

The Just shall live by Faith

Volume 1 - Study 17 Seek the Lord of strength above Associating Yourselves.

C. Ronald Johnson, Christian Wilderness Press: **Isaiah 8:9 Associate yourselves, O ye [my] people, and ye shall be broken in pieces...gird yourselves and ye shall be broken in pieces.**

These are brief studies, not
“teachings” or “doctrines”.

Volume 1, Study 17

8:9) ‘Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces...’

Long before the time of Isaiah -

Ephraim and Manasseh, tribes descendent from the two sons of the great Joseph, were large and powerful among the twelve tribes of the kingdom of Israel. God had greatly blessed them, they were geographically located in the center of God’s people, and they had never understood why one of them, sons of Joseph, had not been chosen as the tribe for Israel’s kings. The first king was Saul of the tribe of Benjamin. But God changed the throne to the tribe of Judah, whereupon David became a great conqueror and expanded Israel’s borders, whereupon David’s son, Solomon, expanded the prestige and wealth of the realm to greatness among all the kingdoms. Even in neighboring Egypt, Pharaoh’s house...very long ago managed by the great Joseph...highly esteemed Israel and acknowledged Israel’s God as a great God.

This esteem by the world was enjoyed by all of Israel’s tribes and they grew them in wealth. Ah, but the building up and maintenance of Solomon’s grandeur, which glorified the land of Judah more than the other tribal lands, necessitated increasing taxes upon the people. King David had not taxed the people, as his kingdom had depended upon spoils of war and yearly tribute from Israel’s conquered nations. Taxes, then, came to the people by way of Solomon; and people through the ages have never liked taxes. But these taxes were not terribly bad in that all the little boats of the tribes were rising on the great tide of wealth that was floating Solomon’s boat.

However, Solomon died and a son, Rehoboam, gained the throne. His name means ‘may the people expand’. David had greatly expanded the kingdom in area and conquests. Solomon had greatly expanded the kingdom in prestige and in riches. We do not know the plans of Rehoboam, but we know that very quickly he sought to become greater than his father and he levied more taxes upon the people; after all, the people were going to be greatly blessed by his government. (It kind of reminds me of our new administration in Washington.) This levy caused rumbling among the people. Tribal leaders (princes and aristocrats) gathered in Jerusalem and sought audience with the king. They laid out their requests and the logic behind their requests. The new king, shunning advice from the throne’s elder advisers, sought advice from the young princes of the realm with whom he had been raised and who greatly admired him. The meeting was received by the king as an insult and he responded by insulting the people’s delegation with the levy being made even harsher.

These angry leaders returned home and soon most of them, with their people’s consent, leagued together against the government in Jerusalem, with the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh taking the lead. All the tribes north of the tribal land of Benjamin on both sides of the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee associated together and declared that they were the true Kingdom of Israel. Thus, they had cut off the tribes of Benjamin, Judah, and Simeon...which were the tribes of the south faithful to the Davidic throne.

Therefore, within the chronicles of the Bible, the southern tribes became known as the southern kingdom or ‘Judah’, and the tribe of Judah (with the other two tribes in the one kingdom) became the supporters and maintainers of the Mosaic Law and the Davidic throne. The northern tribes became known as ‘Israel’. Jeroboam was its first king.

In contempt for the Jerusalem government (which was fully incorporated with the Mosaic priesthood, temple, and sacrifices), which had harshly taxed them, the newly crowned king of Israel (and Israel's following kings) decided to initiate another version of the religion and law of Yahweh. A religious center was set up in the city of Samaria where the people could worship within their modified religion and law of Yahweh...with a separate and newly appointed priesthood. (Sounds like a church split, doesn't it?) Of course their rejection of the holy city, temple, priesthood, etc., had put them on a collision path with their God. Even so, many people of the northern tribes continued in obedience to the Mosaic Law so that three times a year they traveled to Jerusalem for the required feasts and sacrifices, which further antagonized the rebellious leaders and the majority of the people of Israel.



In the time of Isaiah and in these chapters, God speaks in terms of the present situation and He warns of what He has planned for His people and for the nations. Our passage of study is long and it comes out of Isaiah's early years as a prophet.

