

**Is. 10:1** Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness *which* they have prescribed;

**Is. 10:2** To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and *that* they may rob the fatherless!

“Woe” speaks of judgment yet to come. The leaders of Israel are not leading in righteousness; they weren’t being fair. They were making laws intended for evil and not for the good of the people. They were taking advantage of the weak, the poor and needy, those without a champion, those without means of influence.

**Is. 10:3** And what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation *which* shall come from far? to whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your glory?

“day of visitation” – This is a phrase that references judgment and punishment.

*Jeremiah 50:27* Slay all her bullocks; let them go down to the slaughter: woe unto them! for their day is come, the time of their visitation.

*Hosea 9:7* The days of visitation are come, the days of recompence are come; Israel shall know it: the prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad, for the multitude of thine iniquity, and the great hatred.

God, through Isaiah, continues to speak of sure judgment to come and questions His people—How are you going to respond to this time of judgment and destruction when it comes by the hand of those who seem so distant to you now (Assyria)? To whom are you going to turn for help? To whom are you going to give your riches? (“glory” – a reference to wealth, riches; *Psalms 49:17* For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him.)

**Is. 10:4** Without me they shall bow down under the prisoners, and they shall fall under the slain. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

The word “under” is not in the Hebrew. I like the NIV translation of “among.” The point being that when they are taken captive, they will be cast down, smitten, subdued harshly—some to the point of death.

Again, the sad refrain—there is yet more judgment to come.

**Is. 10:5** O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation.

**Is. 10:6** 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.

“O Assyrian” – This would appear to be referring to the king of Assyria who will be responsible for the attack and destruction in Israel. Point is made that this

king will be a “rod” (a stick used in punishment and ruling) in God’s hands and will be used against Israel because of God’s anger toward them. Not all anger is bad; we would call it righteous indignation. The word for “indignation” indicates that they are being judged because of God’s fury and displeasure at their sin. This thought is verified in the first phrase of verse 6. God is sending the Assyrian against a nation *soiled with sin*, “hypocritical.” His victory will be complete; he will be allowed to rob Israel and to ruthlessly and abusively subdue the people.

I have heard it taught that the “Assyrian” is a type of the antichrist to come. Both (the king of Assyria and the Antichrist) are allowed to come to power and to inflict judgment upon Israel as a direct result of God’s sovereignty even though the intent of their heart is rooted in pride and a desire for their own power and glory.

**Is. 10:7 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.***

The Assyrian is not intent upon being God’s vessel. His desire is to conquer many nations and increase his position of power and wealth.

**Is. 10:8 For he saith, *Are not my princes altogether kings?***

**Is. 10:9 *Is not Calno as Carchemish? is not Hamath as Arpad? is not Samaria as Damascus?***

“princes” – head person, captain, chief, general, governor

I think this is saying that those in leadership under the Assyrian have the power of many kings because his holdings are so great. The greater in power those under him appear to be, the greater he appears to be. Then he starts to make comparisons. None of the cities that he had taken had posed any great problem.

**Is. 10:10 As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols, and whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and of Samaria;**

**Is. 10:11 Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols?**

The Assyrian is full of pride. He is expressing the idea that he has conquered kingdoms whose gods and idols were far greater than those of Israel (Samaria) and Judah (Jerusalem). They and their gods certainly shouldn’t cause him any problem.

**Is. 10:12 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.***

**Is. 10:13 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:***

**Is. 10:14** *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.*

God is now declaring that when His purpose for Israel and Judah has been accomplished, He will punish Assyria because of the king's pride. The pride of the ruler often pervades the nation as a whole.

The king is claiming these victories in his own strength and power: "*my hand...I have done...my wisdom...I am prudent...I have removed...and robbed...I have put down...my hand...have I gathered.*" He claims his conquests have been as easy as gathering eggs from the hen's nest.

**Is. 10:15** *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.*

God is saying through Isaiah that the instrument of destruction—be it axe, saw, rod or staff—is nothing in and of itself. Assyria and its king were just instruments of God's choice in accomplishing His purpose. The instrument is only as effective as the one wielding it. It has no power at all in regard to being chosen for use or its effectiveness.

The prophets of Israel, and the people of Israel themselves, were often surprised at God's chosen instruments of judgment, as exemplified so clearly by Habbakuk.

*Habakkuk 1:12-13* *Art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die. O LORD, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?*

As I have thought about this, I know that God doesn't make man's moral choices for him. The scripture is full of statements regarding man's ability to choose:

*Joshua 24:15* *And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve.*

*Proverbs 1:29* *For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD.*

*Isaiah 7:16* *For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.*

*Isaiah 65:12* *Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not.*

One of the amazing things about God is His omniscience; He has always known the end from the beginning. A man's choice to accept Him as Lord and Savior is known to God before he is even born.

