

Holy Trinity Bible Study - Isaiah Lesson #10

Leader Notes

Primary Sources:

Webb - The Message of Isaiah, Barry G. Webb

Motyer – The Prophecy of ISAIAH, J. Alec Motyer

Isaiah 10:5-34

Judgment on Arrogant Assyria

⁵Woe to Assyria, the rod of my anger;
the staff in their hands is my fury!

⁶Against a godless nation I send him,
and against the people of my wrath I
command him,
to take spoil and seize plunder,
and to tread them down like the mire
of the streets.

⁷But he does not so intend,
and his heart does not so think;
but it is in his heart to destroy,
and to cut off nations not a few;

⁸for he says:

¹²When the Lord has finished all his work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, he will
punish the speech of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria and the boastful look in
his eyes. ¹³For he says:

“By the strength of my hand I have
done it,
and by my wisdom, for I have
understanding;
I remove the boundaries of peoples,
and plunder their treasures;
like a bull I bring down those who sit
on thrones.

“Are not my commanders all kings?

⁹Is not Calno like Carchemish?

Is not Hamath like Arpad?

Is not Samaria like Damascus?

¹⁰As my hand has reached to the
kingdoms of the idols,

whose carved images were greater
than those of Jerusalem and Samaria,

¹¹shall I not do to Jerusalem and her
idols

as I have done to Samaria and her
images?”

¹⁴My hand has found like a nest

the wealth of the peoples;

and as one gathers eggs that have been
forsaken,

so I have gathered all the earth;
and there was none that moved a wing
or opened the mouth or chirped.”

¹⁵ Shall the axe boast over him who hews with it,
or the saw magnify itself against him who wields it?

As if a rod should wield him who lifts it,
or as if a staff should lift him who is not wood!

¹⁶ Therefore the Lord God of hosts will send wasting sickness among his stout warriors,
and under his glory a burning will be kindled,
like the burning of fire.

¹⁷ The light of Israel will become a fire,
and his Holy One a flame,
and it will burn and devour
his thorns and briers in one day.

¹⁸ The glory of his forest and of his fruitful land
the Lord will destroy, both soul and body,
and it will be as when a sick man wastes away.

¹⁹ The remnant of the trees of his forest will be so few
that a child can write them down.

The Remnant of Israel Will Return

²⁰ In that day the remnant of Israel and the survivors of the house of Jacob will no more lean on him who struck them, but will lean on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. ²¹ A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God. ²² For though your people Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will return. Destruction is decreed, overflowing with righteousness. ²³ For the Lord God of hosts will make a full end, as decreed, in the midst of all the earth.

²⁴ Therefore thus says the Lord God of hosts: "O my people, who dwell in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrians when they strike with the rod and lift up their staff against you as the Egyptians did. ²⁵ For in a very little while my fury will come to an end, and my anger will be directed to their destruction. ²⁶ And the Lord of hosts will wield against them a whip, as when he struck Midian at the rock of Oreb. And his staff will be over the sea, and he will lift it as he did in Egypt. ²⁷ And in that day his burden will depart from your shoulder, and his yoke from your neck; and the yoke will be broken because of the fat."

²⁸ He has come to Aiath;
he has passed through Migron;
at Michmash he stores his baggage;
²⁹ they have crossed over the pass;
at Geba they lodge for the night;
Ramah trembles;

Gibeah of Saul has fled.
³⁰ Cry aloud, O daughter of Gallim!
Give attention, O Laishah!
O poor Anathoth!
³¹ Madmenah is in flight;
the inhabitants of Gebim flee for

safety.

³²This very day he will halt at Nob;
he will shake his fist
at the mount of the daughter of Zion,
the hill of Jerusalem.

³³Behold, the Lord God of hosts
will lop the boughs with terrifying

power;

the great in height will be hewn down,
and the lofty will be brought low.

³⁴He will cut down the thickets of the
forest with an axe,
and Lebanon will fall by the Majestic
One.

Reading: The Message of Isaiah pages 71-73

Questions to Consider

1. Who is sovereign?

“This magnificent oracle of the two sovereignties: the sovereignty of the Lord and of the king of Assyria (12). In doing so he creates one of the Bible’s central utterances about the relation between heaven and earth in human history.”