For quite some years the northern tribes have been suffering due to 1) Syria attacking them in their northernmost parts, taking some towns and territory, and 2) Philistia attacking them on their western border. Therefore, Israel has been working to gain terms with Syria, which has been accomplished in a rather loose Association within which Israel pays tribute to Syria and Israel agrees to help Syria in her desired expansions and conquests. Syria also has designs on the southern kingdom of Judah and so Israel is helping with this and together they have been attacking the northern part of Judah and taking off spoil, though they have yet to permanently capture and hold any towns or cities.

Meanwhile during this same period, Assyria has been increasing in strength and has been flexing her muscles in small military excursions to some of her neighbors. Israel's tribes east of the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River have already experienced Assyria's expanding might and those tribes have been taken off of their land and into exile in Assyria. Assyria was the first empire of that early age to remove in great numbers the high and middle classes of a conquered land and take them into other conquered lands as exiles. It was done with the idea of making the empire everlasting, the conquered nations not being able to regenerate by means of its low class citizens. Therefore, west of the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River and north of the land of Benjamin are the remains of the northern kingdom of Israel.

Interestingly, God is giving a long prophecy that deals with all His people (i.e. all the tribes), but also it is to the surrounding small nations and to Syria and to Assyria. But primarily, this prophecy falls hardest on the northern tribes, for they have been forming intertribal associations to gain greater internal strength and have been confederating with Syria; and in this they have with Syria been attacking their brothers in Judah. This prophecy, for the northern tribes, extends from the time that Isaiah uttered the prophecy to the wondrous occasion of the first coming of the Messiah and then on to the end of our own present age. It shall be explained as we go along.

However, even more to the point of our purpose (i.e. *the Bible's warning to us*) we shall focus (when we arrive there) on 8:9-20. A couple of weeks ago, as I was drawn to this passage in my own study, it seemed appropriate for our time in the coming days.

Begin Isaiah 8:1 - 10:6

8:1) Moreover the LORD said unto me, Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen concerning Mahershalalhashbaz.

This very long word is going to be a name for Isaiah's son, meaning "Hasting to the

spoil, Swift upon the prey”...a prophetic description of the near-future situation coming to the northern tribes, but it also contains a milder version to the southern tribes (Judah).

God said ‘**Take thee a great roll**’ because the prophecy would include other nations as well. We will only be involved in it here as far as 10:6.

Note ‘**write it in a man's pen**’: God poetically informs Isaiah that all of mankind in the lands to be affected by this prophecy shall experience all that is in the prophecy, including Isaiah.

8:2) And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah.

Isaiah writes down what God has given him. Then he goes to the faithful priest and to another well-known and trusted witness as he goes to record the prophecy. It shall be stored with all past prophecies. The Mosaic Law commanded that all prophecies that were claimed to be prophecy be stored away in a safe place by the priesthood and scribes. Therefore, each prophecy was kept to be verified (or not) with its future (i.e. a long or short time) fulfillment. It was how God proved His prophet, whether real or false.

However, before a prophet became ‘proven’, how did the average person know if he was a real prophet? How can one know to believe or disbelieve a particular prophecy? Before (or even after) a person was proved by God to be a real prophet, each Israelite (and each child of God) was required to look to God for verification of a prophecy; that is, the message comes by messenger, but it is authenticated to each person by God.

8:3,4) And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son. Then said the LORD to me, Call his name Mahershalalhashbaz. For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria.

The conception, then, occurred some months later. Damascus is the capital and largest city in Syria. Samaria had become the same for the northern tribes (Israel). Syria has dominated Israel and taken some of Israel’s land and cities in the north of Israel; but also, Israel has come to terms with Syria and together they have been raiding inside the southern tribes (Judah)...not yet taking control of any towns, but taking spoils.

A child is quite young by the time he or she knows the difference between mother and father and can refer by name to each. In those few years, the king of Assyria shall have accomplished the fulfillment of the prophecy regarding Syria and Israel.

Note God’s play on words, meaning: Should not the northern tribes, amidst of their difficulties, cry out to Father God who used to Mother them as a hen does her chicks?

