

Isaiah 7

Intro to Isaiah 7-12

- post-ch. 6 and Isaiah's response to God confronting his sin
 - now, the people's response to him confronting their similar sin (6:5) for God-blind/deaf (6:9-10) leading to judgment (6:11-13a) or repentance and restoration (6:13b)?
 - in a time of decision- in response to Isaiah's preaching
 - see: belonging to the people of God as belief/trust vs. ethnicity and ritual- an increasing emphasis
 - in a moment of crisis- in response to key event: Syro-Ephraimite War (735/734 BC)- Aram and Israel vs. Judah, since Judah did not join their revolt vs. Assyria
 - leads to judgment vs. all three countries- w/ God using Assyria as His tool- and then eventually, God punishing the disobedient/prideful tool
 - see: esp. Judah's king's decision to depend on God vs. Assyria
 - see also: death of King Uzziah (6:1a) and the dying monarchy of Judah vs. the living God and His Messianic Kingdom (chs. 9,11)
- > use dry-board for map and to note key players and dates

7:1-2

- 1a's when Ahaz was king of Judah (II Kings 16, II Chron 28)
 - Ahaz as son of Jotham, son of Uzziah (6:1a)
 - nothing recorded during Jotham's reign (between 740 when co-regent Uzziah died and 735 when Ahaz led co-regency)- although the trouble began then (II Kings 15:37); just excerpts from Isaiah's ministry, apparently with nothing noteworthy from Jotham's time as leader
- 1b's Rezin of Aram (Syria) and Pekah (Remaliah's son; II Kings 15:27-31) of Israel (2's 'Ephraim'; see: Hosea) 'marched up to fight' against Jerusalem (Ahaz/Judah, 2's hopeful/sad reference to 'the house of David') but 'could not overpower it'
 - 2's Ahaz and his people were 'shaken, as the trees of the forest...by the wind' (Lev 26:36)
 - esp. given earlier defeats at their hands and apparent assassination attempt (II Chron 28:5-8)
 - tempted to approach Assyria for help (vs. relying on God)

7:3-9

-3's God commands Isaiah to take his son to meet Ahaz and deliver 4-9's message

-MH's God sends Isaiah to meet Ahaz– even when he was not particularly interested; how much moreso for people who do seek God

-Shear-Jashub (8:3) means 'a remnant will return' (10:21,22); MH's 'he carried a sermon in his name' (8:18; Hos 1:4,6,9)– an early example of the word 'became flesh'!

-but implies exile as well!; Motyer's 'a name of promise...[and] disaster'

-to meet at 'the aqueduct of the Upper Pool' (22:9-11, 36:2)– key to Jerusalem's above-ground water supply (pre-Hezekiah– II Chron 32:2-4)

-and w/ app. to meeting Ahaz 'where he was at'– physically and spiritually

-4's 'be careful, keep calm, don't be afraid, do not lose heart' (Ps 27:14)– in the face of Rezin and Pekah's 'fierce anger', characterized as 'these two smoldering stubs of firewood'

-implies that Ahaz should not form an alliance with Assyria to escape a non-threat (7:7-9); a matter of faith, not politics

-God's implied P but his P required as well

-Rezin & Pekah strengthened a bit by each other, but a modest and fading problem, soon to cool and vanish into smoke and ash

-MH's 'They have consumed themselves with the heat of their own anger; you may put your foot on them and tread them out.'

-and nothing vs. the all-consuming fire of God;

-> both would die in 732– Rezin by Assyrians (II Kings 16:9) and Pekah by Hoshea (II Kings 15:30)-- when Damascus (Aram's capital) was sacked and Israel was defeated (Israel not taken into exile until 722)

-and 3's 'remnant would return' afterwards (II Chron 28:8-15)

-5-6's what they say: plans to invade/plunder Judah, establishing Tabeel as puppet king– vs. 7-9a's what God says about that (!):

-7b's no (Ps 33:10, Pr 19:21, Lam 3:37)

-8a,9a's trash talk– 'only' (merely human) * 2

-Pekah as 'son of Remaliah' (4 of 5x, incl. 8:6)– prob. emphasizing that he had usurped his throne, not even wanting to mention his name

-8b's Ephraim to be 'shattered' within 65 years

-Rezin and Pekah as MH's 'so far from seizing other people's lands that they should not be able to hold their own.'

-two Assyrian kings (Esarhaddon and then Ashurbanipal) settled foreigners into Israel in 671 and 669 (II Kings 17:24-33; Ezra 4:10)– mixed races, eventually becoming the Samaritans

-7a's God as 'the Sovereign Lord' ('Adonai Yahweh'); Motyer's 'This emphasis on

the sheer greatness of the Lord eases the pathway to faith, makes faith a practical policy in the hard realities of life– and also leaves unbelief without excuse.’

→ 8b matches 9b– what God says to Ahaz/Judah: ‘if you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all’ (II Chron 20:20)

-in context, speaks to Ahaz’s opportunity to respond a la 6:5 vs. 6:9-10

-difficulty apparently enhanced by public opinion (given 8:5-7’s judgment) and Judah’s history of weakly following Israel’s lead (since Omri)

7:10-16

-10a’s ‘again’ implies a second attempt; in any case, a very gracious offer

-11’s Ahaz commanded to ask God for *any* ‘sign’ (!; Mal 3:10)

-on 11b’s poetry, Motyer’s ‘The magnitude of the offer (as we might say, ‘to move heaven and earth’) highlights the seriousness of the crisis and also the importance the Lord attaches to the exercise of faith.’

-begins to connect this episode to Gideon (Jud 6:36-40) and Moses (Ex 3:12)– why those?

