

Text: Isaiah 9:1-10:4

Title: God's anger ends because a child is born

Time: 7/27/2025 am

Place: NBBC

Introduction: We all know what an earthquake is. Last week I was concerned for family members who live on Guam because of the tsunami warning related to the earthquake off the coast of Russia. Thankfully, they were fine.

Serious NFL fans know what the Beast Quake was. During a Wild Card playoff game against the New Orleans Saints, Seattle Seahawk running back Marshall Lynch scored a 67-yard rushing touchdown to secure the win for his team. The run is remembered as the Beast Quake because to get the 67 yards, Lynch had to break nine tackles. He ran through defenders like the crashing tsunami of an earthquake.

One reporter described a part of the run this way: "Jabari Greer wrapped his arms around Lynch's waist at the 49-yard line, and received a 4-yard ride before unceremoniously tumbling to the turf.

"Which is when Tracy Porter ate the most iconic stiff-arm in NFL history. As the Qwest Field crowd came irreparably unglued, the 185-pound corner attempted to wrangle a loose lion by tugging on its fur. Instead, Lynch launched Porter five yards into the stratosphere, then skirted through defensive lineman Alex Brown's diving arms along the sideline. He veered inside, evaded a helpless Roman Harper, and somersaulted backward — exalted — into the end zone."

It turns out there was a seismometer across the street from Qwest Field, and when the fans cheered the running back's run, it recorded a ground disturbance equal to a magnitude 1 or 2 earthquake. For that reason, the play is remembered as the NFL's Beast Quake.

I mention this historic play because there are four verses in our passage that sound to me like a similar but divine stiff arm (9:12, 9:17, 9:21, 10:4 – “For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still”). Clearly, that phrase is the theme of the second half of our passage. God is angry, and like a tsunami from an earthquake the hand of His wrath is stretched out against the nation of Israel. These four paragraphs of judgments are called the word of the Lord sent against Jacob and fallen on Israel (9:8).

But before we learn about this anger-sent and hand-of-wrath-still-stretched-out, Isaiah speaks of a great light, a great multiplication, and a great joy in Israel. This light, multiplication, and joy come through the gift of a great Child. Clearly, the message of the passage is that God’s anger ceases and His stretched out hand relents because of this Child. My title this morning is “God’s anger ends because a child is born.”

So our passage has two parts, the first hopeful and the second seemingly hopeless, and because I like to end on a hopeful note, we will take the second half of the passage first, and the first half second. We will examine first the causes of God’s unending anger (9:8 – 10:5) and then the Cause of the end of God’s anger (9:1-7).

I. The causes of God’s unending anger (9:8 – 10:4).

Application: Another reason for taking these verses first is that they describe what the passage calls an earlier time (v. 1). I would translate the end of verse one in a way that is similar to the ESV: “Now [is] the earlier time He [God] diminishes the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but at the later [time] He shall glorify the way of the sea on the side of the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.”

So, there is first an earlier time, the time that Isaiah calls “now,” the time of the days of Isaiah’s life and prophecy. It is

a time when the northernmost tribes of Israel, Naphtali and Zebulun, would be diminished, what the KJV calls *lightly afflicted*. The idea is that they would be afflicted in a disrespectful way by the Lord.

Specifically, the borders of Naphtali and Zebulun would not be respected by their enemy Assyria to the north. One commentator explains, “These areas were the first to fall to Assyria. The people were deported, and their lands, with Gilead in Transjordan, became three Assyrian provinces” (Motyer). The time of Isaiah’s *now* was the early days of God’s judgment, and Isaiah tells us four reasons why God’s anger was not withdrawn in his day, and why God’s hand was still stretched out.

1. Judgment was coming because of the pride of positive thinking (vv. 8-12).

Illustration: The first home Maureen and I owned was a fixer-upper in the city of Danbury, CT. One of the features that needed fixing (which we never got to) was an issue with moisture in the basement and the effect that had on the brick foundation of the house. At times, we would have rivers in the basement, and all that moisture had caused many of the bricks used on the top of the foundation to begin to melt away into dust. The fieldstone on the bottom of the foundation was fine, but the bricks were crumbling.

That is the analogy Isaiah uses as he describes the Israelites’ faith in the power of their positive thinking. They were saying, “The bricks are crumbling, but we will rebuild with fieldstone. Sycamores are cut down, but we will plant bigger and better cedars.” Those statements are prideful because they fail to recognize that the nation’s problem was not the poor quality of its building materials. The nation’s problem was its rebellion against God and its sin. In the end, it is this God who determines whether the enemies of a nation succeed or fail

(vv. 11-12). A nation's success must begin with Him. That is certainly where our nation's success began years ago.

So the question for our nation today and our lives this morning is not whether can we make America great again with trade deals, foreign investment, lower inflation and interest rates, and more defense spending. The question is whether we can make her great again by returning to the Lord that He might be pleased to bless us again. Will we experience the true revival of hearts that we need, that will fill our churches with sincere worshipers of Christ once more?

2. Judgment was coming because of the dearth of godly leadership (vv. 13-17).

Illustration: Everyone knows that the tail is a body part that follows the dog. It does not lead the dog. And it is that body part that wags only if the dog is happy.

