
Observations from Isaiah

LESSON X : THE SOVEREIGN RULER OF THIS WORLD — PART 2 (9:8-10:34)

General outline (from Young's *Isaiah*):

- A. Introduction to the Entire Prophecy (1:1-31)
- B. Early Messages of Isaiah (2:1-5:30)
- C. Judah's True Hope: The Messianic King (6:1-12:6)
 - 1. Isaiah's Vision of the Holy God (6:1-13)
 - 2. The Crisis and the Promise (7:1-25)
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c. The boasting of Assyria (10:5-19)

“Woe to the Assyrian, the rod of my anger, in whose hand is the club of my wrath! I send him against a godless nation, I dispatch him against a people who anger me, to seize loot and snatch plunder, and to trample them down like mud in the streets. But this is not what he intends, this is not what he has in mind; his purpose is to destroy, to put an end to many nations. ‘Are not my commanders all kings?’ he says. ‘Has not Calno fared like Carchemish? Is not Hamath like Arpad, and Samaria like Damascus? As my hand seized the kingdoms of the idols, kingdoms whose images excelled those of Jerusalem and Samaria —

O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few. For he saith, Are not my princes altogether kings? Is not Calno as Carchemish? is not Hamath as Arpad? is not Samaria as Damascus? As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols, and whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and of Samaria;

Wo [to] Asshur, a rod of Mine anger, And a staff in their hand [is] Mine indignation. Against a profane nation I send him, And concerning a people of My wrath I charge him, To spoil spoil, and to seize prey, And to make it a treading-place as the clay of out places. And he — he thinketh not so, And his heart reckoneth not so, For — to destroy [is] in his heart, And to cut off nations not a few. For he saith, ‘Are not my princes altogether kings? Is not Calno as Carchemish? Is not Hamath as Arpad? Is not Samaria as Damascus? As my hand hath got to the kingdoms of a worthless thing, and their graven images, [Greater] than Jerusalem and than Samaria, Do I not — as I have done to

shall I not deal with Jerusalem and her images as I dealt with Samaria and her idols?' " When the Lord has finished all his work against Mount Zion and Jerusalem, he will say, "I will punish the king of Assyria for the willful pride of his heart and the haughty look in his eyes. For he says: " 'By the strength of my hand I have done this, and by my wisdom, because I have understanding. I removed the boundaries of nations, I plundered their treasures; like a mighty one I subdued their kings. As one reaches into a nest, so my hand reached for the wealth of the nations; as men gather abandoned eggs, so I gathered all the countries; not one flapped a wing, or opened its mouth to chirp.' " Does the ax raise itself above him who swings it, or the saw boast against him who uses it? As if a rod were to wield him who lifts it up, or a club brandish him who is not wood! Therefore, the Lord, the LORD Almighty, will send a wasting disease upon his sturdy warriors; under his pomp a fire will be kindled like a blazing flame. The Light of Israel will become a fire, their Holy One a flame; in a single day it will burn and consume his thorns and his briers. The splendor of his forests and fertile fields it will completely destroy, as when a sick man wastes away. And the remaining trees of his

Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols? Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man: And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people: and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped. Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood. Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness; and under his glory he shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire. And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame: and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briers in one day; And shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body: and they

Samaria, And to her worthless things, So do to Jerusalem and to her grievous things? And it hath come to pass, When the Lord doth fulfil all His work In mount Zion and in Jerusalem, I see concerning the fruit of the greatness Of the heart of the king of Asshur. And concerning the glory of the height of his eyes. For he hath said, 'By the power of my hand I have wrought, And by my wisdom, for I have been intelligent, And I remove borders of the peoples, And their chief ones I have spoiled, And I put down as a mighty one the inhabitants, And my hand as to a nest Getteth to the wealth of the peoples, And as a gathering of forsaken eggs All the earth I — I have gathered, And there hath not been one moving wing, Or opening mouth, or whispering.' — Doth the axe glorify itself Against him who is hewing with it? Doth the saw magnify itself Against him who is shaking it? As a rod waving those lifting it up! As a staff lifting up that which is not wood! Therefore doth the Lord, the Lord of Hosts, Send among his fat ones leanness, And under his honour He kindleth a burning As the burning of a fire. And the light of Israel hath been for a fire, And his Holy One for a flame, And it hath burned, and devoured his thorn And his brier in one day. And the honour of his forest, and his fruitful field, From soul even unto flesh He doth consume, And it hath been as the fainting of a standard- bearer. And the

forests will be so few that a child could write them down. (NIV) *shall be as when a standard-bearer fainteth. And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them.* (KJV) *rest of the trees of his forest [are] few, And a youth doth write them.* (YLT)

