

CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

Isaiah Chapter 10 — Woe to Oppressors, Judgment on Assyria, and the Remnant of Israel

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

Isaiah Chapter 10 deals with three major truths:

God judges injustice.

God rules over nations.

God preserves a faithful remnant.

The chapter opens with a severe warning against leaders who use law itself as an instrument of oppression.

They write:

Unjust laws.

Oppressive decrees.

They rob:

The poor.

Widows.

The fatherless.

God asks them:

“What will you do on the day of judgment?”

Power will not protect them.

Wealth will not rescue them.

Government position will not provide refuge.

Then Isaiah turns toward Assyria.

Assyria is one of the most powerful empires on earth.

Yet God describes the empire as:

“the rod of My anger.”

This is one of the clearest statements in Isaiah concerning divine sovereignty over nations.

Assyria believes:

It conquers by its own strength.

Its kings boast:

We conquered.

We plundered.

We destroyed.

We subdued kingdoms.

But God says Assyria is only:

An axe.

A saw.

A rod.

A club.

A tool cannot boast against the one using it.

God may sovereignly use a nation for His purposes while still holding that nation accountable for its:

Pride.

Violence.

Cruelty.

Arrogance.

Assyria intends to destroy nations for its own glory.

God uses Assyria within His judgment.

The same historical event therefore contains:

Human intention.

Divine purpose.

Then the chapter turns to hope.

A remnant will return.

They will no longer depend upon the power that struck them.

Instead:

“They will truly rely on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel.”

Finally, Assyria marches toward Jerusalem.

City after city trembles.

The enemy reaches Nob and shakes his fist toward Zion.

It appears unstoppable.

Then God acts.

The great forest is cut down.

The tall trees fall.

The lofty are humbled.

Lebanon falls:

“before the Mighty One.”

The central truth of Isaiah 10 is:

God judges leaders who use power to oppress the weak, sovereignly uses nations as instruments of His purposes without approving their pride or cruelty, humbles every power that exalts itself, and preserves a faithful remnant who learns to rely upon the Holy One of Israel rather than human strength.

I. WOE TO THOSE WHO MAKE UNJUST LAWS

Isaiah 10:1 — Oppression Written into Law

“Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who write oppressive decrees.”

Isaiah begins with:

Woe.

The problem is not merely individual wrongdoing.

Injustice has entered the legal system.

People with authority use:

Law.

Policy.

Decrees.

To protect oppression.

This is especially serious because law should defend justice.

Instead:

It becomes a weapon against the weak.

Cross References

Amos 2:6

God condemns Israel because they sell the righteous for money and treat the poor as though their lives were worth no more than a pair of sandals.

Exodus 23:6

God commands His people not to twist justice against a poor person simply because that person lacks social power or influence.

Micah 2:1

Woe belongs to those who lie awake planning evil and then carry it out when morning comes because they possess the power to do it.

Spiritual Principle

Something does not become righteous merely because it becomes legal.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Human law remains accountable to divine justice.

II. THE POOR ARE ROBBED OF THEIR RIGHTS

Isaiah 10:2 — Widows and Orphans Become Prey

“To deprive the poor of their rights and rob My people of justice, to make widows their prey and plunder the fatherless!”

God identifies specific victims:

The poor.

Widows.

The fatherless.

These are people who often possess less political and economic power.

Instead of protecting them, corrupt leaders exploit them.

Notice God calls them:

“My people.”

God takes their oppression personally.

Cross References

Micah 2:2

The wicked covet fields and steal them, desire houses and seize them, and oppress families by taking away their property and inheritance.

Psalms 94:6

The wicked murder widows and foreigners and even kill the fatherless without fear of accountability.

James 5:4

The unpaid wages of workers cry out against those who cheated them, and the cries of the oppressed reach the Lord of Heaven's Armies.

Spiritual Principle

God hears the cries that powerful people try to ignore.

Key Truth

How a society treats people with little power reveals much about its moral condition.

III. WHAT WILL OPPRESSORS DO WHEN JUDGMENT COMES?

Isaiah 10:3 — Wealth Cannot Be Hidden

“What will you do on the day of judgment, when disaster comes from afar? To whom will you run for help? Where will you leave your wealth?”

Isaiah asks three devastating questions.

What will you do?

Where will you run?

Where will you leave your wealth?

Everything the oppressor trusted suddenly becomes useless.

Power:

Cannot save.

Money:

Cannot save.

Connections:

Cannot save.

Cross References

Hosea 9:7

The days of punishment and accountability arrive, and Israel will learn that judgment cannot be avoided forever.

Luke 19:44

Jesus warns Jerusalem that judgment will come because the people failed to recognize the time when God graciously visited them.

Jeremiah 5:31

Prophets speak falsely, priests misuse authority, and the people prefer it that way; yet God asks what they will do when the end finally comes.

Spiritual Principle

Every form of earthly power eventually meets a day when it cannot provide rescue.

IV. NOTHING REMAINS BUT DEFEAT

Isaiah 10:4 — Captivity or Death

“Nothing remains but to bow among the captives or fall among the slain. Yet for all this, His anger is not turned away; His hand is still stretched out.”

The repeated refrain from Isaiah 9 appears again.

Judgment continues because rebellion continues.

Those who once stood proudly over others now:

Bow among captives.

Fall among the dead.

Cross References

Isaiah 9:12

Even after Israel experienced attack from surrounding enemies, God’s judging anger continued because the people still refused repentance.

Isaiah 5:25

God’s anger burned because of persistent rebellion, and even after severe judgment His hand remained raised.

2 Kings 17:6

Assyria captured Samaria and carried Israel away into exile, demonstrating the historical reality of the judgment Isaiah announced.

Spiritual Principle

Pride stands tall until judgment forces it down.

