and stubborn spirit of the people. Various enemies will be “set up on high” and will be “stirred up” against Israel. There seems to be little doubt that the term *adversaries of Rezin* is a reference to Assyria (cf. 2 Kin. 16:1–9), but the interpretation of the phrase, *the Syrians before and the Philistines behind*, is somewhat more complicated. It is difficult to be certain from the sentence structure whether these are the

enemies of Israel or of Rezin. If they are understood as the enemies of Rezin, then it is difficult to fit the Syrians into that role. If, on the other hand, the enemies are those of Ephraim⁵, there is no record in scripture of the Philistines attacking Ephraim. Regardless of the specific identification of these enemies, however, the significance of the prophecy is still crystal clear. Israel will be set upon from all sides,⁶ as if by ravenous beasts, and will be devoured without mercy.

Even in the face of these pitiable circumstances, though, the people remain blindly impenitent. For this reason, the Lord, through Isaiah, announces a new level of punishment. In proverbial language it is now promised that “head and tail, palm-branch and rush” will be “cut-off” (9:14). Isaiah identifies the head as a reference to the elderly and honorable, those who would be the leaders in society. The tail refers to false prophets and calls to mind the image of a fawning dog, wagging its tail in approval of its master (9:15). Both figures employed in this passage refer to two extremes and thereby appear to include everything that lies in between.⁷ In other words, all classes of people (highest to lowest) are to be destroyed “in one day” (i.e., suddenly or at once, v. 14).

As if to emphasize the severity of this plague, Isaiah provides further detail concerning its implications in 9:17. The word translated *young men* in this verse usually denotes those “who are chosen,” particularly as warriors. The significance of God’s not rejoicing over this group is that the symbols of Israel’s hope, strength, vitality, and security will be cut off, without God’s blessing.⁸ In this condition, the people will be extremely vulnerable to their enemies. Furthermore, God’s judgment in this instance will be so extensive that even widows and orphans will be left unprotected. The most casual student of the Bible must concede that God has always displayed a special type of affection and concern for these classes of people (cf. Deu. 10:18; Psalms 10:14, 18; 68:5; Jer. 49:11; Hos. 14:3). Apparently, however, the level of ungodliness in Israel at this time (as discussed earlier) so closely approximated that in the world before the flood (cf. Gen. 6:5–6) that God considered no one worth sparing. So, we read that God will “have [no] compassion on their fatherless and widows.”

In 9:18–21, Isaiah employs the figure of a raging fire to describe both the crime of the people (unchecked wickedness) and the resulting punishment (being consumed by their own wickedness). In a sense, the crime and the punishment are the same. The general message of this passage is that, because the people persist in evil, they will be allowed to experience the ultimate consequences of their behavior. Israel has ignited a fire that is now out of control. The

people are described “as the fuel of [the] fire” (v. 19), each contributing to the general destruction just as individual pieces of wood in a fire help to consume one another.⁹ The wrath of God has now reached the point where He is willing to let this fire rage on until “the land [is] burnt up [ASV fn., darkened]” (v. 19).

The specific conditions which Isaiah is communicating by this imagery are now made clear. Civil war is rampant in the northern kingdom. As noted already, it is difficult here to make a clear distinction between the crime of the people and God’s judgment against them. Their moral and spiritual deficiencies are so severe and so extensive that the natural affections and allegiances which brethren ought to have for one another have been replaced by malevolence. In 9:20-21, the people, particularly Manasseh and Ephraim,¹⁰ are depicted as insatiable savages, lashing out in cold-blooded fury, and seeking to devour each other.