8:5-7) The LORD spake also unto me again, saying, Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son; Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks:

Rezin leads the northern Israelite tribes. Remaliah’s son is king of Syria. Shiloah is *Siloam*...the deep spring-fed pool located just inside the southeast corner of the wall of Jerusalem. (In the time of Jesus, it was the pool where invalids waited for an annual and blessed stirring of the waters; whereupon the first person into the waters was healed.)

God is in the process of chastising the leaders of the northern tribes because of their turning away from Jerusalem as their holy city to make the city of Samaria their holy city where the people could go more conveniently to meet God. God refers to the waters flowing out of the pool of Siloam (i.e. through an open canal to Jerusalem's Water Gate) as His waters flowing fresh and serene. God compares His waters (even healing waters once a year) in Jerusalem to the waters of the Euphrates River, which annually rise strong and swift, often overflowing its banks due to the runoff of snow in the high mountains, making its waters roily, muddy, and turbulent...dangerous and unfit to drink...and

certainly not waters of healing.

8:8) And [also] he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck [in Judah]; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.

The king of Assyria shall remove both Syrians and Israelites from their land. The people of Israel, the northern tribes, will initially be scattered around Assyria and in her lands of conquest; and then they would become further scattered throughout the nations in the coming ages. Some Israelites shall return, trickling back over the years, but the northern tribes shall never again be a kingdom or even known as a nation. On the other hand, God is stating here that the southern kingdom, Judah, shall not be conquered or her people taken captive into exile; nevertheless, they shall experience the overflowing armies of Assyria, even as will all of the nations inside and around Palestine.

‘**Immanuel**’ means ‘God is with us’. In whatever is happening or will happen, whether it be considered by Christian’s as “good” or “bad”...‘God is with us’! At varying times, in varying ways, and by varying means this truth to God’s people has been stated in scripture repeatedly. Too often behind what we consider as “bad” we see the human hands of our enemies or the demonic hand of Satan while not perceiving the larger, broader, higher hand of our God.



8:9) Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces.

The Lord is into one of His sarcastic moods, for He is not only offering prophecy that *the people of all of the nations in and around Palestine shall attempt to Associate for their common cause of withstanding a common enemy*, but He is encouraging them *to go on and do what they will naturally do*. Then He informs them about the results of their Associations (as the results shall be worked out according to prophecy).

Dear reader, take note of the repetition because it emphatically lifts the verse very high. God wants His people, and all of the people of the region, to take note. In fact, the words ‘**associate**’ and ‘**confederate**’ are often repeated in the prophecy.

8:10) Take counsel together [Syria and Israel], and it shall come to nought; speak the word [of positive thinking and human intentions], and it shall not stand: for God is with us.

‘...**for God is with us**’ is the word ‘**Immanuel**’. Here in two verses, then, is the beginning hint that this prophecy is also messianic in its composition, which we will see. Moreover, note that ‘...**for God is with us**’ or ‘**Immanuel**’ has everything to do with God’s Intent and God’s Plan for His people throughout all the ages; in other words, God’s Plan for the Ages of Adam. Furthermore, take note of what is coming for God’s people and even Isaiah and his family shall experience its discomforts. Even so, he and others like him shall be brought through.

8:11) For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying,

‘**For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand**’ indicates that God is clearly getting’s Isaiah’s attention...and through him the many people in Judah and in Israel who continue to be influenced by God’s true prophets, who pray for real spiritual discernment, who heed the prophecies. Perhaps we should similarly be instructed.

8:12) Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.

Speaking strongly to Isaiah and to His obedient people who heed the prophecies, God is warning, indeed commanding, that they not seek Associations with brethren who are

seeking to be Associated. Association is not at all the same as fellowship. Fellowship has to do with love of each other and with God. Association has to do with strength in united membership for a cause. Therefore, when a person or a group said, 'A confederacy', it was in bragging about their new found strength in numbers and common purpose; and this was (and is) looking more to Association than to 'the Lord of Hosts'. Indeed, the common fear of those in Association is the fear common to everyone under siege. (See Chapter 1 of God's Hook about Rahab the Harlot.) The normal, human, earthy will to survive is very strong among all men and women. We Christians think that we need to survive to continue God's work for Him.