V. ASSYRIA IS THE ROD OF GOD’S ANGER

Isaiah 10:5 — A Powerful Nation Is Still a Tool

“Woe to the Assyrian, the rod of My anger, in whose hand is the club of My wrath!”

This verse contains a remarkable tension.

Assyria is:

Powerful.

Cruel.

Imperial.

But God calls Assyria:

My rod.

God is sovereign even over nations that do not worship Him.

Assyria is an instrument.

Not:

The ultimate ruler.

Cross References

Isaiah 10:15

Isaiah later compares Assyria to an axe or saw that foolishly boasts against the person using the tool.

Habakkuk 1:6

God tells Habakkuk that He is raising up the fierce Babylonian nation to carry out judgment across the land.

Jeremiah 51:20

God describes a powerful kingdom as His war club and weapon through which He breaks nations and kingdoms.

Spiritual Principle

God can use a nation without approving everything that nation does.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A tool may be powerful, but it is never greater than the hand directing it.

VI. GOD SENDS ASSYRIA AGAINST A GODLESS NATION

Isaiah 10:6 — Judgment Through a Foreign Power

“I send him against a godless nation; I dispatch him against a people who have provoked My wrath, to seize loot, take plunder, and trample them down like mud in the streets.”

God clearly states His purpose.

Assyria is sent as an instrument of judgment.

Israel’s rebellion has provoked God.

The invasion is therefore not outside divine sovereignty.

Cross References

Isaiah 5:25

God’s anger burns against His rebellious people because they rejected His truth and continued in sin.

Micah 7:10

Those who mocked God’s people would eventually experience humiliation themselves when God acted in justice.

2 Kings 17:7

Israel’s exile came because the people sinned against the Lord who had rescued them from Egypt and because they turned toward other gods.

Spiritual Principle

God may use historical events as instruments of discipline.

VII. ASSYRIA HAS ITS OWN WICKED INTENTION

Isaiah 10:7 — God’s Purpose and Man’s Purpose

“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.”

This verse is essential for understanding divine sovereignty and human responsibility.

God has one purpose.

Assyria has another.

God uses Assyria for judgment.

Assyria seeks:

Conquest.

Destruction.

Glory.

Its motives are sinful.

God’s sovereignty does not excuse human wickedness.

Cross References

Genesis 50:20

Joseph tells his brothers that they intended evil against him, but God intended the same events for good in order to preserve many lives.

Habakkuk 1:7

The invading nation is terrifying and self-exalting, establishing its own authority and acting according to its own proud standards.

Acts 2:23

Jesus was handed over according to God’s determined purpose and foreknowledge, yet those who crucified Him remained morally responsible for their wicked actions.

Spiritual Principle

God can sovereignly accomplish His righteous purpose even through people whose intentions are evil.

Key Truth

Divine sovereignty never turns human sin into righteousness.

VIII. ASSYRIA BOASTS IN ITS COMMANDERS

Isaiah 10:8 — “Are Not My Commanders Kings?”

“He says: ‘Are not my commanders all kings?’”

Assyria’s confidence grows.

Its military commanders seem as powerful as kings.

The empire evaluates itself by:

Military strength.

Conquest.

Political dominance.

Cross References

2 Kings 18:33

The Assyrian spokesman mocked the gods of conquered nations and claimed that none had been able to rescue their lands from Assyria.

Isaiah 36:18

Assyria warns Judah not to trust the Lord, arguing that other nations’ gods had failed to save them.

Isaiah 37:12

The Assyrian king boasts that earlier nations and their gods could not escape destruction.

Spiritual Principle

Repeated success can tempt people to confuse temporary dominance with ultimate sovereignty.

IX. ASSYRIA LISTS ITS CONQUESTS

Isaiah 10:9 — One City After Another

“Has not Calno fared like Carchemish? Is not Hamath like Arpad, and Samaria like Damascus?”

Assyria keeps a record of victories.

City after city has fallen.

The implied argument is:

Jerusalem will be no different.

But Assyria fails to recognize one critical difference:

Jerusalem is under the covenant purposes of the living God.

Cross References

Isaiah 37:13

The Assyrian challenge lists previously defeated kings and cities as evidence of supposedly unstoppable power.

2 Kings 19:12

Assyria points to earlier conquered nations and asks whether their gods were able to rescue them.

Isaiah 36:19

The Assyrian spokesman mocks the gods of conquered regions and compares them with Jerusalem's God.

Spiritual Principle

Past victories do not guarantee future victory when human power collides with God's purpose.

X. ASSYRIA BOASTS OVER IDOLATROUS KINGDOMS

Isaiah 10:10 — False Comparisons

“As my hand seized the kingdoms of the idols, kingdoms whose carved images were greater than those of Jerusalem and Samaria—”

Assyria makes a theological mistake.

It assumes:

The Lord is merely another regional god.

It compares Him with idols.

This is arrogance combined with spiritual blindness.

Cross References

2 Kings 18:34

Assyria lists conquered nations and asks where their gods were when their cities fell.

Isaiah 37:23

God rebukes Assyria for mocking and blaspheming the Holy One of Israel.

Isaiah 36:19

The Assyrian spokesman compares the Lord with powerless idols from defeated nations.

Spiritual Principle

Never judge the living God by the failures of false gods.

XI. ASSYRIA THINKS JERUSALEM WILL FALL THE SAME WAY

Isaiah 10:11 — The Ultimate Miscalculation

“Shall I not deal with Jerusalem and her idols as I dealt with Samaria and her idols?”

Assyria assumes:

Jerusalem is simply next.

But Jerusalem’s idols are not the same as:

The Lord.

Judah may have been guilty of idolatry.

Yet the living God remains sovereign.

Cross References

Isaiah 36:20

Assyria asks which god among the nations has delivered its land and arrogantly assumes Jerusalem’s God will fail as well.

