
2 Nephi 20 — Isaiah 10 — The Assyrian as the Lord's Rod, the Remnant Returns, the Cedars Cut Down

Closing the fourfold refrain, the Assyrian as God's instrument then God's target, Shear-Jashub returns, the proud cedars fall, c. 725–701 BC.

The chapter closes the indictment of chs. 9–10 (the fourth *not turned away* at v. 4) and meditates on divine instrumentality — the Lord uses Assyria to chasten Israel, then judges Assyria for the boast. The chapter's center is v. 15: *shall the axe boast against the wielder?* The chapter ends with the felled forest of vv. 33–34 — the proud cedars cut so the obscure Branch of ch. 11 can shoot. *Shear-Jashub* (a remnant shall return) is explicitly enacted in vv. 20–22.

Ten Insights

1. **Hoy, unjust decrees (v. 1).** *Hoy* — funereal woe-particle. False legislation is spiritually homicidal — already dead in the prophetic verdict.
2. **The four protected classes (v. 2).** Needy, poor, widow, fatherless — the Torah's mishpat-protected. A society's covenant-state is read by their condition.
3. **Day of visitation (v. 3).** *Paqad*-root — same root as 1 Ne. 1:20's tender mercies. Paqad operates from tender mercy to mustered host.
4. **Fourth refrain spans the chapter break (v. 4).** Isaiah's prophetic architecture transcends Masoretic chapter divisions. Chs. 9 + 10 are one prophetic unit.
5. **Assyrian as rod (vv. 5–6).** Being used is not being approved. The Assyrian executes commissioned chastisement; the Assyrian has no covenant-standing.
6. **Misaligned intent (v. 7).** The Assyrian intends genocide; the Lord intends chastisement. Same action, opposite intent. Caiaphas-grammar (Jn. 11:50).
7. **Axe-saw-rod-staff parable (v. 15).** Instrument has no agency apart from the wielder. The OT charter for D&C 121's unrighteous-dominion doctrine.
8. **Shear-Jashub returns (vv. 20–22).** *A remnant shall return.* Paul cites at Rom. 9:27. Multi-dispensational doctrine — historical, Pauline, Restoration.
9. **Yoke destroyed by the anointing (v. 27).** *Mip'nei shamen* — from the face of the oil. Messianic anointing destroys the yoke; not violent insurrection.
10. **Lebanon falls; Branch will rise (vv. 33–34).** Forest-felling sets up Isa. 11:1's shoot from the stump. Magnificat-grammar (Lk. 1:52) in 8th-century-BC form.

Cross-References

Ex. 22:22–24 (widow and orphan); Deut. 10:18 (Lord executes judgment); Deut. 24:17–21 (gleaning); Judg. 6–7 (Gideon); 2 Kgs. 18–19 (Sennacherib's siege); 2 Kgs. 19:35 (angel slays 185,000 — direct fulfillment of vv. 16–19); Ps. 7:15 (digs a pit); Ps. 18:25–27 (Lord brings down haughty); Ps. 75:6–7 (lifting up); Ps. 94:20 (throne of iniquity); Prov. 16:18 (pride before destruction); Prov. 26:27 (pit-is-self-dug); Isa. 2:11–17 (haughtiness brought low); Isa. 7:3 (Shear-Jashub named); Isa. 11:1 (Branch — sequel); Isa. 14:24–27 (Assyrian broken); Isa. 37 (Sennacherib's defeat); Isa. 41:11–16 (worm Jacob); Jer. 23:5 (Branch); Ezek. 31 (Pharaoh as cedar — direct parallel to v. 34); Dan. 4 (Nebuchadnezzar's tree); Mic. 5:7–9 (remnant of Jacob); Zech. 11:1–2 (Lebanon's cedars fall); Lk. 1:52 (Magnificat — direct parallel to v. 33); Jn. 11:50 (Caiaphas — instrument unaware); Rom. 9:27–28 (cited — Shear-Jashub); Rom. 11:5 (remnant by grace); 2 Cor. 4:7 (treasure in earthen vessels); Heb. 12:5–11 (chastening); Rev. 17–18 (Babylon falls); 1 Ne. 4:13 (Caiaphas grammar); 1 Ne. 14:3 (pit self-dug); 1 Ne. 16:29 (small means); 1 Ne. 22:13–14 (great-and-abominable falls by own sword); 2 Ne. 19 (paired chapter); 2 Ne. 21:1 (Branch — sequel); 2 Ne. 28:31 (arm of flesh); Mosiah 11 (Noah's pride); Alma 39:6 (denying Holy Ghost); Hel. 3:33–36 (Nephite pride); Morm. 8:36–41 (latter-day pride); D&C 1:24 (in their own language); D&C 35:13 (weak things thresh nations); D&C 109:60–67 (remnant); D&C 113:7–10 (Branch and anointing); D&C 121:34–37 (unrighteous dominion — direct application of v. 15); D&C 122:7 (all these things experience); D&C 133:30–34 (remnant returns); JS—H 1:14–17.