IN A NUTSHELL — The Lord sent Assyria (“*the rod of My anger, the club of My wrath*”) to judge Israel in His anger, but Assyria’s intention was entirely self-centered. The victories the Lord had given them lifted their hearts in pride, taking credit for what the Lord had done and imagining none can stand before them. But when the Lord was done with Assyria (after His hand of judgement fell even upon Jerusalem), the Lord’s wrath would be outpoured on Assyria for his pride.

THE MYSTERY OF GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY AND MAN’S RESPONSIBILITY — The dictionary explains someone as sovereign as “*one that exercises supreme authority within a limited sphere; an acknowledged leader.*” Someone who is sovereign is said to “*possess supreme power.*” This is an awesome passage in relation to the sovereignty of God, yet it is written in such a way to carefully maintain the responsibility of man! ***The word of God clearly states all of Assyria’s accomplishments were due to the Sovereign of the Universe dispatching them, first here then there, to accomplish His will. Yet through it all man is free to make choices and are held responsible for those choices!*** This is a true paradox and cannot be explained but believed entirely by faith. ***To disregard either of these truths is to deny the plain teaching of scripture!*** Note both truths set side-by-side in this passage:

<i>The Sovereignty of God</i>	<i>The Responsibility of Man</i>
● “<i>The rod of mine anger</i> That is, the rod, or instrument, by which I will inflict punishment on a guilty nation.... [T]he sense of the passage ... [is] that the Assyrian was the agent by which he would express his anger against a guilty people. <i>Woe might be denounced against him for his wicked intention, at the same time that God might design to make use of his plans to punish the sins of his own people....</i> ● “<i>I will send him:</i> Implying that he was entirely in the hand of God, and subject to his direction; and showing that God has control over kings and conqueror’s; Prov 21:1.” [Barnes, <i>Notes on OT</i>]	● “<i>Howbeit he meaneth not so:</i> It is not his purpose to be the instrument, in the hand of God, of executing his designs. He has a different plan; a plan of his own which he intends to accomplish. <i>Neither doth his heart think so:</i> He does not intend or design it. The ‘heart’ here, is put to express ‘purpose, or will.’ <i>It is in his heart to cut off nations:</i> Utterly to destroy or to annihilate their political existence. <i>Not a few:</i> The ambitious purpose of Sennacherib was not confined to Judea. His plan was also to invade and to conquer Egypt; and the destruction of Judea, was only a part of his scheme; Isa 20.” [Barnes, <i>Notes on OT</i>]

DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY AND HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY MUST BOTH BE MAINTAINED — “Archibald Alexander: ‘Calvinism is the broadest of systems. It regards the divine sovereignty and the freedom of the human will as the two sides of a roof which come together at a ridgepole above the clouds. Calvinism accepts both truths. A system which denies either one of the two has only half a roof over its head.’ Spurgeon: ‘The system of truth revealed in

the Scriptures is not simply one straight line but two, and no man will ever get a right view of the gospel until he knows how to look at the two lines at once. These two facts [of divine sovereignty and of human freedom] are parallel lines; I cannot make them unite and you cannot make them cross each other.' John A. Broadus: 'You can see only two sides of a building at once; if you go around it, you see two different sides, but the first two are hidden. This is true if you are on the ground. But if you get up upon the roof or in a balloon, you can see that there are four sides, and you can see them all together. So our finite minds can take in sovereignty and freedom alternately, but not simultaneously. God from above can see them both and from heaven we too may be able to look down and see'.... Decrees and freedom *seem* to be mismatched, but they are not so. Even Jonathan Edwards, with his deterministic theory of the will, could, in his sermon on Pressing into the Kingdom, insist on the use of means, and could appeal to men as if they had the power to choose between the motives of self and of God. *God's sovereignty and human freedom are like the positive and the negative poles of the magnet — they are inseparable from one another and are both indispensable elements in the attraction of the gospel.*" [Strong, *Systematic Theology*]

