

## “And What Will Ye Do in the Day of Visitation?” (Isa. 10:3)

According to Isaiah’s prophecies, Israel was about to be annihilated. In a short time, the land of Israel would be overrun by the Assyrian army, and the people of Israel would be dispersed throughout the earth.

The Northern Kingdom, sometimes referred to as “Samaria,” or “Ephraim,” had been apostate and corrupt since the days of Jeroboam, who had led them in their separation from the Southern Kingdom, which comprised the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and any else who wanted to keep their religion pure and worship in the Jerusalem temple. These northern tribes were easy prey to faulty alliances and false gods who failed them in their hour of need. Leaders like King Ahab and his wife Jezebel set the tone for their people in rebellion and refusal to repent, even when they had proof of the prophets’ declarations. For example, although Elijah’s contest with the priests of Baal proved that Jehovah was “the God,” Ahab and his people did not repent, but rather reacted with rage against Elijah, and Jezebel swore that she would see Elijah murdered for his affront against herself, her priests and her religion (1 Kings 18-19). It was a pattern that would be repeated throughout Israel’s history.

The people of the Northern Kingdom paid little heed to the warnings of any of the prophets, including Isaiah’s. At most, they responded with an empty bravado by boasting that if the prophecies were true, and the Lord allowed their homes to be destroyed, they would replace their ruined cities with an even greater grandeur than previously existed. “Every one is an hypocrite and an evildoer and every mouth speaketh folly,” Isaiah said of them (Isa. 9:17). In a fist-waving defiance, they proclaimed:

The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones:  
the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars (Isa. 9:9-10)

But the northern tribes did not return and build. Most were carried away captive to other countries, and while there, lost their sense of national and spiritual identity as children of Israel. Other captive people were brought in by the Assyrians to take their place, and they intermarried with the poorest of the poor who had been left in that land (2 Kings 17). They formed an amalgam of religious and superstitious beliefs, setting the stage for the great divide between the Samaritans and Jews of Jesus’ day.

There is an event during King Hezekiah’s reign that particularly underscores the divide between the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. Hezekiah, who had come to the Jewish throne in his youth, instituted great reforms, cleansed the temple, renewed the covenant, and returned to many of the ancient customs, including the celebration of the Passover. Despite the fact that the Assyrians had already attacked and conquered much of the Northern Kingdom, Hezekiah, in the spirit of covenant and of brotherhood, sent messengers throughout the whole land of Israel to invite all to participate in a united Passover, and to renew themselves and their covenants as Israel. While some from the North did accept his invitation and made the journey to Jerusalem, most laughed his messengers to scorn and refused the offer. For all who did accept, it was a time of spiritual healing and revival (2 Chron. 29-30). Although he is not specifically mentioned, we imagine that Isaiah was part of those festivities, for we know that he was revered by Hezekiah, and as prophet, would surely have had a leading role in that great Passover celebration.

Hezekiah’s spiritual awareness, as well as his understanding of Israel’s covenant with God, is apparent in the written invitation he sent to the scattered people of the North:

Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel,  
and he will return to the remnant of you, that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of  
Assyria.

And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the Lord God of  
their fathers who therefore gave them up to desolation, as ye see.

Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the Lord,  
and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever:  
and serve the Lord your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you.

For if ye turn again unto the Lord, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before  
them that lead them captive,  
so that they shall come again into this land:  
for the Lord your God is gracious and merciful,  
and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him”( 2 Chron. 30:6-9)

Because the northern tribes would not accept the invitation of the Lord as it came to them through kings  
and prophets, the Lord had no alternative but to bring them back to Himself through trial, affliction and  
chastening. After all, they were His children and His covenant people; He had promised Abraham that He  
would remember those children forever. If they would not listen to his pleadings, perhaps they would  
turn to Him as they were pummeled by their adversaries.

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## “For Whom the Lord Loveth he Chasteneth” (Heb. 12:6)

For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons;  
for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers,  
then ye are bastards, and not sons.

Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence:  
shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit,  
that we might be partakers of his holiness.

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous:  
nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which  
are exercised thereby (Heb. 12:6-11).