-12’s response: ‘I will not put the Lord to the test’ by asking (Ps 95:9)– merely sounding pious (given 13’s rebuke and his subsequent disobedience) vs. out of reverence for God

-fears outcome, not wanting to follow the prophet’s counsel (wanting help from Assyria instead– II Kings 16:7-8)

-MH’s ‘as if it would be a tempting of God to do that which God himself invited and directed him to do.’ (see: legalism!)

-the center of this passage, bookended by 1-2’s threat vs. 17’s destroyed; 3-6’s Isaiah’s son and layout of Northern plans vs. 16’s virgin’s son and destruction of Northern powers; 7-9’s the Lord’s word of assurance vs. 13-15’s the Lord’s sign of judgment

-13’s rebuke about (ironically) testing God’s patience; 14a’s will be given a sign anyway!

-from 11’s ‘the Lord your God’ vs. 12’s ‘the Lord’ vs. 13b’s ‘my God’– uh-ohh...

-Motyer’s ‘The sign is no longer a matter of invitation but of prediction, no longer persuading to faith but confirming divine displeasure.’

→ 14b’s ‘the virgin will...give birth to a son’¹ to be named Immanuel (8:8,10; Num 14:9, II Chron 13:12, Ps 46:7)

-15’s ‘will eat curds and honey (7:22) when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right’

-curds and honey represent a simple/poor diet from living off the uncultivated land (given Assyrian invasion and devastation of ag in

¹ The NIV omits ‘Behold...’

732)

-‘wrong...right’ as an imprecise age of accountability (Dt 1:39)- and what Ahaz has but does not exercise properly!

-16's before that (732), ‘the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste’- by 17's Assyria (II Kings 15:29, 16:9)

-> faith here as exceptionally practical and as much national as individual

-> 14's ‘virgin’ &/or ‘young woman’??

1.) for Christians

-KSB's ‘So effective were the early Christians in using this verse...that the Jews found it necessary to modify the translation and even produce another Greek OT.’

-in the LXX, Gr. ‘parthenos’- virgin; and Mt 1:22-23's interpretation as ‘virgin’ (1st of 22 in Isaiah; see: W&Z, p. 1049)

-virgin-born but eating 15's normal stuff and living by modest means-

Christ as both God and (common) man

-Heb. ‘almah’ means an unmarried girl of a marriageable age, but typically referred to a virgin² (at least in those days!)

2.) that said, for Ahaz and Isaiah...

-requires a contemporary fulfillment of this prophecy; signs usually fulfilled within a few years (8:18, 20:3-6, 37:30) and needed to be so here to be meaningful

-but if public, a young woman naming a child Immanuel- in the face of this prophecy- might be considered self-fulfilling vs. impressive

-> must be a virgin birth or sufficiently private and probably in Ahaz's household

3.) that said, to Isaiah (and perhaps Ahaz)³...

-beyond the above: 8:8's ‘your land, Immanuel’, 8:10's his ability to thwart the enemy's plans, and 9:1-7's govt of Immanuel- all point to someone extraordinary, and ultimately to the Messiah

-see: tension in chs. 7-12 between Immanuel as SR and LR- and Isaiah does nothing to resolve this tension

-of course, it's both!- a contemporary sign and a warning that Ahaz was jeopardizing the Messianic hope, or at least consigning him to Motyer's ‘poverty, heir to a meaningless throne in a conquered land’

² See: Gen 24:43, Ex 2:8, Ps 68:25, Pr 30:19, SoS 1:3, 6:8). Motyer notes that there is no recorded use of ‘almah’ for a married woman outside of Scripture either.

³ Some (e.g., Miller) argue that ‘the woman’ is Isaiah's wife and that this is a ref to his second or third son- but Isaiah's wife was not an ‘alma’, and they named their son something else! The only out might be that perhaps Isaiah remarried soon after being widowed (?).

7:17-25

-> given Ahaz's rejection of salvation, judgment and destruction follow (Pr 8:35-36)...

-17's for Judah, the worst time since the kingdom split (about two centuries earlier- in 931; I Kings 12:19-20)- when Assyria comes (II Chron 28:20-21)

-5/6 of the tribes stripped away vs. near loss of sovereignty

-irony of Assyria in this role- pursued as savior, would eventually harm and nearly destroy them; MH's 'The creature that we make our hope commonly proves our hurt.'

-18,20,21,23's 'in that day...' (apocalyptic language)

-18-19's flies from Egypt and bees from Assyria everywhere (even in the rock crevices and on the thorn bushes)

-Judah would enlist assistance from Assyria now, but perhaps Egypt as well (would definitely do so 30 yrs later- chs. 28-31; ironic given bondage)

-both countries known for these insects; flies as more irritating but less painful? in any case, MH's 'Enemies that seem as contemptible as a fly or a bee, and are as easily crushed, shall yet, when God pleases, do his work as effectually as lions.'

-20's from land to people: picture of a barber to shave their head, legs, and beards

-'shave' completely-- in times of mourning (15:2; Job 1:20, Jer 47:5, 48:37, Ez 7:18, Amos 8:10, Mic 1:16) or unclean-ness (Lev 14:8-9); humiliating when inflicted (3:17; II Sam 10:4-5)

-'legs' as lit. 'feet'- head and feet as totality

-lit. from 'head to toe'

-often a euphemism for private parts (I Sam 24:3's 'cover his feet!'); fig. for public and private

-'hired'- by God &/or Ahaz

-21-22's seeming wealth of a man who keeps a young cow and two goats who provide an abundance of milk and an ability to eat curds and honey (7:15) for 'all who remain in the land'

-abundant milk as ironic or bad news given so few young animals to nurse- and for the previously wealthy, so few servants to have to feed

-land of 'milk and honey' represents gifts vs. complete diet!

-readily available honey- again, prevalent since ag had been decimated

-23-25's valuable vineyards over-run with 'briers and thorns' (5:6; incl. 25's inducing 'fear') and given over to hunting and grazing

-> Ps 80:8-19 to close...

