

# CHAPTER 10

## INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 10

This chapter contains denunciations of punishment, first on the governors of the Jewish nation, and then upon the Assyrians; a woe is denounced on the makers and imposers of bad laws, whereby the poor and the needy, the widows and the fatherless, were deprived of their right, (<sup>2300B</sup>Isaiah 10:1,2) which woe or punishment is explained to be a desolation of their country by the Assyrians, that should come afar off, and which they could not escape; under whom they should bow and fall; and yet there should not be an end of their punishment, (<sup>2300B</sup>Isaiah 10:3,4) next follows a prophecy of the destruction of the Assyrians themselves, for the comfort of God's people; in which is observed, that the Assyrian monarch was an instrument in the hand of the Lord to chastise his people, and therefore is called the rod and staff of his wrath and indignation, (<sup>2300B</sup>Isaiah 10:5) the people are described against whom he was sent, and the end for which is mentioned, (<sup>2300B</sup>Isaiah 10:6) though this was not his intention, nor did he design to stop here, but to destroy and cut off many other nations, (<sup>2300B</sup>Isaiah 10:7) which he hoped to do from the magnificence of his princes, who were as kings, and from the conquests he had made of kingdoms, and their chief cities, (<sup>2300B</sup>Isaiah 10:8-11) wherefore, when the Lord had done what he designed to do by him among his people the Jews, he was determined to punish him, because of the pride of his heart, and the haughtiness of his looks, and his boasting of his strength and wisdom, and of his robberies and plunders, without opposition; which boasting was as foolish as if an axe, a saw, a rod, and a staff, should boast, magnify, move, and lift up themselves against the person that made use of them, (<sup>2300B</sup>Isaiah 10:12-15) which punishment is said to come from the Lord, and is expressed by leanness, and by a consuming and devouring fire; for which reason his army is compared to thorns and briers, to a forest, and a fruitful field, which should be destroyed at once; so that what of the trees remained should be so few as to be numbered by a child, (<sup>2300B</sup>Isaiah 10:16-19) and, for the further consolation of the people of God, it is observed, that in the times following the destruction of the Assyrian monarchy, a remnant of the people of Israel should be converted, and no more lean upon an arm of flesh, but upon the

Lord Christ, the Holy One of Israel; even a remnant only; for though that people were very numerous, yet a remnant, according to the election of grace, should be saved, when it was the determinate counsel of God, and according to his righteous judgment, to destroy the far greater part of them, for their perverseness and obstinacy, (<sup>230B</sup>Isaiah 10:20-23) wherefore the people of God are exhorted not to be afraid of the Assyrian, though chastised by him; since in a little time the anger of the Lord would cease in his destruction, which should be after the manner of the Egyptians at the Red sea, and as the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb; whereby they would be free from his burden and yoke, because of the anointed King that should reign, or the King Messiah, (<sup>230B</sup>Isaiah 10:24-27) and then follows a description of the expedition of the king of Assyria into Judea, by making mention of the several places through which he should pass with terror to the inhabitants, until he should come to Jerusalem, against which he should shake his hand, (<sup>230B</sup>Isaiah 10:28-32) and then, under the similes of lopping a bough, and cutting down the thickets of a forest, and the trees of Lebanon, is predicted the destruction of his army and its generals by an angel, (<sup>230B</sup>Isaiah 10:33,34).

**Ver. 1.** *Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, &c.*] Or, “O ye that decree”, &c. **ywh** being a sign of the vocative case, and an interjection of calling, as Aben Ezra observes; though the Targum and other versions understand it of a threatening denounced; and is to be understood as lying against lawgivers and judges, political rulers and governors of the people, that made unrighteous laws; laws which were not agreeable to the law of God, nor right reason; and were injurious to the persons and properties of men; and which were calculated for the oppression of good men, especially the poor, and for the protection of wicked men, who made no conscience of spoiling them:

*and that write grievousness [which] they have prescribed;* laws grievous and intolerable being made by them, they wrote them, or ordered them to be written, to be engrossed and promulgated, published them, and obliged the people to be subject to them. This some understand of the scribes of judges, who sat in court, and wrote out the decrees and sentences made by them; but it rather intends the same persons as before; and not ecclesiastical but political governors are meant, and such as lived before the Babylonish captivity; or otherwise the whole is applicable to the Scribes and Pharisees, to the Misnic doctors, the authors of the oral law, the fathers of tradition, whose decisions and decrees were unrighteous and

injurious, and contrary to the commands of God; heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and very oppressive of the poor, the fatherless, and the widow; for which they are reprov'd by Christ, (<sup><468></sup>Matthew 15:3,6,9 23:4,14,23,25) Jarchi says it is an Arabic<sup>f177</sup> word, which signifies scribes.

**Ver. 2.** *To turn aside the needy from judgment, &c.*] Such laws being made as discouraged them from any application for justice; and, when they did, were harassed with such long, vexatious, and expensive suits, as obliged them to desist, and the cause being generally given against them, and for the rich:

*and to take away the right from the poor of my people;* for not to do justice to the poor is the same as to rob and plunder them, and take away by force what of right belongs to them; wherefore it follows:

*that widows may be their prey, and [that] they may rob the fatherless;* who have none to protect and defend them, and whose protectors judges ought to be, in imitation of God, whom civil magistrates represent, who is the Judge of the widows and the fatherless; and therefore this is observed as an aggravation of their sin, which was very great indeed: it is very wicked in a judge to pervert the judgment of the poor and needy, the widow and the fatherless, contrary to laws that are made by God and men; but to make and prescribe wicked and unrighteous laws, that wickedness may be framed, and mischief committed by a law, that the poor and the needy, the widows and fatherless, may be injured under colour and pretence of law and justice, is the height of injustice. (see <sup><490></sup>Psalms 94:20,21).