THE FOLLOWING EXTENDED QUOTES ARE A "MUST READ" — *"This is a most remarkable instance of the supremacy which God asserts over the purposes of wicked people. Sennacherib formed his own plan without compulsion. He devised large purposes of ambition, and intended to devastate kingdoms. And yet God says that he was under his direction, and that his plans would be overruled to further his own purposes. Thus 'the wrath of man would be made to praise him;'* Ps 76:10. *And from this we may learn (1) That wicked people form their plans and devices with perfect freedom. They lay their schemes as if there were no superintending providence; and feel, correctly, that they are not under the laws of compulsion, or of fate. (2) That God presides over their schemes. and suffers them to be formed and executed with reference to his own purposes. (3) That the plans of wicked people often, though they do not intend it, go to execute the purposes of God. Their schemes result in just what they did not intend — the furtherance of his plans, and the promotion of his glory (4) That their plans are, nevertheless, wicked and abominable. They are to be judged according to what they are in themselves, and not according to the use which God may make of them by counteracting or overruling them. Their intention is evil; and by that they must be judged. That God brings good out of them, is contrary to their design, and a thing for which they deserve no credit, and should receive no reward. (5) The wicked are in the hands of God. (6) There is a superintending providence; and people cannot defeat the purposes of the Almighty. This extends to princes on their thrones; to the rich, the great, and the mighty, as well as to the poor and the humble — and to the humble as well as to the rich and the great. Over all people is this superintending and controlling providence; and all are subject to the direction of God. (7) It has often happened, in fact, that the plans of wicked people have been made to contribute to the purposes of God. Instances like those of Pharaoh, of Cyrus, and of Sennacherib; of Pontius Pilate, and of the kings and emperors who persecuted the early Christian church, show that they are in the hand of God, and that he can overrule their wrath and wickedness to his glory. The madness of Pharaoh was the occasion of the signal displays of the power of God in Egypt. The wickedness, and weakness, and flexibility of Pilate, was the occasion of the atonement made for the sins of the world. And the church rose, in its primitive brightness and splendor, amid the flames which persecution kindled, and was augmented in numbers, and in moral loveliness and power, just in proportion as the wrath of monarchs raged to destroy it.... In this verse [10:12] we see — (1) That God will accomplish all the purposes of which he designs to make wicked people 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.*

He can stay their goings when he pleases, and subdue them to his will. (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, and not according to God's design to overrule them. Their plans were wicked; and if God brings good out of them, it is contrary to their intention; and hence, they are not to be screened from punishment because he brings good out of their plans, contrary to their designs. (4) Wicked people "are in fact" often thus punished. Nothing is more common on earth; and all the woes of hell will be an illustration of the principle. Out of all evil God shall educe good; and even from the punishment of the damned themselves, he will take occasion to illustrate his own perfections, and, in that display of his just character, promote the happiness of holy beings.... In this verse [10:16] God reproves the pride and arrogance of the Assyrian monarch. He does it by reminding him that he was the mere instrument in his hand, to accomplish his purposes; and that it was just as absurd for him to boast of what he had done, as it would be for the axe to boast when it had been welded with effect. In the axe there is no wisdom, no skill, no power; and though it may lay the forest low, yet it is not by any skill or power which it possesses. So with the Assyrian monarch. Though nations had trembled at his power, yet he was in the hand of God, and had been directed by an unseen arm in accomplishing the designs of the Ruler of the universe. Though himself free, yet he was under the direction of God, and had been so directed as to accomplish his designs. As if it were no wood: That is, as if it were a moral agent, itself the actor or deviser of what it is made to do. It would be impossible to express more strongly the idea intended here, that the Assyrian was a mere instrument in the hand of God to accomplish his purposes, and to be employed at his will. The statement of this truth is designed to humble him; and if there be any truth that will humble sinners, it is, that they are in the hands of God; that he will accomplish his purposes by them; that when they are laying plans against him, he will overrule them for his own glory; and that they will be arrested, restrained, or directed, just as he pleases. Man, in his schemes of pride and vanity, therefore, should not boast. He is under the God of nations; and it is one part of his administration, to control and govern ALL THE INTELLECT IN THE UNIVERSE. In all these passages, however, there is not the slightest intimation that the Assyrian was not free. There is no fate; no compulsion. He regarded himself as a free moral agent; he did what he pleased; he never supposed that he was urged on by any power that violated his own liberty. If he did what he pleased, he was free. And so it is with all sinners. They do as they please. They form and execute such plans as they choose; and God overrules their designs to accomplish his own purposes." [Barnes, Notes on OT] "All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: 'What have you done?' " (Dan 4:35)