Isaiah 37:23

The Lord identifies Assyria’s boast as an insult directed against the Holy One of Israel Himself.

2 Kings 18:35

The Assyrian commander asks who among all the gods of the lands has rescued a country from Assyria’s power.

Spiritual Principle

Arrogance often overreaches because it cannot distinguish between human weakness and divine weakness.

XII. GOD WILL JUDGE ASSYRIA'S PRIDE

Isaiah 10:12 — The Instrument Will Be Judged

“When the Lord has finished all His work against Mount Zion and Jerusalem, He will punish the king of Assyria for the fruit of his arrogant heart and the pride of his haughty eyes.”

God will finish His work.

Then:

He will judge the tool He used.

Assyria is accountable for:

Arrogance.

Pride.

Cruelty.

Self-exaltation.

Cross References

Isaiah 37:36

The angel of the Lord struck the Assyrian camp, causing an enormous military defeat in a single night.

2 Kings 19:35

God brought devastating judgment against the Assyrian army outside Jerusalem.

Isaiah 14:25

God promises to crush Assyria and remove its yoke from His people.

Spiritual Principle

Being used by God does not exempt anyone from being judged by God.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God's usefulness of a person is never permission for that person's pride.

XIII. ASSYRIA TAKES CREDIT FOR EVERYTHING

Isaiah 10:13 — “By My Strength”

“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.’”

Listen to the repeated language:

My hand.

My wisdom.

My understanding.

I removed.

I plundered.

I subdued.

There is no acknowledgment of God.

This is the vocabulary of pride.

Cross References

Daniel 4:30

Nebuchadnezzar looked at Babylon and boasted that he had built the great city by his own power for his own glory.

Deuteronomy 8:17

God warns His people not to say that their own power and strength created their wealth.

Habakkuk 1:16

A conquering nation worships its own military strength because that strength has produced wealth and victory.

Spiritual Principle

Pride takes personal credit for gifts, opportunities, and abilities that ultimately came under God’s providence.

XIV. ASSYRIA THINKS THE WORLD IS A NEST

Isaiah 10:14 — No One Dared Resist

“As one reaches into a nest, so my hand reached for the wealth of nations. As people gather abandoned eggs, so I gathered the whole earth; no one flapped a wing, opened a mouth, or chirped.”

Assyria views nations as helpless nests.

It sees itself as unstoppable.

No resistance.

No opposition.

No challenge.

This confidence becomes arrogance.

Cross References

Habakkuk 1:15

The conqueror gathers nations like fish caught in nets and rejoices over military success.

Deuteronomy 8:17

God warns against imagining that human strength alone produced prosperity.

Ezekiel 29:3

Pharaoh is condemned for boasting in his own greatness and acting as though Egypt's resources belonged to him independently of God.

Spiritual Principle

When success encounters no resistance, humility becomes especially important.

XV. THE AXE CANNOT BOAST AGAINST THE WOODCUTTER

Isaiah 10:15 — Tool Versus User

“Does the axe raise itself above the one who swings it, or the saw boast against the one who uses it? As if a rod could wield the one who lifts it up, or a club could raise the one who is not wood!”

This is the central image of the chapter.

Assyria is:

An axe.

God is:

The One using it.

How absurd for the axe to boast.

The tool has:

No independent glory.

Cross References

Romans 9:20

Paul asks who the human being is to argue arrogantly with God, like a created object challenging the One who formed it.

Isaiah 29:16

Isaiah condemns the absurdity of reversing Creator and creature, as though pottery could claim superiority over the potter.

Isaiah 45:9

Woe belongs to the one who quarrels with the Creator, like a piece of clay challenging the Potter who shapes it.

Spiritual Principle

Created power never becomes Creator power.

Key Truth

The tool should never take the glory that belongs to the hand using it.

XVI. GOD WILL WEAKEN ASSYRIA'S STRONG MEN

Isaiah 10:16 — Fire Beneath the Pomp

“Therefore the Lord, the Lord of Hosts, will send a wasting disease among his strong warriors; under his pomp a fire will be kindled, like a blazing flame.”

Assyria appears:

Healthy.

Strong.

Magnificent.

God sees beneath the pomp.

Judgment will burn under the glory.

Cross References

2 Kings 19:35

The Lord struck the Assyrian army during the night and left its military power devastated.

Isaiah 37:36

God's angel destroyed an enormous portion of the Assyrian force outside Jerusalem.

Malachi 4:1

The coming day of judgment is pictured as a furnace consuming arrogant and wicked people like dry stubble.

Spiritual Principle

Outward strength can conceal approaching collapse.

XVII. THE LIGHT OF ISRAEL BECOMES A FIRE

Isaiah 10:17 — The Holy One Consumes Assyria

“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.”

God is:

Light to His people.

Fire to arrogant opposition.

The Holy One whom Assyria mocked becomes the One who destroys its power.

Cross References

Isaiah 37:36

The Lord brought sudden destruction upon the Assyrian army.

2 Kings 19:35

In one night God struck the invading army and shattered its apparent invincibility.

Zechariah 12:6

God pictures His people under His power like fire among wood and flame among dry material, consuming surrounding enemies.

Spiritual Principle

The God who comforts His people can also judge those who oppose His holy purposes.

XVIII. ASSYRIA'S SPLENDOR WILL WITHER

Isaiah 10:18 — Forest and Field Destroyed

“The splendor of his forests and fertile fields it will completely destroy, both soul and body, as when a sick man wastes away.”

The empire is compared to:

A forest.

A fertile field.

Both are devastated.

Military splendor disappears.

Cross References

Isaiah 37:36

God's judgment dramatically reduced Assyria's military force.

2 Kings 19:35

The Assyrian camp experienced catastrophic loss in a single night.

Nahum 1:14

God announces the end of Assyria's power and declares that its name and idolatrous legacy will not continue indefinitely.