8:13) Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.

As mentioned, Associations against the common enemy will attract all sorts of folks. Yet, Israel's God makes it clear that Isaiah and those heeding God-inspired prophecies are not to Associate with the many in Israel who are joining and professing the merits of Associations.

Many folks finding themselves in difficult times think that their God (or gods) is mad at them, and so they fear and dread and then believe that they must appease. Yet, followers of the ancient God of Israel are supposed to fear and dread their God, which manifests differently in fashion and in method; because in His chastising, this God always has His arm outstretched to welcome them back into fellowship.

8:14) And he [i.e. God] shall be for a sanctuary; but [He will also be] for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, [and also] for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

The northern tribes will be taken into exile from off their land, including true believers in Yahweh. Also, the tribes in Judah shall be oppressed. However: Jerusalem the holy city is even more emphasized in this verse because the people of Jerusalem are true believers in Yahweh and in His law. But alas! they are playing religious games, thinking that they are more spiritual than the brethren. They think that their spirituality will save them from the approaching enemy.

They, too, have their Association. In the coming year, they will strive even more in their Association to become "pure", "spiritual", and thus "worthy and fit for the battle". They, too, are looking more to their learned and spiritual abilities than to the God of the holy city. Indeed, they see themselves as protectors of Yahweh, His holy city, and His holy things and form their own styled Associations.

Many are the sincere Christians through the ages who have fit this picture. Some terrible wars have resulted. Some terrible church splits have occurred. The world finds it easy to scorn us and thinks if it scorns us and/or persecutes us that it is hurting God. But God can no more *be helped by us* than He can *be hurt by the world*.

8:15) And many among them [i.e. the northern and southern tribes and the city of Jerusalem] shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.

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**Now Pay Close Attention**

**8:16) Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.**

Who are 'my disciples'? In this prophecy, they are those who are *not associating*; instead, they are looking to, believing in, and standing within the prophecy. God has testified and they are binding it up in their hearts. For a very long time they have been keeping sealed the Mosaic law from all of the changes and misrepresentations coming at them from spiritual leaders, and now they are commanded to continue to keep it sealed... for Yahweh changes not.

Personally to me this means, “over and above the church” because it is supposed to be higher than the church. Indeed, the church is supposed to be an assembly of believers who have a high relationship with a High God. Are you saved to God or to the church? Therefore: though I ‘forsake not the gathering together in love of God with the brethren’, I am commanded to take all that God has helped me with and taught me in the Scriptures, and all of His doings (i.e. experiences) with me, and I am to bind these up in my heart (as did Mary during her time of pregnancy and birth of baby Jesus, Luke 2:19). Moreover, I am to seal the Scriptures, which to me means that I am not to add to it or subtract from it ...to the best of my sincere abilities in keeping my foolish ego in check.

It further means that the things bound up and sealed by me are to be my staff to lean upon in those times when it seems that the heavens are made of brass. (For throughout history it seems that the religious leaders of Israel and Judah, and in the New Testament church, spoke most loudly whenever God was mostly silent. In other words, they were trying to provide truth to the people when the God of Truth was not speaking His Truth.

**8:17,18) And I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him. Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.**

‘The children whom the Lord hath given me’ are the children born to his wife whose names God used prophetically; but also it seems to me that, like the Apostle Paul, Isaiah thinks of himself as something of a spiritual father to the many in Judah and in Israel who particularly hear, heed, and hold dear God’s Word. They hold dear the Spoken Word, and as It is silent they continue holding dear the Written Word.

Does God hide Himself at times? It seems to me that He hides Himself most of the time. It seems to me that His Silence is as potent as His Speech. It seems that He is busier when He is Silent doing both “good” and “bad”.

Moreover, this verse speaks of *a few* ‘for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.’ See Matthew 10:27,28. Is this not what Paul speaks of in Ephesians 6:10-18?

Note: the prophecy goes out to all the nations involved and to all of God’s people. But God knows that only the scattered few will hear, heed, obey, and prepare as best they can.

