

The Millennium Forecast

The Book of Isaiah

Text

Isaiah 9:1-10:4

Topic

Isaiah expresses God's loving discipline of the Jews in the repeated phrase, "For all this His anger is not turned away, But His hand is stretched out still."

Title

"Talk To The Outstretched Hand"

Sam realized Frodo was setting off alone to Mordor. As Frodo rowed towards the opposite shore, Sam waded out into the River Anduin. It deepened, and he was quickly in trouble because he couldn't swim. Unconscious and sinking, Frodo reached into the water and pulled him into the boat.

Fast forward to Mordor. Inside Mount Doom, Frodo went over the cliff. He was holding on to a ledge by his fingertips. Sam reached down with his hand, and pulled him up.

I'm sure you could recall dozens of scenes in which someone is similarly saved by an outstretched hand.

Four times we read in our text, "But [God's] hand is stretched out still" (v12, 17, 21, 10:4).

God's outstretched hand represents His reaching out to *discipline* the nations of Israel and Judah. The hand that metes out discipline would deliver the Jews if they turned to Him.

Seventh century Israel and Judah refused God's outstretched hand. The LORD would, therefore, mete out national discipline.

I'll organize my comments around two questions: **#1 Are You Firmly In The Grip Of God's Outstretched Hand?**, or **#2 Are You Releasing Your Grip In God's Outstretched Hand?**

#1 - Are You Firmly In The Grip Of God's Outstretched Hand? (9:1-7)

Clint Barton thought he had a firm grip on Natasha Romanoff, but she let go, falling to her heroic death.

There was nothing heroic about seventh century Judah. Their hands were slippery-slimey from immorality and idolatry.

Before we go on, let me mention something. The hand and grip of God in these verses is a metaphor by which we can better comprehend God's national discipline. These verses have nothing to do with the perseverance of individual saints, or saints being "snatched" out of God's hand (John 10:28-29).

Before we see God's discipline, we are given a glimpse of the future. Through the eyes of Isaiah, we see Israel in the Millennial Kingdom on Earth.

Isa 9:1 Nevertheless the gloom *will not be* upon her who *is* distressed, As when at first He lightly esteemed The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, And afterward more heavily oppressed *her*, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, In Galilee of the Gentiles.

Isa 9:2 The 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.

The first chapter of John's Gospel describes Jesus coming to Earth as light shining in the darkness. The light of the world, He means to transfer sinners from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light.

It's great that we have the New Testament to comment on the Old. Matthew 4:15-16 quotes Isaiah, applying it, saying, "Jesus... departed to Galilee, And leaving Nazareth,

He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali..."

Seven hundred years before Jesus came, Isaiah mapped out His early ministry movements. It wasn't in Jerusalem He made His headquarters. It was in an obscure region. Many Gentiles were settled there. Talk about ruining the neighborhood.

His geography tells us a lot about how Jesus would conduct His mission. He would constantly and consistently humble Himself, making "Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:7-8).

Humility should mark our serving. God accomplishes His purposes by unusual methods and through unusual men to assure He gets the glory.

The recent film, *The Jesus Revolution*, depicts the role a young man played in igniting revival that began in Southern California in the late 1960s. The popular actor who portrays Lonnie Frisbee is 48yrs old. *Lonnie Frisbee was 18yrs old when God used him to spark revival what would spread through North America, Europe, and Central America.* The more you learn about him, the more God gets the credit.

Isa 9:3 You 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.

Isaiah saw a regathered and restored, united nation:

- He describes them as "multiplied," meaning growing and expanding in all good things.
- The general attitude that prevails is like the joy of a plentiful "harvest," or a great military victory in which much "spoil" was recovered.

Imagine being a believer in the time of Isaiah. Hope was lost for the northern kingdom of Israel. Things were bleak at best in the south. Nevertheless, a regathered and restored Israel would rejoice in the future kingdom of Messiah.

We should note in passing that Isaiah's verbs are in the past tense. He writes as if it has already happened. That is prophetic language. As far as he was concerned, if it had been shown to him from God, it was as good as done.

Isaiah may have anticipated the regathering and restoration in his lifetime. You remember that Jesus' disciples kept pressing Him about establishing the Kingdom. They were still doing so at the ascension.

The Bible encourages us to anticipate the kingdom:

- "Thy kingdom come" ought to permeate our praying.
- The last words in red in the Bible are, "Surely I am coming quickly" (Revelation 22:20).

Isa 9:4 For You have broken the yoke of his burden And the staff of his shoulder, The rod of his oppressor, As in the day of Midian.

"Yoke," "staff," and "rod" illustrate the nation being oppressed by a succession of Gentile nations. Midian were a people who oppressed the Jews in the time of the Judges. God raised-up Gideon to defeat them by putting a Bible in every hotel room. Seriously, Gideon was a goof, but God used him to reveal light in the darkness, literally, thereby scattering an army many times more powerful.

Isaiah passes over the centuries between the first and second comings of Jesus. He sees all burdens of oppression fully, finally lifted from Israel.