Spiritual Principle

No empire possesses permanent splendor.

XIX. SO FEW WILL REMAIN THAT A CHILD CAN COUNT THEM

Isaiah 10:19 — The Mighty Forest Reduced

“And the trees left standing in his forest will be so few that a child could count them.”

The great forest becomes:

A handful.

The empire that boasted of countless conquests becomes countable.

Cross References

Isaiah 6:13

Isaiah earlier pictured judgment reducing a people like a tree cut down until only a stump remains.

2 Kings 19:35

Assyria's enormous army was suddenly reduced by divine judgment.

Nahum 2:13

God declares Himself against Nineveh and promises to destroy its military strength and silence its messengers.

Spiritual Principle

God can reduce what appears immeasurably powerful to almost nothing.

XX. THE REMNANT WILL RELY ON THE LORD

Isaiah 10:20 — No Longer Trusting the One Who Struck Them

“In that day the remnant of Israel, the survivors of Jacob, will no longer depend on him who struck them down but will truly rely on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel.”

This is one of the great restoration verses in the chapter.

Judgment teaches the remnant where not to trust.

They had leaned upon foreign power.

That power hurt them.

Now:

They return to God.

Cross References

Micah 4:7

God promises to make the weak and scattered remnant into a people over whom the Lord Himself will reign.

Zephaniah 3:12

God promises to leave a humble and lowly people who will seek refuge in the name of the Lord.

Romans 9:27

Paul quotes Isaiah and explains that although Israel may be numerous, only a remnant will experience the promised preservation.

Spiritual Principle

Sometimes painful experience teaches us to stop leaning on what cannot truly hold us.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A remnant is formed not merely by surviving judgment but by learning to trust God through it.

XXI. A REMNANT WILL RETURN TO THE MIGHTY GOD

Isaiah 10:21 — Shear-jashub Fulfilled

“A remnant will return, a remnant of Jacob will return to the Mighty God.”

Isaiah’s son Shear-jashub carried this message in his name:

A remnant will return.

Return means more than:

Geographical movement.

It also carries the idea of:

Spiritual return.

The remnant comes back to:

The Mighty God.

Cross References

Romans 9:27

Paul uses Isaiah's remnant language to explain that physical descent alone does not mean everyone participates in the saving promise.

Isaiah 7:3

Isaiah's son Shear-jashub—whose name means “a remnant will return”—accompanied him as a living sign.

Isaiah 11:11

Isaiah later promises that God will again gather the surviving remnant of His people from the places where they were scattered.

Spiritual Principle

God's restoration always points people back to Himself.

XXII. ONLY A REMNANT WILL RETURN

Isaiah 10:22 — Numerous as Sand, Yet Reduced

“Though your people, Israel, be as numerous as the sand on the seashore, only a remnant will return. Destruction has been decreed, overwhelming and righteous.”

Large numbers do not cancel judgment.

Israel may be numerous.

But only a remnant returns.

Judgment is described as:

Righteous.

God is not acting unjustly.

Cross References

Romans 9:27

Paul quotes this verse to emphasize that only a remnant of Israel participates in the promised saving work.

Genesis 22:17

God promised Abraham that his descendants would become as numerous as the stars and the sand along the seashore.

Hosea 1:10

Hosea also declares that Israel's descendants will become countless like the sand, yet the prophecy ultimately includes restoration after judgment.

Spiritual Principle

Numbers do not determine faithfulness.

XXIII. GOD WILL COMPLETE HIS DECREED JUDGMENT

Isaiah 10:23 — God Finishes What He Announces

“The Lord, the Lord of Hosts, will carry out the destruction decreed upon the whole land.”

God’s judgment is not impulsive.

It is:

Decreed.

Purposed.

Measured.

He will accomplish what He has announced.

Cross References

Romans 9:28

Paul explains that the Lord will carry out His Word upon the earth fully and decisively.

Daniel 9:27

Daniel speaks of decreed judgment continuing until God’s appointed purpose is fulfilled.

Isaiah 28:22

Isaiah warns that God has determined a work of judgment against the land and calls people not to harden themselves against the warning.

Spiritual Principle

God’s warnings should be taken seriously because His Word does not expire through human unbelief.

XXIV. ZION IS TOLD NOT TO FEAR ASSYRIA

Isaiah 10:24 — The Rod Will Not Last Forever

“Therefore, this is what the Lord, the Lord of Hosts, says: ‘My people who live in Zion, do not be afraid of the Assyrian, who strikes you with a rod and lifts up a club against you, as Egypt did.’”

Assyria is dangerous.

God does not deny the danger.

But He says:

Do not fear.

Why?

Because Assyria’s authority is:

Temporary.

Limited.

Subordinate.

The reference to Egypt recalls another oppressor God defeated.

Cross References

Exodus 14:13

Moses told the terrified Israelites not to fear but to stand firm and watch the Lord bring deliverance from Egypt.

2 Kings 19:6

God told Hezekiah not to be afraid of the blasphemous threats spoken by Assyria’s representatives.

Isaiah 37:6

Isaiah assured the king that he should not fear the words by which Assyria had insulted the living God.

Spiritual Principle

God’s people should never confuse temporary oppression with permanent defeat.

Key Truth

The rod is real.

But the hand holding history is greater.

XXV. GOD’S ANGER AGAINST HIS PEOPLE WILL END

Isaiah 10:25 — Judgment Has a Limit

“Very soon My anger against you will end, and My wrath will be directed to their destruction.”

This is hope.

Discipline has:

A purpose.

A limit.

God’s judgment upon His people is not endless destruction.

The instrument of discipline will itself be judged.

Cross References

2 Kings 19:7

God promised that the Assyrian king would receive troubling news, return to his own land, and ultimately fall there.