**8:19) And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?**

Let me make clearer the latter part of the verse: ‘Should not a people seek unto their God...(seeking) the living as opposed to (seeking) the dead?’

Throughout the Church’s history there have been “spiritual” men and women, “gifted” ones that “peep” and “mutter” in ways that draw and attract followers. It has always been so. It is so today. Instead of seeking out such a one for leadership, instead of seeking Associations among the brethren, instead of seeking special groups, Bible studies, etc., a faithful disciple should go to and cling to this next verse.

Here is where God wants His disciple.

**8:20) To the law and to the testimony: if they [who] speak [of being with, or joining, or associating with you, but] *not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.***

A disciple kind of Christian that has *light* in him or her will surely, in the evil day, attract sincere people (including Christian brethren) wanting help. However, what kind of help do they want? God wants the Christian that has *light* to help sincere seekers to find *His Light* and not to arrange for seekers to be cloistering around the disciple’s light.

Ah, but most seekers (should they approach a disciple) do not seek even a disciple’s light, instead human-worldly-help, for they understand and trust that kind of help. They wish to Associate where they can feel safe from the evil worldly forces they can ‘see’ approaching. This is why many Christians, in desiring to attract people to God, form

Associations. For people, including Christians, feel safe and/or strong in Associations.

I hope this does not seem like a “hard” saying, for God is saying this very thing to Isaiah and to His close followers who, purely in faith, are heeding Isaiah's prophecies. And please note that these prophecies arrived from God because He did not then (and does not now) continually speak to His people...except within the continually present *testimony and law* (which for Christians is His entire Spirit taught Written Word).

To repeat: Whenever God speaks less, historically the leaders and influential ones of His people typically speak more in their concern for the people; yet, the raising of their voices in teaching, preaching, pleading, etc. is not equivalent to the scripture studied-and-prayed-over on one's knees in humble seeking of his or her Lord and Master. It is not a “group thing”.

The more such a leader sincerely works for God, when God is not working or He is working silently (even secretly), the more in sincerity the leader will invariably and fervently step over into the realm of misleading God's people. In my book *God's Hook*, you can read the story (Moses and the Rock) of Moses and Aaron assuming that they rightly discerned the situation. They thought that God was going to again punish His people when actually He was going to bless them with waters from the Rock in an arid encampment. It was not long before God led His people out of the Sinai Peninsula.

My work and Barbara's work at seeking God is primarily for ourselves. And in our concern for the brethren, I offer (through this website and my books) the opportunity to look over my shoulder at what I am doing for me. In this, I try to encourage the reader toward similar endeavors on his or her own. With your Bible, in the privacy of your closet, seek to humble yourself before our God, seeking Him to aid you (and me) in Biblical faith to walk pleasingly before Him (Hebrews 11:6) and to enlighten you by His Light in your most inward parts.

It is not nearly as important to know by direct leading what to do or not to do as it is to be in the process of God conforming you into the image that He desires for you. Obedience that comes naturally within the character of a newborn puppy is of greater quality than obedience that arrives to a dog by his training. The former makes it so much easier and more profitable during the necessary training. When a disciple functions by his pure God-worked instinct within developing situations, then the result is better, higher, and very pleasing to God.

**‘But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.’ Hebrews 11:6**

God and Isaiah have been speaking to us regarding this kind of faith. It is all through your Bible. It is inside every true believer born again by God Himself. Each one of us has it. However, each also has the kind of faith that is common to all mankind; and since we Christians are yet in our fallen condition and environment, then daily we are more familiar with common faith than with our Biblical faith, and daily we typically proceed by the faith that is common to mankind.

The functionality of both, common faith and Biblical faith (the latter is of heaven)...as well as the struggle of God's people to discern the difference and to yield more often to the higher faith over the lower faith...is what *GOD'S HOOK* is all about. The book is not so much “a teaching book” as it is a Bible Story Telling book, with its emphasis upon the faith of heaven in action between God and the character(s) in each story.