Isaiah 8:1-9:7

8:1-4

-1-2's writing on scroll with two 'reliable witnesses' (but Uriah not-so-reliable later– II Kings 16:9-16, post-732!)

-written (Hab 2:2) with an 'ordinary pen' (MH's 'men...should not covet the pen or tongue of angels'), and presumably in a plain manner (I Cor 14:19; w/ app.)

-3's 'went to...' (!)

-3's son named 'Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz'– the longest personal name in the Bible

-lit. 'speed spoil, hasten prey' (a couplet, even for his son's name!)- or more fig., 'quick to the plunder, swift to the spoil'

-Motyer's 'more impressionistic than grammatical...intended to provoke questions, not to answer them'

-Miller's an 'anxiety-producing...gibberish of sorts...[having] to do with the Assyrian invasion.'

-4's prophecy in about 733: when he's a young infant, Assyria (7:17) will conquer Damascus (Aram/Syria; in 732) and Samaria (Israel; plundered in 732 before sacked in 722)

-'mamma/dadda' as the first thing a child usually knows/speaks (9-12 months vs. 7:16's 2-3 years)

8:5-10

-6's because Judah⁴ had rejected 'the gently flowing waters of Shiloah' and Israel had 'rejoiced over Rezin and [Pekah]'

-> 7-8's God would send the powerful Assyrians ('overflow...its banks') to destroy Israel and to mess with Judah but not conquer them (7:17; 1:7-8)

-latter poetically expressed as water 'reaching up to [their] neck' and the wings (of a bird of prey) covering them

-fulfilled soon (10:27-32; II Chron 28:20), but more fully in 701 when Sennacherib would sack all of Judah except Jerusalem

-on the power of the Euphrates, no sense in opposing it, but MH's 'In the greatest deluge of trouble God can and will keep the head of his people above water.' (Ps 69, esp. 69:1)

⁴ 'This people' as Judah (given 'Shiloah' and general context of chs. 7-9) and Israel (given 4's Samaria and 6's 'rejoice over Rezin'). Easily fits both– because Judah chose Israel's path, it merited Israel's punishment.

- ‘gentle waters of Shiloah’ (Jn 9:7's Siloam)
 - fig. for God’s gentle care and sustaining provision
 - represented Jerusalem as a city of faith– believing that God would protect their vulnerable water supply (22:9-14)
 - derived from the Gihon Spring (7:3; II Chron 32:30, Neh 3:15)
 - represented Davidic kingship; Gihon was where David passed the monarchy to his sons (I Kings 1:33-34,45)
 - on rejecting (gentle) Shiloah vs. choosing (mighty) Euphrates...
 - ignoring God’s love– in order to face His wrath
 - w/ app. to choosing our own way– and God letting us face the natural consequences
 - Motyer’s ‘The nemesis of choosing the world is to get the world, in full and plenty.’
 - the seeming weakness of faith vs. the power of the world
 - Motyer’s ‘To the human eye, the way of faith is full of insecurity and hazard...but to choose the world is to be overwhelmed by the world.’
 - 8b’s ‘Immanuel’– as sarcasm/irony or noting the reality that he will be impacted by all of this
 - on latter, Motyer’s ‘Immanuel is caught up in the ruination brought about by unbelief. His kingship is stripped of earthly glory and he comes as a suffering king. Historically, Ahaz’s appeal to Assyria brought peace and the cessation of the northern threat. Isaiah, however, saw thru to the reality: the glory had departed and David’s throne was now a hollow unreality, never to return to sovereignty again. There was nothing now for Immanuel to inherit except suffering and loss.’
- but 9-10's ultimate futility of human ‘plans’ (Ps 2, 46-48) in the face of Assyria (incl. ‘be shattered’ * 3– following in Aram and Israel’s footsteps), given God (8b's ‘Immanuel’) and His plan (‘for *God is with us*’– Immanuel again!)

8:11-15

- 11's Lord’s warning to Isaiah ‘not to follow the way of this people’– ‘with his strong hand upon me’ (?!; Ez 1:3, 37:1, 40:1)
 - 12's avoid agreeing with them about conspiracy, fear and dread (in essence, not believing 10b’s ‘God with us’; Amos 7:10); 13's instead, fear and dread God as holy (Neh 4:14, Pr 1:7, Lk 12:4-5; quoted in I Pet 3:14; vs. ‘fearless’)
 - ‘conspiracy’ as Ahaz’s alliance in response to Aram/Israel’s plans or ‘treason’– Isaiah’s stand on this issue (Jer 37-38)
 - both w/ app. to how we’re often called to swim upstream despite the

temptation to go along and w/ app. to not fearing the things the world fears

-> 14a's if so, 'he will be a sanctuary'- tension/irony

-> 14b's if not, a stumbling block, trap and snare⁵ (28:16; Ps 91:12, 118:22, Jer 6:21, Ez 3:20)

-quoted 6x in NT; given clear ref to God and applied to Christ in NT- more evidence of Christ's deity

-> 15's many will stumble, fall, and be broken, snared, and captured

-> same God, but differing responses to Him-- and different outcomes

-> Motyer on the idea that 'a remnant shall return': '[it] no longer means simply that there will always be survivors to continue the nation on earth but that there is a distinction between the secularized, politicized professing people of God and those, within that people, who turn to him in repentance and faith, who look to his word and obey it.'

8:16-18

-> 17's decision on 12-15's choice: 'I will wait in the Lord...[and] put my trust in him' (quoted in Heb 2:13 and attributed to Christ!)

vs. God currently 'hiding his face from' His people (1:15, 59:2; Mic 3:4)

-MH's '[Isaiah] saw the hand of God in all that which was discouraging to him, and kept his eye upon that.'

