

ISAIAH 10

A TOOL IN GOD'S HANDS

In this chapter, the prophet denounces punishment – in the Lord's name – against the proud oppressors of His people. But throughout the chapter, there are several sweet descriptions of that great salvation by Jesus – from which alone, the people of God can find deliverance or comfort.

Amidst general sins, with which both the people of God and their leaders are said to abound, the prophet points to some special instances of tyranny which the magistrates and rulers were guilty of. Against these, the Lord particularly sets His face; and He assures them that there will surely be a day of reckoning when His righteous judgments will be poured out upon the world at large. But there is one day of visitation that will certainly come for us in particular – namely, the day of our death. And have we made up our minds as to what we intend to do in that day? When we find ourselves unable to stop our departing soul from its flight into another world, what shall we do? When we have passed into that other world and are in the immediate presence of God, standing before His judgment-seat, what shall we do then? The believer has no doubt what he shall do! He who has come to Jesus, and who knows that he is forgiven through His blood, and who lives day by day in union with Him – such a person will have no difficulty in determining what to do on that day. He will cling to the Savior alone, Who has promised to never leave him nor forsake him; and so he is sure to be safe. But we must not delay, for *now* is the time when salvation is being freely offered to us! Let us make sure that we have an interest in Christ today; and then, if tomorrow happens to be the day of visitation, we will have no need to be afraid!

In verses 5-19, we have a passage that is both simple and grand! It contains an address to Sennacherib – that proud Assyrian king whom the Lord used for the chastisement of other nations, and then overthrew because of his own pride and wickedness. As we consider how many years have elapsed since his death, and how many hundreds of miles away we live from the scene of his grand accomplishments; we might almost be tempted to ask why so much of our attention should be directed to him. The reason is this: if we can understand his character and story according to the explanation which God has given of them, we shall be better enabled to understand the character and story of many other persons of whom we read in history; and we will also be helped in our understanding of the events which are passing around us at the present time.

When God uses men as tools in His hand to do His work, it is very common for Him to intend one thing, and for them to intend another! Men have

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ Woes against those who abused their power over God's people – verses 1-4
- ❖ Isaiah speaks of an invasion of God's people by King Sennacherib – verses 5-19
- ❖ Encouragement that the enemy himself would be destroyed – verses 20-34

their own selfish goals and intentions, but Jehovah has His noble purposes; and we may rest assured that the counsel of the Lord is what shall ultimately stand. And herein lies the Christian's consolation! He looks beyond man – beyond his purposes and doings – to God, Who is the true Worker of all. King Sennacherib thought only of his own glory, and of destroying all his rivals; but the Lord used him for the accomplishment of His own righteous purposes. And then, when He was done with him, He set him aside.



When the Lord's judgments (prophesied in verses 5-19) had all fallen upon the great mass of the hypocritical nation, the remnant that escapes – being humbled and purified – would return to the Lord (verses 20-21). And this seems to have been one of the great lessons which God meant His prophet to teach His people. His judgments were not meant to utterly destroy them; but rather, to purify them, and to purge out the rebels from among them like the dross (chapter 1:25; Ezek. 20:38; Mal. 3:3). And all the while, the Lord is taking care to preserve His true and faithful remnant! At all times in the world's history, He has a very small number of faithful believers who have a quiet, honest, and thorough trust in Him. How few are grounded – as true trust must always be grounded – upon God's Covenant in Christ! Do we have such a trust? Paul stood as the only unmoved man upon the shattered, tempest-tossed vessel. While the winds were howling, and the waves were dashing, he told his shipmates, "Be of good cheer; for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me!" (Acts 27:25) When a man can thus venture his all upon God's simple Word, he is never disappointed!

In verse 24, we have the practical conclusion of this whole prophecy: "Therefore, O my people, be not afraid!" The remnant shall be saved; therefore, "fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom!" (Luke 12:32) "I, even I, am he that comforteth you," declares the Lord. "Who art thou that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?" (chapter 51:12-13) How repeatedly is this the Word of God to His own people! "Fear not, Abram!" (Gen. 15:1) "Fear not," Hagar! (Gen. 21:17) "Fear not," Isaac! (Gen. 26:24) "Fear not," Jacob! (Gen. 46:3) "Fear not," Israelites at the Red Sea! (Ex. 14:13) "Fear not," Moses! (Deut. 3:2) "Fear not," Joshua! (Josh. 8:1) "Fear not," Gideon! (Jud. 6:23) "Fear not," Solomon! (1 Chr. 28:20) "Fear not, Daniel!" (Dan. 10:12) "Fear not, Paul!" (Acts 27:24) The proud Assyrian monarch was brought to a humiliating end, so there was no reason why the Lord's people needed to be afraid of him!

Thank You, Lord, for Your continual reminders to us that we do not need to be afraid! We pray for grace to be among Your faithful remnant. Amen.