**The Coming King** Isaiah 10:16 – 11:4a bible-sermons.org November 16, 2014

In our previous passage the Lord spoke of the coming captivity of Israel because of their pride and injustice. They boasted that they would rebuild their fallen bricks with dressed stones. It was defiance against God. Amazingly, Tom Daschle quoted that verse on 9/12/01 on the senate floor saying it spoke to all Americans. He thought he was talking about rebuilding, but he was quoting a passage that spoke of the judgments of God coming on a prideful unrepentant nation.

After judging Israel, God began to describe what would happen to the nation that He used to punish them, Assyria. He spoke of the pride of the Assyrians and compared them to an axe boasting against the hand that wielded it (10:15). They were mere instruments in God’s hand, but spoke as if they were gods.

Our passage today picks up with how God was going to deal with the pride of Assyria. *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.* Isaiah 10:16-17 Man has a tendency to look to his might and inventions for security. God’s weapons make ours look like toys. What can man do against a category 5 hurricane? Or what can we do against a new airborne virus? We dream of stopping asteroids. Good luck with that.

In contrast with Assyria’s pride and man’s pride in general, the last part of this chapter ticks off various names of God. The Lord God of hosts is the God of angel armies. He calls Himself the Light of Israel, the Holy One, the Holy One of Israel, the Mighty God, and the Majestic One. Those names declare His supreme greatness and power, but also His covenant with the Jewish people (Genesis 17:7). While He was disciplining them severely, He was also holding accountable the tool with which He disciplined them. He was not forsaking them by any means, and it is the same for all who know Him. His discipline is His “lovingangerkindness” to purify us (Job 5:17). If the rod of His discipline in using their free will deals with others more severely than God intends, then God will hold them accountable.

*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.* Isaiah 10:18-19 The Assyrian army is referred to as a forest which would be destroyed, both their souls and bodies. So few would survive that a child could count them. We often place hope in numbers, whether it is a nation or a church. But God has shown time and again that it is not the number of people that matter, but His presence with those people (2 Samuel 24:10). A single soul fully surrendered to the Lord can do more than we can imagine. The stories are numerous. Consider Noah, Abraham, Gideon, Jonathan, Sampson, Paul, but most of all the God/man Christ Jesus. Numbers are not important to God, but a humble, submitted spirit is His delight (Psalm 147:11).

God is using this little church to touch the world through giving to missions, the web, and your personal lives. We just need a few who are faithfully committed to putting God first, like those of you who explain the glory of the resurrection in that painting, or who are willing to run a storefront on 89a when the Lord opens the door, or give to mission needs. If God adds to our numbers, may we never boast in those numbers or natural talent, but rather may we always boast in the Lord who is our strength (Judges 7:2). Whether the culture comes against us as annoying thorns or as a forest like army, the fire of God is more than sufficient to deal with it.

*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.* Isaiah 10:20-22 Sadly, only a few of those in Israel would survive and truly turn to the Lord and lean on Him in truth. That is because destruction was decreed, overflowing with righteousness. The righteous justice of God would come upon the idolaters and those who leaned on anything other than the Lord. They heard the truth through the prophets. They would see the prophecies come to pass. That was the grace of God extended to them in mercy to turn them from their ways. And yet they would not turn and be saved (45:22).

This is one of those prophecies in which we can see multiple fulfillments. This was true of the return to the Promise Land from captivity in Persia. It was perhaps more clearly fulfilled in the days of Jesus when only a few leaned on Jesus in truth and much of Israel was destroyed in 70 A.D.(Romans 9:27). It will be true in the last days in the time of Jacob’s trouble (Zechariah 14:2) and when the 144,000 are chosen out of Israel to be witnesses to the world (Revelation 7:4).

*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.* Isaiah 10:24 After speaking to Israel, God addressed Judah. Since the rod God was using was for the purpose of refining a remnant and causing them to lean on Him and return to Him, they should not fear that discipline. Neither should we.

Is the diagnosis cancer? Be not afraid. If you are God’s child, He will use it to take you home into His presence or purify you to trust more completely in Him as the Mighty God. Did you lose your job? Be not afraid. God is our provider. After we learn to lean on Him, He can work more powerfully through us, as we happily and humbly give Him all the credit.