-> 16's 'bind/seal up the testimony/law (or teaching) among my (God's or Isaiah's) disciples'; and 18's 'Here am I' (6:8b) along with 'the children the Lord has given me'- 'signs and symbols in Israel from the Lord' (7:3,14, 20:3)

-his name and the names of his children- passing this along to interested contemporaries and future generations

-both to prove Isaiah's prophetic words (Jer 32:13-15, 36:2, Jn 14:29)

-perhaps connected to or including 1-2's scroll

-both point to Isaiah withdrawing (somewhat or a lot?) to mentor his disciples

-Miller's 'Isaiah now recognized that an unbreachable gulf had opened up between himself and his contemporaries. He did not dread what they feared, nor call conspiracy what they called conspiracy (8:12). They and he had come to a parting of the ways (8:11)...It appears therefore that he withdrew at this time from public life and determined to [work with his] disciples (8:16).'

⁵ See: 14b-15's bookending.

8:19-22

- > the response and subsequent outcome of the non-remnant (vs. 8:14a,16-18)
- 19's 'inquire of their God' vs. 'consult mediums and spiritists' (3:3; Lev 19:31, 20:6)
 - latter 'who whisper and mutter' (unclear) vs. former who speaks loud and painfully clear- at least thru His word and His prophets
 - latter as consulting dead people for the living (or perhaps they're dead!) vs. former as consulting the living God
 - 20's if they don't speak according to the law/testimony (16's teaching), then 'they have no light of dawn'⁶ (Jn 3:19-20)
 - 'light of dawn' as a figure for hope, emerging from darkness, etc.
 - 20's word as proper mediator (vs. 19's options)
 - from 12's avoid popular opinion to 19's avoid popular religion (5:5); from fear God vs. enemies to consult God vs. mediums
- 21's distressed, hungry, drifters- will become angry 'at their God and their king' (Pr 19:3, Ex 22:28); 22's will look at life and see only 'distress, darkness and fearful gloom'- and 'will be thrust into utter darkness' (II Pet 2:17)
 - Motyer's 'the withholding of earth's good from those who rejected earth's God'
 - irony of cursing king and God when their problems were self-induced- they had betrayed the system by refusing to trust God
- > more bookending in 8:9-22- 9's international vs. 21-22's national collapse; 10,19-20's fruitless consultation; 11,16-18's set apart by/to God's word; 12,14b-15's fear vs. fate of the ungodly; all pointing to the middle/key: 13,14a's fear vs. privilege of the godly

- > review 8:11-22's different orientation toward God, the source of truth, and the important things in life results in God as sanctuary vs. stumbling block-- and hope vs. despair wrt future (3:10-11); here, more on that hope...

9:1-7

- 1a's in the future, 'there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress'- the faithful remnant (vs. 8:22)
- 1b's in the past, he humbled Israel (Zebulun and Naphtali)
 - Z&N as most northern tribes (later known as Galilee); first to be hit by Assyria (dates this poem)
 - more interestingly, Z&N where Jesus grew up (?) and largely ministered
 - 1c's 'in the future, he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles' (!; quoted in Mt 4:12-17)

⁶ Apparently, a difficult passage to interpret; see: Motyer, p. 97.

- not called this anywhere else– a ‘new name’ (Rev 2:17, 3:12)!
- Gentiles involved in the new hope
- they’d see 2’s ‘a great light’ alright!– ‘the people *walking* in darkness (8:22)...in the land of the shadow of death’– ‘have seen a great light...a light has dawned’ (42:6, 49:6; Ps 112:4, Zech 14:7, Jn 1:9, 8:12)
 - darkness/Light points to God’s creative work (Gen 1:2-3, II Cor 4:6), sin/righteousness
 - ‘have seen’ as their P; ‘has dawned’ as God’s P
- 3’s ‘enlarged the nation’, ‘increased their joy’ (Ps 67:4, 96:11), people rejoicing before God
 - as at harvest or post-plunder– the range/totality of material happiness, from nature to history, in peace (constructive) or war (destructive)– and all with not much work at that moment
- as 4-5’s defeated oppressors, shattered yokes (2:4, 10:26-27, 37:36-38; Acts 15:10, Gal 5:1), total destruction of enemy as with fire (4:4)
 - compared to Gideon vs. Midianites (7:10; Jud 7; Ps 83:9a)
 - along with 3’s plunder, a picture of entering into victory and the spoils of battle, having done little or nothing
 - Gideon had delivered N&Z, in part thru a sudden light (Jud 7:20)
 - earlier, as with Gideon, victory had resulted in apostasy (Jud 8:27) and anarchy (Jud 9); called to return to (earlier) faith
 - also reminiscent of Egypt and the Exodus (incl. 8:5-8’s water refs)
 - > MH’s ‘If God makes former deliverances his pattern in working for us, we ought to make them our encouragements to hope in him and to seek him.’ (w/ app.)
 - > see: perspective given (long!) time-span from Isaiah’s prophecy to its fulfillment; w/ app. to, e.g., Chinese Christians
- > 6a’s ‘for to us a child is born, to us a son is given’– child as human; son as divine– who ‘will be called...
 - ‘Wonderful Counselor’ (1:26)
 - see: Willard’s Jesus as the smartest man in the world; won’t guide you wrong
 - the import of Wisdom and the role of the Spirit (Jn 14,16)
 - comparison to David (II Sam 16:23); comparison to Solomon (I Kings 3:9,28); vs. implied comparison to Ahaz and the people (8:19)
 - ‘Counselor’ implies the plans and actions of a leader (Ps 20:4, Mic 4:9), spelled out more thoroughly in ch. 11 and chs. 24-27
 - counselor implies He can listen (I Jn 5:14), can understand (perfect info and proper perspective), will tell you the truth (Pr 27:6, Jn 14:17,26), has your best interests in mind, and provides hope