Elder D. Todd Christofferson taught:

Sadly, much of modern Christianity does not acknowledge that God makes any real demands on  
those who believe in Him, seeing Him rather as a butler “who meets their needs when

summoned” or a therapist whose role is to help people “feel good about themselves.”<sup>1</sup> It is a religious outlook that “makes no pretense at changing lives.”<sup>2</sup> “By contrast,” as one author declares, “the God portrayed in both the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures asks, not just for commitment, but for our very lives. The God of the Bible traffics in life and death, not niceness, and calls for sacrificial love, not benign whatever-ism.”<sup>3</sup>

I would like to speak of one particular attitude and practice we need to adopt if we are to meet our Heavenly Father’s high expectations. It is this: willingly to accept and even seek correction. Correction is vital if we would conform our lives “unto a perfect man, [that is,] unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13). Paul said of divine correction or chastening, “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth” (Heb. 12:6). Though it is often difficult to endure, truly we ought to rejoice that God considers us worth the time and trouble to correct.

Divine chastening has at least three purposes: (1) to persuade us to repent, (2) to refine and sanctify us, and (3) at times to redirect our course in life to what God knows is a better path. Consider first of all repentance, the necessary condition for forgiveness and cleansing. The Lord declared, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent” (Rev.3:19). Again He said, “And my people must needs be chastened until they learn obedience, if it must needs be, by the things which they suffer” (D&C 105:6; D&C 1:27).<sup>4</sup>

It is not likely that we, as human beings, would perceive our suffering as a sign of mercy. It is doubtful that many of the Israelites viewed their destruction under the hands of the Assyrians as an act that manifested God’s love and concern for them. Yet, this is exactly what the scriptures and Elder Christofferson state as truth.

Furthermore, the Lord impresses upon us the fact that the place where he begins his cleansing work is with His own people, with those who say that they are in covenant with Him, and yet are slack or weary, or altogether hypocritical and far from living in a spirit-rich relationship with Him.

Isaiah prophesied of Israel:

Therefore the Lord shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him,  
and join his enemies together;

The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind;  
and they shall devour Israel with open mouth.

For all this his anger is not turned away,  
but his hand is stretched out still.

For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them,

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<sup>1</sup> Dean, “Almost Christian,” 30; see also Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, “Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers” (2005), 118–71.

<sup>2</sup> Dean, “Almost Christian,” 37

<sup>3</sup> Dean, “Almost Christian,” 37

<sup>4</sup> “As Many as I Love, I Rebuke and Chasten,” April 2011 General Conference

neither do they seek the Lord of hosts.

Therefore [will]<sup>5</sup> the Lord cut off from Israel head and tail,  
branch and rush, in one day.

The [elder],<sup>6</sup> he is the head;  
and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail.

For the leaders of this people cause them to err;  
and they that are led of them are destroyed.

Therefore the Lord shall have no joy in their young men,  
neither shall have mercy on their fatherless and widows:

for every one is an hypocrite and an evildoer,  
and every mouth speaketh folly.

For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still (Isa. 9:11-17).

Many scholars have taught that the Assyrian destruction is a type or shadow of events that will transpire with the Savior's Second Coming (see LDS Institute manual, Isa. 9-10). As Isaiah's prophecies have relevance and application to many different time periods, we would do well to study the Israelite response to their chastening so that we might be better prepared for the times that we will encounter the Lord's corrective hand in our own lives. Will we be lost in fear? Will we hold up our fist and declare that whatever He does to us, we will "rebuild and restore" by our own power and might? Will we "curse God and die?" (Job 2:9) Or, will we turn more fully to him, submit ourselves, and seek for direction?

The Lord said of our day:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, darkness covereth the earth,  
and gross darkness the minds of the people,  
and all flesh has become corrupt before my face.

Behold, vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants of the earth, a day of wrath, a day of burning, a day of desolation, of weeping, of mourning, and of lamentation;  
and as a whirlwind it shall come upon all the face of the earth, saith the Lord.

And upon my house shall it begin, and from my house shall it go forth, said the Lord;

First among those among you, said the Lord, who have professed to know my name and have not known me,  
and have blasphemed against me in the midst of my house, saith the Lord (D&C 112:23-26).

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<sup>5</sup> 2 Ne. 19:14 places the term *will* before the phrase *the Lord* rather than after it.

<sup>6</sup> 2 Ne. 19:15 omits the phrase *and honorable*. The term *elder* replaces the KJV *ancient*.