**Ver. 3.** *And what will ye do in the day of visitation, &c.*] Not in a way of grace and mercy, but of wrath and anger, as the following clause explains it, when God should come and punish them for their sins; and so the Targum,

“what will ye do in the day that your sins shall be visited upon you?”

it designs the Babylonish captivity, as the next words show; the same phrase is used of the destruction of the Jews by the Romans, (<sup><294></sup>Luke 19:44):

*and in the desolation [which] shall come from far?* from Assyria, which was distant from the land of Judea: the word<sup>f178</sup> for “desolation” signifies a

storm, tumult, noise, and confusion; referring to what would be made by the Assyrian army, when it came upon them:

*to whom will ye flee for help?* Rezin king of Syria, their confederate, being destroyed; and Syria, with whom they were in alliance, now become their enemy, (see <sup><201></sup>Isaiah 9:11,12):

*and where will ye leave your glory?* either their high titles, and ensigns of honour, as princes, judges, and civil magistrates, which they should be stripped of; or rather their mammon, as Aben Ezra interprets it, their unrighteous mammon, which they got by perverting the judgment of the poor and needy, the widow and the fatherless, of which they gloried; and which now would be taken away from them, when they should go into captivity.

**Ver. 4.** *Without me they shall bow down under the prisoners, and they shall fall under the slain, &c.]* That is, either, being forsaken by me, and destitute of my help, they shall bow down; or, “because they are without me”, are not my people, and do not hearken to me, therefore they shall bow down, so David Kimchi; or, were it not for me, they would, as others; or that they might not bow down and fall; and so the words may be connected with the preceding verse (<sup><201></sup>Isaiah 10:3): others render the word, translated “without me, besides”; and the sense is either, as Moses Kimchi, besides their bowing in their own land, when subdued by the Gentiles, a greater affliction shall befall them, captivity; when they should be either carried captive or slain; or besides him that shall bow down under the prisoners, they shall fall under the slain; besides those that are taken, others shall be killed; or none shall escape, but, or “except”, him that bows, and hides himself under the prisoners, or in the place of the slain, that he might not be thought to be alive: or the sense is, the desolation shall be so general, that none shall escape, either they shall be taken prisoners, or they shall be slain; agreeably to which Noldius<sup>f179</sup> renders the words, “without me”, everyone “shall bow down among the prisoners, or shall fall among the slain”; which gives the best sense of them; that, being left of God for their sins, they would either be bound and carried captive, or else slain with the sword, and one or the other would be the lot of everyone of them:

*for all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still;* the final and utter destruction of the nation of the Jews being then not yet come, when carried captive to Babylon, there remained a greater calamity for them, to come by the hands of the Romans. These first four verses

(<sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 10:1-4) seem more properly to belong to the preceding chapter (<sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 9:1-21), and this should begin with the next verse (<sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 10:5).

**Ver. 5.** *O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, &c.*] Either as calling him to come against the land of Israel to spoil it, so Kimchi; or as grieving that he was obliged to make use of him in such a manner against his people; or as threatening him with ruin. So the Targum, Septuagint, and all the Oriental versions render it, “woe to the Assyrian”; wherefore this, and what follows, serve to comfort the people of God; that though they should be carried captive by the Assyrians, yet they should be utterly destroyed, and a remnant of the Jews should be saved. The Assyrian monarch is called the “rod of God’s anger”, because he was made use of by him as an instrument to chastise and correct Israel for their sins:

*and the staff in their hand is mine indignation*; that is, the staff which was in the hand of the king of Assyria, and his army, with which they smote the people of Israel, was no other than the wrath and indignation of God against that people, and the execution of it, which he committed to them as instruments. Kimchi interprets “their hand” of the land of Israel, into which this staff was sent, the Assyrian, to smite and chastise them. The Targum is,

“woe to the Assyrian, the government of my fury; and an angel sent from before me against them for a curse.”

**Ver. 6.** *I will send him against a hypocritical nation, &c.*] The people of Israel, who might well be called so, since everyone of them was a hypocrite, (<sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 9:17) pretending to love, fear, and serve the Lord, when it was only outwardly, and by profession, and not in deed, and in truth; their character contains the reason of the Lord’s calling and sending the Assyrian to correct and chastise them:

*and against the people of my wrath*: who provoked him to wrath, were deserving of it, and upon whom he was about to bring it; it was their hypocrisy that stirred up his wrath against them; nothing is more hateful to God than that:

*will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey*: that is, the Assyrian monarch, to make a spoil and a prey of the people of the Jews, not by any legal commission, or express command, but by the secret power

of his providence, guiding and directing him into the land of Judea, to ravage and spoil it:

*and to tread them down like the mire of the streets*: which denotes the great subjection of the inhabitants of it to him; the very low and mean estate into which they should be brought; the great contempt they should be had in; the little account that should be had of them; and their inability to help and recover themselves.

**Ver. 7.** *Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so, &c.*] His purposes, intentions, and thoughts, were not as the Lord's; he did not imagine that he was only the rod of his anger, and the staff of his indignation, a minister of his wrath, and the executioner of his vengeance; he thought he was his own lord and master, and acted by his own power, and according to his own will, and was not under the direction and restraints of another; his intention was not to chastise and correct the people of the Jews, but utterly to destroy them, and not them only, but many other nations; as follows:

*but [it is] in his heart to destroy and cut off nations, not a few*; not the nation of the Jews only, but many others, and so establish an universal monarchy; and what flushed him with hope and expectation of success were the magnificence of his princes, and the conquests he had already made.

