

Session 13

Isaiah 10:22-11:16 | The Assyrian Cut Down and the Branch Raised Up

Isaiah Oracle by Oracle / Dr. Randy White

- The previous lesson ended with the remnant returning to “the mighty God” (10:21).
- Isaiah 10:22-23 clarifies that the remnant principle does not mean Israel will escape judgment as a whole.
- Isaiah 10:24-34 then resolves the Assyrian threat: the Assyrian comes near Jerusalem, but the LORD cuts him down.
- Isaiah 11 shows what rises after the proud forest falls: not another Assyrian empire, but the Branch from Jesse and the kingdom He brings.

The remnant and the consumption decreed (10:22-23)

- Verses 22-23 make clear that judgment will not be avoided by Israel’s large numbers.
 - Even if Israel is as numerous as the sand of the sea, only a remnant will return.
 - Paul quotes this passage in Romans 9:27-28 to show that God’s work with Israel has always included the principle of a remnant.
 - The phrase “**the consumption decreed**” (v. 22) means the judgment is determined, not accidental.
- Yet again, a question arises: *Is this a short-term or long-term prophecy?*
 - In the short term, the Assyrian does his work, Israel is destroyed, and a remnant, not the whole, returns both to the land and to her God. One could argue that this is exactly what happened, especially in light of the New Testament, where Galilee was filled with a returned remnant living in the territory of the northern kingdom and serving “the mighty God.”
- In the long term, this context will soon move into the Branch from Jesse (11:1), the wolf and the lamb (11:6-9), and a worldwide regathering (11:11-16). In light of Paul’s use of these verses in Romans 9:27-28, it seems unlikely that they are *only* meant to reflect the current crisis or even just a general “remnant principle.”

Comfort to Zion under Assyrian threat (10:24-27)

- Verse 24 turns directly to **“my people that dwellest in Zion.”**
 - Judah is told not to fear the Assyrian, even though he will smite with a rod.
 - The command does not deny Assyrian pressure; it denies the Assyrian’s final power.
- Verse 25 says the indignation will last only “a very little while.”
 - God’s anger has a limit.
 - The Assyrian’s assignment will end, and then God’s anger will turn to his destruction.
 - In the Old Testament, “little while” is never used for an ordinary or trivial passage of time. Every occurrence concerns a significant moral, national, or prophetic situation. The phrase serves as a reminder that the present state of affairs is temporary and that God is about to bring a decisive change.
- Verse 26 compares the Assyrian’s coming defeat to earlier deliverances.
 - Midian was broken at the rock of Oreb (Judg. 7:25).
 - The phrase “after the manner of Egypt” appears in verses 24 and 26. In verse 24, Assyria becomes a new Egypt to God’s people. Then, in verse 26, Assyria receives an Egypt-style overthrow from God.
 - The point is that the Assyrian may look overwhelming, but Israel’s God has overthrown overwhelming enemies before.
- Verse 27 promises that the Assyrian burden and yoke will be removed.
 - “His burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder...” That is, the Assyrian’s burden from Israel’s shoulder, with “my people that dwellest in Zion” (v. 24) as the referent of “thy” (“people” here is singular, thus “thy” and “dwellest”).
- The KJV says the yoke will be destroyed **“because of the anointing.”**
 - The phrase is literally, “because of oil.” The problem is that it means something, but we are just not sure what it means. Therefore, a wide range of interpretations has been given.
 - Rashi interprets it as “because of Hezekiah,” and interprets this as Hezekiah’s anointing.
 - This concept fits the “near and far” interpretive principle of prophecy, with Hezekiah being the “near” and the Messiah being the “far.”
 - Many modern translations develop some “interesting” interpretations:
 - CSB: The yoke will be broken because your neck will be too large.
 - NIV: the yoke will be broken because you have grown so fat.
 - ESV: the yoke will be broken because of the fat.
 - This is a difficult phrase, but at minimum it points to the Lord’s consecrated purpose for His people and His kingly program.
 - In the broader Isaiah context, it is hard not to hear a Messianic echo, though the immediate historical deliverance should not be ignored.

The Assyrian approaches Jerusalem, but the Lord cuts him down (10:28-34)

- Verses 28-32 describe the Assyrian’s terrifying march toward Jerusalem.
 - In the near term, the “he” of verse 28 is the Assyrian power introduced in verse 5, represented most naturally here by Sennacherib in his campaign against Judah.
- The named places move generally southward toward Jerusalem: Aiath,

- Migron, Michmash, Geba, Ramah, Gibeah, Gallim, Laish, Anathoth, Madmenah, Gebim, and Nob.
- The list creates a sense of rapid advance and mounting panic.
- Nob is close enough to Jerusalem that the Assyrian can shake his hand against “the mount of the daughter of Zion” (v. 32).
- Verses 33-34 abruptly reverse the picture.
 - The Lord, “**the LORD of hosts,**” will lop the bough with terror.
 - The high ones will be humbled.
 - Lebanon, a picture of majestic trees and imperial strength, will fall by a mighty one.
- The transition into chapter 11 is important:
 - The proud forest is cut down in 10:33-34.
 - Immediately afterward, a small shoot comes from the stem of Jesse (11:1).
 - Human empire is felled like timber; the Davidic hope begins like a branch.
- Because of its broader implications, this passage is almost certainly written with “prophetic contingency” in mind.
 - It *can* be fully fulfilled in Hezekiah and Sennacherib.
 - It *fits perfectly* as a later full fulfillment in the Antichrist, his army, and the Lord’s ultimate victory.