**Isaiah 8:21,22) And they [not faithful and obedient to the testimonies and to the law of God] shall pass through it [i.e. that which is coming as prophesied], hardly bestead and hungry [i.e.**

with little strength]: **and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward** [for God's help]. **And** [also] **they shall look unto the earth** [for man's help]; **and** [lo and] **behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven** [from the afflicting dimness even] to [full agonizing] **darkness.**



## Chapter 9 is a Continuation of Chapter 8

And now I remind you of 8:14,15 -

**8:14) And he** [i.e. God] **shall be for a sanctuary; but** [He will also be] **for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel,** [and also] **for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.**

(In Old Testament Times:) The northern tribes will be taken into exile off their land and Judah shall be oppressed, but Jerusalem the holy city is emphasized here because her people are true believers in Yahweh and in His law. However, they are playing religious games thinking they are the truly spiritual Israelites and thinking this will truly save them from the approaching enemy. And therefore, they also are having their Associations. In the coming year they will strive even more in their Associations as they are looking more to their united spiritual abilities than to God.

**8:15) And many among them** [of the northern and southern tribes and the city of Jerusalem] **shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.**

Furthermore, I suggest that something similar during a similar time will similarly occur near the end of Israel's age with a Remnant brought through.

**9:1) Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her** [i.e. the northern tribes] **vexation, when at the first he** [i.e. God] **lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations.**

Earlier it was mentioned that God by means of Syria 'lightly afflicted' the northern part of the northern tribes located west of the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee (i.e. Zebulun and Naphtali) and that Syria, in dominion over Israel and confederated with Israel, 'lightly afflicted' Judah.

Also mentioned was that God by means of Assyria had '**more grievously afflicted**' the tribes of Israel located east of the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee. Indeed, by the time of this prophesy, those tribes had already been removed from their land by Assyria and taken into exile. Soon Assyria shall come to fulfill this prophesy regarding Syria and the remaining northern tribes west of the river and sea and shall take them into exile.

Furthermore, for the yet remaining northern tribes it '**shall not be such as**' the earlier times '**lightly afflicted**' by Syria, but shall be *much worse...such that the whole people will be removed with none returning for a very long time.*

Albeit, next in this passage we see a famous prophesy that works with 8:14,15. It definitely works in the Old Testament time of this prophesy, but it also works amid God's Plan of the Ages respecting God's people Israel (i.e. all of the tribes). In the New Testament, in both Gospel and Epistles, we see this prophesy mentioned in respect to Christ having come as the man Jesus...crucified, resurrected, and sitting in heaven at the right hand of the Father.

Yet also in the New Testament are passages linking these verses with many other Old

Testament passages into a fabric that tells of Israel's being drawn, gathered, and reunited back to the Promised Land. Amid the whole cloth of prophecies, this particular prophecy (though pertinent in Old Testament times) will stir to life in the End Times and will begin working out similarly for all the tribes of Israel, *as the end of the time of the Gentiles draws to conclusion*. This is Paul's continued explaining about the Bible's 'mysteries'.

Therefore, bearing it in mind and heart, let us continue in the many-fold things that will come to pass as God and Isaiah speak to us...in their 'testimonies' and in the pure 'law' and pure prophecies of the Word.

**9:2) The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.**

See Matthew 4:12-17 and other passages in the Gospels about the lands around the Sea of Galilee and on both sides of the Jordan River. On the west side of the sea was Capernaum and on the east side of the sea and the river was the region of Decapolis.

**9:3) Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy: they [shall] joy before thee [i.e. God] according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.**

The first part of the verse has to do with God's people (both in the time of Isaiah and in the time of Jesus) who were working their best to multiply, by human endeavor, their works and land and people...but it has '**not increased their joy**' as they worked in their Associations.

The second part of the verse along with the next verse has to do with the kind of joy that God's people Israel shall have when He has accomplished His work for them, as is prophesied in all of scripture.

**9:4) For thou [i.e. God] hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian.**

'...in the day of Midian' refers to the earlier time of Gideon when God used him in saving the Israelites of the northern tribes from '**the Midianites and the sons of the east**' (which story you will find in God's Hook).

But as for what is soon coming to God's people: He shall first break their stiff necks and humble them, for only then will they turn and cry out to Him.