**Ver. 8.** *For he saith, [are] not my princes altogether kings?*] Meaning either the kings which he had conquered, which were become his princes and subjects; or rather, such were the greatness and glory of his nobles, that they were equal in their riches and dominions to kings, and so were able to furnish him with men and money for such an expedition he had in his heart to undertake, even to conquer and subdue all the nations of the earth: and this he said either to his people, boasting of his grandeur; or in his heart, as Kimchi observes, to encourage himself; or rather more openly before others, in order to discourage and inject terror into the nations he meant to destroy, and particularly the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

**Ver. 9.** *[Is] not Calno as Carchemish?* &c.] Jarchi's note is,

“as the children of Carchemish are princes and rulers, so are the children of Calno;”

as if this was giving an instance of the grandeur of his subjects; but much better is the Targum,

“as Carchemish is subdued before me, shall not Calno be so?”

as I or my ancestors have conquered the one, it is as easy for me to conquer the other; or as sure as the one is subject to me, so sure shall the other be; for Carchemish was a city belonging to the Assyrians, situated upon the river Euphrates, (<sup><485D></sup>2 Chronicles 35:20 <sup><246D></sup>Jeremiah 46:2) called by Ammianus<sup>f180</sup> Circusium; the Syriac version calls it Barchemosh; and Calno is the same with Calneh in the land of Shinar, a city built by Nimrod, (<sup><010D></sup>Genesis 10:10 <sup><310D></sup>Amos 6:2) in the Septuagint version it is called Chalane, and it is added,

“where the tower was built;”

from whence the country, called by Pliny<sup>f181</sup> Chalonitis, had its name, the chief city of which was Ctesiphon, thought to be the same with Calneh.

*[Is] not Hamath as Arphad?* Hamath and Arphad were both cities conquered by the Assyrians; (see <sup><1283D></sup>2 Kings 18:34) and are both mentioned along with Damascus, (<sup><242D></sup>Jeremiah 49:23).

*[Is] not Samaria as Damascus?* Damascus was the metropolis of Syria, and was taken by the Assyrians; and Samaria was the metropolis of Ephraim, or the ten tribes; (see <sup><230D></sup>Isaiah 7:8,9) and was as easy to be taken as Damascus was. The Targum is,

“as Arphad is delivered into my hands, shall not Hamath be so? As I have done to Damascus, so will I do to Samaria.”

**Ver. 10.** *As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols, &c.]* Which worship idols, as the Targum paraphrases it. He speaks of them as being very easily taken by him; he had no trouble in subduing them; no sooner did he come up to them, and looked on them, and saw where they were, but they fell into his hands; they gave up themselves to him at once, and he took possession of them.

*And whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and of Samaria;* being made of better metal, or more richly ornamented, or worshipped in a more pompous manner; or were “more” than they of Jerusalem and Samaria, exceeded them in number; or were “stronger” and mightier than they, as Kimchi supplies it, and yet could not protect them; or were “from

Jerusalem, and from Samaria”; the wicked men of Israel, Jarchi says, supplied all the nations with images, they all sprung from them; and if the idols which came from hence could not secure the nations of the earth from falling into the hands of the Assyrian monarch, neither could they preserve Jerusalem and Samaria from being taken by him.

**Ver. 11.** *Shall I not, as I have done to Samaria, and her idols, &c.]*

Kimchi observes, that what is said in the preceding verses was said before Samaria was taken, but this after it was taken:

*so do to Jerusalem, and her idols;* he had taken Samaria, and carried the ten tribes captive, and now his eye was upon Judah and Jerusalem; and such was his insolence, impiety, and blasphemy, that he reckons the true God, whom the Jews worshipped, among the idols of the Gentiles, and upon a level with them, if not inferior to them, especially to his own idol, and thought himself superior to him.

**Ver. 12.** *Wherefore it shall come to pass, &c.]* It shall surely be; what God has purposed in his heart, and published in his word, shall certainly be fulfilled:

*[that] when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon Mount Zion, and on Jerusalem;* in correcting, chastising, and humbling the inhabitants thereof, by suffering them to be besieged by the Assyrian army. God sometimes makes use of wicked men to chastise his people; this is his work, and not theirs; and when he begins, he goes on, and finishes it; and when he has done, punishes the instruments he uses; after he has scourged his children, he takes the rod, and breaks it to pieces.

*I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks;* that is, he would punish him for his wicked actions, which were the fruit of the haughtiness of his heart, and the pride of his eyes; or for that pride which filled his heart, and showed itself in his lofty looks. Kimchi joins this to the preceding clause, and makes the sense to be, that God would punish the Assyrian for his pride, in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem; for there his army died, or near it, being smitten by the angel. The Targum is,

“and it shall be, when the Lord hath finished to do all that he hath said in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem.”



**Ver. 13.** *For he saith, by the strength of my hand I have done [it], &c.]*

Meaning either that by the power of his army, which was under his command, or by his own personal valour, he had subdued kings, taken their kingdoms and chief cities, and ascribes nothing to the power and providence of God; and if such arrogance and haughtiness, in things of a civil nature, is an instance of vanity, and is resented by the Lord, then much more such conduct in things of a religious nature, when men ascribe regeneration, conversion, and salvation, to the power of their free will, and to the works of their hands, and not to the power and grace of God:

*and by my wisdom, for I am prudent;* attributing his conquests partly to his power, and partly to his skill and prudence in marshalling his army, making use of stratagems to decoy the enemy, and get an advantage of him; whereas strength and power, and so wisdom and prudence, are from the Lord; as he gives safety, victory, and salvation to kings, so he teaches their hands to war, and their fingers to fight; which they ought to acknowledge, and will, unless vain and proud:

*and I have removed the bounds of the people;* by subduing kingdoms, and adding them to his own, so that they were no more distinct governments; and by transplanting the inhabitants of them to other places, and making new colonies and settlements; and so the Targum,

“and I have removed the people from province to province:”

taking that to himself which belongs to God, who has determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of men’s habitations:

*and have robbed their treasures:* laid up in palaces, temples, sepulchres, and private houses, for time to come, which are usually plundered when cities and towns are taken; the Targum renders it,

“their laudable cities:”

*and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant [man];* from their greatness, from their seats of honour and dignity; or I have put down many inhabitants, as Jarchi, and reduced great numbers to a low and mean estate. The Targum is,

“I have brought down with strength they that dwell in fortified places;”

and so Aben Ezra and Kimchi explain it, they that dwell in a strong place or palace.