In the first part of chapter 10, the focus of God’s chastisement shifts from internal strife to an external threat, “which shall come from far.” Although the identity of this threat is not immediately revealed, the bulk of the chapter clearly indicates the nation of Assyria. After castigating those responsible for the perversion of the legal system, Isaiah poses some very piercing questions concerning a “day of visitation” (v. 3). This phrase appears several times in the Old Testament and almost always denotes (as in this case) a day of judgment or day of reckoning. The idea conveyed is similar to that of a master returning home to require a thorough accounting of his servants’ behavior. The promise of punishment is made clearer by the fact that the prophet’s questions are somewhat rhetorical, designed to provoke serious thought. The message implicit in these questions is that, **when** the day of visitation comes (**not if** it comes), the people will be powerless to protect themselves from the desolation God will bring. There will be no one to whom they can run for help because they have already rejected their only true help—God. As a result, all that they consider so valuable will be forfeited. There will be no place safe enough to deposit their treasures, no opportunity to retrieve them later. The only choice open to the people seems to be between two great evils. After clearly implying what their fate will be in the coming desolation, Isaiah spells it out vividly in verse 4, where...

...A pitiful scene is introduced: prisoners, awaiting sentence, crouch in abject fear in a small prison, some lying hopelessly on the ground, others huddled above them. Or...they may be likened to people who seek, of all places, to take refuge among the corpses on the field of battle...Could a more dismal prospect be imagined?¹¹

The Role, Character, and Eventual Judgment of Assyria

God's Use of Assyria

Beginning in 10:5, God's attention (and Isaiah's prophecy) is turned to the nation of Assyria and its place in God's plan. In verses 5 and 6, Isaiah makes it plain that God is in complete control of people and events throughout history (cf. Pro. 21:1). The great nation of Assyria is personified and described in no uncertain terms as a mere tool in the hands of an all-powerful God. The figures employed by Isaiah represent Assyria as "the rod of [God's] anger" and as wielding "the staff" of God's indignation. In either case, Assyria is the instrument and God is the active agent.

God has a specific job for Assyria to accomplish, namely the chastisement of Israel, who is now described as "a profane nation" and "the people of my wrath." Assyria will be sent with a charge not only "to take the spoil, and to take the prey" (i.e., to plunder the land and to enslave the people), but to trample the people (ASV fn., "to make them a treading down") as if they were "mire" in the streets. Concerning the significance of this expression, Hailey notes:

To the modern generation, accustomed to paved roads and streets and rarely venturing into byways, this may not mean much; but to the older generation who remember what it was like to tread through slushy, miry, muddy streets, the picture is meaningful indeed. In such a quagmire of filth and slime the people would be trodden down.¹²

Assyria's Arrogance

In 10:7-15, the prophet presents a detailed discussion of the national character of Assyria. To begin with, Isaiah emphasizes that understanding and acknowledging the will of God are not prerequisites to playing a role in the fulfillment of that will. Assyria is being used as an instrument for God's purposes, but Assyria's thoughts and intentions are completely foreign to this concept ("...he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so," v. 7). Assyria supposes itself to be engaged in the wholesale devastation and conquest of surrounding nations purely for its own interests.

Since Assyria has divorced itself from the notion that its accomplishments are in any way related to the will of God, the natural conclusion is that all the credit belongs to Assyria. The arrogance resulting from this frame of mind is manifested in a blatant fashion as Isaiah provides a sample of Assyria's thought processes ("For he saith..." v. 8). A series of boasts is put forth which, to the Assyrian mind, provides the assurance of continued success (vv. 8-11). It is claimed, first, that Assyria's princes are all kings. This may indicate that many of the kings of

conquered nations were serving in the Assyrian army. In other words, those that are now princes in Assyria (subjects of the Assyrian monarchy) have formerly been kings in their own right. Another possible meaning is that the throne of Assyria has been elevated to such a degree that those in command under it are as great, in terms of power and majesty, as the kings of other countries.¹³ In either case, this boast reveals an extreme level of pride and self-confidence on the part of Assyria.