Motyer – The Prophecy of ISAIAH, J. Alec Motyer, (pg. 112)

2. If the Assyrian Empire is but an axe or saw, is it culpable for its behavior?

“The Assyrian holocaust was not ‘let loose’ on the world; it was sent, directed where it was merited (6), kept within heaven’s limits, and in the end Assyria was punished for its excesses (12)... the biblical paradox: the Lord is sovereign, but his instruments are morally responsible agents.”

Motyer – The Prophecy of ISAIAH, J. Alec Motyer, (pg. 113)

3. What marks the peak of Assyria’s power?

The attack on Ephriam.

“This passage could be dated any time after the Assyrian inroads began seriously in 734. When people heard of real pressure on the northern kingdom, they would expect a word from the Lord through his prophet, even more so when Samaria fell in 722, and urgently so when Hezekiah played with anti-Assyrian rebellion about 713 and actually rebelled

Motyer – The Prophecy of ISAIAH, J. Alec Motyer, (pg. 113)

4. When god says “I send” is he speaking to the King of Assyria? (V5)

No, the Lord stating his secret, what he sovereignly intends to accomplish through Assyria... it was not a directive from heaven that moved Assyria against western Palestine and Zion; it was their own self-confidence.”

Motyer – The Prophecy of ISAIAH, J. Alec Motyer, (pg. 114)

5. Why is the King of Assyria's Confident about victory over Ehriam and ultimately Jerusalem?

"Samaria and Jerusalem are all the more helpless, notes Isaiah ironically, since they were not such proficient idolaters!"

Motyer – The Prophecy of ISAIAH, J. Alec Motyer, (pg. 114)

6. What Stands out about verse 12?

- a. It is prose
- b. It is in fact a thematic statement which sums up the whole of 5-19.
- c. The focus has shifted back to the south, and to Jerusalem/Zion.
- d. "the LORD should then, as verse 12 also tells us, redirect his anger towards arrogant Assyria.
"The Assyrian 'flood' which overwhelmed the north eventually swept on into Judah as well. It was at Jerusalem that the LORD finished all his work¹⁴⁰ of judging the two kingdoms."

Webb - The Message of Isaiah, Barry G. Webb (pg.71)

7. How does God respond to the Kings claims in verses 13 & 14? (V15)

"The king is a hollow man. He would have no standing except it had been given him from above (Jn. 19: 11)."

Motyer – The Prophecy of ISAIAH, J. Alec Motyer, (pg. 115)

John 19:11 – Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore, he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin."

8. Is it surprising is that the LORD should have chosen to use such a proud, pagan nation at all, especially against his own people?

"He obviously did, but "this did not absolve Assyria of moral accountability (7-11, 15). It is not that Assyria resisted her calling (she was not even aware of it), but that she sinned in the manner in which she fulfilled it (arrogantly, 15).

"The twin truths of divine sovereignty and human responsibility are held together in a fine tension here, as they are in Scripture as a whole."

Webb - The Message of Isaiah, Barry G. Webb (pg.72)

9. If what has gone before in verses 5–15 is the true understanding of world history. What do verses 16-18 represent?

"The real relationship of divine to human sovereignty, consequences follow."

"Sovereign One', 'the Sovereign par excellence'. This solemn title looks back askance at the hollow sovereignty of the king of Assyria! The LORD is Yahweh, suitably to this passage, the exodus-God who saves his people and overthrows his foes. He is Almighty/'of hosts'"

“He is present as their Holy One, the God ever on his people’s side, however unworthy. In a single day (cf. 9: 14 < 13 >; 10: 3) is very appropriate to the Assyrian judgment (37: 36).” (V17)

(V 19) “Assyria limped on to its death (37: 36ff.) but was so diminished that even a child could conduct a census! Isaiah summons to his aid another motif from the Gideon stories (Jdg. 7: 14; cf. Is. 9: 4 < 3 >; 10: 26).”