The “burning vengeance” spoken of in relation to the Second Coming in the Doctrine and Covenants is also used to describe the destruction of Israel under the Assyrian army. Isaiah’s prophecy below has application to at least these two time periods:

For wickedness burneth as the fire:  
it shall devour the briers and thorns,  
and shall kindle in the thickets of the forest[s],<sup>7</sup>  
[so that it rolled up high in]<sup>8</sup> smoke.

Through the wrath of the Lord of hosts is the land darkened,  
and the people shall be as the fuel of the fire: no man shall spare his brother.

And he shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry;  
and he shall eat on the left hand, and they shall not be satisfied;

they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm;

Manasseh, Ephraim; and Ephraim, Manasseh: and they together shall be against Judah.

For all this his anger is not turned away,  
but his hand is stretched out still (Isa. 9:18-21)

During their great calamity, the people of Israel turned against each other. Brother against brother, father against son, mother against child. Instead of banding together as the “family” of Israel, Ephraim and Manasseh were in enmity against Judah, and attacked them (see Isa. 7). This age-old enmity and jealousy must end. In our day, Ephraim has the major responsibility of gathering the lost tribes, and restoring them to covenant promises. Nothing provides greater unity than an understanding of, and commitment to, the “new and everlasting covenant” as provided through the Father and the Son, which includes faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism for the remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

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“For the People Turneth Not Unto Him That Smitten Them, Neither do They Seek the Lord of Hosts” (Isa. 9:13)

The Lord, through Isaiah, provides the key for our growth and healing while under chastisement. Instead of turning away in anger, in lack of faith, or even in self-doubt, we must turn towards the Lord for needed submission, repentance, and guidance.

Piercingly, he asks the question:

And what will ye do in the day of visitation,  
and in the desolation which shall come from far?

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<sup>7</sup> 2 Ne. 19:18 makes the noun forest into a plural.

<sup>8</sup> Brown, driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 5.

to whom will ye flee for help?  
and where will ye leave your glory?

Without me they shall bow down under the prisoners,  
and they shall fall under the slain (Isa. 10:3-4).

H Burke Peterson taught the following:<sup>9</sup>

Now, some will say, “Why would a Father in heaven who calls us his children—who says he loves us above all of his creations—who says he wants only the best for us—who wants us to be happy and enjoy life to the fullest—why does he let these things happen to us—if we are really that dear to him?” The scriptures and the prophets have some needed answers for us:

We read in Helaman: “And thus we see that except the Lord doth chasten his people with many afflictions, yea, except he doth visit them with death and with terror, and with famine and with all manner of pestilence, they will not remember him” (Hel. 12:3).

From Hebrews we also read: “My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth” (Heb. 12:5).

Let us remember—trials are an evidence of a Father’s love. They are given as a blessing to his children. They are given as opportunities for growth.

Now, how do we approach them? How do we overcome them? How are we magnified by them? There seems to be a reason why we lose our composure in adversity—why we think we can no longer cope with what we’re faced with here in this life. There is a reason why we give up, why we “fall apart at the seams” so to speak. The reason may be so simple that we lose sight of it. Could it be it’s because we begin to lose contact with our greatest source of strength—our Father in heaven? He is the key to our enjoying sweetness in adversity—in gaining strength from our trials—he and he alone.

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## Immanuel, “God With Us,” - The Promise of Covenant Hope

Isaiah’s writings, so indicative of the Father’s methods, maintain a constant balance of warning and hope, and so it is when we think that we cannot bear any more of the “gloom and doom,” or of the prophesied chastisement, the rays of light and hope are scattered throughout the desperate warnings, and we are reassured that there is, indeed a Plan of Salvation, and that that salvation comes only in and through the Lord Jesus Christ and His atonement. He has told all of this to us beforehand, and through the words of “many prophets,” so that we need not be lost in confusion when the events transpire, and we will know the course that we should take so that we may have peace of mind and heart, if not physical peace . . . and if we know the prophecies, we always have reason for hope.

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<sup>9</sup> “Adversity and Prayer” October 1973 General Conference

Chapter 9 begins with just such hope, as it contrasts the fact that the northern borders of Israel were particularly hard-hit during the Assyrian conquests with the promise that those same areas will be blessed by the light of Christ during His mission. The area of the Galilee is particularly rich and was therefore, particularly targeted. As the people were driven forth from their homes, shaven, manacled, and humiliated, Isaiah prophesies of their despair:

And they shall look unto the earth;  
and behold trouble and darkness,  
dimness of anguish;  
and they shall be driven to darkness (Isa. 8:22)

But, the Savior's atonement offers hope, even to those who feel cast off and lost. Isaiah prophesies of Jesus' mission in Galilee, and in the regions round about:

Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation,  
when at first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,  
and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the [Red]<sup>10</sup> sea,  
beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations.