**Ver. 14.** *And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people, &c.]* With that ease as a man finds a nest of birds, and takes them:

*and as one gathereth eggs [that are] left;* by the bird, who not sitting upon them, there is none to protect them; whereas, when they are sat upon by the bird, she will flutter with her wings, and strike with her bill, and preserve them as well as she can:

*have I gathered all the earth;* the kingdoms and inhabitants of it, there being none to resist, or that dared to do it, as follows:

*and there was none that moved the wing;* as a bird will do, when its young or eggs are taken away from it:

*or opened the mouth, or peeped;* chattered, clucked, or expressed any grief, uneasiness, or resentment; the Targum is,

“that opened his mouth, and spoke a word.”

**Ver. 15.** *Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? &c.]* Hitherto are the words of the Assyrian monarch; and here begin the words of the prophet, rebuking him for his pride, and deriding his vain boasting, in attributing that to himself, to his wisdom and power, who was but an instrument, which belonged to God, the sole Governor and wise orderer of all things; which was all one as if an axe should ascribe the cutting down of trees to itself, and insist on it that the man that cut with it had no share in the action, nor was it to be ascribed to him; than which nothing is more absurd. The sense is, that the king of Assyria, in taking cities, and conquering kingdoms, and adding them to his own, was only an instrument in the hand of God, like an axe in the hand of one that hews down trees; and therefore it was vain and ridiculous to take that to himself which belonged to the Lord, on whom he depended as an instrument, as to motion, operation, and effect; from whom he had all power to act, all fitness for it, and efficacy in it, as the axe has from the person that makes and uses it, or any other instrument, as follows:

*[or] shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it?* or draws it to and fro; which is the sense of the Targum, Septuagint, and Vulgate Latin versions, and others; and which further exposes the vanity and arrogance of

the Assyrian monarch, who had no more concern in the spoiling of nations, and destruction of kingdoms, than the saw has in cutting of timber that is hewn; which has its form, its sharp teeth, not of itself, but from the maker; and when thus made, and fit for use, cannot draw itself to and fro, and cut trees in pieces, which are felled by the axe, but must be moved by another; and to insult the mover of it, as if it was not his act, but its own, is not more absurd than what this haughty prince was guilty of, in boasting of his power, wisdom, and prudence, in the above mentioned things:

*as if the rod should shake [itself] against them that lift it up*<sup>f182</sup>; for such was the king of Assyria, he was no other than the rod of the Lord's anger, (<sup>2305</sup>Isaiah 10:5) and which he lifted up, and with it chastised his people; wherefore for him to behave haughtily against the Lord, and arrogate that to himself which was the Lord's doing, was as if a rod should shake itself against him that lifts it up; or, "as if a rod should shake those that lift it up": as if there were more power in the rod than in them that take it up and strike with it; yea, that even the rod moves them, and not they the rod, which is wretchedly absurd:

*[or], as if the staff should lift up [itself, as if it were] no wood*<sup>f183</sup>; but something more than wood, an animate creature, a rational agent, whereas it is nothing else but wood; or "as if a staff should lift up" itself against that which is "not wood", like itself, but is a man, that can move himself and that too; or "as if a staff should lift up" that which is "not wood"; attempt to bear, carry, move, and direct that which is not material like itself, but is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, even the almighty God. Deuteronomy Dieu thinks that *pyrh* is not a verb, but a noun of the plural number, of *rh*, "a mountain": and renders it, "as if a rod should shake those that lift it up: and as if a staff were mountains, and not wood". The Targum is,

"when a rod is lifted up to smite, it is not the rod that smites, but he that smites with it."

The sense is, that the Assyrian monarch was only a rod and staff in the hand of the Lord, and only moved and acted as used by him; whereas, according to his vain boast, he was the sole agent, and all was done by his own power and prudence; and was so far from being moved and directed by the power and providence of God, that he was the director of him; which is infinitely more absurd than the things instanced in.

**Ver. 16.** *Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, &c.*] Because of the pride, and arrogance, and vain boasting of the Assyrian monarch, which was resented by the Lord, he is threatened with what follows; and in order to humble him, and to show that God is above him, these titles are used; “the Lord”, the Lord of the whole earth, and the King of kings, and Lord of lords; “the Lord of hosts”, of armies above and below, of more and greater armies than what the king of Assyria was lord of; and therefore he might be assured that what is hereafter threatened would be fulfilled, namely,

*send among his fat ones leanness*; the Targum is, among his princes, who abounded in riches and honour; or his army, and the chiefs in it, the mighty and strong; and by “leanness” is meant destruction and death, which came upon his army, and the great men of it, immediately from the hand of God; (see <sup>19465</sup>Psalm 106:15) compared with (<sup>04133</sup>Numbers 11:33):

*and under his glory he shall kindle a burning, like the burning of a fire*; that is, under his army, which was great and glorious, very numerous, and well accoutred with clothes and arms, and made a very splendid and glittering show, and of which the Assyrian monarch gloried; this army the Jews say was destroyed by fire, and that the bodies of the men were burnt, and their clothes untouched; but Jarchi interprets this glory of their garments, which give a man glory, and says these were burnt; the Targum calls them their vessels of glory; perhaps meaning their glittering arms, which were burnt along with them.

