

# The Assyrian, the Kingdom and the Prophets

A Collection of Quotes  
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## What view of the future does Isaiah present?

“**Isaiah’s scheme of history**: he conceives the **overthrow of Assyria as followed immediately by the Messianic age**” (J. Skinner, *Isaiah 1-39, Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, 1905, p. 104).

“The prophet Isaiah is convinced that **the Assyrians**, the instruments of God’s punishment, will overthrow not only Samaria but **Jerusalem**. As a state **Judah** will be destroyed” (“Remnant,” *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, Vol. 2, p. 315).

“The very earliest Messianic prophecies of the OT represent the golden age as preceded by a time of conflict — the conflict which will destroy the particular oppression of Israel at the time and wipe out the ungodly in Israel itself. The power to be overcome is in each case an actually existing empire, Assyria, Babylon, or Persia, **whose downfall will immediately usher in the glorious reign of peace**” (“2 Thessalonians,” *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, Vol. 2, p. 572).

Isaiah “uniformly regards the intervention of Jehovah in the **Assyrian crisis** as the supreme moment of human history and the turning point in the destinies of the kingdom of God, to be **succeeded immediately by the glories of the Messianic age**” ((J. Skinner, *Isaiah 1-39, Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, 1905, p. 303).

“When **Assyria’s** work is done her haughtiness and braggart arrogance will be punished. Then, when she is destroyed and Judah is free, the era of blessedness will begin. **There will be stable government and a righteous administration under the Messianic king**, who passes through victory to an abiding peace. Agriculture will flourish, the land will be very fruitful, prosperity will abound. Judah’s reliance will be placed on no earthly power, but on Yahweh alone” (*Peake’s Commentary*, p. 436).

“It is hard to resist the impression that **Isaiah looked for the end of the age with the fall of Assyria** (Isa. 7-9, 10-11), that Habakkuk looked for it to follow the overthrow of Babylon (Hab. 2:2ff), that Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Deutero-Isaiah anticipated its coming at the close of the exile (Jer. 29-31; Ezek. 36; Isa. 49, 51)...To shirk this conclusion by regarding *the* Day of the Lord as *a* day of the Lord — any act of judgment — is inadmissible” (George Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Future*, p. 170).

“Sennacherib’s armies had withdrawn, but the danger of another attack still hovered on the political horizon. Thus the portraiture of the Messiah in Isa. 9:1-7 is that of a Divine warrior-hero who would break the **Assyrian yoke** in a great battle” (Owen Whitehouse, *Century Bible*, Isaiah 1-39, p. 61).

“Isaiah places the advent of the Messianic king in immediate connexion with a deliverance from **Assyrian** oppression (Isa. 8:16-9:7; 10:33-11:1), likewise Micah (5:4-6)” (“Daniel,” *Hastings Dictionary of the Bible*, 1911, Vol. 1, p. 556).

## The Fate of the Assyrian

See particularly Isaiah 30:27-32:20. The Assyrian falls when God intervenes to set up the Kingdom. Why does Revelation 19:20 (the fall of the beast) reflect the fall of *the Assyrian* at the end of Isaiah 30? Isaiah 30:33 pictures the Assyrian king going into the fire of brimstone, ignited by God. This is the Topheth (see Jer. 7:31, valley of the son of Hinnom) which became the “Ge-henna” or hell-fire of the NT prophecies. Historically, the king of Assyria did not die in the events of 701 BC. He survived and returned home and was murdered 20 years later by his sons (Isa. 37:36-38).

Paul sees in the Assyrian of **Isaiah 11:4** the Antichrist of **2 Thessalonians 2:8**: “the one whom the lord [Jesus] will destroy by the breath of his mouth.” The *Word Biblical Commentary* on 2 Thessalonians says:

“This clause is based on Isa. 11:4, LXX, where the coming prince of the house of David is to ‘smite the earth with the word of his mouth and destroy the wicked one with the breath through his lips.’”

“While Isaiah beholds the rise of Messiah’s Kingdom in connection with the fall of **Assyria**, Micah sees the Kingdom of the Messiah established after the Babylonian exile” (T.K. Cheyne, *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, p. 13).

“It would be easy to show in detail, particularly from Isaiah 9 and Micah 5, how the Messianic kingship is expressly represented by the prophets as the institution by means of which the theocracy of the perfect time is able to exalt itself in victorious *defiance of the Assyrian world-power*” (Dr. Eduard Riehm, *Messianic Prophecy*, 1891, p. 188).

