

## ISAIAH 10<sup>1</sup>

### *The Almighty's Anger against the Arrogant Assyrian Axe*

#### *Woe to Assyrian Axe!*

5 Woe to Assyria, the rod of my anger. The staff in their hands is my fury! 6 Against a godless nation [Israel] 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. 7 But 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. 8 For he says:

Are not my commanders all kings? 9 Is not Calno like Carchemish? Is not Hamath like Arpad? Is not Samaria like Damascus? 10 As my hand has reached to the kingdoms of the idols, whose carved images were greater than those of Jerusalem and Samaria, 11 shall I not do to Jerusalem and her idols as I have done to Samaria and her images?

12 When the Lord (יהוה) 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. 13 For 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. 14 My 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 Lord Yahweh 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 [in 701 bc]. 18 The glory of his forest and of his fruitful land he 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 [in 612 bc].

#### *Israel's Remnant 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 Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. 21 A

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 10:1-4 fits better with Isaiah 9.

remnant will return,<sup>2</sup> 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 Yahweh of hosts will make a full end, as decreed, in the midst of all the earth. 24 Therefore thus says the Lord Yahweh 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 Yahweh of hosts will wield against them a whip, as when he struck Midian at the rock of Oreb.<sup>3</sup> And his staff will be over the sea, and he will lift it as he did in Egypt.<sup>4</sup> 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.

### *The Assyrians Approach Zion*

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

33 Behold, Lord Yahweh 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.

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<sup>2</sup> **Hos 3:5** 5 Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek Yahweh their God and David their king, and they shall come in fear to Yahweh and to his goodness in the latter days.

<sup>3</sup> **Jdg 7:25** 25 [Israel under Gideon] 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.

<sup>4</sup> **Ex 14:21-22** 21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and Yahweh drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. 22 And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

## *Biblical Worldview*

### **1. Isaiah at a Glance.**

- a. In this section Isaiah again contrasted two kingdoms: the Assyrian Empire and God's millennial kingdom. Assyria would fall because it dared to defeat God's People. John A. Martin, "[Isaiah](#)," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1055.

### **2. About God we learn:**

- a. His rod and staff is Assyria (v. 5).
- b. He sends and commands Assyria against Judah (v. 5).
- c. God will finish his work on Mount Zion and Jerusalem (v. 12).
- d. Then he will punish the arrogance of the king of Assyria (v. 12).
- e. Assyria is God's axe, saw, rod, and staff (v. 15).
- f. He will send a tasing sickness among the Assyrian army (v. 16).
- g. He is the Light and Holy One of Israel (v. 17).
- h. He will burn Israel's thorns and briers in one day (v. 17).
- i. God will destroy Assyria's forest and fruitful land (v. 18).
- j. The remnant of Israel will lean on him in truth (v. 20).
- k. A remnant of Israel will return to him (v. 21).
- l. He is holy (v. 20) and mighty (v. 21).
- m. He will make a full end in the midst of all the earth (v. 23).
- n. The people who dwell in Zion are his people (v. 24).
- o. His fury on Judah will come to an end (v. 25).
- p. His anger will be directed to Assyria's destruction (v. 25).
- q. God will whip Assyria (v. 26).
- r. God's staff will again be over the sea (v. 26).
- s. God will bring low the nations' pride through Assyria (v. 34).
- t. He is the Majestic One (v. 34).

### **3. About Assyria we learn:**

- a. He is the rod of Yahweh's anger (v. 5).
- b. His staff is God's fury (v. 5).
- c. God sends him against a godless nation (v. 6).
- d. God commands him against the people of his wrath (v. 6).
- e. They are to take spoil, seize plunder, and tread down like the mire of the streets (v. 6).
- f. But he does not intend or think along with God (v. 7).
- g. His heart is to destroy and cut off many nations (v. 6).
- h. He thinks his commanders are all kings (v. 8).
- i. He thinks Calno is like Carchemish, Hamath is like Arpad, and Samaria is like Damascus (v. 9).
- j. His hand has reached to the kingdoms of the idols (v. 10).
- k. He thinks he will do to Jerusalem and her idols what he has done to Samaria and her images (v. 10).