Isaiah 37:7

God assures Hezekiah that Assyria’s threat will be turned back and the arrogant king will not accomplish what he boasts.

Nahum 1:9

God declares that Assyria’s affliction will not continue indefinitely because He will bring its power to a decisive end.

Spiritual Principle

God’s discipline of His people has a redemptive purpose and does not last forever.

XXVI. GOD WILL DEFEAT ASSYRIA AS HE DEFEATED MIDIAN AND EGYPT

Isaiah 10:26 — Remember Earlier Deliverance

“The Lord Almighty will lash them with a whip, as when He struck Midian at the rock of Oreb; and He will raise His staff over the waters, as He did in Egypt.”

God reminds His people of:

Midian.

Egypt.

Past deliverance becomes fuel for present faith.

If God delivered before:

He can deliver again.

Cross References

Judges 7:25

Israel captured and killed Midianite leaders, including Oreb, after God gave Gideon victory over a far larger enemy force.

Exodus 14:27

When Moses stretched out his hand, the sea returned and overwhelmed the Egyptian forces pursuing Israel.

Isaiah 9:4

Isaiah compares God's future deliverance with the day He shattered Midian's oppressive yoke.

Spiritual Principle

Remembered deliverance strengthens present faith.

XXVII. THE YOKE WILL BE BROKEN

Isaiah 10:27 — The Burden Removed

“In that day their burden will be lifted from your shoulders, their yoke from your neck; the yoke will be broken because of the anointing.”

Assyria's oppression is pictured as:

A burden.

A yoke.

God removes both.

The power that once controlled Judah will be broken.

Cross References

Isaiah 14:25

God promises to crush Assyria and remove its burden from His people.

Nahum 1:13

God promises to break the oppressor's yoke and tear away the bonds that held His people.

Jeremiah 30:8

God promises to break the foreign yoke from His people's necks so they will no longer remain enslaved.

Spiritual Principle

No yoke remains unbreakable when God determines to remove it.

XXVIII. THE ASSYRIAN ARMY ADVANCES

Isaiah 10:28 — Aiath, Migron, Michmash

“They enter Aiath, pass through Migron; they store their supplies at Michmash.”

The prophecy now becomes geographically vivid.

The enemy advances town by town.

The movement toward Jerusalem feels relentless.

Cross References

Nehemiah 11:31

Aiath and nearby locations are listed among the settlements associated with the people of Benjamin.

1 Samuel 13:5

Philistine forces once gathered at Michmash with a massive military force, causing Israel great fear.

1 Samuel 14:31

Israel later fought its enemies across the same broader region.

Spiritual Principle

A threat can move closer without ever moving beyond God's limit.

XXIX. RAMAH TREMBLES AND GIBEAH FLEES

Isaiah 10:29 — Fear Spreads Toward Jerusalem

“They cross the pass and say, ‘We will camp at Geba for the night.’ Ramah trembles; Gibeah of Saul flees.”

The invading force draws nearer.

Cities react with:

Fear.

Flight.

Panic.

Cross References

1 Samuel 22:6

Saul once stayed in Gibeah with his officials while exercising royal authority there.

Joshua 18:24

Geba is listed among the towns belonging to Benjamin.

1 Samuel 10:26

After Saul was publicly recognized as king, he returned to his home in Gibeah.

Spiritual Principle

Places associated with former strength can become places of fear when human security fails.

XXX. NEARBY TOWNS CRY OUT

Isaiah 10:30 — Gallim, Laishah, and Anathoth

“Cry out, Daughter of Gallim! Listen, Laishah! Poor Anathoth!”

The advancing army spreads terror.

One town after another hears the danger.

The prophetic description creates the feeling of an enemy moving rapidly toward Zion.

Cross References

1 Samuel 25:44

Gallim is mentioned as the home of the man to whom Saul gave David’s wife Michal.

Joshua 15:44

Laish-related geographic names appear among settlements in the land, illustrating the broader network of towns vulnerable to invasion.

Jeremiah 1:1

Jeremiah came from Anathoth, a priestly town in Benjamin located near Jerusalem.

Spiritual Principle

National judgment touches ordinary communities, not merely kings and armies.

XXXI. PEOPLE FLEE AND TAKE COVER

Isaiah 10:31 — Madmenah and Gebim

“Madmenah is in flight; the people of Gebim take cover.”

Fear continues to spread.

Flight.

Hiding.

Evacuation.

The empire appears unstoppable.

Cross References

Jeremiah 6:1

Jeremiah calls people to flee from Jerusalem’s region because disaster and destruction are approaching.

Nehemiah 11:34

Gebim is listed among settlements occupied after the return from exile, reminding us that towns devastated by judgment could later be inhabited again.

Joshua 18:21

Benjamin’s towns are carefully identified within the inheritance God gave the tribe.

Spiritual Principle

Human fear sees the advancing army.

Faith must also remember the God who determines where it stops.

XXXII. ASSYRIA SHAKES ITS FIST AT ZION

Isaiah 10:32 — The Enemy Reaches Nob

“This very day he will halt at Nob; he will shake his fist at the mountain of Daughter Zion, at the hill of Jerusalem.”

The enemy comes extremely close.

From Nob:

Jerusalem is threatened.

Assyria shakes its fist.

It appears that nothing remains between:

The empire.

The city.

But this is where human advance meets divine boundary.

Cross References

2 Samuel 5:7

David captured the stronghold of Zion, which became known as the City of David.

Nehemiah 11:32

Nob is listed among the towns associated with the restored population around Jerusalem.

Joshua 18:25

The surrounding Benjaminite towns demonstrate how near the enemy's advance has come toward Jerusalem.

Spiritual Principle

Sometimes God allows the enemy to come frighteningly close before revealing the limit He has established.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Nearness is not victory.