“Practical uses of the doctrine of decrees — (a) *It inspires humility by its representation of God's unsearchable counsels and absolute sovereignty.* (b) *It teaches confidence in him who has wisely ordered our birth, our death and our surroundings, even to the minutest particulars and has made all things work together for the triumph of his kingdom and the good of those who love him.* (c) *It shows the enemies of God that as their sins have been foreseen and provided for in God's plan, so they can never, while remaining in their sins, hope to escape their decreed and threatened penalty.* (d) *It urges the sinner to avail himself of the appointed means of grace, if he would be counted among the number of those for whom God has decreed salvation....* It is a striking evidence of the truth of the doctrine that even Arminians pray and sing like Calvinists. Charles Wesley, the Arminian, can write: 'He wills that I should holy be — What can withstand his will? The counsel of his grace in me He surely will fulfill.' On the Arminian

theory, prayer that God will soften hard hearts is out of place — the prayer should be offered to the sinner; for it is his will, not God's, that is in the way of his salvation. And yet this doctrine of Decrees, which at first sight might seem to discourage effort, is the greatest, in fact is the only effectual, incentive to effort. For this reason Calvinists have been the most strenuous advocates of civil liberty. Those who submit themselves most unreservedly to the sovereignty of God are most delivered from the fear of man. Whitefield the Calvinist, and not Wesley the Arminian, originated the great religious movement in which the Methodist church was born, and Spurgeon's ministry has been as fruitful in conversions as Finney's has." [Strong, *Systematic Theology*] A well-known illustration by Charles Spurgeon: "You have heard a great many Arminian sermons, I dare say; but you never heard an **ARMINIAN PRAYER**, for the saints in prayer appear as one in word, and deed and mind. An Arminian on his knees would pray desperately like a Calvinist. He cannot pray about free will; there is no room for it. Fancy him praying, '*Lord, I thank Thee I am not like those poor presumptuous Calvinists. Lord, I was born with a glorious free will; I was born with power by which I can turn to Thee of myself; I have improved my grace. If everybody had done the same with their grace that I have, they might all have been saved. Lord, I know Thou dost not make us willing if we are not willing ourselves. Thou givest grace to everybody; some do not improve it, but I do. There are many that will go to hell as much bought with the blood of Christ as I was; they had as much of the Holy Ghost given to them; they had as good a chance, and were as much blessed as I am. It was not Thy grace that made us to differ; I know it did a great deal, still I turned the point, I made use of what was given me, and others did not — that is the difference between me and them.*' That is a prayer for the devil, for nobody else would offer such a prayer as that. When they are preaching and talking very slowly, there may be wrong doctrine; but when they come to pray the true things slip out; they cannot help it."

THE PRIDE OF ASSYRIA — *Are not my princes altogether kings?:* Assyria's rulers were of such skill and majesty that they compared favorably to other kingdom's kings. *Is not Calno as Carchemish?:* What follows is a listing of cities fallen by the might of Assyria, the implication being that are not the remaining cities going to suffer the same fate? **Calno** was a city in the land of Shinar, and was probably the city built by Nimrod, called in Gen 10:10, Calneh and at one time the capital of his empire. It is mentioned by Ezekiel, Ez 27:23. **Carchemish** was a city on the Euphrates, belonging to Assyria. It was taken by Necho, king of Egypt, and re-taken by Nebuchadnezzar in the fourth year of Jehoiachin, king of Judah; 2 Kings 23:29. **Hamath** was a celebrated city of Syria. It is referred to in Gen 10:18, as the seat of one of the tribes of Canaan. It is often mentioned as the northern limit of Canaan. in its widest extent; Num 13:21; Josh 13:5; Judg 3:3. The Assyrians became masters of this city about 753 years before Christ; 2 Kings 17:24. **Arpad** was a city not far from Hamath and is called by the Greeks Epiphania; 2 Kings 18:34. **Samaria** was the capital of Israel. **Damascus** was the capital of Syria. "Calno and Arpad, both in northern Syria, were taken in 738, Damascus in 732, Samaria in 722, and Hamath on the Orontes in 720 B.C. The ancient Hittite city of Carchemish on the upper Euphrates was vanquished in 717 B.C." [Grogan, *Isaiah*] "The 'fruit' of the heart's pride of Asshur is his vainglorious blasphemy of Jehovah, in which his whole nature is comprehended, as the inward nature of the tree is in the fruit which hangs above in the midst of the branches, as in Zech 12:7, the self-glorification which expresses itself in the lofty look of the eyes." [K&D, *Commentary*] "The argument [of 10:10,11] is this: 'The nations which I have subdued were professedly under the protection of idol gods. Yet those idols were not able to defend them — though stronger than the gods worshiped by Jerusalem and Samaria. And is there any probability, therefore, that the protection on which you who are Jews are leaning, will be able to deliver you?' " [Barnes, *Notes on OT*]