The bragging continues with the enumeration of six cities, all of which have been conquered by Assyria (v. 9). The line of reasoning is plain enough: Not even the strongest of cities has been able to withstand Assyria's might. Calno, Hamath, and Samaria have all succumbed just as Carchemish, Arpad, and Damascus have. What can possibly prevent this trend from continuing? It is interesting and perhaps significant that the listing of these cities moves geographically from the northeast to the southwest, drawing ever nearer to Judah and Jerusalem.¹⁴

In verses 10 and 11 the argument is developed further, and Assyria voices a specific threat designed to terrorize Jerusalem. As was common among ancient heathen nations, Assyria subscribes to the view that military performance is directly related to the strength or weakness of a nation's gods. That Assyria has triumphed over other nations with little or no difficulty is considered a sign that Assyria's gods (idols) must be superior. Since the idols and images of the kingdoms already conquered were far more impressive (in design and in quantity) than those of Jerusalem and Samaria (i.e., they "did excel them," v. 10), Assyria assumes that "Jerusalem and her idols" will fall just as easily (v. 11). The obvious and fundamental flaw in this thinking is its blasphemous nature. Assyria does not entertain the possibility of failure because it considers the God of Israel no different from common, heathen idols.

It would probably be difficult to find a more forceful display of the arrogance which characterized Assyria than the boasting of verses 13 and 14. As noted already, this is to be expected since Assyria has no inkling that God is involved in its successes. The pompous claims are now made in much more explicit language which attributes Assyria's position solely to its own strength, wisdom, and understanding. Assyria takes obvious pride in its ability to rearrange international boundaries at will (cf. 2 Kin. 17:24ff),¹⁵ and to increase its own wealth by deposing kings and plundering kingdoms (v. 13). Verse 14 is somewhat repetitive, but an interesting figure of speech is now employed to emphasize how helpless Assyria considers the

rest of the world. Nations and their riches are depicted as eggs in an unguarded nest. All Assyria must do is reach in and take what it desires. Not even verbal resistance will be offered.

As a final note regarding the character of the Assyrians, Isaiah provides a potent reminder of the true (i.e., Divine) perspective of things. In verse 15, Assyria is cast in the absurd light of an inanimate object, a tool which considers itself better than the intelligent being that wields it. The point is well made that Assyria has no cause for boasting because, in reality, it is nothing more than an instrument. Its rise to power has been possible only because it was compatible with the fulfillment of God's will.

God's Judgment of Assyria

The arrogant and blasphemous spirit of Assyria has not gone unnoticed by God. In verse 12, the prophet reveals that, once God's purpose has been accomplished, Assyria will experience its own "day of visitation," and will be called to account for its conduct. God fully intends to punish the self-glorifying words and the self-serving deeds which are the product (i.e., "the fruit") of Assyria's outrageous pride. Barnes sums it up well by observing:

In this verse we see (1) That God will accomplish all the purposes of which he designs to make wicked men the instruments. Their schemes shall be successful just so far as they may contribute to his plans, and no further. (2) When that is done, they are completely in his power, and under his control.... (3) The fact that they have been made to further the plans of God, and to execute his designs, will not free them from deserved punishment. They meant not so, and they will be dealt with according to their intentions....¹⁶

Verses 16-19 provide some detail as to how God will deal with Assyria. The adverb *therefore* (v. 16) is highly significant, as it indicates that what follows (Assyria's fall) is a direct result of what has come before (Assyria's pride). The great nation will be reminded, of its frailty and mortality. Isaiah uses a variety of figures to describe some type of plague which God will inflict upon Assyria. The healthy and prosperous army, which has grown "fat" on the spoils of victory, will suddenly waste away as though stricken with some grave illness.¹⁷ All of Assyria's material wealth and power and associated pride ("his glory") will have a fire kindled beneath it. Everything in which Assyria has placed its confidence will be devoured, and the source of the flame is the same God Who serves as "the light of Israel" (cf. Deu. 4:24 and Isa. 60:19). With considerable literary flair, the prophet conveys the extent of Assyria's punishment. All classes of people, from "his thorns and his briers" to "the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field," will be consumed. "Both soul and body" (i.e., the whole man) will be destroyed (vv. 17-18). At the apparent apex of its power, the army of Assyria will suddenly be reduced to almost nothing. At

the conclusion of the chapter, Isaiah provides a “play-by-play” account of Assyria’s march toward Jerusalem. The people of Israel are in terror at the apparent invincibility of this enemy. Yet, just when it seems nothing can stop Assyria, God “will lop the boughs,” and “cut down the thickets of the forest ...” (vv. 28–34). It is quite plausible to suggest that this prophecy is fulfilled in the slaying of the 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night by the angel of God (cf. 2 Kin. 19:32–36, Isa. 37:33–37). In keeping with the image of a forest, Isaiah concludes this section by declaring that “the remnant of the trees” from Assyria’s once great army will be so few in number that even a child will have no trouble counting them (10:19).