The Branch from Jesse and the Spirit of the LORD (11:1-5)

- Verse 1 begins with a contrast to the felled Assyrian forest.
 - “**There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse**” presents new life from what looks like a cut-down Davidic line.
 - Jesse, rather than David, may emphasize the humbled origin of the royal house before its glory.
 - This promise is seen messianically by both Christians and Jews.
 - Rashi: “Eventually, the King Messiah shall come and redeem them.”
- Verse 2 identifies the source of the Branch’s wisdom and rule: “**the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him.**”
 - The Spirit is described with wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, and the fear of the LORD.
- This is not mere political brilliance. It is Spirit-endowed Messianic rule.
- Verses 3-5 describe righteous judgment.
 - He does not judge by outward appearance or rumor.
 - He judges the poor and meek with righteousness and equity.
 - He smites the earth with the rod of His mouth and slays the wicked with the breath of His lips.
- Righteousness and faithfulness are not accessories to His reign; they are the girdle of His rule.

Kingdom peace in creation (11:6-9)

- Verses 6-8 describe a transformed order using predator-and-prey imagery.
 - The wolf dwells with the lamb.
 - The leopard lies down with the kid.
 - The calf, young lion, and fatling are together.
 - A little child leads them.
- About asps and cockatrices’ dens:
 - An *asp* is an old snake that cannot hear and thus cannot be charmed (Psalm 58:4).
 - A *cockatrice* is not a mythical creature, but something that lays eggs (Isaiah 59:5), and a serpent of some type (Isaiah

- 14:29). In 17th-century English, it was the word used of the most deadly of snakes.
- The passage should not be reduced too quickly to a vague symbol of personal peace.
 - The language is creation-wide and kingdom-oriented.
 - The curse and violence associated with the present order are being reversed.
 - Verse 9 gives the reason: **“the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.”**
 - The peace is not sentimental. It comes from the worldwide knowledge of the LORD.
 - This is larger than Judah’s immediate deliverance from Assyria.

The root of Jesse and the gathering of the nations (11:10)

- Verse 10 shifts from the Branch to the **“root of Jesse.”**
 - The Messiah is both from Jesse’s line and the source of Jesse’s hope.
 - This anticipates the kind of paradox later seen in the Messiah as both David’s Son and David’s Lord.
- The root stands for an ensign of the people.
 - The Gentiles seek Him.
 - His rest is glorious. (Note that *rest* is a noun, the “Sabbath rest” of the Kingdom.)
 - Cross-references: Psalm 132:13-14; Isaiah 32:17-18; Isaiah 66:1; Matthew 11:28-29; Hebrews 4:9.
- Paul quotes Isaiah 11:10 in Romans 15:12 to show that Gentile hope is rooted in Israel’s Messiah, not detached from Israel’s promises.

The remnant gathered a second time (11:11-16)

- Verse 11 says the Lord will set His hand again **“the second time”** to recover the remnant of His people.
 - This points beyond the first exodus and beyond a small return from Assyrian pressure.
 - The named lands stretch the horizon: Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, and the islands of the sea.
- Verse 12 expands the gathering to the **“outcasts of Israel”** and the **“dispersed of Judah.”**
 - Both northern and southern kingdom language appears.
 - The regathering is national, not merely individual.
- Verse 13 anticipates healed division.
 - Ephraim’s envy departs.
 - Judah no longer vexes Ephraim.
 - The old fracture between north and south is resolved under the Branch’s reign.
- The Lord anticipated this day when He spoke of **“other sheep”** being brought into **“one fold”** under **“one shepherd”** (John 10:16).
 - Compare Ezekiel 34:23; 37:21-24, where the divided people are gathered, made one nation, and placed under one shepherd/king.
- Verses 14-15 describe victory over surrounding enemies and the drying or dividing of waters.
 - The language intentionally recalls exodus imagery.
 - The Lord who brought Israel out once can gather and deliver Israel again.
- Verse 16 closes with a highway for the remnant.
 - As there was a highway from Egypt in the first exodus, there will be a way for the remnant from Assyria.
 - The lesson therefore moves from Assyrian

threat to Messianic kingdom hope: the
enemy is cut down, the Branch rises, and

the remnant comes home.