

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Bible Study Notes: Isaiah Chapter 10 & 11

1/29/14

Chapter 10 Study Notes

God's Judgment on Assyria - Verses 1-11

Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, ² to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless. ³ What will you do on the day of reckoning, when disaster comes from afar? To whom will you run for help? Where will you leave your riches? ⁴ Nothing will remain but to cringe among the captives or fall among the slain. Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away, his hand is still upraised. ⁵ "Woe to the Assyrian, the rod of my anger, in whose hand is the club of my wrath! ⁶ I send him against a godless nation, I dispatch him against a people who anger me, to seize loot and snatch plunder, and to trample them down like mud in the streets. ⁷ But this is not what he intends, this is not what he has in mind; his purpose is to destroy, to put an end to many nations. ⁸ 'Are not my commanders all kings?' he says. ⁹ 'Has not Calno fared like Carchemish? Is not Hamath like Arpad, and Samaria like Damascus? ¹⁰ As my hand seized the kingdoms of the idols, kingdoms whose images excelled those of Jerusalem and Samaria—¹¹ shall I not deal with Jerusalem and her images as I dealt with Samaria and her idols?"

ISAIAH 10:1

God will judge unjust judges and those who make unfair laws. Those who oppress others will be oppressed themselves. It is not enough to live in a land founded on justice; each individual must deal justly with the poor and the powerless. Don't pass your responsibility off onto your nation or even your church. You are accountable to God for what you do.

ISAIAH 10:7

Although Assyria did not know it was part of God's plan, God used this nation to judge his people. God accomplishes his plans in history despite people or nations who reject him. He did not merely set the world in motion and let it go! Because our all-powerful, sovereign God is still in control today, we have security even in a rapidly changing world.

ISAIAH 10:9

Calno, Carchemish, Hamath, Arpad, Samaria, and Damascus were cities conquered by Assyria. Assured of great victories that would enlarge their empire, the king of Assyria gave an arrogant speech. Already Assyria had conquered several cities and thought Judah would be defeated along with the others. Little did he know that they were under the mightier hand of God.

ISAIAH 10:10

Samaria and Jerusalem were filled with idols that were powerless against the Assyrian military machine. Only the God of the universe could and would overthrow Assyria, but not until he had used the Assyrians for his purposes.

God's Judgment on Assyria - Verses 12-19

¹² When the Lord has finished all his work against Mount Zion and Jerusalem, he will say, "I will punish the king of Assyria for the willful pride of his heart and the haughty look in his eyes. ¹³ For he says: "By the strength of my hand I have done this, and by my wisdom, because I have understanding. I removed the boundaries of nations, I plundered their treasures; like a mighty one I subdued their kings. ¹⁴ As one reaches into a nest, so my hand reached for the wealth of the nations; as people gather abandoned eggs, so I gathered all the countries; not one flapped a wing, or opened its mouth to chirp." ¹⁵ Does the ax raise itself above the person who swings it, or the saw boast against the one who uses it? As if a rod were to wield the person who lifts it up, or a club brandish the one who is not wood! ¹⁶ Therefore, the Lord, the LORD Almighty, will send a wasting disease upon his sturdy warriors; under his pomp a fire will be kindled like a blazing flame. ¹⁷ The Light of Israel will become a fire, their Holy One a flame; in a single day it will burn and consume his thorns and his briers. ¹⁸ The splendor of his forests and fertile fields it will completely destroy, as when a sick person wastes away. ¹⁹ And the remaining trees of his forests will be so few that a child could write them down.

ISAIAH 10:12

The predicted punishment of the Assyrians took place in 701 B.C., when 185,000 Assyrian soldiers were slain by the angel of the Lord (37:36, 37). Later, the Assyrian Empire fell to Babylon, never to rise again as a world power.

ISAIAH 10:12

The Assyrians were haughty. Proud of the victories God permitted, they thought they had accomplished everything in their own power. Our perspective can also become distorted by pride in our accomplishments. If we do not acknowledge God to be in control of our life, working out his purposes, we are bound to fail.

ISAIAH 10:15

No instrument or tool accomplishes its purposes without a greater power. The Assyrians were a tool in God's hands, but they failed to recognize it. When a tool boasts of greater power than the one who uses it, it is in danger of being discarded. We are useful only to the extent that we allow God to use us.

ISAIAH 10:17

Assyria's downfall came in 612 B.C. when Nineveh, the capital city, was destroyed. Assyria had been God's instrument of judgment against Israel, but it, too, would be judged for its wickedness. No one escapes God's judgment against sin, not even the most powerful of nations (Psalm 2).