The Assyrians would soon find themselves on the receiving end of God’s justice, only it was not to refine them, but rather to destroy them. *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.* Isaiah 10:26 Once again God refers to Gideon’s defeat of the hordes of Midian (Judges 7:25). He also reminds them of the defeat of the Egyptian army when Moses stretched out the rod of God over the sea and it drowned Egypt’s army (Exodus 14:27-28). The reason God reminds the Jews of these stories is that they knew that in each case the final outcome was only because of the mighty power of God. If they had looked to their own strength or wisdom they would have been utterly destroyed. In both cases God wrought a mighty victory because the people trusted in Him and leaned on Him. Though the people of Judah would later go into captivity and be decimated, God could bring a mighty victory that was beyond their imagination. Through their descendants would come the Messiah who will, in God’s time, usher in the Kingdom of peace described in the next chapter.

We don’t always live long enough to see what God is doing in and through our lives. Hebrews 11 of is full of people who died in faith not yet having received what God promised them (Hebrews 11:39). Most of church history is a record of people dying in faith looking forward to what God has for us. We experience it in part when we yield to the Holy Spirit, but the fullness issomething we look forward to by faith (1 Corinthians 13:9-10). Dying in faith is coming across the finish line as a winner (2 Timothy 4:7-8). Our last breath here is followed by our first breath of the air of heaven, marveling at the countenance of Jesus in all His glory.

*33 Behold, 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. 34 He will cut down the thickets of the forest with an axe, and Lebanon will fall by the Majestic One.* Isaiah 10:33-34 The Assyrians as the axe in God’s hand boasted in their pride, but the Mighty One would now wield an axe against them. The greedy, prideful powers of this world that wage war to conform the world to their liking will answer to the axe wielder. They will face the Prince of Peace and find He brings peace by bringing them low (9:6). The Majestic One will show who wields whom. You see, peace is not found by pretending the heart of man is good, but rather when evil in man’s heart is confessed and forsaken or judged and brought low. It is the Prince of Peace who does both mighty works of grace for the good of those who choose life in Him.

Now all that is left is the stumps of Judah and Assyria. But God had already told us that the holy stump was the seed from which the Messiah would come (6:13)*.* That stump includes another stump, the stump of Jesse. It was to Jesse’s son, David, that the promise of the lineage of Messiah was given (Psalm 89:3-4). *1 There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.* Isaiah 11:1 The roots go back through Jacob, Isaac, Abraham, and all the way back to Eve. God has always been seeking fruit that remains (John 15:16). Fruit trees have branches that will bear fruit and those that don’t. Often the flowers will come in clusters and several will be pollinated. Sometimes you can see five small fruits beginning to grow from one flower cluster, but most of them will drop off and die. The one that remains is the fruit that endures to eternal life (Romans 6:22).

Jesus is the fruitful branch, the branch of promise. That is one of the names for the Messiah, the Branch (Zechariah 3:8). He is the One that bears lasting fruit to the glory of the Father. The difference between Him and all the other descendants of David is seen in the rest of the prophecy. *2 And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.* Isaiah 11:2 We are told that three pairs of qualities of the Holy Spirit will rest on Him.

The first set is wisdom and understanding. Jesus declared that One greater than Solomon was present, referring to Himself (Matthew 12:42). That would mean He is the wisest One to ever live (John 7:46). We see that wisdom not only in how He answered His accusers and critics, but in how He taught and dealt with people. His understanding came from His heavenly perspective (John 7:38). He knew what was in man’s heart. He understood that being great is being the servant of all (Mark 9:35). He understood that to do the will of the Father was the only thing one should do. He understood the Scriptures like no one else (Colossians 2:3).

The second set of anointed qualities from the Holy Spirit is counsel and might. He is the Wonderful Counselor. When asked a question which was the greatest law or if it was lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, His counsel was always perfect. Though He veiled His true might, it came out in the power of His words. It was revealed in a small part when He told those who came to arrest Him, “I Am!” (John 18:6) But it was totally revealed when He walked out of the grave as Victor over death, hell, and all the forces of evil.