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light,  
they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined (Isa. 9:1-2).

Jesus Christ is the light "which is in all things, and which giveth life to all things" (D&C 88:7-13), even in the "land of the shadow of death." He did, indeed, transform the region of Galilee during His earthly mission, as people flocked to hear His teachings, and to be healed under His hands.

Isaiah continues in chapter 9 to prophesy of the blessings that come through the mission and atonement of the Savior. The following verses have application to various timelines, from the actual birth of Jesus, to the time of the Millennium, when Christ shall rule and reign as King of Kings. Because of Him, the yoke of bondage - spiritual and temporal - will be broken, and Israel will be restored and gathered in fulfillment of the covenant.

Thou hast multiplied the nation,  
and increased the joy:  
they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest,  
and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

For thou hast broken the yoke of his [their] burden,  
and the staff of his [their] shoulder,  
the rod of his [their]<sup>11</sup> oppressor.<sup>12</sup>

For every [boot of a soldier that tramps with a quake]<sup>13</sup>,

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<sup>10</sup> JST Isa 9:1 and 2 Ne. 9:1 add the word Red before sea

<sup>11</sup> NIV

<sup>12</sup> 2 Ne. 19:4 omits the phrase *as in the day of Midian*

<sup>13</sup> NIV

and [every garment]<sup>14</sup> rolled in blood;  
shall be [for]<sup>15</sup> burning and fuel of fire.

For unto us a child is born,  
unto us a son is given:  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder:  
and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor,<sup>16</sup>  
The mighty God,  
The everlasting Father,  
the Prince of Peace

Of the increase of his government and peace there [is]<sup>17</sup> no end,

upon the throne of David,  
and upon his kingdom,  
to order it,  
and to establish it  
with judgment  
and with justice  
from henceforth  
even for ever (Isa 9:3-7).<sup>18</sup>

President Joseph Fielding Smith wrote about the various titles Isaiah uses for the Savior:

Isaiah ... speaks of Christ as 'Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.' (Is. 9:6)

These titles, and the sayings that Jesus was the Creator and all things were made by him, have proved to be a stumbling block to some who are not well informed. The question arises, 'How could he, if he had not body and flesh and bones, before he was born of Mary, accomplish these things as a spirit?' Jesus had no body of flesh and bones until he was born at Bethlehem. This he fully explained to the brother of Jared. The answer to this question is simply that he did these wonderful works because of the glory his Father had given him before he was born (John 17:6-24) and because at that time he was God. In an epistle issued by the First Presidency and Council of Twelve Apostles in 1916, these matters are clearly explained. (see Era, Vol. 19:34.) From this epistle the following is taken:

'... scriptures that refer to God in any way as the Father of the heavens and in the earth are

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<sup>14</sup> Parry, *Understanding Isaiah*, 94

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> Most translations, other than the KJV, do not place a comma between Wonderful and Counselor, thus making the two terms read as one. Parry, *Understanding Isaiah*, 94.

<sup>17</sup> JST Isa. 9:7 and 2 Ne. 19:7 replace shall be with is.

<sup>18</sup> Note that these verses can also apply to the birth of King Hezekiah, a righteous king in a time of darkness, who brought hope to Israel.

to be understood as signifying that God is the Maker, the Organizer, the Creator of the heavens and the earth.

'With this meaning, as the context shows in every case, Jehovah, who is Jesus Christ, the Son of Elohim, is called "the Father," and even "the very eternal Father of heaven and earth" (See Mosiah 16:15). With analogous meaning, Jesus Christ is called "The Everlasting Father," (Isaiah 9:6).

'That Jesus Christ who we also know as Jehovah, was the executive of the Father, Elohim, in the work of creation is set forth in the book *Jesus the Christ*, Chap. 4. Jesus Christ, being the Creator, is constantly called the Father of heaven and earth in the sense explained above; and since his creations are of eternal quality, he is very properly called the Eternal Father of heaven and earth' (*Church History and Modern Revelation*, 1:168).

