

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 briars 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

Commented [PW1]: Isaiah 10:15 (ESV)

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!

Commented [PW2]: Genesis 17:7 (ESV)

⁷ And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.

Commented [PW3]: Job 5:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ "Behold, blessed is the one whom God reproves; therefore despise not the discipline of the Almighty.

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.

Commented [PW4]: 2 Samuel 24:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ But David's heart struck him after he had numbered the people. And David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have done very foolishly."

Commented [PW5]: Psalm 147:11 (ESV)

¹¹ but the LORD takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love.

Commented [PW6]: Judges 7:2 (ESV)

² The LORD said to Gideon, "The people with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel boast over me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.'

Commented [PW7]: Isaiah 45:22 (ESV)

²² "Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.

Commented [PW8]: Romans 9:27 (ESV)

²⁷ And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved,

Commented [PW9]: Zechariah 14:2 (ESV)

² For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

Commented [PW10]: Revelation 7:4 (ESV)

⁴ And I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel:

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 is something 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.

Commented [PW11]: Judges 7:25 (ESV)

²⁵ And they captured the two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they killed at the winepress of Zeeb. Then they pursued Midian, and they brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon across the Jordan.

Commented [PW12]: Exodus 14:27-28 (ESV)

²⁷ So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course when the morning appeared. And as the Egyptians fled into it, the LORD threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea.

²⁸ The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained.

Commented [PW13]: Hebrews 11:39 (ESV)

³⁹ And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised,

Commented [PW14]: 1 Corinthians 13:9-10 (ESV)

⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.

Commented [PW15]: 2 Timothy 4:7-8 (ESV)

⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

⁸ Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

Commented [PW16]: Isaiah 9:6 (ESV)

⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

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).

Commented [PW17]: Isaiah 6:13 (ESV)
¹³ And though a tenth remain in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak, whose stump remains when it is felled." The holy seed is its stump.

Commented [PW18]: Psalm 89:3-4 (ESV)
³ You have said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant:
⁴ "I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.'" Selah

Commented [PW19]: John 15:16 (ESV)
¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

Commented [PW20]: Romans 6:22 (ESV)
²² But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.

Commented [PW21]: Zechariah 3:8 (ESV)
⁸ Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who sit before you, for they are men who are a sign: behold, I will bring my servant the Branch.

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).

Commented [PW22]: Matthew 12:42 (ESV)
⁴² The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

Commented [PW23]: John 7:46 (ESV)
⁴⁶ The officers answered, "No one ever spoke like this man!"

Commented [PW24]: John 8:38 (ESV)
³⁸ I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father."

Commented [PW25]: Mark 9:35 (ESV)
³⁵ And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all."

Commented [PW26]: Colossians 2:3 (ESV)
³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Commented [PW27]: John 18:6 (ESV)
⁶ When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground.

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.

Commented [PW28]: Luke 4:10-12 (ESV)
¹⁰ for it is written, "'He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,'
¹¹ and "'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'"
¹² And Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

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.

Commented [PW29]: Proverbs 16:6 (ESV)

⁶ By steadfast love and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for, and by the fear of the LORD one turns away from evil.

Commented [PW30]: Hebrews 4:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Commented [PW31]: John 7:24 (ESV)

²⁴ Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.”

Commented [PW32]: 1 Corinthians 6:2 (ESV)

² Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases?

Commented [PW33]: Ortlund Jr. - Preaching the Word – Isaiah: God Saves Sinners.

Commented [PW34]: Jeremiah 17:9 (ESV)

⁹ The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

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.

Commented [PW35]: Luke 22:64 (ESV)
64 They also blindfolded him and kept asking him, "Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?"

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.

Commented [PW36]: Ephesians 1:23 (ESV)
23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

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.