THE UNSAVED ARE RESPONSIBLE TO GLORIFY GOD AS WELL AS THE BELIEVER

— Sometimes we as Christians tend to excuse the lost for not giving the glory to God for the things He does in them and through them ... after all, “*they’re not saved and do not know better.*” ***Yet in these verses the Lord’s wrath against Assyria is due to them not giving Him the glory for the things He had done through Assyria!*** “This verse [10:13] and the following are designed to show the reason why the king of Assyria should be thus punished. It was on account of his pride, and wicked plans. He sought not the glory of God, but purposed to do evil. *For I am prudent*: I am wise; attributing his success to his own understanding, rather than to God. *I have removed the bounds of the people* That is, ‘I have changed the limits of kingdoms; I have taken away the old boundaries, and made new ones at my pleasure. I have divided them into kingdoms and provinces as I pleased’.... *Have robbed their treasures*: Their hoarded wealth. This was another instance of the claim which he set up, of power and dominion. The treasures of kingdoms which had been hoarded for purposes of peace or war, he had plundered, and appropriated to his own use. *I have put down the inhabitants*: I have subdued them; have vanquished them.... *And my hand hath found, as a nest*: By a beautiful and striking figure here, the Assyrian monarch is represented as describing the ease with which he had subdued kingdoms, and rifled them of their treasures. No resistance had been offered. He had taken them with as little opposition as a rustic takes possession of a nest, with its eggs or young, when the parent bird is away.... *Have I gathered all the earth*: That is, I have subdued and plundered it. This shows the height of his self-confidence and his arrogant assumptions. *That moved the wing*: Keeping up the figure of the nest. There was none that offered resistance; as an angry bird does when her nest is about to be robbed. *Or opened the mouth*: To make a noise in alarm. The dread of him produced perfect silence and submission. *Or peeped*: Or that chirped — the noise made by young birds. The idea is, that such was the dread of his name and power that there was universal silence. None dared to resist the terror of his arms.” [Barnes, *Notes on OT*]

THE WRATH OF GOD TURNED FROM THE JEWS TO ASSYRIA — “*Wherefore ...* In this verse God, by the prophet, threatens punishment to the king of Assyria for his pride, and wicked designs. *His whole work*: His entire plan in regard to the punishment of the Jews. He sent the king of Assyria for a specific purpose to execute his justice on the people of Jerusalem. That plan he would execute entirely by the hand of Sennacherib, and would ‘then’ inflict deserved, punishment on Sennacherib himself, for his wicked purposes.... The punishment here threatened is, that while he appeared to be a victor, and was boasting of success and of his plunder, God would send leanness — as a body becomes wasted with disease. *His fat ones*: That is, those who had fattened on the spoils of victory; his vigorous, prosperous, and flourishing army. The prophet here evidently intends to describe his numerous army glutted with the trophies of victor, and reveling on the spoils. *Leanness*: They shall be emaciated and reduced; their vigor and strength shall be diminished.... The “fact” was, that of that vast host few escaped. The angel of the Lord killed 185,000 men in a single night; 2 Kings 18:35.” [Barnes, *Notes on OT*] “The army of Asshur, composed as it was of many and various nations, was a forest; and, boasting as it did of the beauty of both men and armor, a garden ground (carmel), a human forest and park.... Only a single vital spark would still glimmer in the gigantic and splendid colossus, and with this its life would threaten to become entirely extinct. Or, what is the same thing, only a few trees of the forest, such as could be easily numbered, would still remain, yea, so few, that a boy would be able to count and enter them. And this really came to pass. Only a small remnant of the army that marched against Jerusalem ever escaped. With this small remnant of an all-destroying power the prophet now contrasts the remnant of Israel, which is the seed of a new power that is about to arise.” [K&D,

