

AGAPE 2 LESSON 1

HIS HAND IS STRETCHED OUT STILL

Put together by Bongie Kuzwayo

[Isaiah chapter 10]

That opening word, **“woe”** sends chills down my spine. God’s anger was waxed hot. You tremble to think what will happen next. Woe = is a primitive word expressing pain exclamatorily, Oh!

Two things stand out for me:

- What is it that God had decreed (v22) and would not turn the scales of justice?
- What was the final judgement of Assyria?

Right through from chapters 5 to 10 of the Book of Isaiah, we see this expression, **“His hand is stretched out still.”** He will not relent until He accomplishes what He decreed. His hand is stretched out still to judge Israel. *[Hosea2v21—23] It shall come to pass in that day that I will answer,” says the Lord; “I will answer the heavens, and they shall answer the earth. (22) The earth shall answer with grain, with new wine, and with oil; they shall answer Jezreel. (23) Then, **I will sow her for Myself in the earth**, and I will have mercy on her who had not obtained mercy; then I will say to those who were not My people, ‘You are My people!’ And they shall say, ‘You are my God!’”* God says, only a remnant will return because He will make a determined end in the midst of Israel (Isaiah6v13).

Jezreel = God sows

You will remember that Jezreel was Hosea’s son by his wife of harlotry, Gomer, whose name means (complete). Gomer is a metaphor for the nation of Israel. **God decreed that He was determined to make a complete end of the nation by sowing them for Himself in the earth.**

[Isaiah6v9—11] Then I said, “Here am I, send me.” And He said, “Go tell this people: Keep on hearing, but do not understand, keep on seeing but do not perceive.’ (10) Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and return and be healed.” (11) Then I said, “Lord, how long?” And He answered: “Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant, the houses are without a man, the land is utterly desolate.

The Lord was determined to make an end of the Nation of Israel **by hiding revelation from them.** Without a proceeding word people die spiritually first before they are completely destroyed.

[Isaiah 10v1—2] Woe to those who decree unrighteous decrees, who write misfortune which they have prescribed (2) to rob the needy of justice, and to take what is right from the poor of My people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless.

The church today is doing business as usual. They are casting a deaf ear to the present reformation. The motivational messages make the people of God worthless.

(v5) A second “woe” in the same chapter: Two is a number symbolizing witness.

God is in a militant mood indeed. Much as Assyria is on God’s assignment, he will surely taste the sting of God’s anger.

- God will inflict an emaciating disease on the well-fed Assyria, and kindle a burning fire under his glory (v16).

- Israel will become a burning fire, and its Holy One a flame – will burn up Assyria’s thorns and thistles (v17).
- God will completely destroy Assyria’s forests and orchards to the point that the remaining trees will be very few (18).

(10v12) Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Lord has performed all His work on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, that He will say, “I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his haughty looks.

God makes sure that He accomplishes what He has purposed. He is a righteous Judge and He does justice. Justice is His very character (Deuteronomy32v4). Only a remnant will return, that is the holy seed (Isaiah6v13).

(v13) The arrogant, boastful Assyria says:

- I have done this by my own strength.
- My own wisdom
- I am clever
- I abolished the borders of the nations
- I plundered their treasures
- Like a mighty warrior, I subjugated the inhabitants
- My hand has reached out, as if into a nest, to seize the wealth of nations.
- Like one gathering the abandoned eggs, I gathered the whole earth
- No one would dare open his mouth.

(v24—27) God gives Israel a ray of hope: [v24—27] Therefore, the Lord God of Hosts says this: “My people who dwell in Zion, do not fear Assyria, though he strikes you with a rod and raises his staff over you as the Egyptians did. (25) In just a little while, My wrath will be spent, and My anger will turn to their destruction.” (26) And the Lord of hosts will brandish His whip against him as He did when He struck Midian at the rock of Oreb; and He will raise his staff over the sea as He did in Egypt. (27) On that day his burden will fall from your shoulders, and his yoke from your neck. The yoke will be broken because of the anointing oil.

Whenever Israel cried out to the Lord, God would relent from the disaster He had purposed to punish them. Why would He not relent this time around?

*We see another expression, “**Yet you did not return to Me.**” [Amos4v6, 8, 9, 10, 11] God did everything to discipline Israel, **but they did not accept correction**, they persisted in error. And God expresses His anger in very strong terms.*

[Amos5v18, 21—24] Woe to you who long for the day of the Lord! What will the day of the Lord be to you? It will be darkness and not light. (21) I hate, I despise your feasts! I can’t stand the stench of your solemn assemblies, (22) even if you offer Me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; I will have no regard for your fellowship offerings of fatted cattle. (23) Take away from Me the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps. (24) But let justice flow like water, and righteousness, like an unfailing stream.

Assyria’s final judgement:

Assyria even dared to reproach the Holy One of Israel when he came to attack Hezekiah, king of Israel.

[Isaiah37v23—24] Whom have you reproached and blasphemed? Against whom have you raised your voice, and lifted up your eyes on high? Against the Holy One of Israel. (24) By your servants you have reproached the Lord, and said, "By the multitude of my chariots I have come up to the height of the mountains, to the limits of Lebanon; I will cut down its tall cedars and its tall cypress trees; I will enter its furthest height, to its fruitful forest.

[Isaiah37v33—38] Therefore, thus says the Lord concerning the king of Assyria: "He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with a shield, nor build a siege mound against it. (34) By the way that he came, by the same shall he return; and he shall not come into this city," says the Lord, (35) "for I will defend this city to save it, for My own sake and for My servant David's sake." (36) Then the angel of the Lord went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning there were corpses—all dead. (37) So, Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned home and remained at Nineveh. (38) Now it came to pass as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with a sword; and they escaped to the land of Ararat. Then Esarhaddon, his son reigned in his place.

Now looking at the climate of the church across the board – the church continues in error. Only a hand-full receive the present truth and are running with it. The rest of the church is doing business as usual. Entertainment and unending programmes are the order of the day. Yes, God is longsuffering but He will sure bring judgement in its time. We need to introspect and see where we are so we can adjust in time for God's mercy to save us.