The Remnant of Israel - Verses 20-34

²⁰ In that day the remnant of Israel, the survivors of Jacob, will no longer rely on him who struck them down but will truly rely on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel. ²¹ A remnant will return,^[b] a remnant of Jacob will return to the Mighty God. ²² Though your people be like the sand by the sea, Israel, only a remnant will return. Destruction has been decreed, overwhelming and righteous. ²³ The Lord, the LORD Almighty, will carry out the destruction decreed upon the whole land. ²⁴ Therefore this is what the Lord, the LORD Almighty, says: "My people who live in Zion, do not be afraid of the Assyrians, who beat you with a rod and lift up a club against you, as Egypt did. ²⁵ Very soon my anger against you will end and my wrath will be directed to their destruction." ²⁶ The LORD Almighty will lash them with a whip, as when he struck down Midian at the rock of Oreb; and he will raise his staff over the waters, as he did in Egypt. ²⁷ In that day their burden will be lifted from your shoulders, their yoke from your

neck; the yoke will be broken because you have grown so fat. ²⁸ They enter Aiath; they pass through Migron; they store supplies at Mikmash. ²⁹ They go over the pass, and say, "We will camp overnight at Geba." Ramah trembles; Gibeah of Saul flees. ³⁰ Cry out, Daughter Gallim! Listen, Laishah! Poor Anathoth! ³¹ Madmenah is in flight; the people of Gebim take cover. ³² This day they will halt at Nob; they will shake their fist at the mount of Daughter Zion, at the hill of Jerusalem. ³³ See, the Lord, the LORD Almighty, will lop off the boughs with great power. The lofty trees will be felled, the tall ones will be brought low. ³⁴ He will cut down the forest thickets with an ax; Lebanon will fall before the Mighty One.

ISAIAH 10:20, 21

Once Assyria's army was destroyed, a small group of God's people would stop relying on Assyria and start trusting God. This remnant would be but a fraction of Israel's former population: see Ezra 2:64, 65 for the small number who returned to Judah (see also 11:10-16).

ISAIAH 10:20, 21

Those who remained faithful to God despite the horrors of the invasion are called the remnant. The key to being a part of the remnant was faith. Being a descendant of Abraham, living in the Promised Land, having trusted God at one time—none of these were good enough. Are you relying on your Christian heritage, the rituals of worship, or past experience to qualify you for belonging to God's family? The key to being a true Christian is faith in God.

ISAIAH 10:28-34

The way these cities are listed approximates the route the Assyrians would take in their invasion of Judah in 701 B.C. They would go from Aiath (probably Ai) at the northern border to Nob (only two miles from Jerusalem).

Chapter 11 Study Notes

The Branch From Jesse - Verses 1-16

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. ² The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD—³ and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; ⁴ but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. ⁵ Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. ⁶ The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling^[a] together; and a little child will lead them. ⁷ The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The infant will play near the cobra's den, and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest. ⁹ They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. ¹⁰ In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious. ¹¹ In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the surviving remnant of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the Mediterranean. ¹² He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four

quarters of the earth. ¹³ Ephraim's jealousy will vanish, and Judah's enemies will be destroyed; Ephraim will not be jealous of Judah, nor Judah hostile toward Ephraim. ¹⁴ They will swoop down on the slopes of Philistia to the west; together they will plunder the people to the east. They will subdue Edom and Moab, and the Ammonites will be subject to them. ¹⁵ The LORD will dry up the gulf of the Egyptian sea; with a scorching wind he will sweep his hand over the Euphrates River. He will break it up into seven streams so that anyone can cross over in sandals. ¹⁶ There will be a highway for the remnant of his people that is left from Assyria, as there was for Israel when they came up from Egypt.

ISAIAH 11:1-9

Assyria would be like a tree cut down at the height of its power (10:33, 34), never to rise again. Judah (the royal line of David) would be like a tree chopped down to a stump. But from that stump a new shoot would grow—the Messiah. He would be greater than the original tree and would bear much fruit. The Messiah is the fulfillment of God's promise that a descendant of David would rule forever (2 Samuel 7:16).

ISAIAH 11:3-5

God will judge with fairness and truth. How we long for fair treatment from others, but do we give it? We hate those who base their judgments on appearance, false evidence, or hearsay, but are we quick to judge others using those standards? Only Christ can be the perfectly fair judge. Only as he governs our hearts can we learn to be as fair in our treatment of others as we expect others to be toward us.

ISAIAH 11:4, 5

Judah had become corrupt and was surrounded by hostile, foreign powers. The nation desperately needed a revival of righteousness, justice, and faithfulness. They needed to turn from selfishness and show justice to the poor and the oppressed. The righteousness that God values is more than refraining from sin. It is actively turning toward others and offering them the help they need.

ISAIAH 11:6-10

A golden age is yet to come, a time of peace when children will play with formerly dangerous animals. Not all of this was fulfilled at Christ's first coming. For example, nature has not returned to its intended balance and harmony (see Romans 8:9-22). Such perfect tranquility is possible only when Christ reigns over the earth.

ISAIAH 11:11

When will this remnant of God's people be returned to their land? Old Testament prophecy is often applied both to the near future and the distant future. Judah would soon be exiled to Babylon, and a remnant would return to Jerusalem in 537 B.C. at Cyrus's decree. In the ages to come, however, God's people would be dispersed throughout the world. These locations represent the four corners of the known world—Hamath in the north, Egypt in the south, Assyria and Babylonia in the east, the islands of the sea in the west. Ultimately God's people will be regathered when Christ comes to reign over the earth.

ISAIAH 11:14

Edom, Moab, and Ammon were three countries bordering Judah (along with Philistia). They were the nations who, when Judah was defeated, rejoiced and took their land.

ISAIAH 11:15, 16

Isaiah is talking about a new or second exodus when God will bring his scattered people back to Judah, and the Messiah will come to rule the world. The Lord dried up the Red Sea so the Israelites could walk through it on their way to the Promised Land (Exodus 14). He dried up the Jordan River so the nation could cross into the land (Joshua 3). God will again provide the way of return for his people.