Commentary] *“The prophet does not tell us simply that the Lord will light the fire of judgment; instead, he declares that ‘the Light of Israel will become a fire, their Holy One a flame’ (v.17). This is a profound spiritual insight, of the same order as that of the Rock of salvation becoming the Stone of stumbling. God remains eternally the same, but human beings may experience now one consequence of a particular divine attribute, now another. He is the Light of his people (cf. Ps 27:1), and one day he will be the source of light for all the nations (cf. Isa 2:1-5; 60:1-3); but here that Holy Light is felt by an arrogant conqueror as a fire of judgment. We need to remember that at this time a torch was an agent of both light and heat.* Yet even in the midst of such a description of judgment, there is the slightest suggestion of hope, so characteristic of Isaiah’s prophecies (cf. 6:13; 7:3 mg.; 8:8), God planned a devastating judgment for Assyria but, amazingly — for this is not Israel but a Gentile nation — not total obliteration. If Israel was to be left a remnant for the fulfillment of God’s purposes for her, so too was Assyria! In this way we are prepared for the astounding revelation given in 19:23-25. Having said this, we must also say that the emphasis in v. 19 is still on the judgment.” [Grogan, *Isaiah*]

d. The deliverance by the Lord (10:20-34)

In that day the remnant of Israel, the survivors of the house of Jacob, will no longer rely on him who struck them down but will truly rely on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel. A remnant will return, a remnant of Jacob will return to the Mighty God. Though your people, O Israel, be like the sand by the sea, only a remnant will return. Destruction has been decreed, overwhelming and righteous. The Lord, the LORD Almighty, will carry out the destruction decreed upon the whole land. Therefore, this is what the Lord, the LORD Almighty, says: “O my people who live in Zion, do not be afraid of the Assyrians, who beat you with a rod and lift up a club against you, as Egypt did. Very soon my anger against you will end and my wrath will be directed to their destruction.” The LORD Almighty will lash them with

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God. For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness. For the Lord GOD of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts, O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt. For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction. And the LORD of hosts shall stir up a scourge for him according to the slaughter of Midian at the

And it hath come to pass, in that day, The remnant of Israel, And the escaped of the house of Jacob, Do not add any more to lean on its smiter, And have leant on Jehovah, The Holy One of Israel, in truth. A remnant returneth — a remnant of Jacob, Unto the Mighty God. For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, A remnant doth return of it, A consumption determined, Overflowing [with] righteousness. For a consumption that is determined, The Lord, Jehovah of Hosts, Is making in the midst of all the land. Therefore, thus said the Lord, Jehovah of Hosts, ‘Be not afraid, my people, inhabiting Zion, because of Asshur, With a rod he doth smite thee, And his staff lifteth up against thee, in the way of Egypt. For yet a very little, And the indignation hath been completed, And Mine anger by their wearing out. And awaking for him is Jehovah of Hosts, A scourge

a whip, as when he struck down Midian at the rock of Oreb; and he will raise his staff over the waters, as he did in Egypt. In that day their burden will be lifted from your shoulders, their yoke from your neck; the yoke will be broken because you have grown so fat. They enter Aiath; they pass through Migron; they store supplies at Micdash. They go over the pass, and say, "We will camp overnight at Geba." Ramah trembles; Gibeah of Saul flees. Cry out, O Daughter of Gallim! Listen, O Laishah! Poor Anathoth! Madmenah is in flight; the people of Gebim take cover. This day they will halt at Nob; they will shake their fist at the mount of the Daughter of Zion, at the hill of Jerusalem. See, the Lord, the LORD Almighty, will lop off the boughs with great power. The lofty trees will be felled, the tall ones will be brought low. He will cut down the forest thickets with an ax; Lebanon will fall before the Mighty One. (NIV)

rock of Oreb: and as his rod was upon the sea, so shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt. And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing. He is come to Aiath, he is passed to Migron; at Michdash he hath laid up his carriages: They are gone over the passage: they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah is afraid; Gibeah of Saul is fled. Lift up thy voice, O daughter of Gallim: cause it to be heard unto Laish, O poor Anathoth. Madmenah is removed; the inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee. As yet shall he remain at Nob that day: he shall shake his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem. Behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror: and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled. And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one. (KJV)

