

God & the Greats

February 3, 2013

Assyrian-esque Assumptions

Isaiah 10:5-25

Isaiah was a man with a clear view of God. A prophet. He prophesied in the days of four kings of Judah, e.g. #3, **Ahaz**: a man tragically lacking **real, firm faith**.

As a result of this lack, Ahaz's faithless attempts to solve his problems created bigger problems.

For himself and his people.

[To protect himself from the kingdoms immediately to his north, he called for help from the superpower that those two kingdoms were afraid of, the king of the Assyrian superpower.]

AS A RESULT: Isaiah prophesied in the days of four kings of Judah AND the kings of Assyria.

	KINGS OF ASSYRIA	KINGS OF JUDAH	
His son:	Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 B.C.)	Ahaz (735-727 B.C.)	
His brother [?]:	Shalmaneser V (727-722 B.C.)	Ahaz (727-722 B.C.)	
	Sargon II (722-705 B.C.)	Ahaz (722-715 B.C.)	
	Sargon II (715-705 B.C.)	Hezekiah (715-705 B.C.)	
His son:	Sennacherib (705-681 B.C.)	Hezekiah (705-687 B.C.)	[See Isaiah 36,37]

These great kings shared some assumptions.

Two for example: **TWO ASSUMPTIONS OF THE KING OF ASSYRIA**

Isaiah 10:5-6 ESV Ah, Assyria, the rod of **my anger**; the staff in their hands is **my fury!** Against a godless nation I send him, and against the people of **my wrath** I command him, to take spoil and seize plunder, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.

BUT FIRST: we are studying the greatness of God: **The GREATNESS OF GOD compared to all other "great ones"**

and we have seen already the greatness of **God's power, God's wisdom** and **God's "gentle shepherding"**: (God's love, his kindness, his grace).

The GREATNESS OF GOD'S POWER, WISDOM, LOVE compared to all other "great ones"

Here we must add a **4th sort of greatness** that Isaiah the prophet reveals: "anger/fury/wrath" → **God's great righteousness.**

The GREATNESS OF GOD'S POWER, WISDOM, LOVE and RIGHTEOUSNESS compared to all other "great ones"

It is God's righteousness that inspires **his anger and fury and wrath: God hates sin** because **he loves righteousness.**

Now let's start again...

TWO ASSUMPTIONS OF THE KING OF ASSYRIA

Isaiah 10:5-11 ESV Ah, Assyria, the rod of **my anger**; the staff in their hands is **my fury!** Against a godless nation I send him, and against the people of **my wrath** I command him, to take spoil and seize plunder, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.

But he does not so intend, and his heart does not so think; but it is in his heart to destroy, and to cut off nations not a few; for he says: "Are not my commanders all kings? ... **Is not Samaria like Damascus?** As my hand has reached to the kingdoms of the idols, whose carved images were greater than those of Jerusalem and Samaria, shall I not do to Jerusalem and her idols as I have done to Samaria and her images?"

1. "There is no God, or if there is, it means nothing to me."

NOTICE: "or if." No one can really prove a negative statement as broad as this.

Biblically, **the essence of foolishness** is to declare that you HAVE proven it.

Psalms 14:1 ESV The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none who does good.

The foolishness is claiming a thorough enough understanding of everything to make such a statement.

NOTICE: There is a morality, a relationship to right and wrong, imbedded in this sort of foolishness. **BUT IT'S NOT TRUE.**

Job 12:10 ESV (Job): **In his [God's] hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind.**

A second Assyrian assumption can be seen in **vss.12-15**

Isaiah 10:13,14 ESV

“**By the strength of my hand** I have done it, and **by my wisdom**, for I have understanding; **I remove** the boundaries of peoples, and plunder their treasures; like a bull **I bring** down those who sit on thrones. **My hand** has found like a nest the wealth of the peoples; and as one gathers eggs that have been forsaken, so **I have gathered** all the earth; and there was none that moved a wing or opened the mouth or chirped.”

2. “My life is my own and I answer to no one.”

James 4:14 ESV What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.

Job 34:14-15 ESV (What Elihu knew) If he [God] should set his heart to it and gather to himself his spirit and his breath, all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust.

THREE UNASSYRIAN THOUGHTS TO THINK

a) *THINK: God controls entirely, and uses freely, every human action.*

Isaiah 10:5 ESV Ah, Assyria, the rod of **my anger**; the staff in their hands is **my fury!**

Proverbs 21:1 ESV The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will. The thinking here is “greater to lesser.”

Q: If God has this much control, total control, over the heart of the king, then to what extent does he control the heart of the person you are married to -- the heart of your boss --- your parent – your neighbour -- your mayor-- your premier -- your prime minister -- the president of the United States?

SO WHOM SHOULD WE FEAR? IN WHOM SHOULD WE TRUST? LET US NOT THINK LIKE SO MANY ASSYRIANS.

Psalms 14:1 ESV The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.”

BUT **Proverbs 9:10** ESV The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

Psalms 27:1,13,14 ESV The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?... I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living! Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!

THIS FEARLESSNESS WAS A PART OF ISAIAH'S MESSAGE

THREE UNASSYRIAN THOUGHTS TO THINK

a) *THINK: God controls entirely, and uses freely, every human action.*

Isaiah 10:20 ESV **In that day the remnant of Israel and the survivors** of the house of Jacob will no more lean on him who struck them, but **will lean on the LORD**, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.

b) *THINK: God understands entirely, and judges, every human heart.*

Isaiah 10:5-7 ESV Ah, Assyria, the rod of **my anger**; the staff in their hands is **my fury!** Against a godless nation I send him, and against the people of **my wrath** I command him, to take spoil and seize plunder, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. But **he does not so intend**, and his heart does not so think; but it is in his heart to destroy, and to cut off nations not a few...

Let's NOTICE that it's the intentions of “Assyria's” heart that God is speaking about.

Isaiah 10:12-15 ESV When the Lord has finished all his work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, he will punish the speech of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria and the boastful look in his eyes. For he says: “**By the strength of my hand** I have done it, and **by my wisdom**... Shall the axe boast over him who hews with it, or the saw magnify itself against him who wields it?

NOT JUST OUR ACTIONS ARE KNOWN AND JUDGED BY GOD. ALSO OUR “SECRET” THOUGHTS. OUR ATTITUDES.

Romans 14:10-12 ESV ... we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

c) *THINK:* God is entirely able, and willing, to accomplish his own righteous plans.

Isaiah 10:20-25 ESV In that day the remnant of Israel and the survivors of the house of Jacob will no more lean on him who struck them, but will lean on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God. For though your people Israel be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will return.

Destruction is decreed, overflowing with righteousness. For the Lord GOD of hosts will make a full end, as decreed, in the midst of all the earth. Therefore thus says the Lord GOD of hosts: "O my people, who dwell in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrians when they strike with the rod and lift up their staff against you as the Egyptians did. For in a very little while my fury will come to an end, and my anger will be directed to their destruction.

THIS IS JUST WHAT GOD HAD SAID PERSONALLY TO ISAIAH

Isaiah 8:11-13 ESV For the LORD spoke thus to me with his strong hand upon me, and warned me not to walk in the way of this people, saying: "Do not call conspiracy all that this people calls conspiracy, and do not fear what they fear, nor be in dread. But the LORD of hosts, him you shall honor as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.

AND THIS IS WHAT GOD TOLD ISAIAH TO TELL THE CITIES OF JUDAH

Isaiah 40:9-11 ESV "Behold your God!" Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.