**Ver. 17.** *And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, &c.*] That is, the Lord, who is the light of his people; who enlightens them by his word and Spirit, and by his grace effectually calls them out of darkness into marvellous light, to the light of grace here, and to the light of glory hereafter; and who comforts and refreshes them with his gracious presence, and with the light of his countenance when in affliction and distress, which is sometimes signified by darkness; and the same Lord, who is as light to his people, and gives light and comfort to them, is as a consuming fire to others:

*and his Holy One for a flame*; that is, the Holy One of Israel, the God of Israel, who is holy in himself, and the sanctifier of others; the Syriac version reads, “his Holy Ones”: so Jarchi observes it as the sense of some, that the righteous of that generation are meant; the Targum is,

“and there shall be the Lord, the light of Israel, and his Holy One; and his word strong as fire, and his word as a flame;”

(see <sup>2029</sup>Jeremiah 23:29) so Jarchi interprets it of the law Hezekiah studied:

*and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briers in one day*; the Targum interprets it, his rulers and governors; and so Jarchi, his princes and mighty men; the chief in the Assyrian army, called briers and thorns, because mischievous and hurtful, and caused grief; but rather the multitude of the common soldiers is designed, who were all destroyed in one night, (<sup>2085</sup>2 Kings 19:35) by an angel; who, according to Aben Ezra, is the light and Holy One of Israel here spoken of.

**Ver. 18.** *And shall consume the glory of his forest*, &c.] The Assyrian army is compared to a “forest”, for the number of men in it; and for the mighty men in it, comparable to large and tall trees, such as oaks and cedars; and like a wood or forest a numerous army looks, when in rank and file, in proper order, and with banners, and having on their armour, their shields, spears, bows and arrows; and the “glory” of it intends either the princes and nobles that were in it, the principal officers, generals, and captains; or the riches of it, the plunder of the Egyptians and Ethiopians, as Kimchi observes, which were all destroyed at once:

*both soul and body*, or “from the soul even to the flesh”<sup>f184</sup>; which denotes the total consumption of them, nothing of them remaining; the Targum is,

“the glory of the multitude of his army, and their souls with their bodies, it shall consume;”

and so some understand this of the eternal destruction of soul and body in hell: the Rabbins are divided about the manner of the consumption of the Assyrian army; some say their bodies and souls were both burnt, which these words seem to favour; and others, that their souls were burnt, and not their bodies, their lives were taken away, and their bodies unhurt; which they think is favoured by (<sup>2306</sup>Isaiah 10:16) where it is said, “under his glory”, and not “his glory”<sup>f185</sup>:

*and they shall be as when a standardbearer fainteth*; who when he fails, the whole company or army is thrown into confusion, and flees; and so the Targum,

“and he shall be broken, and flee.”

Some render it, “as the dust of the worm that eats wood”<sup>f186</sup>; so Jarchi; signifying that they should be utterly destroyed, and become as small as the dust that falls from a worm eaten tree; which simile is used, a forest being made mention of before.

**Ver. 19.** *And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few*, &c.] Which were left unconsumed, that escaped this destruction, those of the Assyrian army that fled with Sennacherib their king; which, the Rabbins say<sup>f187</sup>, were no more than ten, as Jarchi and Kimchi observe; yea, some say there were but five left who escaped, and name them, Sennacherib and his two sons, Nebuchadnezzar and Nebuzaradan:

*that a child may write them*; count them, and take down their names; and it may be understood of a military muster, and the sense be, that the army should be reduced to so small a number by this stroke upon them, that there would be no need of an able muster master to take the account of them, a child would be equal to such a task. The Targum is,

“and the rest of his warriors shall fail, that the people shall be a small number, and shall be reckoned a weak kingdom.”

**Ver. 20.** *And it shall come to pass in that day*, &c.] Here begins a prophecy relating to the people of Israel, and concerns things that should befall them after the destruction of the Babylonish monarchy, which after Nebuchadnezzar did not last long; there were but two kings after him mentioned in Scripture, Evilmerodach, and Belshazzar; so that its tall trees, its kings, were very few, so few that a child might count them; and what is after said is for the comfort of that people, and seems to refer to the times of the Gospel, as appears by some words in the context cited by the Apostle Paul:

*[that] the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob*; who should return from the Babylonish captivity, and be settled in their own land:

*shall no more again stay upon him that smote them*; either on the kings of Egypt, who were originally their oppressors, and in whom they had been so foolish as to put their trust and confidence, they being but a broken staff and reed, (<sup>231B</sup>Isaiah 30:2,3 31:1) or on the king of Assyria, in the time of Ahaz, who made him pay tribute, and afterwards fought against him:

*but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth;* that is, upon Christ, the Lord of all, and King of saints; the Lord their righteousness, and from whom they have their holiness: to stay or lean on him is expressive of faith in him, of reliance and dependence on him, and trust in him; which is done in sincerity and uprightness of soul, unfeigned and without dissimulation; not in profession only, but in reality, and as nakedly revealed in the Gospel, without type and figure; for this respects Gospel times, in which the shadows of the law are gone, and Christ, as the object of faith, appears unveiled, being come a High Priest of good things to come. The Targum is they

“shall no more lean on the people whom they served; but they shall lean upon the Word of the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth;”

that is, on the essential Word, the Messiah: this was the case of a few of them, a remnant according to the election of grace, as the following words show.

**Ver. 21.** *The remnant shall return, &c.*] This is said in allusion to Shearjashub, the name of Isaiah’s son, (<sup><2378></sup>Isaiah 7:3) which signifies “the remnant shall return”, and was imposed on him, to give assurance of it; meaning, either that they should return from the Babylonish captivity, as they did, or to God by repentance; or rather the sense is, they shall turn to the Lord, be converted to Christ, to the faith and obedience of him, as some of them were when he came, a few, not all, only a remnant, as it is explained in the next clause:

*[even] the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God;* the Messiah, so called, (<sup><2396></sup>Isaiah 9:6). The Targum is,

“the remnant which have not sinned, and are turned from sin; the remnant of the house of Jacob shall return to worship before the mighty God.”

