

August 4

Scriptures: Read Isaiah 10, 11 & 12

Key Verse: "...the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious."
(Isaiah 11:10)

Overview

Isaiah's pronouncement of judgment upon the Northern Kingdom (Ephraim) which began in 9:8 continues in chapter ten, but now the warnings of punishment are also directed to the people of Judah, for they too rebelled against God. Both kingdoms were guilty of pride, arrogance, self-sufficiency, hypocrisy, and idolatry. In chapter ten, Isaiah condemns and predicts punishment for those who perverted justice by making corrupt laws which oppressed the poor, for in so doing they rejected God's authority and ignored His laws to protect and care for the needy (10:1-4).

God used the king of Assyria as an instrument to mete out His punishment upon Israel and chasten the people of Judah. Many mighty cities had fallen to the Assyrians who boasted of their strength and of how they would overcome their enemies' gods. But God was the power behind the success of the king of Assyria; he was merely God's tool (10:15). Samaria is spoken of as already having fallen (2 Kings 18:9-12), and the Assyrians thought it would be a simple thing to overthrow Jerusalem with their puny gods (10:10-11; 36:18-20; 2 Kings 18:19-20, 28-30, 33-35). They showed haughtiness and contempt toward the God of Israel, but God will not share His glory with another (Is. 42:8). Assyria would be judged with near annihilation, for God, "the Light of Israel" who guides His people, would become a consuming fire to destroy the Assyrians (10:17, 26).

In the midst of judgment, there is a prophecy of hope and mercy for the remnant who will be saved, having learned to trust only in God and not in man. It was in God's predetermined plan that a faithful remnant would return from captivity. In light of this promise, the Lord, through Isaiah, encourages the people of Jerusalem not to fear the Assyrians, for the chastisement would not destroy His people but rather purify them. Isaiah prophesied that God would intervene to save Jerusalem (10:27, 33-34), and Isaiah lived to see this fulfilled (37:36; 2 Kings 19:30-37).

As chapter ten ended by explaining that God will hew down and thus humble the haughty (10:33-34), so the imagery in the beginning of chapter eleven indicates that the House of David ("Jesse", the forefather of the Davidic line) will be hewed down like a tree stump. Isaiah gives a message of hope, however, for from that seemingly dead stump, new life will arise: "a shoot" (NIV 11:1) will come up from its roots and will flourish to become a "Branch" — the Messiah (Rev. 22:16). The Spirit of the Lord will rest upon Him, endowing Him with the fullness of His qualities and attributes (11:2). The Messiah's joy will be to fear the Lord, and thus He will keep the commandments, serve God, and do His will. Since He is righteous and the Spirit of the Lord is made manifest in Him, He will see and hear with spiritual understanding, and thus all His judgments will be righteous. Righteousness will be the key to holding His Kingdom together (11:5; Eph. 6:14), and therefore He will enforce righteousness with "the rod of His mouth", that is by the power and authority of His Word (cf. Rev. 1:16; 19:15; Heb. 4:12; Hos. 6:5).

With prophetic vision, Isaiah refers to “that day” when the Branch shall be a “banner” or ensign, for people of all nations to rally to the standard of the Cross of Jesus (11:10, 12). The Apostle Paul saw this prophecy fulfilled in the redemption that Jesus Christ provided for the salvation of the Gentiles (Rom. 15:12). At this same time, “the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left” (11:11). The word “recover” translated from the Hebrew is qanah, which is usually translated as “bought”, “purchased”, or “redeemed” (Neh. 5:8). The first time the Lord redeemed His people was through the first Passover, resulting in their freedom from bondage in Egypt (11:16). In the present age of grace through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Lord is going to redeem the remnant of His people, the Church, who are found in all parts of the world (cf. John 11:49-52), be they Jew or Gentile, as long as they believe in Jesus. He will give them victory over all their enemies and lead them into the coming age of His Millennial reign, when His holy remnant will enjoy the continual care and leading of the Lord in His glorious resting place (11:14-16). They will be unified in the bond of Jesus Christ (11:13), and it will truly be a golden era of peace and harmony amongst all God’s creation, including mankind and wild beasts, for in that day the curse upon the earth will have been removed (11:6-9; cf. Rom. 8:19-23). Everyone will know and worship the Lord Jesus, for “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord” (11:9b), and thus the redeemed will enjoy singing continual praises to Jesus who is their strength, song, satisfaction, source of joy, sustenance, and salvation. He is the Holy One in their midst who is the source of living water, for in Him are the “wells of salvation” (chapter 12; 55:1; John 4:10, 14; 7:38; Matt. 1:21; Rev. 22:1-3).

Prayer

Our Father, we drink deeply from the “wells of salvation” which You opened through our Lord Jesus Christ. Please be our strength, song, satisfaction, source of joy, sustenance, and salvation at all times. We praise You!