**9:5) For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire.**

When God '**lightly afflicted the land**' and '**grievously afflicted her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations**' (regarding the humbling of God's people mentioned above), the battles were as: '**the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood**'. Yet, the northern tribes did not turn to Him. Therefore, He shall make it that '**this shall be with burning and fuel of fire**', which is *long lasting destruction upon the land*.

Even so, God's immediate dreadful intent toward the northern tribes is intermixed with wondrous saving future intent. The salvation song that began in the last of verse 3 and verse 4 continues in verse 6. (No wonder that Paul labels these prophecies as 'mystery'.)

**9:6) For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.**

Isaiah's two sons became prophetic of the coming Son of God. The wonderful prophecy continues, describing not only the first coming of the Son, but also describing the future environment of his government whenever he comes to claim his kingdom.

**9:7) Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.**

No matter how much God's people Israel (or God's Christian people) zealously Associate and Confederate to accomplish an "expansion of their borders" regarding land,

wealth, glory for God, or wellbeing of the people, only the **'zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this'**. It has been prophesied and shall come to pass in all of its forms... whether "bad" or "good"...to all the people and to His own people.

**9:8) The Lord sent a word into Jacob, and it hath lighted upon Israel.**

As mentioned, this prophecy has dealt Syria, Assyria, all the people of the Palestine region, and all the Israelite tribes (i.e. 'Jacob'), but **'it hath [especially] lighted upon Israel'** - the northern tribes which as yet remain west of the river.

**9:9,10) And all the people shall know, even Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria, that say in the pride and stoutness of [their associated] heart, The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones: [and] the sycomores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars.**

The leading tribe, Ephraim, and leading city, Samaria, are prideful; their people still claim that they can Associate together and rebuild stronger than ever.

**9:11) Therefore the LORD shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him, and join his enemies together;**

God will unite the enemies of the king of the northern tribes against him.

**9:12-14) The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with open mouth. For all this his [i.e. God's] anger is not turned away, but his [compassionate] hand is stretched out still [to his people]. For the people turneth not unto him [i.e. God] that smiteth them, neither do they seek the LORD of hosts. Therefore the LORD will cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush, in one day.**

Not yet is the 'affliction' of the prophecy working out, but the people will respond to it as predicted in verses 9,10. Yet, it will be only the start of the prophecy; and later by the God's Will, Assyria shall conquer Syria and Israel and shall ravage Judah and Philistia and even go on to threaten Egypt. It shall happen suddenly and proceed quickly.

**9:15 - 17) [And] The ancient and honourable [leading elder], he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail. For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed. Therefore the Lord shall have no joy in their young men, neither shall have mercy on their fatherless and widows: for every one is an hypocrite and an evildoer, and every mouth speaketh folly. For all this [in prophecy,] his [i.e. God's] anger is not turned away, but his [merciful] hand is stretched out still [to his people].**

Even in chastisement, even in judgment, God's hand is ever outstretched welcoming them to return to Him. Jesus said to his disciples, "Leave them alone, they are blind leaders of the blind, and together they shall (leaders and followers) fall into the ditch together". And yet, Jesus died for them and for you and for me.

**9:18,19) For wickedness burneth as the fire: it shall devour the briers and thorns, and shall kindle in the thickets of the forest, and they shall mount up like the lifting up of smoke. Through [by means of] the wrath of the LORD of hosts is the land darkened, and the people shall be as the fuel of the fire: no man shall spare his brother.**

**'For wickedness burneth as the fire', 'and the people shall be as the fuel of the fire: no man shall spare his brother'**; it is apparent that the people have wrapped themselves in their strivings against God's intent for them as they try to save themselves, Associating among themselves and with others. When God burns out (i.e. purges) such strivings, it is the people (themselves as the fuel) that will accomplish it, even man against man. Dear reader, this is a zealous and religious thing that works among God's own people.

**9:20) And he shall snatch [as a thief] on the right hand, and be hungry; and he shall [search to] eat on the left hand, and they shall not be satisfied: [thus,] they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm:**

**9:21) Manasseh, Ephraim; and Ephraim, Manasseh [shall be eating up themselves]: and [yet] they together shall [at the same time] be against Judah. For all this [said in prophecy,] his [i.e. God's] anger is not turned away, but his [Almighty] hand is stretched out still.**

Manasseh and Ephraim are brother tribes derived from the sons of Joseph...the leading tribes of the northern tribes that yet remain of the kingdom of Israel west of the river.