**Ver. 22.** *For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, &c.*]

These words are spoken either by the Lord to the prophet, calling Israel his people; or by the prophet to Hezekiah, as Jarchi and Kimchi think; or they may be rendered thus, “for though thy people, O Israel, be as the sand of the sea”,<sup>f188</sup> that is, innumerable, as was promised to Abraham, (<sup><0227></sup>Genesis 22:17 <sup><3010></sup>Hosea 1:10):

*[yet] a remnant of them shall return*; or “be converted in it”<sup>f189</sup>, to the Messiah; or “be saved”, as the apostle interprets it, (see Gill on “~~Rom~~ Romans 9:27”); a remnant is a few, as Kimchi explains it, out of a great number: it signifies, that the majority of the Jewish nation should reject the Messiah, only a few of them should believe in him; and these should certainly believe in him, and be saved by him; and that for the following reason, because

*the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness*; that is, the precise and absolute decree, concerning the salvation of the remnant, God will cause to overflow, or abundantly execute, in a righteous manner, consistent with his divine perfections; and so it makes for the comfort of the remnant of the Lord’s people, agreeably to the intent of the apostle’s citation of it, (see Gill on “~~Rom~~ Romans 9:28”); though some understand it of God’s punitive justice, in consuming and destroying the greater part of the Jewish people, the ungodly among them, and saving a remnant, which return and repent; and to this sense are the Targum, and the Jewish commentators.

**Ver. 23.** *For the Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption, &c.*] Not of the land of Judea, as at the destruction of Jerusalem; but the meaning is, that he that is Lord of all, who does what he pleases in the armies above and below, will execute and accomplish a precise and absolute decree of his, concerning the salvation of the remnant of his people; which is his decree of election, and that standing sure, not upon the foot of works, but his own sovereign will: hence their salvation is sure and certain, and not precarious;

*even determined, in the midst of all the land*; that is, the determined decree should be executed in the several parts of the land of Judea, where this remnant was; for which reason the Gospel was preached in the several cities of Judah, in order to accomplish it, both by Christ and his apostles.

**Ver. 24.** *Therefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, &c.*] Since there is such a decree, and this will certainly be executed:

*O my people, that dwellest in Zion*; the inhabitants of Jerusalem; such of them especially as feared the Lord, and worshipped him, and served him in the temple:

*be not afraid of the Assyrian*: the king of Assyria; neither Sennacherib, that threatened them with ruin, having taken the cities of Judah, and laid siege



to Jerusalem; nor Nebuchadnezzar, who carried them captive, since he would not be able utterly to destroy them, they would return and dwell in the land again; for there was a decree concerning the salvation of a remnant, which would certainly take place; and till that was executed, it was impossible the nation should be destroyed.

*He shall smite thee with a rod*; be an instrument of chastising and correcting, but not of destroying; Jarchi interprets it of smiting with the rod of his mouth, by means of Rabshakeh reproaching, and blaspheming:

*and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt*; which Kimchi explains of the tribute the Assyrians exacted of them, in like manner as the Egyptians set taskmasters over them, and afflicted them with hard bondage, in Egypt: the sense is, that though the Assyrians should annoy and distress them, yet should not utterly consume them; there would be an end of their oppression, and a deliverance out of it; even as when they were in Egypt, and oppressed there, the Lord appeared for them, and supported them, and at length saved them, and so he would now. Mention is made of a rod and a staff, in allusion to what the Assyrian is said to be in the hand of the Lord, (<sup>23015</sup>Isaiah 10:5).

**Ver. 25.** *For yet a very little while*, &c.] Within a few days; for in a very short time after Sennacherib was come up against Jerusalem his army was destroyed by an angel:

*and the indignation shall cease*; the indignation of the Lord against his people Israel, shown by bringing the Assyrian monarch against them, of which he was the staff or instrument, (<sup>23015</sup>Isaiah 10:5):

*and mine anger in their destruction*; not in the destruction of the Jews, but the Assyrians: the sense is, that the anger of God towards the people of the Jews for the present should be discontinued, when the Assyrian army was destroyed. The Targum is,

“for yet a very little while, and the curses shall cease from you of the house of Jacob; and mine anger shall be upon the people that work iniquity, to destroy them;”

that is, the Assyrians.

**Ver. 26.** *And the Lord of hosts shall stir up a scourge for him*, &c.] The Assyrian monarch; this scourge stirred up or awakened by the Lord, with

which that monarch was severely scourged, is no other than the angel that was sent of God to destroy his army, (<sup><1285></sup>2 Kings 19:35):

*according to the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb*: this refers to the destruction of the Midianites in the time of Gideon; and suggests, that the slaughter of the Assyrians should be like that, as it was; for as that was in the night, and very general, and immediately from the hand of the Lord, and was unthought of, and unexpected, and such of their princes that fled were taken and slain, particularly Oreb, at the rock which took its name from him; for not mount Horeb, and the rock there smitten by Moses, are meant, which is written with different letters; see the history of this in (<sup><1079></sup>Judges 7:19-25) so it was in the night when the Assyrian army was destroyed, and that wholly; and not by the Israelites, but by the Angel of the Lord; and at once, at an unawares; and though Sennacherib fled and escaped, he was slain by his own sons, in his own city, in the temple of his god, (<sup><1285></sup>2 Kings 19:35-37):

*and [as] his rod [was] upon the sea*; referring to Moses's rod, which was lifted up, by the order of the Lord, over the Red Sea, when the Egyptians were drowned:

*so shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt*; and destroy the Assyrians, in like manner as he destroyed the Egyptians, all at once.