Isa 9:5 For every warrior's sandal from the noisy battle, And garments rolled in blood, Will be used for burning *and* fuel of fire.

Cortés was a very, very, bad man. When he arrived in what is today Mexico, his soldiers were upset. To 'motivate' them, he burned the ships.

Burning weapons, voluntarily, means there will be 'war no more.' It's mind-boggling since mankind has always been at war. There are currently more than twenty active global conflicts.

How will Israel, of all nations the most despised, finally enjoy peace? "A Child [was] born."

Isa 9:6 For 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.

A "Child is born" who was first a "Son" Who could be "given." The Son existed *before* He was miraculously given to be conceived in a woman's womb and born. This can only, uniquely, marvelously, be Jesus.

He will bear all the weight of human government. We agree with the exclamation of the seventh-trumpet angel in the Book of the Revelation.

He shouts, "The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" (11:15).

Five "names" are given Him. How difficult must it have been to choose five! Scholars say there are a minimum of 200 biblical names and titles for Jesus.

The list starts with "Wonderful." It is not a description of the type of Counselor Jesus is. It is a stand-alone name.

Look at the names that come after. "Wonderful" and "Counselor." "Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace," belong to Jesus uniquely. There is no other "Mighty God," "Everlasting Father," or "Prince of Peace."

"Wonderful" and "Counselor" are uniquely Jesus as well.

There is no other "Wonderful." It almost breaks my mind (in a good way) to think about this. Whatever happens, I can honestly say in my spirit, "Lord, You are Wonderful." I can say that because I know He is working all things together for my good. What is happening to me may be terrible. But if I believe God is sovereign, in charge, that He loves me with everlasting love, then He is "Wonderful" in my abounding, or my being abased; in my blessings, or in my buffetings. Job knew this when he said, "The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD" (1:21).

One of the modern versions translates "Counselor," "adviser." No, no, no. He isn't giving advice for you to weigh. He's not like Lucy, in her psychiatric booth, charging Charlie Brown a nickel. Jesus *is* "Counselor," not just someone who counsels, whose counsel I might accept or reject. The Counselor constantly, directly, counsels Christians by the indwelling Holy Spirit. *No one else is capable of that.*

He is "Mighty God." Strong's Concordance says that the word for "God" is a word that can be used of *any deity*, even an idol. There are a lot of supernatural persons mentioned in the Bible, and probably more that aren't. Some of them are even called 'gods,' but with a lower case 'g.' None of them is "Mighty God." Only the God-Head,

the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are Mighty God. The outcome of human history, and of our lives individually, is never in doubt or danger.

He is "Everlasting Father." I thought the Father was the Father? He is, and we must not confuse the Persons of the Tri-une God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

A better translation would be, "Father of Eternity." Question: Who is the father of the United States? That's right - George Washington. Jesus is the unique "Father of Eternity" in that sense.

It never gets old to say there can be no peace without the "Prince of Peace." On the Cross, by His substitutionary sacrifice, Jesus made peace with sinful humanity (Colossians 1:19-20). Believers will enjoy that peace forever.

Isa 9:7 Of the increase of *His* government and peace *There will be* no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

We talk about political parties having a 'platform,' and the 'planks' that constitute their platform.

Jesus doesn't run for office, and He will never need re-election. But we can see a sort of platform in verse seven.

With apologies to Ronald Reagan, Jesus' government will be Big Government. He will be over all the nations of Earth. There will be no so-called separation between the spiritual and the state.

There will be no religions or philosophies or psychologies or political parties competing for mankind's devotion.

Remember the huge move it was to relocate the American Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem? It took place, not coincidentally, May 14, 2018, the 70th anniversary of the creation of the modern State of Israel. Jesus will move the government of Earth to Jerusalem, to King David's throne. It will fulfill the Davidic Covenant, which unconditionally promises Israel that a descendant of his will rule from his throne forever.

A 'plank,' maybe the only one needed, will be Righteousness. Isaiah doesn't use that word; he uses "judgment" and "justice." If you have just judgments every time, that is righteousness.

"Read my lips," George H. W. Bush famously invited us, then said, "No new taxes." As Dana Carvey would say, "Not gonna happen."

Jesus' forever Kingdom will not need taxation. His own "zeal" will power and prosper His rule.

Later in Isaiah we will read, "For I, the LORD your God, will hold your right hand, Saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you' " (41:13).

God grips you, Christian, like a parent holding the hand of a toddler crossing a busy street.

 ***Put your hand in the hand of the man from Galilee*** 

#2 - Are You Releasing Your Grip In God's Outstretched hand? (9:9-10:4)

Clint Barton thought he had a firm grip on Natasha Romanoff, but she let go, falling to her heroic death.

There was nothing heroic about seventh century Judah. They were way beyond letting go. Their hands were kept busy with immorality and idolatry.

Isaiah presents four cycles of discipline, marked by the repetition of, "For all this His anger is not turned away, But His hand *is* stretched out still."

Isa 9:8 The Lord sent a word against Jacob, And it has fallen on Israel.