Israel’s Reaction to God’s Chastening

In 10:20–27, the attention is turned back toward Israel and how God’s judgment has affected it. It should not be forgotten that within this prophecy the overriding design of all the afflictions experienced by God’s people is to turn them back and to cause them to seek their God again. The hope of salvation through the Messiah is dependent upon the children of Israel (at least some fraction of them) remaining sanctified, set apart for a special purpose.

Once God has completed His work with and upon Assyria, His objective will be accomplished. A “remnant of Israel,” the ones who have escaped the destruction, will have learned their lesson. They will no longer lean upon the heathen nations, “...whom in times past they frequently called to their assistance (cf. 2 Chr. 28:16–23)...All these turned from helping them, to smiting them, when the supposed helper found it to his advantage to turn upon his ally.”¹⁸ The penitent few will have learned that God alone, “Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel,” is worthy of their complete and sincere (“in truth”) trust (v. 20).

The preeminent theme of verses 20–22 seems to be that, of all the myriad descendants which were promised to Abraham (cf. Gen. 22:17; 32:12), only the smallest fraction will survive with their lives and their faith intact. It is interesting to note that the declaration, “a remnant shall return ...” (v. 21) is a fulfillment of the promise implied by the name of Isaiah’s son, Shear-jashub (cf. 7:3).¹⁹ The reason for this grave outcome is that the nation of Israel, by its rebellious and profane conduct, has merited an “overflowing” of God’s righteous indignation. God’s flawless sense of justice demands and has “determined” a level of destruction so thorough that the Jewish nation will be virtually annihilated (vv. 22–23).

Finally, for the sake of the “faithful few,” Isaiah offers words of reassurance and hope in verses 24–27. Because the impending judgment is a necessary result and expression of God’s

righteousness, those who are truly devoted (“... my people”) will have no need to fear. In due time, God’s purpose for Assyria (i.e., a rod of punishment for Israel) will be accomplished, and His attention will be turned toward the destruction of that nation (v. 24–25). In verse 26, the prophet describes the fate of Assyria in historical terms that the faithful Jewish mind could especially appreciate. The references to the “slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb” (cf. Jud. 7) and the destruction of Egypt at the Red Sea (cf. Exo. 14) are calculated to evoke a number of comforting thoughts: (1) Assyria’s defeat will be final and absolute; (2) the nature of this defeat will be such as could only be accomplished by God; and (3) God’s eternal principle of reaping what one sows applies also to Assyria.

When the nation of Assyria has been dealt with once and for all, it will be to the remnant of God’s people like the lifting of a great, oppressive burden. Furthermore, as if to emphasize the completeness of their deliverance, the instrument of that burden (the yoke) will be destroyed as well. There is varied opinion over the meaning of the phrase, “by reason of fatness” (v. 27). Because the word translated “fatness” may also be rendered as “oil,” some commentators have suggested that it refers specifically to one who is anointed (e.g., Hezekiah or, ultimately, the Messiah).²⁰ It seems more natural to this writer, however, to understand this phrase as a general reference to Israel’s essential role in God’s scheme of redemption. God could not and would not allow His people to be choked out of existence by their enemies because of the promise which was made to Abraham (Gen. 22:18) and fulfilled in the Christ (Gal. 3:15–16). God’s will, and those content to adhere to it, will ultimately prevail.

Current Applications

The book of Isaiah, as does any inspired work, contains principles of truth which are timeless because they are intimately linked with the nature and character of God. As such, these principles have relevance and application in any time period and in any culture. I will discuss a few of these in closing.