XXXIII. GOD CUTS DOWN THE LOFTY TREES

Isaiah 10:33 — Pride Brought Low

“See, the Lord, the Lord of Hosts, will lop off the boughs with great power. The tall trees will be cut down, the lofty will be brought low.”

The image shifts.

Assyria was like:

A massive forest.

Now:

God becomes the woodsman.

Tall trees fall.

Height cannot save them.

Strength cannot save them.

Pride cannot save them.

Cross References

Isaiah 2:12

God has appointed a day against everything proud, arrogant, and lifted up, and all such pride will be brought low.

Isaiah 37:24

Assyria boasts of climbing mountains and cutting down the tallest trees, but God exposes this arrogance.

Ezekiel 31:3

A powerful empire is compared to a magnificent cedar towering above surrounding trees.

Spiritual Principle

God cuts down what pride continually lifts up.

XXXIV. LEBANON FALLS BEFORE THE MIGHTY ONE

Isaiah 10:34 — The Great Forest Comes Down

“He will cut down the forest thickets with an axe; Lebanon will fall before the Mighty One.”

The chapter ends with one decisive image.

Assyria:

A forest.

God:

The Mighty One.

Who wins?

Not Assyria.

The great forest falls.

The proud empire that believed itself unstoppable is cut down.

This ending prepares for Isaiah 11.

After the proud forest is felled:

A shoot will come from the stump of Jesse.

Human pride falls.

God's Messiah rises.

Cross References

Isaiah 37:24

Assyria boasts that it has cut down the great trees and conquered lofty places, but its pride is confronted by God.

Ezekiel 31:12

A mighty tree representing imperial greatness is cut down by foreign powers under divine judgment.

Daniel 4:14

Nebuchadnezzar's greatness is pictured as a tree ordered to be cut down as judgment upon his pride.

Spiritual Principle

The forest of human pride falls before the Mighty One.

Key Truth

The chapter does not end with Assyria standing over Jerusalem.

It ends with God standing over Assyria.

XXXV. EIGHT GREAT LESSONS FROM ISAIAH 10

1. God Judges Injustice

Leaders who use laws to oppress the weak answer to God.

Principle:

Authority is never permission to abuse people.

2. God Defends the Vulnerable

The poor, widows, and fatherless matter deeply to Him.

Principle:

God notices injustice that institutions ignore.

3. God Is Sovereign Over Nations

Assyria is called:

“The rod of My anger.”

Principle:

Empires are never independent of God’s sovereign authority.

4. Human Intention and Divine Purpose Can Differ

Assyria intends evil.

God uses its actions within His righteous purpose.

Principle:

God’s sovereignty is powerful enough to accomplish His purpose without making evil morally good.

5. Pride Brings Judgment

Assyria boasts:

My strength.

My wisdom.

My victories.

Principle:

The tool that steals the Craftsman’s glory will eventually be humbled.

6. God Preserves a Remnant

A remnant returns.

Principle:

Judgment does not destroy God’s covenant purposes.

7. God Tells His People Not to Fear

Assyria is powerful.

God is greater.

Principle:

The temporary rod should never be feared above the eternal Lord.

8. The Mighty Are Humbled by the Mighty One

The forest falls.

Principle:

No earthly power remains too large for God to cut down.

XXXVI. WHAT ISAIAH 10 TEACHES ABOUT JUSTICE

The chapter begins with unjust law.

That matters.

God does not evaluate only:

Personal morality.

He also evaluates how systems treat people.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

A society can have many laws and still lack justice.

XXXVII. WHAT ISAIAH 10 TEACHES ABOUT LEADERSHIP

Those making oppressive decrees possess authority.

They misuse it.

God holds them accountable.

Spiritual Principle

The greater the authority, the greater the responsibility to use it justly.

XXXVIII. WHAT ISAIAH 10 TEACHES ABOUT GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

Assyria thinks:

It acts independently.

God says:

I sent it.

Yet God also judges Assyria.

This reveals a profound biblical truth:

God reigns over history without becoming morally responsible for the sinful intentions of human agents.

Key Truth

God is sovereign enough to use what He does not approve.

XXXIX. WHAT ISAIAH 10 TEACHES ABOUT HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY

Assyria cannot say:

“God used us, therefore our cruelty does not matter.”

God judges:

Its motives.

Its pride.

Its violence.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Divine sovereignty never becomes an excuse for human sin.

XL. WHAT ISAIAH 10 TEACHES ABOUT PRIDE

Assyria repeatedly says:

I.

My.

Me.

This is the language of self-exaltation.

Pride forgets:

God.

Dependence.

Providence.

Limits.

Spiritual Principle

Pride interprets God's gifts as proof of our independence from God.

XLI. WHAT ISAIAH 10 TEACHES ABOUT SUCCESS

Assyria succeeds repeatedly.

That success becomes spiritually dangerous.

Victory produces arrogance.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Success can test the soul just as deeply as failure.

XLII. WHAT ISAIAH 10 TEACHES ABOUT THE REMNANT

The remnant does more than survive.

It learns.

It no longer relies upon:

The one who struck it.

Instead:

It relies on the Lord.

Spiritual Principle

Biblical restoration changes the object of trust.

XLIII. WHAT ISAIAH 10 TEACHES ABOUT FEAR

God says:

“Do not be afraid of the Assyrian.”

This does not mean:

Assyria is harmless.

It means:

Assyria is limited.

Key Truth

Faith does not deny the rod.

Faith remembers who controls the rod.

XLIV. WHAT ISAIAH 10 TEACHES ABOUT DELIVERANCE

God reminds His people of:

Egypt.

Midian.

Why?

Because memory strengthens faith.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

When facing a new enemy, remember old deliverances.

XLV. WHAT ISAIAH 10 TEACHES ABOUT HUMAN POWER

Assyria reaches:

Nob.

It shakes its fist toward Jerusalem.

Then:

It stops.

Why?