Isa 9:9 All the people will know - Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria - Who say in pride and arrogance of heart:

Isa 9:10 "The bricks have fallen down, But we will rebuild with hewn stones; The sycamores are cut down, But we will replace *them* with cedars."

Isa 9:11 Therefore the LORD shall set up The adversaries of Rezin [Reason] against him, And spur his enemies on,

Isa 9:12 The Syrians before and the Philistines behind; And they shall devour Israel with an open mouth. For all this His anger is not turned away, But His hand *is* stretched out still.

“Jacob,” “Israel,” and “Ephraim,” were all names for the ten tribes in the north. They had ignored God’s warnings that He would use surrounding nations to humble them. In pride and arrogance of heart, they wanted no help from the LORD.

“The bricks have fallen down, But we will rebuild with hewn stones; The sycamores are cut down, But we will replace *them* with cedars.”

They said, essentially, that without God, they could & would *Build Back Better*.

Have you heard that somewhere before? It first emerged as a summary of the efforts of the United Nations to impose its agenda on the world. More recently, it was Joe Biden’s campaign slogan. Other organizations, e.g., the World Economic Forum, and the World Bank, use it.

The *Build Back Better* adherents have as their modest goal to be planet Earth’s saviors. I’d say it qualifies as “pride, and arrogance of heart” (v9).

We aren’t going to save Earth. We are the one’s who need to be saved. God will restore Creation.

“For all this His anger is not turned away, But His hand *is* stretched out still.”

Commentators tend to explain the outstretched hand as the promise of further discipline. I’d say it is the prospect of further discipline, **if** they do not reach out to God’s hand. The hand of discipline is the hand of love. Isn’t that the point of His discipline? He promised repentance would deliver a nation (Jeremiah 18:7-10). His “hand” is “stretched out” to deliver you, or to continue your discipline.

Isa 9:13 For the people do not turn to Him who strikes them, Nor do they seek the LORD of hosts.

Isa 9:14 Therefore the LORD will cut off head and tail from Israel, Palm branch and bulrush in one day.

Isa 9:15 The elder and honorable, he *is* the head; The prophet who teaches lies, he *is* the tail.

Isa 9:16 For the leaders of this people cause *them* to err, And *those who are* led by them are destroyed.

Isa 9:17 Therefore the Lord will have no joy in their young men, Nor have mercy on their fatherless and widows; For everyone *is* a hypocrite and an evildoer, And every mouth speaks folly. For all this His anger is not turned away, But His hand *is* stretched out still.

J. Alec Motyer says of this passage, "*Rejection of the LORD led to reliance on human wisdom for national guidance, but their leaders were 'misleaders,' and moral decay spread throughout society.*"

Moral decay. We often define biblical sexual morality. It is, at its foundation, sex between one biological male, and one biological female, in a monogamous, heterosexual union, having made a covenant of companionship to remain faithful to God and each other for as long as they both shall live.

How are we doin'? *Not good.* We are being inundated with a cesspool overflow of sexual immorality. It's been said that the new morality is the old immorality. God is, and will continue, to discipline nations because of it.

Isa 9:18 For wickedness burns as the fire; It shall devour the briars and thorns, And kindle in the thickets of the forest; They shall mount up *like* rising smoke.

Isa 9:19 Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts The land is burned up, And the people shall be as fuel for the fire; No man shall spare his brother.

Isa 9:20 And he shall snatch on the right hand And be hungry; He shall devour on the left hand And not be satisfied; Every man shall eat the flesh of his own arm.

Isa 9:21 Manasseh *shall devour* Ephraim, and Ephraim Manasseh; Together they *shall be* against Judah. For all this His anger is not turned away, But His hand *is* stretched out still.

Their wickedness is likened to a raging forrest fire. They start small, but grow when fueled, consuming everything. The refusal to repent is kindling for greater sin, until it becomes life-dominating.

Their lustful cravings are compared to a hunger for meat that is so overpowering they would consume their own flesh. You don't need to be a cannibal to consume your own flesh. Sin will do it for you:

- Drug overdose deaths have reached a historic high, devastating families and communities. More than 104,000 Americans died due to a drug overdose in the twelve month period ending in September 2021.
- Collectively, smoking, alcohol and illicit drug use kills 11.8 million people each year. This is more than the number of deaths from all cancers.

Isa 10:1 Woe to those who decree unrighteous decrees, Who write misfortune, *Which* they have prescribed

Isa 10:2 To 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.

Isa 10:3 What will you do in the day of punishment, And in the desolation *which* will come from afar? To whom will you flee for help? And where will you leave your glory?

Isa 10:4 Without 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.

These issues would fall under the topic of Social Justice. You hear that term a lot today. It's a hot topic. Many of the issues being discussed are different than those in seventh century. Still, social *injustice* invites God's discipline upon a nation.

It's pretty hard to lift someone on to a ledge with one hand grasping theirs.

In the spiritual realm of salvation or damnation, Jesus is the only Person who can pull you up from the depths of sin into Heaven.

He can because He was the God-man who was lifted up on the Cross, then raised from the dead, to exchange His righteousness for your sin.

What must you do to be saved? Believe on the Lord, Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.