**Ver. 27.** *And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, &c.*] The tax or tribute imposed upon Hezekiah by the king of Assyria, (<sup><1284></sup>2 Kings 18:14):

*and his yoke from off thy neck*; the same with the burden; unless it means also the subjection of the cities of Judah, which were taken by the Assyrian; and indeed it may be extended further, and be considered as a prophecy not merely of deliverance from the present distress, but from the future captivity in Babylon; and which was a type of the deliverance and redemption by Christ, when the Lord's people were delivered from the burden of sin, the guilt and punishment of it; from the yoke of the law, the yoke of bondage; and from the tyranny of Satan, and out of the hand of every enemy; and this seems to be hinted at in the next clause:

*and thy yoke shall be destroyed, because of the anointing*; or, "be corrupted, because of fatness"<sup>f190</sup>; through the multitude of riches and honours, with which the Assyrian monarchy abounded; which fill with pride, introduce luxury, and so bring ruin, on a state. Jarchi and Kimchi

interpret the anointing of Hezekiah, the anointed king of Israel, for whose sake the Assyrian yoke was destroyed. The Rabbins say, that this deliverance was wrought on account of the large quantity of oil which Hezekiah consumed in the schools and synagogues, for the study of the law, and the explanation of it; but the Targum much better refers it to the Messiah,

“the people shall be broken from before the Messiah;”

who was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows, and for whose sake, and by whom, the yoke of sin, Satan, and the law, has been destroyed. Vitringa interprets it of the Spirit of God, and his powerful operations, whose gifts and graces are often compared to oil and ointment; and makes the words parallel to (<sup><3046></sup>Zechariah 4:6).

**Ver. 28.** *He is come to Aiath*, &c.] In this and the following verses is prophetically described the expedition of Sennacherib to Jerusalem, when he either went from Assyria, or returned from Egypt thither; and the several places are mentioned, through or by which he passed, or near to which he came, the tidings of which greatly distressed the inhabitants of them; and the first that is named is Ajath, thought to be the same with Ai, which was beside Bethaven, and on the east side of Bethel, (<sup><0472></sup>Joshua 7:2) and though it was burnt, and made desolate by Joshua, (<sup><0483></sup>Joshua 8:28) yet it was afterwards rebuilt, for it was in being in Nehemiah’s time; or at least there was a place of this name, which was upon or near the spot where this stood, since it is mentioned with Geba, Michmash, and Bethel, (<sup><0413></sup>Nehemiah 11:31) according to the ancient Jewish writers<sup>f191</sup>, it lay three miles from Jericho. Jerom<sup>f192</sup> calls it Agai, and says that in his time there was scarce any remains of it, only the place was shown.

*He is passed to Migron*; this place, as the former, was in the tribe of Benjamin; mention is made of it, as in the uttermost part of Gibeah, (<sup><0442></sup>1 Samuel 14:2). Sennacherib seems not to have stayed either in this, or the former place:

*at Michmash he hath laid up his carriages*; here was a passage, called the passage of Michmash, where was the garrison of the Philistines; and on each side of it were two rocks, one called Bozez, and the other Seneh; one of which fronted Michmash to the north, and the other Gibeah to the south, (<sup><0423></sup>1 Samuel 13:23 14:4,5,31) by Josephus<sup>f193</sup> it is called Mechmas, a city; and so it is in the Apocrypha:

“Thus the sword ceased from Israel: but Jonathan dwelt at Machmas, and began to govern the people; and he destroyed the ungodly men out of Israel.” (1 Maccabees 9:73)

In Jerom’s time it was a very large village, who says it was nine miles from Jerusalem<sup>f194</sup>: mention is made of it in the Misna<sup>f195</sup>, as famous for the best fine flour; and this the king of Assyria made his magazine, and in it laid up his provisions and warlike stores, from whence he might be supplied upon occasion. The words may be rendered, “he hath laid up his arms”; and Kimchi thinks he left the greatest part of his arms here, and went in haste to Jerusalem, imagining he should have no occasion for them, but should easily take it. The Targum is,

“at Micmas he shall appoint the princes of his army;”

the generals of it: perhaps the sense is, that here he made a muster of his army, examined the arms of his soldiers, appointed the proper officers, and gave them their instructions.

**Ver. 29.** *They are gone over the passage, &c.*] Or “from the passage”<sup>f196</sup>; not of Jordan, as the Targum; but rather of Michmash, (<sup><09123></sup>1 Samuel 13:23) this to be understood of the king of Assyria with his army:

*they have taken up their lodging at Geba*; or “Geba was their lodging”; that is, for a night only; not that they continued here for any time, as our version seems to suggest. This was a city in the tribe of Benjamin, (<sup><09217></sup>Joshua 21:17) called Geba of Benjamin, (<sup><09152></sup>1 Kings 15:22).

*Ramah is afraid*; the inhabitants of it, as the Targum, at the report of the march of the king of Assyria and his army, and their being near to them. Ramah was in the tribe of Benjamin, (<sup><09185></sup>Joshua 18:25) it is mentioned with Gibeah in (<sup><09088></sup>Hosea 5:8) upon which place Jerom says it was seven miles from Jerusalem; but elsewhere<sup>f197</sup> he says it was but six, and was to the north against Bethel. (see <sup><07913></sup>Judges 19:13).

*Gibeah of Saul is fled*; that is, the inhabitants of it fled, upon hearing the king of Assyria with his army was coming that way. This was also a city of Benjamin, and is called Gibeah of Benjamin, (<sup><09132></sup>1 Samuel 13:2) and Gibeah of Saul, (<sup><09104></sup>1 Samuel 11:4) as here; either because he was born there, as Jerom<sup>f198</sup> affirms; and certain it is, that he was of the tribe of Benjamin; or because he built it, or at least a palace in it to dwell in, as Kimchi thinks; and it is plain he dwelt here, for it is called his home, (<sup><09105></sup>1

Samuel 10:26) the name of the place with Josephus<sup>f199</sup> is Gabathsaoula, which he makes to be thirty furlongs or four miles from Jerusalem, and says it signifies “Saul’s hill”, and that it was situated in a place called the Valley of Thorns.