Because human power reaches boundaries established by God.

Spiritual Principle

No human power can cross every line.

XLVI. THE AXE AND THE WOODCUTTER

This is one of the chapter's most memorable pictures.

Assyria is an axe.

God is the One who swings it.

Imagine an axe saying:

“Look what I did.”

That is the absurdity of pride.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Never boast in the power God merely allowed you to possess.

XLVII. THE DANGER OF TAKING CREDIT

Assyria says:

My hand.

My wisdom.

My understanding.

The same danger exists personally.

We can say:

My career.

My intelligence.

My ministry.

My business.

My success.

My achievement.

But Scripture asks:

Where did:

Life.

Ability.

Opportunity.

Strength.

Come from?

Spiritual Principle

Gratitude protects achievement from turning into arrogance.

XLVIII. WHEN THE ROD BECOMES PROUD

God uses Assyria.

Then Assyria becomes proud of being used.

This is spiritually dangerous.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Being useful to God is never the same as being approved by God in every area of life.

XLIX. THE REMNANT'S NEW TRUST

Verse 20 says they will no longer rely on the one who struck them.

That is profound.

Some people repeatedly return to the very thing that wounds them.

God teaches the remnant:

Stop leaning there.

Spiritual Principle

Restoration often requires changing what you trust.

L. THE ENEMY COMES CLOSE

Verses 28–32 read like footsteps approaching Jerusalem.

Aiath.

Migron.

Michmash.

Geba.

Ramah.

Gibeah.

Gallim.

Anathoth.

Nob.

Closer.

Closer.

Closer.

Then:

God intervenes.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God may allow a trial to come much closer than we would choose without ever allowing it to move beyond His purpose.

LI. THE FOREST FALLS

Assyria looks like:

A vast forest.

God cuts it down.

One moment:

Tall trees.

Next:

Fallen timber.

Spiritual Principle

What appears permanent to us may require only one act of God to remove.

LII. FROM ISAIAH 10 TO ISAIAH 11

Isaiah 10 ends with trees being cut down.

Isaiah 11 will begin with:

A shoot from the stump of Jesse.

That contrast is intentional.

Human greatness is cut down.

God's Messiah grows from what looks small.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God often removes the proud forest before revealing the humble Branch.

LIII. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

What sin is condemned first in Isaiah 10?

The use of law and authority to oppress people and deprive the poor of justice.

Question 2

Which vulnerable groups are specifically mentioned?

The poor.

Widows.

The fatherless.

Question 3

What question does God ask oppressive leaders?

What will they do when judgment comes, where will they run, and what will happen to their wealth?

Question 4

How does God describe Assyria?

As the rod of His anger and the club of His wrath.

Question 5

Did Assyria understand that it was serving God's purpose?

No.

Assyria intended conquest and destruction for its own glory.

Question 6

How can God use Assyria and still judge it?

God sovereignly uses its actions within His righteous purposes while Assyria remains responsible for its proud, violent motives.

Question 7

What was Assyria's central sin?

Pride.

It credited its victories to its own strength and wisdom.

Question 8

What illustration does God use to expose Assyria's pride?

An axe boasting against the person swinging it and a saw boasting against the one using it.

Question 9

What happens to Assyria?

God judges its military power and brings its pride down.

Question 10

What happens to Israel after judgment?

A remnant returns.

Question 11

What does the remnant learn?

They stop relying on the power that wounded them and truly rely upon the Lord.

Question 12

Why are God's people told not to fear Assyria?

Because Assyria's authority is temporary and God will eventually judge it.

Question 13

What earlier deliverances does God mention?

Midian and Egypt.

Question 14

How close does Assyria come to Jerusalem?

The army reaches Nob and threatens Zion directly.

Question 15

How does Isaiah 10 end?

The Lord cuts down the proud forest, and Lebanon falls before the Mighty One.

LIV. PERSONAL APPLICATION

Isaiah 10 asks several searching questions.

Am I Using Authority Justly?

If God has given me influence:

How am I using it?

How Do I Treat People With Less Power?

Do I protect?

Serve?

Ignore?

Exploit?

What Will I Do When Wealth Cannot Help?

Have I made money a refuge it can never truly become?

Do I Recognize God's Sovereignty?

Do I believe He remains Lord over nations and history?

Am I Taking Credit for God's Gifts?

How often do I say:

“My strength.”

“My wisdom.”

“My accomplishment.”

Has Success Made Me Proud?

Has blessing increased:

Gratitude?

Or:

Self-importance?

Am I Relying on Something That Has Already Hurt Me?

What false support do I need to stop leaning upon?

Do I Fear Temporary Power More Than God?

What “Assyria” feels too large in my life?

Do I Remember Past Deliverance?

What has God already brought me through?

Can I Trust God When the Enemy Seems Very Close?

Do I believe He still determines the boundary?

LV. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Never Fear the Axe More Than the Hand That Controls It”

Assyria looked unstoppable.

But Assyria was:

A tool.

God was:

The Sovereign.

Principle:

Temporary powers may affect your circumstances, but only God rules history.

LVI. WHEN LAW BECOMES AN INSTRUMENT OF INJUSTICE

Isaiah does not excuse injustice merely because government approves it.

God says:

Woe.

This means biblical justice stands above:

Human decrees.

Political convenience.

Personal profit.

Spiritual Principle

Right and wrong are not created by legislation.

LVII. GOD AND THE OPPRESSED

God repeatedly identifies with:

The poor.

Widows.

The fatherless.

The vulnerable.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Never assume God overlooks someone simply because society does.

LVIII. GOD CAN USE EVEN ASSYRIA

This chapter demonstrates staggering sovereignty.

God does not need Assyria to believe in Him before He remains sovereign over Assyria.

Spiritual Principle

God's throne does not depend upon human recognition.