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## Shall the Axe Boast Itself Against Him that Heweth Therewith? (Isa. 10:15)

The Lord brought chastisement upon Israel by allowing natural consequences to take place. Assyria, and later, Babylon, desired the wealth of Israel, and the Lord simply removed His hand of protection from the nation. But, let it be known, these are His people, and His eye is upon them. Although the Assyrian kings and generals may believe that they defeated Israel by the might of their power, by prophesying beforehand what would occur, the Lord insured that His people know that all that would transpire was by His will, and under His direction. Nowhere is this point more evident than in the Lord's question concerning the pride of the Assyrian: "Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith?" The Lord would use the Assyrian army to bring about the needed chastisement, but when He who yielded the "axe" was finished with His work, He would discard and destroy it.

O Assyrian the rod of mine anger,  
and the staff in their hand is [their]<sup>19</sup> indignation.

I will send him against an [apostate]<sup>20</sup> nation,  
and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge,

to take the spoil,  
and to take the prey,  
and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.

[But this is not what he intends]<sup>21</sup>;  
neither doth his heart think so:

but it is in his heart to destroy

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<sup>19</sup> 2 Ne. 20:5 changes the pronoun *mine* to *their*.

<sup>20</sup> The Hebrew term *cheapen* means "profane, irreligious, or apostate." *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 338.

<sup>21</sup> NIV

and cut off nations not a few.

For he saith, Are not my princes altogether kings?  
Is not Calno as Carchemish?  
Is not Hamath as Arpad?  
Is not Samaria as Damascus?

As my hand hath found<sup>[ed]</sup><sup>22</sup> the kingdoms of the idols,  
and whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and of Samaria;

Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols,  
so do to Jerusalem and her idols?

Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon  
mount Zion and [upon]<sup>23</sup> Jerusalem,

I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria,  
and the glory of his high looks.

For he saith, By the strength of my hand  
[and by my wisdom I have done these things]<sup>24</sup>;

for I am prudent: and I have [moved the borders]<sup>25</sup> of the people, and have robbed their  
treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man:

And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people:  
and as one gathereth eggs that are left,  
have i gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or  
peeped.

Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith?  
or shall the saw magnify itself against him that [uses]<sup>26</sup> it?

as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up,  
or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood.

Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness;  
and under his glory he shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire.

And the light of Israel shall be for a fire,

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<sup>22</sup> JST Isa. 10:10 and 2 Ne. 20:10

<sup>23</sup> JST Isa. 10:12 and 2 Ne. 20:12

<sup>24</sup> JST Isa. 10:13, 2 Ne. 20:13

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

<sup>26</sup> Parry, *Understanding Isaiah*, 106

and his Holy One for a flame:

and it shall burn and devour  
his thorns and his briars in one day;

And shall consume the glory of his forest,  
and of his fruitful field, both soul and body: and they shall be as when a [sick man wastes  
away]<sup>27</sup>.

And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them (Isa 10:5-19).

Not realizing that he is simply the axe, and caught up in his pride, the king of Assyria views Israel as an easy prey. He compares the ease with which he defeats her to the gathering of eggs from a nest without a “peep” of protest. He has conquered Damascus already, why not Samaria (and Jerusalem), which were considered inferior? If he carried off the idols of greater nations, surely he will show the weakness of Israel’s God. . . . But, he is in for a surprise, for when the Lord calls an end to the destruction, Assyria itself will be consumed, and so little left of it that even a young child, with limited abilities, will be able to count and tally what is left.

Isaiah’s prophecy rang true: the conquest of Israel by Assyria first began in 740 BC. Despite the fact that Assyria had previously held power for many centuries, it fell to the Babylonian Empire in approximately 615 BC, a relatively short time after it conquered Israel, never to regain its former glory.

It’s important to remember that despite the Assyrian success against Northern Israel and many adjoining nations, Jerusalem did not fall to the Assyrian army because her people, under the leadership of Hezekiah and Isaiah, turned to the Lord, and sought His direction. As promised, the Assyrians did “not so much as shoot an arrow into Jerusalem,” but instead, were miraculously killed by the Lord, and those who remained of the army returned quickly to Assyria (see 2 Kings 19).

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### “The Remnant Shall Return” (Isa. 10:21)

Once again, the promise of hope follows closely on the prophecies of condemnation and ruin. Although Israel would be overrun, and the Assyrian leaders punished for their part in the destruction, the children of Israel will return “because of the anointing” (Isa. 10:27).