- ‘Mighty God’ (10:21; power/sovereignty); MH’s ‘As he has wisdom, so he has strength’ (w/ app. to our need for wisdom and courage)
- ‘Everlasting Father’
 - ‘Everlasting’– eternity/deity revisited (Dan 7:9); vs. dying kings and their kingdom
 - ‘Father’– esp. His care for and discipline of His people (40:11, 63:16, 64:8; Ps 72:12-14)
- ‘Prince of Peace’ (11:6-9)
 - irony, but proper definition of 6-7's peace given 3,4-5's ends
 - perhaps (implicit or explicit) violence to get there
- 6b’s ‘the government will be on his (fig.) shoulders’ (22:22; vs. 4's their shoulders released from their burden)
 - 7a’s ‘no end’ (II Sam 7:12-13,16, Dan 7:14,27, Mic 4:7, Rev 11:15) to the ‘*increase* of his government and peace’ (very post-M)
 - 7b’s will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom’ (Ps 2:7-9, Mt 1:1, Lk 1:32-33)
 - > how can a son of David be God? (Mt 22:41-46)
 - 7c’s ‘establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness’ for eternity (11:3-5; Jer 23:5, 33:15)
 - vs. Ahaz and Co.
 - a more pre-M view
- > 7d’s accomplished by ‘the zeal (or jealousy) of the Lord Almighty’ (37:32; Joel 2:18, Zech 1:14, 8:2)
- > see: how would Isaiah and the faithful remnant interpreted these verses? wrestling with obvious refs to political leadership, but leadership of a very different sort!
- > 2-7's mixed verb tenses– not because it has happened or will do so soon, but because it is so evident to ‘the eye of faith’
 - w/ app. to us; as they were to find hope within the darkness by looking to the Messiah’s first coming; we can find a more powerful hope in knowing of His first coming and looking forward to his second coming

Isaiah 9:8-10:34

intro to 9:8-10:4's woes to Israel

- > Isaiah speaks to Israel as well; in God's eyes, the Judah/Israel division was artificial
 - same context with slightly different result: Assyria as conqueror vs. chastiser; Assyria as SR tool to face LR destruction given its pride; a Messiah more clearly placed in the LR; from 9:1's 'Galilee of the Gentiles' to 11:10's Gentiles under the Messianic banner
 - all this, still, as another warning to Judah (as the other group of 'God's people')
- > a four-stage poem, each stanza ending with 'yet for all this, his anger is not turned away, his hand is still upraised'– uh-ohh... (9:12,17,21, 10:4; 5:25)

9:8-12's national disaster

- 8's 'message against Jacob'– 'it will fall on Israel': 11-12a's God 'has strengthened Rezin's (Aram's) enemies (Assyria)– w/ implications also for Israel, as the Arameans turn against them from the (north and) east and Philistines from the west (E/W as totality)
 - Arameans had often been their foes (I Kings 20,22, II Kings 6-7, 8:7-15, 10:32-33, 13:3-5) until Jeroboam II had bested them (II Kings 13:22-27) and then this recent alliance of convenience
 - in the face of 9-10's Israel's pride (Ephraim/Samaria)– fallen bricks to be replaced with more durable and attractive 'dressed stone' (Amos 5:11) and fig trees by cedars
 - 'fallen bricks' as metaphor for or caused by an earlier earthquake (Amos 1:1, 4:11)
- 12b's uh-ohh... (revisited)

9:13-17's collapse of leadership

- 13's lack of repentance despite 12's continuing anger (further 'justifying' it)
 - MH's 'Those are ripening apace for ruin whose hearts are unhumiliated under humbling providences; for God will walk contrary to those who walk contrary to him...'
- 14-15's 'the Lord will cut off' Israel's head (elders/leaders; palm branch) and tail (prophets; reed– cite on John the B) 'in a single day'⁷ (19:15)
 - head/tail as totality, incl. body– the people
 - 14's leaders fall after 10's bricks fall
 - prophets as those who: 15b's 'teach lies', 16's 'mislead' the people– since they are

⁷ Probably refers to the death of Jeroboam II, from which Israel slid into anarchy, or the fall to Assyria in 722.

themselves misled

-MH's 'It is ill with a people when their physicians are their worst disease.'
(Pr 24:24, 29:5)

-in denoting prophets as tails, Isaiah may be taking an extra poke at them—
supposed to be the head, but no authority/leadership (3:1-4, 30:9-11; Mic
2:11)

-> 17a's 'the Lord will take no pleasure in' anyone

-15-16's leaders more responsible, but 17's followers are responsible as well

-young and old implies totality and no hope for future generations

-even the orphans and widows (!!; 10:2) since 'everyone is ungodly and wicked'
and 'every mouth speaks vileness' (Gen 6:5)

-MH's 'How can they expect God should spare them when they show no
compassion one to another?'

-poverty in and of itself is not enough to commend anyone to God; MH's 'If
the poverty and hopelessness of their state was not an argument with them
to keep them from sin, they could not expect it should be an argument with
God to protect them from judgments.'

-> 17b's uh-ohh... (a strange praise chorus!- revisited)

9:18-21's civil collapse

-18's 'wickedness burns like a fire' (the people &/or their actions) vs. 19a's 'wrath of the
Lord' by which 'the land will be scorched and the people will be fuel for the fire'

-19b's connection: 'no one will spare his brother'— God allowing others to
administer judgment for Him

-Motyer's 'Wickedness is inherently self-destructive...but it is so by the will
of God. Its outworking expresses his wrath. He presides over the cause and
effect processes which he has built into creation...'

-20a's 'on the right/left', they would 'devour/eat' but 'still be hungry/not be
satisfied'— despite all this, not satisfied by it

-20b's 'each will feed on the flesh of his own offspring' (civil wars
post-Jeroboam II)— 21a's Manasseh vs. Ephraim (two sons/tribes of
Joseph, and then both vs. Judah— not exactly 'family values')

-Motyer's 'This was symptomatic of a grab-all society in
which people are just so much fuel.'