1. When all is said and done, God is in control. The fate of this world, (all its inhabitants and all their most carefully laid plans) is in His hand (cf. Jam. 4:13–15). Regardless of how matters may appear to us, His perfect will cannot be denied or thwarted indefinitely (cf. 2 Pet. 3:3ff). If our hope is to overcome sin and death, we must be found to be on God’s side, even if physical death is the price (cf. Rev. 2:10).
2. The Divine aim of chastisement is, first and foremost, to bring about repentance, to turn souls back to their God (cf. 1 Cor. 5:5). God’s desire is always that our trials turn us toward Him

(for guidance, if not forgiveness) rather than away from Him. Furthermore, chastisement is often the only way in which impurities may be removed from our lives.

3. An unprecedented “day of visitation” is still in store for this world (cf. Heb. 9:27; 2 Pet. 3:9–12) in which a thorough accounting will be required (cf. Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10). It is extremely relevant, therefore, for us to consider just where our “glory” (i.e., treasure) is, and with whom we will entrust it for safe keeping in that day (cf. Mat. 6:19–21). If we give no thought to righteousness, self-control, or the judgment to come (Acts 24:25), there will be no place of refuge for our souls.
4. There is still a prevalent tendency for man to take far too much credit for his achievements and to consider himself equal to the God who made him. The attitude that, “...By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom: for I have understanding ...” (Isa. 10:13) is an almost perfect summation of the tenets of Humanism. This trait, which is so pervasive in our society, still implies blasphemy and is still particularly loathsome to God (cf. Pro. 6:16–17).
5. It has always been (and continues to be) only the “remnant,” only the minority, who **consistently** remain faithful to God and His will. In relative terms, very few people ever learn that the only object worthy of our absolute trust and devotion is God, and that anything else presents a false hope. The old argument that popularity is the primary measure of success for God’s people has never had any basis in the Scriptures. There have only been two occasions in all of history when the majority of the people in this world were truly faithful to God: before Eve’s sin in the garden and immediately following the flood. It should come as no surprise then that our Lord promised that only the “few” will find their way to Heaven (cf. Mat. 7:13–14; 21–23).
6. God is, by nature, the perfect combination of justice and mercy. The fact that His love is infinite does not imply that sin can be excused or ignored. When God determines that punishment is required, however, the degree of retribution is infinitely fair, fitting, and appropriate to man’s needs, abilities, and inabilities (cf. Rom. 11:22).

Endnotes

1. All scripture quotations are from the American Standard Version.
2. George Rawlinson, *Isaiah in The Pulpit Commentary*, ed. H.D.M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1950) 10:167.
3. Homer Hailey, *A Commentary on Isaiah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985) p. 108.
4. Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1965) 1:355.
5. Hailey, p. 107.
6. In 9: 12, the words *before* and *behind* may also be rendered *on the east* and *on the west* (ASV fn.).
7. H.C. Leupold, *Exposition of Isaiah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1968) p. 192.
8. Albert Barnes, *Notes on the Old Testament: Isaiah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1950) 1:198.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 199.
10. Being the descendants of the sons of Joseph, these two tribes should have had an especially strong relationship.
11. Leupold, p. 199.
12. Hailey, p. 113.
13. Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1712) 4:66.

14. Young, p. 362.
15. This was a particularly blasphemous claim, since it ascribed to Assyria the type of authority only God possessed (cf. Deu. 32:8; Dan. 4:17; Acts 17:26).
16. Barnes, p. 298.
17. The latter part of 10:18 ("... as when a standard-bearer fainteth") may also be rendered, "... as when a sick man pineth away" (ASV fn.).
18. Leupold, p. 207.
19. The alternate rendering of "Shear-jashub" is "a remnant shall return" (ASV fn.).
20. C.F. Rawlinson, p. 189, for example.

[**Note** Andy McClish wrote this MS for the Third Annual Houston College of the Bible Lectureship, hosted by the Spring Church of Christ, Spring, TX, June 18-21, 1995. He delivered it orally and it was published in the lectureship book, *Isaiah, Volume. 1, Chapters 1-39*, ed David P. Brown.]

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