Apocryphal Correlations

Sirach 10:13–18. *The Lord hath cast down the thrones of proud princes* — direct rod-judged-after-use parallel.

Wisdom of Solomon 5:14–23. *The hope of the ungodly is like dust* — boast-then-judgment parallel to vv. 8–19.

1 Enoch 46:1–8. Son of Man *putteth down kings from their thrones* — direct Magnificat-grammar parallel to v. 33.

4 Ezra 11:1–46. Eagle-vision — imperial eagle (Rome) judged after commissioned chastening — direct rod-then-rod-judged parallel.

2 Baruch 36–40. Cedar-and-vine vision — proud cedar uprooted, vine planted — direct ch. 10:34 → ch. 11:1 transition parallel.

1QM (Qumran War Scroll). Sons of Light vs. Sons of Darkness — Lord uses Kittim (Rome) as chastening, then judges them — eschatological rod-then-rod parallel.

Damascus Document (CD) 1:5–11. Remnant-community of the Teacher of Righteousness — direct Shear-Jashub communal application.

Tobit 13:9–18. Comfort Jerusalem; the dispersed gather — remnant-return parallel.

Hebrew Word Studies

shevet-api (שֵׁבֶט אִפִּי, **rod of my anger**) — v. 5. Judicial-disciplinary instrument. *Shevet* = rod, scepter, tribal-staff.

matteh (מַטֵּה, **staff / branch**) — v. 5. Same noun used of Aaron's budded staff (Num. 17:8) and the Messianic Branch of ch. 11. Same word, opposite use — disciplinary then redemptive.

hithpa'er (הִתְפַּאֵר, **glorify oneself**) — v. 15. Reflexive-hitpa'el of *pa'ar* (glory). Self-glorification is the precise mode of corruption available to the instrument. D&C 121:34–37 is v. 15 in priesthood-application.

she'ar yashuv (שְׂאֵר יָשׁוּב, **a remnant shall return**) — vv. 21–22. Isaiah's son's name walked as embodied prophecy. *Yashuv* from *shuv*-root = repentance-as-returning. Multi-dispensational doctrine.

shamen (שָׁמֵן, **anointing oil**) — v. 27. The yoke is destroyed *mip'nei shamen* — by the Messianic anointing, not by insurrection. D&C 113:7–10.

adir (אֲדִיר, **mighty one**) — v. 34. The mighty-one who fells Lebanon. Cedars of Lebanon = OT emblem of pride. The felling makes room for the Branch of 21:1.

Personal Application

Three practices. First, receive chastening without demanding the rod's instant judgment. The Lord judges the rod in due time. Your calling is to learn what the chastening teaches. Second, anchor in v. 15 every time stewardship-power is exercised. I am the axe, not the wielder. Each morning, name your stewardships and confess each as delegated. The moment you take credit, you become the Assyrian. Third, trust Shear-Jashub when the remnant looks small. A remnant shall return. The remnant is measured by return, not by size. Smaller, more faithful remnants are the covenant's continuity.