like the smiting of Midian at the rock Oreb, And his rod [is] over the sea, And he hath lifted it in the way of Egypt. And it hath come to pass, in that day, Turned is his burden from off thy shoulder, And his yoke from off thy neck, And destroyed hath been the yoke, because of prosperity. He hath come in against Aiath, He hath passed over into Migron, At Michdash he looketh after his vessels. They have gone over the passage, Geba they have made a lodging place, Trembled hath Rama, Gibeah of Saul fled. Cry aloud [with] thy voice, daughter of Gallim, Give attention, Laish! answer her, Anathoth. Fled away hath Madmenah, The inhabitants of the high places have hardened themselves. Yet to-day in Nob to remain, Wave its hand doth the mount of the daughter of Zion, The hill of Jerusalem. Lo, the Lord, Jehovah of Hosts, Is lopping a branch with violence, And the high of stature are cut down, And the lofty are become low, And He hath gone round the thickets of the forest with iron, And Lebanon by a mighty one falleth! (YLT)

THE DESIRED RESULTS OF GOD’S JUDGEMENTS — *Israel should no longer trust in foreign alliances but trust the Lord.* “And it shall come to pass: The prophet proceeds to state the effect on the Jews, of the judgment that would overtake the army of the Assyrian. One of those effects, as stated in this verse, would be, that they would be led to see that it was in vain to look to the Assyrians any more for aid, or to form any further alliance with them, but that they should trust in the Lord alone.... *Shall no more again stay:* Shall no more depend on them. Alliances had been formed with the Assyrians for aid, and they had resulted as all alliances formed between the friends and the enemies of God do. They are observed as long as it is for the interest or the convenience of God’s enemies to observe them; and then his professed friends are made the victims of persecution, invasion, and ruin.... *In truth:* They shall serve him sincerely and heartily, not with

feigned or divided service. They shall be so fully satisfied that the Assyrian cannot aid them, and be so severely punished forever, having formed an alliance with him, that they shall now return to Yahweh, and become his sincere worshipers.” [Barnes, *Notes on OT*] “Him the remnant of Israel would turn, but only the remnant.... If the number of the Israelites were the highest that had been promised, only the remnant among them, or of them, would turn, or ... come back to their right position. With regard to the great mass, destruction was irrevocably determined; and this destruction ‘overflowed with righteousness,’ or rather ‘flowed on righteousness,’ i.e., brought forth righteousness as it flowed onwards, so that it was like a swell of the penal righteousness of God.” [K&D, *Commentary*]

THE DEITY OF CHRIST — *The mighty God*: One important item of note in this verse is the reference to the Lord as the “*Mighty God*”, the same term used to describe the Lord Jesus in 9:6. The importance of this is because the word used in both these verses for “God” is the Hebrew word “el” (plural, elohim) which has the connotation of a sovereign, not always referring to the Lord (it is even used of city governors). Therefore those who deny the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ would not take the title “mighty God” in 9:6 as an ascription of deity; rather they state “*He will one day be ruler under God the Father, mighty indeed but not deity.*” Yet here in 10:21, within the same flowing context of 9:6 is the same title which can not refer to any but the Lord God, Jehovah, the God of Israel. “The mighty or conquering God; the Messiah, the same person mentioned in ver. 6 of the preceding chapter.” [Clarke, *Commentary*] “ ‘The remnant will turn, the remnant of Jacob, to God the mighty.’ El gibbor is God as historically manifested in the heir of David (Isa 9:6). Whilst Hosea (Hos 3:5) places side by side Jehovah and the second David, Isaiah sees them as one. In New Testament phraseology, it would be ‘to God in Christ.’ ” [K&D, *Commentary*]