The third set consists of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. His knowledge of Scripture was perfect. He knew when a verse was spoken out of context and when another clarified the meaning (Luke 4:10-12). Knowing the Scriptures so perfectly and clearly meant He had knowledge to apply to every situation He faced.

We do not think of Jesus having a fear of the LORD, however, the fear of the LORD is what deters us from evil (Proverbs 16:6). He knew the righteous judgments of God. He was tempted in all points like we are and yet without sin (Hebrews 4:15). Why? It was not because he was incapable of sinning. It was because He had the perfect fear of the LORD. He shows us how important it is that we should have the same. He loved and trusted the Father and longed to return to His side, and yet He lived in the fear of the LORD. He demonstrated the perfect balance. These three pair of anointed attributes make Him the Wonderful Counselor and Prince of Peace. And we will now see how this anointing is expressed in the age to come.

In case the “fear of the LORD” seems out of place, the next verse tells us that He not only was anointed with it but He delights in it. *3 And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear,* *4 but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;* Isaiah 11:3-4a Jesus delighted in the fear of the Lord keeping Him from the destructiveness of evil.

The world only has what it sees and hears to go by. Even when we want to do the right thing, we often make the wrong judgment. If you are in Christ, then the Spirit of God lives in you and can help you do as Jesus did, which is to listen to the Spirit who knows all things. Then you can judge a righteous judgment (John 7:24). That is a result of delighting in the fear of the LORD. Because God is just, those who fear Him want to see justice in their decisions.

Injustice is most often directed toward the poor and the meek because one can get away with it. The poor and the meek don’t have the resources to resist injustice, but Jesus does. He stands in their defense. The day is coming when He will be Judge over the whole earth. In the Millennial Kingdom Jesus will judge the world through His saints (1 Corinthians 6:2). There will be no more injustice.

Injustice was one of the chief complaints God had against Judah. Much of that injustice was to take advantage of the weak, but some of it was probably the limitations of man and our trust in ourselves. How often we go about our day never looking to God in our decisions but trusting in our own limited resources. “That is our greatest sin—to think and act as our own saviors and to disrespect the Savior of the world.”1 (quoted from Ortlund Jr.)Can you imagine the day when injustice will be no more? The leadership of man has failed time and time again, in every form and every way. We have tried to create utopia but failed because of what is in our own hearts (Jeremiah 17:9). But the day is coming when a pure heart will reign through others whose hearts He has made pure.

As a side note, this passage is why the soldiers blindfolded and struck Jesus and then asked who it was that hit Him (Luke 22:64). His claim to be the Messiah meant He could judge without seeing. They were mocking that claim. It was a demonstration of His meekness to not name each man and their ancestry.

We’ll continue next week with this glorious description of the Kingdom we are all headed toward. Our great hope is not only that His work in us will be completed, but that He will reign in righteousness. Then we will experience life as He meant it to be in all its fullness. Every time we hear of injustice or face it ourselves, we should remember that the day is coming when the One who does not judge by what He hears with the ear or sees with His eyes will be the great Judge who reigns in righteousness with all power to enforce it. He is anointed with might and will be called the Mighty God. None will dare resist His righteous judgments. There will be no more politics, no more debates about which way things should be, no more indoctrination and religion, just the presence of the Majestic One who will make all things right (Ephesians 1:22). God has put this hope in our hearts and described it through the prophets. He will bring it to pass, for He is Mighty God, the Majestic One. Until that day come, let us lean on Him by learning His Word and listening to and obeying His Spirit.

Questions

1 What was God going to do to Assyria and why?

2 How can numbers be detrimental?

3 Go over the multiple fulfillments of 10:21-22.

4 Why fear the Lord but not fear discipline?

5 What examples were given in regard to the coming judgment on Assyria?

6 Why do we call Jesus “the Branch”?

7 Review the three pairs of anointing.

8 How can we judge the world?

9 Why would Jesus delight in the fear of the LORD?

10 Review the Orland Jr. quote.