Nephi, who loved the writings of Isaiah, explained:

And it shall come to pass that my people, which are of the house of Israel, shall be gathered home unto the lands of their possessions; and my word also shall be gathered in one. And I will show unto them that fight against my word and against my people, who are of the house of Israel, that I am God, and that I covenanted with Abraham that I would remember his seed forever (2 Ne. 29:14)

The covenant that the Lord made with Abraham is eternal, and we can observe the Lord reaching out time and time again to fulfill it. Moses was called to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt in fulfillment

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<sup>27</sup> *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 65.

of that promise (see Gen. 15). Nephi and Jacob taught their people that they would still inherit the promises even though they were “a branch that had been broken off” (1 Ne 19:24), and we can be sure that the Shepherd is still gathering the sheep of Israel in fulfillment of the word he gave to Abraham millennia ago. We may encounter scourges of war and depravation, just as ancient Israel did, but we know that when the Lord “finishes His work,” all will be safely gathered in, and every tear will be wiped away (Isa. 25:8).

And it shall come to pass in that day,

that the remnant of Israel,  
and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob,

shall no more stay upon him that smote them;  
but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.

The remnant shall return, [yea]<sup>28</sup> the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God.

For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return:  
the [complete destruction]<sup>29</sup> decreed shall overflow with righteousness.

For the Lord God of hosts shall make a [complete destruction]<sup>30</sup>, even determined, in the midst  
of all the land.

Therefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, O my people that dwelt in Zion, be not afraid of the  
Assyrian:

he shall smite thee with a rod,  
and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt.

For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease,  
and mine anger in their destruction.

And the Lord of hosts shall stir up a scourge for him according to the slaughter of Midian at the  
rock of Oreb:  
and as his rod was on the sea, so shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt.

And it shall come to pass in that day,  
that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder,  
and his yoke from off thy neck,  
and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing (Isa. 10:20-27).

Modern-day revelation teaches us:

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<sup>28</sup> JST Isa. 10:21, 2 Ne 20:21

<sup>29</sup> *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 478.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*

I, the Lord have suffered the affliction to come upon them, wherewith they have been afflicted, in consequence of their transgressions;

Yet I will own them, and they shall be mine in that day when I shall come to make up my jewels.

Therefore, they must needs be chastened and tried, even as Abraham, who was commanded to offer up his only son.

For all those who will not endure chastening, but deny me, cannot be sanctified (D&C 101:2-5).

Elder Todd D. Christofferson explains:

If we sincerely desire and strive to measure up to the high expectations of our Heavenly Father, He will ensure that we receive all the help we need, whether it be comforting, strengthening, or chastening. If we are open to it, needed correction will come in many forms and from many sources. It may come in the course of our prayers as God speaks to our mind and heart through the Holy Ghost (see D&C 8:2). It may come in the form of prayers that are answered no or differently than we had expected. Chastening may come as we study the scriptures and are reminded of deficiencies, disobedience, or simply matters neglected.

Correction can come through others, especially those who are God-inspired to promote our happiness. Apostles, prophets, patriarchs, bishops, and others have been put into the Church today, just as anciently, “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:12). Perhaps some of the things said in this conference have come to you as a call to repentance or change, which if heeded will lift you to a higher place. We can help one another as fellow Church members; it is one of the primary reasons that the Savior established a church. Even when we encounter mean-spirited criticism from persons who have little regard or love for us, it can be helpful to exercise enough meekness to weigh it and sift out anything that might benefit us.

Correction, hopefully gentle, can come from one’s spouse.

Remember that if we resist correction, others may discontinue offering it altogether, despite their love for us. If we repeatedly fail to act on the chastening of a loving God, then He too will desist. He has said, “My Spirit will not always strive with man” (Ether 2:15). Eventually, much of our chastening should come from within—we should become self-correcting. h lesson learned.

All of us can meet God’s high expectations, however great or small our capacity and talent may be. Moroni affirms, “If ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is [God’s] grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ” (Moroni 10:32). It is a diligent, devoted effort on our part that calls forth this empowering and enabling grace, an effort that certainly includes submission to God’s chastening hand and sincere, unqualified repentance. Let us pray for His love-inspired correction.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> “As Many as I Love, I Rebuke and Chasten,” April 2011 Conference