-> 21b's uh-ohh... (revisited)

10:1-4's moral perversion of leaders

-here, corruption and injustice vs. 13-17's general ineptness and (self-) deceit

-1-2's woe to bad leaders: those who 'make bad laws', 'issue oppressive decrees', 'deprive

the poor of their rights' and 'withhold justice from the oppressed of my people'

-3a's rhetorical Q: 'what will you do on the day of reckoning?'

-3b's no outsiders to help and accumulated wealth is in vain; MH's 'Will there not come a desolation upon those that have made other desolate?'

-4a's 'nothing will remain but to cringe among the captives or fall among the slain'⁸
(!)

-> 4b's uh-ohh... (revisited⁹)- no repentance forthcoming; implies unlimited punishment instead of expected mercy/reprieve

-> ironically, all this as part of 9:17's judgment; circular- as with Assyria in 10:5-34...

10:5-11's woe to Assyria

-5's Assyria (specifically, her king- more later) as 'the rod of my anger' vs. the ones 'in whose hand is the club of [God's] wrath'- God's P and their P! (10:15,24; Jer 50:23, 51:20, Hab 1:5-17, Jn 19:11)

-6's originally sent by God against 'a godless nation' of 'a people who anger' Him- to take their stuff (8:1,3's 'loot' name/prophesy) and 'trample them down'

-Judah/Israel! (vs. God's people-- Amos 3:2, Eph 2:3-5)

-but 7's self-interested agendas (albeit harnessed by God) and 8-9's pride expressed in rhetorical Q's (key theme in chs. 13-23) and a list of cities (all Aramean except Samaria; 36:19-20, 37:12-13) Assyria had conquered

-each pair of the list in north/south order, as if the king were saying 'I took this, I can take that'; Motyer's 'The list is not a historical description of the march, but an impressionistic expression of an inexorable advance [and] disaster ever nearer...'

-see: 10-11's idolatry in Samaria & Jerusalem and Assyria's view of God-- believing that He was just another impotent idol, and that Jerusalem would fall as easily as Samaria had

10:12-19

-12's 'when the Lord has finished all his work' against Judah/Jerusalem, He promised to punish the prideful Assyrians (2:11-17; Ps 18:27, 101:5); MH's 'When God had done his work by [them], he would then do his work upon [them].'

-'finished' as a weaving term for snipping off a thread- a picture of completion and its ease

⁸ 'Cringe' as singular and 'fall' as plural, pointing to individual and corporate aspects.

⁹ Motyer notes that 9:8-10:4 may have belonged to the same poem as the material around 5:25. See: p. 112.

-fulfilled in 701 BC God defeated Assyria at Jerusalem (more later), allowing Sennacherib to be assassinated in his temple shortly after his return– and ultimately in 612 BC when Nineveh was destroyed by Babylon

-13-14's bragging (incl. 9x 'I/my'): 13's the king supposes his own strength and strategy/wisdom are responsible for the ease of his success in conquering and plundering the nations (14:13-14; Ez 28:2-5)

-does not attribute his success to God, his gods, or even, his army!

-removing 'boundaries' with such ease– refers to Assyria's strength, but may also reference Assyria's policy of mixing the people of captive nations

-on 14's comparison to robbing a bird's nest

-as God had abandoned them

-and MH's 'There was no more difficulty in taking them than in rifling a nest, nor any more reluctance or regret within his own breast in destroying families and cities than in destroying crows' nests...'

-> 15's God's comparison of Assyria to the inanimate object wielded by the worker– the glory goes to the man not the tool (see: potter/clay; 10:5)

-> 'therefore...' God would send:

-God as lit. 'the Lord of Hosts'– in charge of heaven's and earth's soldiers, and thus, in full control here

-16a's 'a wasting disease' on his soldiers– perhaps a rapidly-spreading plague administered by the angel of the Lord that killed the 185K Assyrian soldiers during the siege of Jerusalem (37:36-37; see: Sennacherib's cryptic account of his retreat; II Sam 24:15-17) -> 18b's 'as when a sick man wastes away'

-16b-18a's 'blazing flame' that will destroy everything, incl. 19's so few trees (i.e. soldiers) that a child could list them– a remnant of another sort (!) and another reference to Gideon

-> disease/fire as internal/external and soldiers/pomp as substance/style– both implying totality

-18a's forests (ref to Assyrians, given 10:33-34) and fertile fields to become 17b's 'thorns and briers'

-forests/fields as natural/cultivated growth, expressing totality

-on 'thorns and briers', MH's 'They would be so far from stopping the fire that they would inflame it.'

-16b's 'fire/flame' as 17a's 'the Light of Israel (vs. 10:6!)...their Holy One' (fire/light)

-> if God is sovereign (in letting Assyria do its thing to deliver God's judgment), why is Assyria held morally responsible? (37:28-29)

-Motyer's 'The thrust of the passage is clear: the absolute sovereignty of God...[But] Isaiah goes out of his way to show us a real human agent at work.'--

points to 8,13's thoughts, 7's mind, 10,13-14's hand- of 5's individual (king vs. nation)

-in sum, Motyer's 'What the king of Assyria did conformed to the will of God; why he did it had nothing to do with the will of God, only with the king's arrogance.'
(Gen 50:20, Mic 4:11-12)

10:20-23's future faithful Jewish remnant

-20's would 'truly rely' on God not Assyria- under Hezekiah's reforms and then post-Babylon's exile

-21's future remnant [of the relatively faithful who return from exile; arguably, Isaiah's primary audience] vs. 22's currently huge population (Gen 13:16, 22:17) = impending destruction and death-- 23's that God will 'carry out'

-all of this, eventually, pointing to Israel's best interests (w/ app.; Dan 11:35)

10:24-27's message from God: security for the faithful

-25-26's 'very soon my anger against you will end' and be redirected at Assyria- supported by additional refs to:

-Gideon vs. Midianites/Oreb (9:4; Ps 83:11; incl. sudden victory from an invisible power, Sennacherib's assassination in his temple at home after he lost so many troops but thought he was out of harm's way)

-Moses and the Exodus, incl. 26's 'whip' (28:15,18) and 27's 'in that day': the burden/yoke will be lifted/broken (10:20; 11:10,11)

-may include tribute previously paid to Assyrians (II Kings 18:14)

-can refer to Assyrians, Babylonians, Romans, end-times, or more fig., for our release from bondage to sin

-> 24's don't be afraid of the Assyrians

-MH's 'It is against the mind and will of God that his people, whatever may happen, should give way to [earthly] fear...'