Application: Isaiah criticizes many groups as ungodly in this paragraph – both the ancient and honorable and the young men, even widows and orphans – that needy group for whom the Lord normally has great compassion and concern (see 10:2). He says of them all, “Every one is an hypocrite and an evildoer, and every mouth speaketh folly” (v. 17).

But as I read the paragraph, it is hard to miss that Isaiah holds his fellow prophets especially responsible for the dearth of godly leadership in Israel. He notes that they were speaking lies, and he calls them the tail of the nation. As the nation's tail, they followed the nation in its sin and idolatry, rather than calling the nation to pursue the Lord (v. 13). As the nation's tail, they wagged when the nation was happy instead of faithfully declaring, “Thus saith the Lord.”

Paul warned about teachers like this in our church age: “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove,

rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. For the time [season] will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” (2 Tim. 4:2-5).

Where shall we find our leaders today? Will there be any among us who seek to be true to the Word of the Lord in a world of hypocrisy and idolatrous disobedience? Every nation needs these leaders to avoid the judgment of this passage.

3. Judgment was coming because wickedness brings destructive division (vv. 18-21).

Application: 2 Kings 15:8ff describes a time in Israel of civil strife, civil war, and the assassination of leaders. The nation’s wickedness became self-destructive. This happened nationally because it happened personally. We can be divided against others due to wickedness, and we can be divided against ourselves due to wickedness. Paul warned, “But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another” (Gal. 5:15). James warns, “A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways” (Jam. 1:8).

No man spares his brother under these conditions (v. 19), because every man forgets who his brothers are. Wicked Americans forget what a fellow-American is. Wicked church members forget what a brother in Christ is. Families break apart as family members forget what it means to be a family due to their wickedness. Will we see how destructive and divisive our own wickedness can be before it is too late?

4. Judgment was coming because the powerful oppressed the powerless (10:1-4).

Application: The conditions described here involve legislation that makes the rich and powerful more rich and powerful and the poor and oppressed more poor and oppressed. In our nation, legislation authorizing deficit spending and promoting inflation does this. Legislation funding abortion does this. Legislation defunding law enforcement does this. What we have come to know as “lawfare” does this.

The pride of positive thinking, a dearth of spiritual leadership, destructive division, and the oppression of the powerless by the powerful – these are some of the causes of God’s unending anger against a sinning nation and people. What could possibly stop this tsunami of the earthquake of God’s wrath? God’s answer – a Child will be born in the latter time.

II. The Cause of the end of God’s anger (9:1 – 9:7).

Application: Last week we took some time to consider the Child’s name. The grammar of v. 6 literally tells us that He calls Himself these names. He does so in word and deed. He is the Wonderful Counselor – whose council is the declaration of omniscience, which works supernatural life-changing miracles. He is the Mighty God – laying claim to the nature of Jehovah God Himself according to Isa. 10:21-22. He is Our Father Forever – who gives believers spiritual life the way Adam gave us physical life, and He is the Prince of Peace – who establishes peace by conquering His enemies either through their willing surrender or by force. We must surrender.

But our passage tells us not only how He names Himself, but also what He does when He is born. These mighty works of His bring an end to God’s anger and cause the outstretched hand of His wrath to finally relent.

1. He brings light to people in darkness (9:2). Have you ever thanked anyone for turning the lights on for you? The Child does that for us when we realize who He truly is.

2. He brings the joy of multiplication (9:3). Have you noticed that it is easier to be joyful at church to the degree the pews are full? The Child saves souls, fills pews, and causes this joy.

3. He brings freedom (9:4-5). The fuel of fire reminds us of the power of Pentecost (Mt. 3:11, Acts 2:3). The freedom comes from revival, not warfare. As the song promises, "Would you be free from the burden of sin? There is power in the blood." The Child can make slaves of sin free from their sin.

4. He brings the rule of righteousness (9:6-7). Isaiah tells us that the Child would be a royal child, a descendant of David who would rule on David's throne, which was in Jerusalem. When the Child was born, wisemen saw His star and inquired, "Where is He who is born King of the Jews?"

However, the King was crucified, not installed on David's throne, when Jesus came the first time. But that will be different when this same Jesus comes again. At His second coming, He shall rule the world from David's throne in Jerusalem. He shall establish finally righteousness in the earth. Once established, that rule of righteousness shall last forever and ever. Satan's dominion here shall finally come to an end.

Conclusion: Our understanding of the mission of this child is incomplete until we grasp the end of verse 7: "The zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall perform this." In Hebrew, the word translated *zeal* refers to *the jealousy of true love*. The one thing that can stop the anger of God against the sinner's sin is His own jealous love for His creatures.

Just like it is not satisfactory to any good husband that his wife should belong to another, it is not satisfactory to the Lord that His creatures should not belong to Him. His jealous love for those who should belong to Him caused Him to set aside His anger and His wrath, to become a Child born in human flesh, and to give Himself up for our salvation.

The Gospel of Matthew quotes Isaiah 9, identifying this Child clearly as Jesus Christ: “Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. . . Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

In response to this act of jealous love for our salvation, will we repent and turn to Him? Will we follow Him faithfully and let Him make us fruitful fishers of men?

“A man came—I think it was actually in Philadelphia—on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction—the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

—David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

Preachers and Preaching