**Ver. 30.** *Lift up that voice, O daughter of Gallim, &c.*] In a mournful and lamentable manner, and yet with such a clear loud voice, as to be heard afar off: the word is sometimes used for making a joyful sound, and of the neighing of horses. The inhabitants of Gallim are meant by its daughter; of this place was Phalti, who married Michal, Saul’s daughter; very probably it was in the tribe of Benjamin. Jerom<sup>f200</sup> makes mention of Accaron, a village, which was called Gallim.

*Cause it to be heard unto Laish;* if this was the place the Danites took, and called it Dan, it was on the northern border of Judea, in the furthest part of the land; hence the phrase, from Daniel to Beersheba; it was near to Caesarea or Paneas, from whence the river Jordan took its rise; and was a great way off, either of Gallim or Anathoth, for the voice of them to be heard.

*O poor Anathoth!* this was a city in the tribe of Benjamin, (<sup><f218></sup>Joshua 21:18) it was the native place of the Prophet Jeremiah, (<sup><2400></sup>Jeremiah 1:1) according to Josephus<sup>f201</sup>, it was twenty furlongs from Jerusalem; and, according to Jerom<sup>f202</sup>, three miles: it is called “poor”, because it was but a poor mean village; or because it would now become so, through the ravages of the Assyrian army.

**Ver. 31.** *Madmenah is removed, &c.*] That is, the inhabitants of it, who removed from thence upon hearing that the Assyrian army had invaded the land, and was coming up to Jerusalem. There was a place called Madmannah, which lay in the southern part of the tribe of Judah, (<sup><f253></sup>Joshua 15:31) which, Jerom<sup>f203</sup> says, was then called Memris, and was near the city of Gaza; but whether the same with this is not certain.

*The inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee;* of this place we have no account any where. Hillerus<sup>f204</sup> thinks the whole name of the city was Joshebehagebim, which we render “the inhabitants of Gebim”; and supposes it had its name from the ditches that were in it, or about it.

**Ver. 32.** *As yet shall he remain at Nob that day, &c.*] The same day he came from Gebim; and proceed no further as yet, but make a short stay, and prepare himself and army to march to Jerusalem the next day: the Jews

say<sup>f205</sup>, that he performed all his journeys in one day; the same day he came to Ajath he came to Nob, where he stayed the remaining part of the day. Nob was a city of the priests, (<sup><13219></sup>1 Samuel 22:19) and so it is called in the Targum here; it was so near Jerusalem, that, as Jarchi and Kimchi say, it might be seen from hence; wherefore here he stood, in sight of Jerusalem; against the wall of it, the Targum says; and did as follows:

*he shall shake his hand [against] the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem;* threatening what he would do to it, and despising it as unable to hold out against him; or the sense is this, yet a day, or in a day's time, from the last place where he was; he shall come to Nob, and there shall he stop, and go no further: or, "the mountain of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem, shall shake its hand"; bidding him defiance, insulting over him, or rejoicing at the fall of the Assyrian army. Wherefore it follows:

**Ver. 33.** *Behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror,* &c.] Cut off the king of Assyria and his army, in a most terrible manner; "the glory" of it, as in (<sup><23108></sup>Isaiah 10:18) the word signifies that which is the ornament, the beauty and glory, of the tree. The Septuagint render it, "the glorious ones"; and the Arabic version, "the nobles", the generals, and principal officers of the army; the Targum is,

"behold, the Lord of the world, the Lord of hosts, shall cast forth the slain in his camp, as grapes that are trod in a winepress."

*And the high ones of stature [shall] be hewn down;* the princes of Assyria, so boasted of as kings, (<sup><23108></sup>Isaiah 10:8) comparable to tall trees, to oaks and cedars:

*and the haughty shall be humbled;* who, like their monarch, boasted of their wisdom and strength, (<sup><23102></sup>Isaiah 10:12-14) but now both he and they will be brought very low.

**Ver. 34.** *And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron,* &c.] The multitude of the common soldiers, the whole body of the army, by means of one of his angels, that excel in strength, for which he is compared to "iron"; and which is explained in the next clause:

*and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one;* the Assyrian army is compared to the forest of Lebanon, for the multitude of trees in it, and the tallness of its cedars, it abounding not only with common soldiers, but with great men; so

it is compared to a forest, and to Carmel, or a fruitful field, in (~~23018~~ Isaiah 10:18) and the Assyrian monarch is said to be a cedar in Lebanon, (~~33013~~ Ezekiel 31:3) which fell by the hands of one of the mighty angels, (~~12195~~ 2 Kings 19:35) some, because of this last clause, think that this and the preceding verse (~~23018~~ Isaiah 10:33) are to be understood of the calamities that should come upon the Jews, at the time of the Babylonish captivity; for though Sennacherib should stop at Nob; and proceed no further, however should not be able to take Jerusalem, yet hereafter a successor of his should; and, according to this sense, by the “bough” lopped may be meant Jeconiah, or Zedekiah king of Judah; by the “high ones of stature”, and the “haughty” ones, his children, the princes of the blood, and the nobles of the land; and by the “thickets of the forest”, the common people, who were either killed or carried captive; and by Lebanon, the temple, (~~33010~~ Zechariah 11:1) and by the “mighty one”, Nebuchadnezzar that burnt it. And some of the ancient Jews interpret this last clause of the destruction of the temple by Vespasian; they observe upon this passage in one place<sup>f206</sup>, there is no mighty one but a king, as in (~~24121~~ Jeremiah 30:21) and there is no Lebanon but the house of the sanctuary, according to (~~41825~~ Deuteronomy 3:25) wherefore when a certain Jew saluted Vespasian as a king, and he replied that he was no king, the Jew made answer, if thou art not a king, thou shall be one; for this house (meaning the temple) shall not be destroyed but by the hands of a king, as it is said, “and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one”,<sup>f207</sup>.