- l. God will punish the speech of the Assyrian king's arrogant heart and the boastful look in his eyes (v. 12).
- m. He says he has strength, wisdom, and understanding (v. 13).
- n. He says he removes boundaries of peoples and plunders their treasures (v. 13).
- o. He says he brings down those who sit on thrones (v. 13).
- p. He says his hand has found the wealth of the peoples (v. 14).
- q. He says that he has gathered all the earth, and no one could do anything about it (v. 14).
- r. In reality, he is like:
  - (1) An axe hewn by God (v. 15).
  - (2) A saw wielded by God (v. 15).
  - (3) A rod lifted by God (v. 15).
  - (4) A staff lifted by God (v. 15).
- s. He should not:
  - (1) Boast over God (v. 15).
  - (2) Magnify himself against God (v. 15).
- t. He cannot:
  - (1) Wield God (v. 15).
  - (2) Lift God up (v. 15).
- u. God will send wasting sickness on his warriors (v. 16).
- v. God will kindle a fire under his glory (v. 16).
- w. God will burn and devour his thorns and briars in one day (v. 17).
- x. God will completely destroy his glory (v. 18).
- y. He will be like a sick man wasting away (v. 18).
- z. His remnant will be very few (v. 19).
- aa. Israel is not to be afraid of him (v. 24).
- bb. God's anger will be directed to his destruction (v. 25).
- cc. God will whip him (v. 26).
- dd. His burden and yoke will depart from Israel (v. 27).
- ee. The Assyrian army will pass through Aiath, Migron, Michmash, Geba, Ramah, Gibeah of Saul, Gallim, Laishah, Anathoth, Madmenah, Gebim, and Nob and approach Jerusalem (vv. 28-32).
- ff. Assyria is the axe with which God will bring low the prideful nations (vv. 33-34).

#### 4. About Israel we learn:

- a. God has sent Assyria against her (v. 6).
- b. She is a godless nation (v. 6).
- c. She is the people of God's wrath (v. 6).
- d. God will finish his work of discipline on Mount Zion and Jerusalem (v. 12).
- e. God is her Light and Holy One (v. 17).
- f. In the future, the remnant of Israel will lean on Yahweh in truth (v. 20).
- g. Her remnant will return to the mighty God (v. 21).
- h. Her people used to be as the sand of the sea (v. 22).
- i. But only a remnant will return (v. 22).
- j. God's destruction on her overflows with righteousness (v. 22).
- k. She must not be afraid of the Assyrians (v. 24).

- l. God fury and anger on her will come to an end (v. 25).
  - m. Assyrian's burden will depart from her shoulder (v. 27).
  - n. The Assyrian king will shake his fist at her (v. 32).
5. God often uses unlikely instruments to accomplish his purposes in the world (J. A. Martin, *BKC*, 1:1055).
    - a. For example, he later uses Babylon against Judah, which puzzles Habakkuk.  
(1) Hab 1:6-17
  6. Assyria had the wrong attitude in conquering Israel. Discounting the greatness of Israel's God, Assyria assumed that Israel and Judah were like any other nation. Assyria had conquered the Aramean cities of Calno, Carchemish, Hamath, Arpad, and Damascus, and Israel's capital Samaria. So Assyria thought she could easily take Jerusalem. Since these other conquered cities had greater gods, in the minds of the Assyrians, than did Jerusalem, that city could be taken more easily (Martin, *BKC*, 1:1055).
    - a. See the Assyrians' similar boasting in Is 36:19–20; 37:12.
  7. The words of the Assyrian king in Is 10:13-14 express the empire's arrogant pride. The king believed what had been achieved had been done by his own strength and wisdom (six times he says I and three times my)(Martin, *BKC*, 1:1055).
  8. In 701 bc 185,000 Assyrian soldiers surrounding Jerusalem were killed (37:36–37). Then in 609 bc the Assyrian Empire fell to Babylon. The fall of the Assyrian empire is a prototype of the fall of all who oppose God and his plans for Israel (Martin, *BKC*, 1:1055).
  9. God's destruction, though overwhelming, will always be fair and righteous (Martin, *BKC*, 1:1056).
  10. The route the Assyrian invaders would take in 701 bc was from the northern boundary of Judah at Aiath (another name for Ai), about eight miles north of Jerusalem, southward to Nob, about two miles north of Jerusalem. The sites of 8 of the 12 towns are known (all except Gallim, Laishah, Madmenah, and Gebim)(Martin, *BKC*, 1:1056).

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