LIX. DIFFERENT INTENTIONS, ONE EVENT

Assyria invades.

Assyria intends:

Destruction.

God intends:

Judgment.

One event.

Different purposes.

This resembles Joseph's words:

"You intended evil."

"God intended good."

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God's sovereignty is so complete that evil intentions cannot prevent His righteous purpose.

LX. SUCCESS WITHOUT HUMILITY

Assyria's mistake was not merely victory.

It was interpreting victory as proof of personal greatness.

Spiritual Principle

Success should increase gratitude, not eliminate dependence.

LXI. A REMNANT WILL RETURN

This is not merely hopeful poetry.

It is a repeated theme in Isaiah.

God preserves:

A people.

A promise.

A future.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

God may reduce numbers without losing purpose.

LXII. DO NOT FEAR ASSYRIA

Fear says:

Look how strong they are.

Faith says:

Look how temporary they are before God.

Spiritual Principle

Fear evaluates power by size.

Faith evaluates power by sovereignty.

LXIII. THE YOKE WILL BREAK

The oppressor's yoke appears permanent.

God says:

It will break.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Never call permanent what God has already declared temporary.

LXIV. THE LAST STOP IS NOB

Assyria advances.

Town after town.

Then Nob.

The enemy can see Jerusalem.

But seeing the city is not the same as conquering it.

Spiritual Principle

Proximity to victory is not possession of victory.

LXV. THE MIGHTY ONE CUTS THE FOREST

Assyria considers itself mighty.

Isaiah ends by revealing:

The Mighty One.

That title settles the comparison.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

There will always be a difference between those who are mighty and the One who is Almighty.

LXVI. FINAL APPLICATION

Isaiah Chapter 10 begins with powerful people abusing weak people.

It ends with the most powerful empire of the day being cut down by God.

That is intentional.

The chapter teaches:

Power matters.

But power is never ultimate.

Leaders can write laws.

Kings can move armies.

Empires can conquer nations.

But every authority remains beneath:

God.

The first warning is therefore to leaders.

Do not use power to:

Oppress.

Exploit.

Rob.

Silence.

Take advantage of the weak.

Because God asks:

“What will you do on the day of judgment?”

Then comes Assyria.

Assyria is terrifying.

But God calls it:

A rod.

An axe.

A saw.

A club.

Those are tools.

Assyria does not know it is a tool.

It says:

I did this.

My strength.

My wisdom.

My victories.

That pride becomes its downfall.

We should learn from this.

Whenever God gives:

Ability.

Position.

Success.

Influence.

Opportunity.

Never say:

“I did all this myself.”

Instead:

Give thanks.

Remain humble.

Remember the hand above the tool.

Isaiah also gives hope.

A remnant will return.

And their greatest change will not merely be geographic.

They will change what they trust.

They will no longer rely on the one who struck them.

They will rely:

“on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel.”

That is restoration.

Maybe that is the lesson some of us need most.

Stop leaning on what keeps hurting you.

Stop putting ultimate trust in:

Money.

People.

Power.

Institutions.

Your own strength.

Return to:

The Mighty God.

Finally, Assyria moves toward Jerusalem.

Closer.

Closer.

Closer.

Until it reaches Nob.

Then Isaiah changes the picture.

The army becomes a forest.

And suddenly:

God begins cutting.

Tall trees fall.

Lofty trees come down.

The great forest collapses.

Why?

Because Lebanon falls:

“before the Mighty One.”

Therefore:

Do justice.

Use authority humbly.

Protect the vulnerable.

Do not boast in success.

Do not fear temporary power.

Trust God’s sovereignty.

Remember His past deliverance.

And when the forest standing against you seems enormous:

Remember the Axe is still in the hand of the Mighty One.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

You are the Lord over:

Kings.

Governments.

Nations.

Armies.

History.

Forgive us when we forget that every human power remains under Your authority.

Father, give justice to those who are oppressed.

Protect:

The poor.

Widows.

Orphans.

The vulnerable.

Those who have little influence.

Judge corruption.

Expose unjust systems.

Give leaders wisdom and righteousness.

And if You give us authority, keep us from abusing it.

Teach us to use influence as:

Stewardship.

Service.

Responsibility.

Father, protect us from pride.

When You give success:

Make us thankful.

When You give strength:

Keep us dependent.

When You give wisdom:

Keep us teachable.

When You give influence:

Keep us humble.

Never let us become like Assyria, saying:

“My strength did this.”

“My wisdom accomplished this.”

Remind us that every gift ultimately comes from You.

Father, thank You that You preserve a remnant.

Teach us to rely fully upon You.

If we are leaning upon something that continues to wound us, give us courage to release it.

Bring us back to:

The Holy One of Israel.

Father, deliver us from fear.

When the enemy looks powerful:

Remind us that it is still limited.

When trouble moves closer:

Remind us that nearness is not victory.

When human power shakes its fist at us:

Remind us that You are still the Mighty One.

Break every yoke You never intended us to carry forever.

Lift every burden according to Your will.

And give us confidence that no forest of pride can stand indefinitely before You.

May we live:

Justly.

Humbly.

Faithfully.

Dependently.

Always giving You the glory.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.

Key Verse

**“In that day the remnant of Israel, the survivors of Jacob, will no longer depend on him who struck them down but will truly rely on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel.” —
Isaiah 10:20**

Central Truth

God judges injustice, sovereignly rules over nations, uses human powers without approving their sinful motives, humbles those who boast in their own strength, and preserves a remnant who learns to abandon false dependence and rely completely upon the Holy One of Israel.

Isaiah 10 in One Sentence

Isaiah condemns oppressive rulers, reveals Assyria as a temporary instrument in God's hand, announces judgment upon the empire's arrogance, promises that a faithful remnant will return to the Mighty God, and assures Zion that even the greatest human forest will fall before the Mighty One.