-motivated by the comfort in reminding them of 24's covenant relationship ('my people'), Davidic promise ('who live in Zion'), and past redemption from a difficult situation in Egypt; comfort in being told that God is in control of this, that the judgment will be rel. short (Ps 30:5), and that their enemy will be dealt with shortly (pointing to Egyptians and Midianites as examples)

10:28-34's destruction of Assyria

-28-32's vision-like depiction of Assyrian troops on the march (10:9)- the last ten miles on their way from Aiath (Ai- Josh 8) to Jerusalem (in 701 BC)

-vs. 33-34's the Lord will cut them down like a tall forest of trees (10:16-19's forest fire; ironic ref to 10:15's axe; vs. 11:1a's 'shoot')

-> see: bookending of 28-32's supposedly victorious march vs. 27,33-34's futility of attacking God's people

-> see: bookending of 20-23,24-26's Judah with 5-19,27-34's Assyria- as if surrounded!
(reproduced on a much larger scale in chs. 13-27)

Isaiah 11:1-12:6

-> next week: Is 13-20??

11:1-9

-> developing 9:1-7 further– and again, a note of SR and LR hope; Motyer's 'It is specifically a word of assurance for the dark day of the Assyrian threat but contains in itself clear indications that its fulfillment is for time yet to come. Undated hope is a living, ever-present assurance for God's people.'

-1a's 'a shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse' (6:13, 53:2; II Sam 7:16, Job 14:7-9, Dan 4:15); 1b's 'from [Jesse's] roots a Branch will bear fruit' (4:2-6, 11:10; Jer 23:5; Rev 5:5, 22:16's 'Root of David')

-Jesse as David's father; Jesse's 'shoot' implies not just David's lineage, but another David (Hos 3:5, Acts 2:29-31)

-shoot of Jesse vs. David to emphasize Christ's modest 'roots' (I Sam 18:18)

-6:13, 11:1's living Israelite stump/shoot/branch (despite its fragile appearance) vs. 10:33-34's dead (formerly powerful) Assyrian stump

-> 2's 'the Spirit of the Lord will rest on him' (42:1, 59:21, 61:1; I Sam 16:13)– defined further as the Spirit of wisdom & understanding (Dt 1:13, I Kings 3:9-12; vs. 10:13a), counsel & power (9:6, 42:4), knowledge & fear of the Lord (Heb 5:7)

-w/ reference to future leaders, esp. Christ

-'rest on' as long-term, in complete measure, as a team (Christ's 'dove'; Col 1:19, 2:9) vs. OT's typically temporary and more-limited empowerment

-w/ app. to our need for all three (esp. leaders)!

-3a's 'he will delight in the fear of the Lord' (Jn 1:18, 8:29)

-unlike Ahaz or Assyria

-interesting combo of delight and fear/reverence! (w/ app. to human father, good profs; vs. no boundaries, inconsistent)

-3b-5's government (builds on 9:6):

-stemming from 1's identity and 2's resources; Motyer's 'The whole section shows how he is fully absorbed in exercising the divine gifts.' (w/ app.)

-with 4,5's righteousness [as belt], 4's justice, and 5's faithfulness [as sash] (1:21, 5:16; Ps 72:1-4; Eph 6:14,16)

-incl. some punishment– 4b's 'strike the earth' and 'slay the wicked' (10:5,25)

-by 4b's 'the rod of his mouth' and 'the breath of his lips'– word and deed as equivalent; word as effortless (vs. forceful per se) and powerful (Gen 1; II Thess 2:8, Heb 4:12, Rev 19:15,21); irony that 'breath' usually confers/means life

-esp. wrt poor and needy (9:17 vs. 10:2; Ps 82:3-4)

-3b's not 'by what he sees [or]...hears'– beats bribery, etc., but import of distinguishing between external appearance and inner reality (Rom 2:16, I Cor 4:5); between what they say about themselves, what others say about them, and reality

-> again, all of the above vs. Ahaz and most previous kings because of character defect of inability to rule

-6-9's results in a restored/Eden-like world/creation (2:2-4, 35:9, 65:20-25; Ez 34:25-29):

-6a's wolf/lamb, leopard/goat, calf/lion/yearling will live together peacefully; 7's cow/bear, lion/ox will eat together

-the animals have a new nature, from carnivore to herbivore, back to the original design of Eden (Gen 1:29-30)

-reconciling old enemies (predator/prey), eliminating old fears

-not only to do no harm, but actually get along with the other

-if the wolves are getting along with the sheep, how much more so the sheep with each other (Ez 34:20-24)

-6-7's wild and domestic animals– totality

-6's 'yearling', 7's 'young' indicate this isn't just a one-generational fluke (vs. 9:17)

-see: Chesterton, p. 252

-> 6b's 'and a little child will lead them' (vs. 3:4; Mt 18:3-4); Motyer's 'not just safe among them, but...so secure is this peace that a youngster can exercise the dominion originally given to humankind.' (Gen 1:28)

-8's children/snakes without getting bit

-infant as helpless; toddler as careless– but neither in danger now!