Motyer – The Prophecy of ISAIAH, J. Alec Motyer, (pg. 116)

10. Why from remnant to remnant? (19-20)

“The link word, in verse 20, is remnant. When Assyria is at last reduced to a remnant (19)” *Webb - The Message of Isaiah, Barry G. Webb (pg.72)*

11. Why are verses 20-27 the central pivot on which verses 5-34 as a whole turn?

“Both the preceding passage and following passages of this section speak of the condemnation against Assyria but this central section talks about the impact of all this on the remnant in Jerusalem.” *Webb - The Message of Isaiah, Barry G. Webb (pg.72)*

12. What is the impact on the remnant? (20-24)

“The remnant of Israel will no longer lean on her, but will lean upon the LORD (20). If this first paragraph (20–23) is simply a prediction of what will happen, it is followed in verses 24-27 by an exhortation about how to act now in the light of it: O my people... do not be afraid of the Assyrians (24).”

Webb - The Message of Isaiah, Barry G. Webb (pg.72)

13. Who is Isaiah referring to as the remnant in verse 20?

“Israel in verse 20 is not the northern kingdom, but the whole twelve tribes, as the repetition of the name Jacob (the common ancestor) in verses 20 and 21 confirms. And verses 22b and 23 reaffirm the LORD’s intention fully to execute his threatened judgments. The whole land, both north and south, will be devastated, and only then will Assyria herself be dealt with (25–27).”

Webb - The Message of Isaiah, Barry G. Webb (pg.72)

14. Who is the message in verse 24 directed at?

The survivors in Jerusalem.

15. Why this preface of the remnant before Isaiah turns back to this message of hope for those living in fear in Jerusalem? (v 24-26)

- “God reminds them of the continuing covenant relationship (they are ‘my people’) and of the Davidic promise under which they live in Zion”

Motyer – The Prophecy of ISAIAH, J. Alec Motyer, (pg. 118)

- Even though Isaiah has told them of their defeat and deportation, he reminds them also that his promise to Abraham will be fulfilled as it was in the Egyptian captivity.

16. In verse 27a, what is the yoke that is being broken?

The overlordship of Assyria.

17. What is the meaning of the second half of verse 27?

“A literal translation would be ‘and a/the yoke shall be broken because of oil’. ‘Oil’ symbolizes inherent richness or strength.”

Motyer – The Prophecy of ISAIAH, J. Alec Motyer, (pg. 118)

18. What then is the inherent richness or strength in Zion making it invincible to Assyria?

Yes, God’s promise to Abraham and the anointing of David with oil. In other words, God’s promises the Abraham and to David.

19. What is the question put before Judah and Jerusalem? (v20-27)

“The issue before them is exactly the one which was put to their representative, Ahaz, in chapter 7. Will they act out of fear or out of faith? Will they look to Assyria to save them or return to a wholehearted reliance on the LORD (20–21)? Verses 24–27 assure them that if they do so return (21) they need have no fear of the Assyrians. The LORD will deliver them as he rescued their forefathers from the Egyptians and the Midianites (26).” *Webb - The Message of Isaiah, Barry G. Webb (pg.72)*

20. What is the message for us of these passages??

“Kaiser has said, ‘ . . . true faith is at the same time an imminent expectation . . . For anyone who does not acknowledge that God can show himself gracious here and now is ultimately excluding God entirely from his life.’”

Motyer – The Prophecy of ISAIAH, J. Alec Motyer, (pg. 118)

21. What conclusion can we take from this section?

“Essentially, the choice that Isaiah and his compatriots faced was whether to respond to the circumstances that threatened them with calm reliance on God or with a frenzy of self-help, using whatever means the wisdom of the age deemed most likely to succeed. And since the world is always with us, and has the same basic character from age to age, it is an issue which always faces the people of God in a multitude of ways small and great. In the book of Isaiah the issues of faith and unbelief are constantly related to the very pressing and practical business of political, national and personal survival, and this has a most important lesson to teach us. Faith is more than a means of justification; it is also a practical approach to the challenges of daily life, just as much for us as it was for those who faced the Assyrian threat. We are not only saved by faith; we live by it.”

Webb - The Message of Isaiah, Barry G. Webb (pg.73)

22. What is the final transition that takes place between verse 32 and 33?

The Lord who called Assyria to destroy the Northern kingdom and brings Jerusalem to its knees, destroys Assyria before it can devour Jerusalem.

“The Assyrians were sovereign until they met the Sovereign – and at the very moment when the threat is at the gates of Zion!”

Motyer – The Prophecy of ISAIAH, J. Alec Motyer, (pg. 120)