

## 3. The Lord of Hosts (Isaiah 9&10)

### Introduction

Having spent a couple of sessions looking at the background to Isaiah and how his prophecies are understood in the light of the Gospel we will spend some time considering the way in which God reveals his character through some of those prophecies. The next 6 studies look at different aspects of God's character and aim to deepen our understanding of who he is.

Many of Isaiah's prophecies were warnings, showing the people what was about to happen, and why. Often God is referred to as 'Lord of (angel) Hosts' - Warrior God (N.B. translated 'Lord Almighty' in the NIV). This study looks at the warnings and promises God gave to his people in the turbulent times of the 8th century BC.

### To start with (5 min)

- Which of the following make you angry? What other things do? How do you tend to express this?
  - Bad drivers
  - Travel delays
  - People being late
  - Oblivious shoppers in supermarkets
  - Cold call selling
  - Reality TV shows

Many people remember song lyrics more easily than spoken words, consequently much of the Bible (which started as oral tradition) takes that form - including prophecy. Isaiah 9.8 - 10.4 is a good example. Written as a poem or song, each stanza ends with the refrain 'For his anger has not turned away, his hand is stretched out still' (9.12, 9.17, 9.21, 10.4)

*In 4 groups/ pairs - take one of the stanzas and paraphrase it into two sentences. Then re-read the paraphrased prophecy adding in the refrain at the end of each stanza.*

1. a. What reasons does it give for God's anger against his people?  
b. How far do you think this justifies God's response?

God's people had made a covenant vow with Him. The terms of the covenant are listed in Deuteronomy.

### Read Deuteronomy 28.1-14

2. How do you react to the consequence of obedience to God's law?

### Now read Deuteronomy 28.51-20 & 47-52

3. How does this help us to understand God's response & anger in Isaiah 9 & 10?

Isaiah 10 continues by describing the way God will use the Assyrian nation as 'the rod of my anger' (verse 9) and his 'axe' (verse 15) to bring judgement on Israel. However it then goes on to describe how he will punish the Assyrians too for their arrogance. (verse 5-19) (*Read if you have time*).

### Finally read Isaiah 10.20-27

4. a. What promises does God make to his people about the future?  
b. Why do you think this is included in this prophecy?
5. What qualities of God's character would you say are described in these chapters?
6. Some people complain that we have made the 'Lord of Hosts' tame in the way we picture, present and relate to him. How far would you agree with that view? What do you think the effects of that are?
7. How is this image of 'the Lord of Hosts' a challenge to you in your relationship with him and the way in which you worship & pray?

### Reflect and Pray - Suggestions

- Praise God that despite his awesome might he is still interested in us; spend some time worshipping him.
- Ask his forgiveness for the times we have 'tamed' God and made him a genie for our prayer requests.
- Ask him to help us grasp his holiness & power as we live our lives trying to follow him.