**10:1) Woe unto them [the spiritual leaders] that decree unrighteous decrees [against God's prophetic intent], and [the prophets] that write [such things that amount to] grievousness [before the Lord] which they have prescribed [for themselves and for the brethren]; To [thus] turn aside the needy from [righteous] judgment, and to take away the right[s] from the poor[est] of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless!**

Here is the kind of thing that can happen when zealous leaders are trying to save the brethren (religiously and politically), for they need finances to do their work, and money must come from somewhere to work grandiose schemes for saving the middle class and wealthy without which the zealous leaders would have no support and could not exist.

And what government can exist without taxes and what church can exist without tithes and offerings; yet, somehow it is those that pay the taxes and tithes and offerings that somehow survive while the needy and the poorest fall by the wayside, eventually forgotten in the process that started out to help them, yet it eventually failed them.

Only in God's Compassion can people truly help the needy and poorest among us.

**10:3) And what will ye [yourselves] do in the day of [God's] visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far? [and] to whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave [your legacy...] your glory?**

**10:4) Without me they shall bow down under [even beneath] the prisoners, and they shall fall under [beneath] the slain. [That is, the leaders shall be slain first.] For all this [that is forewarned in prophecy,] his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.**

**10:5,6) O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their [i.e. the Assyrians'] hand is mine [own] indignation. [For] I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge [to fulfill], to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.**

Later in history, when Assyria finally receives her own judgment from God, Syria will rebuild and again become a nation. However, Israel, the northern tribes, shall never even become a unique and united people again, much less become a kingdom and a nation. Even so, they wait for their inclusion into a United Israel during the End of Days to receive their Messiah returning to claim his kingdom.

Let the Lord be your fear and your strength, and avoid looking for strength in numbers. Bind up the Testimonies and keep the entire Word. And hide such things (and your personal experiences with your Lord) in your heart...as did Mary. When you assemble let it be in the love of your Lord and in the love of each other.

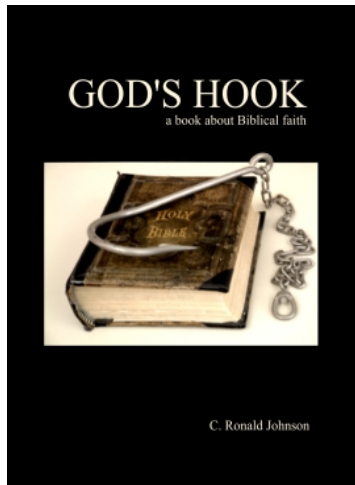


Dear reader, if you would like an assignment with this Old Testament lesson then briefly continue:

Go through the lesson again to better familiarize yourself with what was going on in the Land of Promise with the northern kingdom (Israel), with the southern kingdom (Judah), and with the holy city of Jerusalem. Note each in its own actions...in its functional (or dysfunctional) relationship with God the Father.

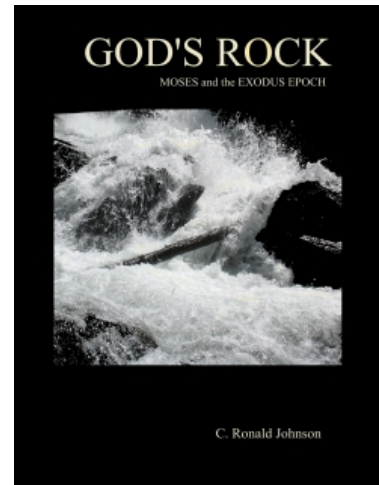
When you feel comfortable with that knowledge and understanding then go to a rather similar (though much shorter) New Testament text - Luke 15:11-32 - and see if Jesus was giving more than a simple parable.

These are short Bible studies by C. Ronald Johnson at Christian Wilderness Press



a book  
about  
Biblical  
Faith

the life of  
Moses  
and the  
Exodus



C. Ronald Johnson