THE LORD WILL END HIS USE OF ASSYRIA FOR JUDGEMENT UPON JUDAH, AND JUDGE ASSYRIA — “Verse 21 opens with the phrase *sear yasub* (‘a remnant will return’), which is identical with the name of Isaiah’s son (Shear-Jashub, 7:3). The emphasis in this verse is positive. God will not utterly destroy his people (cf. also 6:13).... *Verses 22-23 are cited by the apostle Paul in Rom 9:27-28 in his great theological treatment of God’s purpose for Israel and its relationship to the way its representatives reacted to the gospel of Christ in his day.*” [Grogan, *Isaiah*] “In these esoteric addresses, it is not the prophet’s intention to threaten and terrify, but to comfort and encourage. He therefore turns to that portion of the nation which needs and is susceptible of consolation, and draws this conclusion from the element of consolation contained in what has been already predicted, that they may be consoled.... The very words in which the people are addressed, ‘My people that dwelleth on Zion,’ are indirectly encouraging. Zion was the site of the gracious presence of God, and of that sovereignty which had been declared imperishable. Those who dwelt there, and were the people of God (the servants of God), not only according to their calling, but also according to their internal character, were also heirs of the promise; and therefore, even if the Egyptian bondage should be renewed in the Assyrian, they might be assured of this to their consolation, that the redemption of Egypt would also be renewed.” [K&D, *Commentary*]

ASSYRIA’S FINAL ADVANCE UPON JERUSALEM DESCRIBED — As if describing movement by movement, Isaiah gives the final glory moments of the Assyrian army as they move upon Jerusalem. The general course of this march is from the northeast to the southwest toward Jerusalem, and it is possible still to follow the route by the names of the places here mentioned, and which remain at present. All the places are in the vicinity of Jerusalem, and this shows how much his rapid approach was suited to excite alarm. **Migron** is mentioned in 1 Sam 14:2, from

which it appears that it was near Gibeah, and was in the boundaries of the tribe of Benjamin, to the southwest of Ai and Bethel. No trace of this place now remains. **Michmash** was a town within the tribe of Ephraim, on the confines of Benjamin; Ezra 2:27; Neh 7:31. It is now desolate but bears the marks of having been a much larger and stronger place than the other towns in the neighborhood. It is about nine miles to the northeast of Jerusalem, and in the immediate neighborhood of Gibeah and Ramah. **Ramah** was a city in the tribe of Benjamin, laying on a high hill a little east of the road from Jerusalem to Bethel. **Gibeah of Saul**, so-called because it was the birthplace of Saul (1 Sam 11:4; 15:34; 2 Sam 21:6) and to distinguish it from Gibeah in the tribe of Judah (Josh 15:57). **Gallim** was a city of Benjamin, north of Jerusalem. It is mentioned only in this place and in 1 Sam 25:44. No traces of this place are now to be found. **Laish** was probably a small village in the neighborhood of Gallim. There are at present no traces of the village; in 1 Macc. 9:9, a city of this name is mentioned in the vicinity of Jerusalem. **Anathoth** was a city of Benjamin (Josh 21:18) where Jeremiah was born; Jer 1:1. **Madmenah** is not mentioned elsewhere. **Gebim** is nowhere else mentioned and an unknown city. **Nob** was a city of Benjamin and inhabited by priests; Neh 11:32. When David was driven away by Saul, he came to this city, and received supplies from Ahimelech the priest; 1 Sam 21:1-6. Nob must have been situated somewhere upon the ridge of the mount of Olives, to the northeast of the city.

THE LORD'S FINAL JUDGEMENT UPON ASSYRIA — “The prophet had described, in the previous verses, the march of the Assyrians toward Jerusalem, station by station. He had accompanied him in his description until he had arrived in full sight of the city, which was the object of all his preparation. He had described the consternation which was felt at his approach in all the smaller towns. Nothing had been able to stand before him; and now, flushed with success, and confident that Jerusalem would fall, he stands before the devoted city. But here, the prophet announces that his career was to close; and here his arms to be stayed. Here he was to meet with an overthrow, and Jerusalem would still be safe. This is the design of the prophecy, to comfort the inhabitants of Jerusalem with the assurance that they still would be safe.... *With iron*: As a forest is cut down with an axe, so the prophet uses this phrase here, to keep up and carry out the figure. The army was destroyed with the pestilence (2 Kings 19:35); but it fell as certainly as a forest falls before the axe.” [Barnes, Notes on OT]

“In that day the remnant of Israel,
the survivors of the house of Jacob,
will no longer rely on him
who struck them down
but will truly rely on the LORD,
the Holy One of Israel.
A remnant will return, a remnant of Jacob
will return to the Mighty God.”

— Isaiah 10:20,21 NIV