*Revelation 17:8* The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

Knowing these choices, the Lord chooses those vessels to accomplish His purposes in accordance with the desires of the given individual/nation (e.g., Pharaoh, the Assyrian, Babylon, the antichrist, etc.). In that context, it stands to reason that God would choose the wicked to perform the awful acts of judgment aimed at causing His people to turn back to Him in repentance for deliverance.

**Is. 10:16** 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.

**Is. 10:17** 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 briars in one day;

**Is. 10:18** And shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body: and they shall be as when a standardbearer fainteth.

**Is. 10:19** And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them.

Continuing the thought of judgment on Assyria, when God exacts punishment on Assyria, her robust soldiers and men will begin to grow thin and weak. Her glory and pride (her armies) will be destroyed by the judgment of God, The Light of Israel, His Holy One. This judgment is compared to a fire destroying thorns and briars—swift and devastating.

*Deuteronomy 4:24* For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.

Yet, the forest will not be completely consumed, there will be some trees left, but so few that even a child could number them. In other words, Assyria will not be completely destroyed. In chapter 19 Isaiah speaks of a time when Assyria, Egypt and Israel will be allies.

*Isaiah 19:23-25* In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.

**Is. 10:20** 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.

In fact, this verse seems to make reference to that time in Christ's kingdom being referenced in Isaiah 19. In the past, Israel had turned for help to those who had enslaved and threatened them. This verse says the remnant of Israel and Judah, the house of Jacob, the whole nation, will "no more" put their faith and trust in other nations; they will "stay" (support oneself, rely, rest) on the Lord in "truth" (establishment, stability, sure). That will not be true until Christ sets up His kingdom on earth.

**Is. 10:21 The remnant shall return, *even* the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God.**

**Is. 10:22 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.**

**Is. 10:23 For the Lord GOD of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land.**

Sadly, it will only be a small remnant of Israel that will return to the Lord since the Lord will destroy many through judgment. The Hebrew for "overflow" implies a cleansing and washing away. In other words, it will cleanse the land of the wicked and allow Israel a fresh start in relationship with their God. God is the One Who has decreed the "consumption" (destruction, riddance).

**Is. 10:24 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.**

**Is. 10:25 For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction.**

God now directs His words to His people in Judah. Those in Judah should not be afraid of the Assyrian. Though judgment will come, it will be temporary; and the enemy of their judgment will be destroyed. As we listen to God's message, we need to keep our faith focused on His truth, and not our expectations. What to God is "a very little while" can often seem like forever from the human point of view.

*Psalm 37:10 For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.*

*Haggai 2:6-7 For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come:*

*Hebrews 10:37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.*

In God's economy of time, "yet a little while" and the wicked will not be found on earth; that won't happen until eternity begins. In just "a little while" from the time of Haggai's prophecy, "the desire of all nations," which I believe is a reference to Jesus, the Messiah would come; that would be over 500 years later.

“Yet a little while” and Jesus will come again according to the writer of Hebrews; it’s already been 2000 years.

**Is. 10:26** And the LORD of hosts shall stir up a scourge for him according to the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb: and *as his rod was upon the sea, so shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt.*

God’s destruction of Assyria will be comparable to the destruction of the Midianites through the leadership of Gideon and to the destruction of Pharaoh’s army at the Red Sea.

**Is. 10:27** 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.*

In the day that Assyria meets his destruction, the people of Judah will feel like a big yoke has been removed from their neck and a big burden lifted off their shoulders.

“because of the anointing” – I’m not sure what this means. Anointing usually had reference to consecration and holiness before God. Maybe it is a reference to Israel’s chosen position of blessing before God in the millennium.

**Is. 10:28** He is come to Aiath, he is passed to Migron; at Michmash he hath laid up his carriages:

**Is. 10:29** They are gone over the passage: they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah is afraid; Gibeah of Saul is fled.

**Is. 10:30** Lift up thy voice, O daughter of Gallim: cause it to be heard unto Laish, O poor Anathoth.

**Is. 10:31** Madmenah is removed; the inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee.

**Is. 10:32** 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.

**Is. 10:33** 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.

**Is. 10:34** And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one.

Isaiah now gives a description of the approaching armies of Assyria as they march toward Jerusalem. This account is given in 2Kings 18-19. It took place when Hezekiah was king of Judah. Hezekiah sought God’s protection in prayer, and God informed Hezekiah through Isaiah that Assyria would not be allowed to touch Jerusalem. These verses in Isaiah 10 are obviously before that time. Isaiah prophesied during the reigns of 4 kings—Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah.

God routed the Assyrians by sending the angel of the Lord to kill 185,000 of their soldiers in one night. This caused the king of Assyria, Sennacherib, to turn tail

and run home where he was killed by two of his sons. The account is clear that God saved Jerusalem for "his own sake."

*2Kings 19:34 For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.*

J. Vernon McGee (Thru the Bible) has an interesting note on these verses regarding future events: "This is a remarkable section of prophecy. It gives geographical locations, all of them north of Jerusalem, and it shows the route taken by Assyria and of the future invader from the north....The invader comes from the land of Magog (cf Ezek 38:39)."