-repeats vs. 6, but beyond that, points to ending Gen 3:15's curse

-> 9's 'they will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain'– 'for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord' (Jer 31:33-34a, Hab 2:14)

-identifying the New Eden with Mt. Zion (see: the New Jerusalem, God's kingdom on earth– now and ultimately, later)

-9b's knowledge as causal

-> Motyer's 'First, the Messiah buds forth and then thru him, new life for people becomes possible on a world-wide scale and the life of nature itself is transformed.' (Vs. 10:33-34)

11:10-16

- 10,11's 'in that day' as SR and eschatological
- 10-11's probably a prose insertion between ch. 11's two poems
 - overlap: 1-2,10's Jesse, root, rest; 11,15-16's day (16's 'when'), hand, remnant, Assyria, Egypt, sea
 - former poem deals with the King, the nature of his rule and the Eden-like world where he reigns; the latter deals with the people who come to the Lord's Banner; Motyer's 'The glorious hope, therefore is of a reconstituted world and people under a perfect King.'
- 10a's 'the Root of Jesse (11:1) will stand (42:4) as a banner (5:26) for the peoples' (Gen 12:3, Zech 14:16, Lk 13:29, Jn 12:32)
 - Christ as 10's 'root' vs. 1's 'shoot'– Jesse also sprang from Him; Motyer's 'the Messiah is the root cause of his own family tree pending the day when, within that family, he will shoot forth.'
 - 10b's 'the nations will rally to (lit. 'seek'; 9:13) him' (2:2-4; quoted in Rom 15:12; Jn 12:20-21)
 - 10c's 'his place of rest will be glorious'– rest & security but freedom & activity
- 11's God reclaims a second remnant from all over the world (11's examples represent geographical totality)– first at Exodus (Ex 15:16, Ps 78 [see also: God's hand]); second at Pentecost &/or the 2nd coming? (9:7; Mt 24:31)
 - list of nations (contemporary world powers in all directions) implies that no earthly power will be able to stop it
 - Heb. 'Shinar' as Babylon, but chosen for its ref to Gen 11 (Zech 5:11)
 - 11's 'reach out' as grace, election
 - see: 12's recap of 10-11 (19:23-25, 27:13, 49:22, 56:8, 62:10)
 - note overlap of 10's 'the nations', 11's 'his people' and 12's exiles
- 13's infighting ('jealous...hostile'– emotions and actions) between Ephraim (Israel) and Judah would 'vanish' (Jer 3:18, Ez 37:22; Eph 2:15's Jew/Gentile)
 - 14's resulting in mutual defeat and plunder of those to the west (Philistines) and the east (Edom, Moab, and Ammon)– implies political domination or at least dominion (14:2)
 - military action (Rev 19:11-21)– with those who choose to oppose God, and thus, find destruction– those who have refused 10's banner, 11's 'reach out'
 - or vs. 9:6, 11:6-9,13, Motyer's 'Such warlike references jar against the forecast of the Prince and his kingdom of peace, but we must understand them as fidelity to a metaphor rather than predictive of a course of events. Isaiah foresaw the Messiah in royal and warrior terms.'
- 15-16's remnant (incl. 12's Gentiles) returning miraculously– reminiscent of how Israel had left Egypt (Ex 14) and entered Canaan (Josh 3) years before

- incl. a 'scorching wind' to reduce the Euphrates (fig. for worldwide) to 'seven streams' (fig.)– so that 'men can cross over [it] in sandals'
- nature tamed (revisited)
- along with the 'highway' and boundaries coming down, fig. for making it incredibly easy for people to accept the Gospel (35:8, 40:3-4, 42:15-16, 57:14, 62:10, 63:11-14; Rev 16:12)

12:1-6

-1a,4a's '*in that day* you will say...'- a two-verse song connected to 11:10,11 and previous (10:20,27)

- just as the original Exodus led to praise (Ex 15's song), so too will this deliverance

-1b's 'praise'- although previously angry (9:12,17,21, 10:4), God had now 'comforted' him (male individual[s])

- w/ app. to our thanking God for both mercy and grace (original and continuing)

- 2's 'Surely God is (2b's 'has become') my salvation...my strength and my song' (quoting Ex 15:2; Ps 118:14)

- 'the Lord, the Lord'- as 'Yah, Yahweh'; Motyer's 'In Psalms it occurs frequently in the cry, "Hallelujah"...It is a shortening or diminutive, expressing endearment.'

- reaches back to 6:1-7

-> 2's 'I will trust and not be afraid' (8:12-18)

-> 3's 'with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation' (Ex 15:25,27's post-song water; Jer 2:13, Jn 4:10)

- 'you' moves to the plural (as in 6:5); Motyer's 'if we were to sense an implication that what saved him will also save others, our intuition is borne out [here]...The tiny beginning of one man's salvation modulates into a singing community.'

- 'draw water...' as our P along with God's P (Ps 87:7)- not easy work, but should still result in joy (54:1, 56:7; Dt 26:11, Acts 2:46)

-4b's 'thanks', 5's sing to 'all the nations' (9:7, 11:10), 6's 'shout aloud and sing for joy' (12:3)

- about the greatness of God and the glorious things He has done

- praise God and tell everybody (6:8-13)

- 6's 'the Holy One of Israel among you'

- 'among'-- vs. 1a's anger; God but ultimately Christ/Immanuel

- 'Holy', but 'among' them- they had become holy too!

- 'of Israel'- merged (11:13)

- 6's 'people' as singular (NASB's 'inhabitant') and female (a la Miriam-- Ex 15;

Zion personified by a woman)– for totality with 1's male singular; every individual and the community are praising God

-> sets up chs. 13-27

-> ending the comparison between Ahaz and esp. Assyria's finite/unjust kingdom and God's infinite/righteous