“For Micah does not refer to the captivity of the Jews by the *Chaldeans*, which happened about 130 years after the date of the prophecy, but to a deportation of them to Babylon by the *Assyrians*...Even in the Messianic time Assyria is the world-power which has to be overthrown (Mic. 5:4ff)...Babylon belonged at this time (the time of Hezekiah) to the Assyrians...Assyria is in [Micah’s] eyes the land of Nimrod (5:6), and the first capital of Nimrod’s dominion was Babel (Gen. 10:10). There, in the first seat of a world-power, the distress of the people of God is to reach its extremity...It must be frankly conceded that Micah’s threat — in its concrete historical interpretation — was *not* fulfilled” (Ibid., p. 146-147).

“Nothing but the complete shattering of the **Assyrian power** could pave the way to the erection of the perfect Kingdom. But this latter event Isaiah sets in the closest and most immediate connection with the impending deliverance of the people of God from the Assyrian tyranny...The triumph of the theocracy over the Assyrian supremacy lies on the border of Isaiah’s times-horizon, and he sees it transfigured and glorified by the dawn-light of the Messianic salvation” (Ibid. p. 160-161).

“All the prophets represent the consummation and perfect condition of the Kingdom of God as at hand...the early chapters of Isaiah, for example, placing it close behind the **Assyrian** devastations” (Ibid. p. xii).

“The **spiritualizing evaporation of the entire concrete matter of Messianic prophecy** is the just consequence of Hengstenberg’s failure to fulfill the first duty of an exegete, that of placing himself on the standpoint of the Old Testament, and in particular of the several prophets, so as to judge of the sense which they themselves attached to their words” (Ibid. p. 152).

“The stroke that slew 185,000 Assyrians in one night (Isa. 37:36-38) cannot be anything more than **a shadow of the final fulfillment of this prophecy (see Isa. 30:27-33)**. There was nothing, in that quiet

single blow, in the silence of the night, to correspond to the terrific words here used; and this becomes more clear as the prophecy draws to a close” (F.C. Jennings, *Studies in Isaiah*, p. 370).

Compare Isaiah 30:33 with Revelation 19:20; Daniel 7:11, 26, and Matthew 25:41.

### **The Future Peace of Zion (Micah 5:5-6)**

“The placid picture vanishes for a moment, and the tramping boots of the invader are heard (v. 5). The events described here are difficult to locate historically. Those who place this pericope in the context of the conquests of Antiochus III (who ruled from 283-187 BC) **have great difficulty with the term ‘Assyrian’**; yet if the passage is understood to describe a coalition of leaders who will successfully withstand the Assyrian invasion in the eighth century, the difficulties remain, for the Israelites offered no successful resistance at that time...

“Zechariah also used ‘Assyria’ and ‘Egypt’ (Zech. 10:10) to refer to the nations from which God’s people will be gathered when the kingdom is to be established. That the prophecy of Zechariah was written long after the fall of the Assyrian Empire is significant because it indicates that, in the mind of Zechariah, Assyria (no longer a nation in his time) represented more than the empire that brought down the northern kingdom” (*Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7, p. 429-430).

If the people return from Egypt, does not this mean Egypt? Then does not Assyria mean Assyria, especially as the Euphrates River is mentioned in the same context! (See Isa. 11:11-16).

### **Isaiah 10:28-32: The March of the Assyrian to Jerusalem**

“Knobel regards this as a prophecy, **because no Assyrian king ever did take the course described**...Now no doubt the Assyrian army, when it marched against Jerusalem, came from the southwest, namely from the road to Egypt, and not directly from the north. Sennacherib had conquered Lachish; he then encamped before Libnah, and it was thence he advanced toward Jerusalem” (Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on Isaiah*, p. 276).

“The description of the approach of hostile forces against Jerusalem and their encampment close to the city has several difficult features...[The passage] suggests that the reference is to an Assyrian advance. This could have been either that of Sargon II in 711, or that of Sennacherib in 701 BC. Yet the difficulty occasioned by this latter interpretation is that the route described was **certainly not that taken by the Assyrians at that time**. The historical reality then was of an advance from the south, whereas the prophet’s visionary description is of an advance from the north...Duhm and Marti would deny the description to Isaiah altogether and apply the prophecy to a final eschatological attack by Gentile powers against Jerusalem. Certainly the visionary element of the description must be taken fully into account so that it is not necessary to regard it as recording an advance as it actually happened” (Clements, *New Century Bible Commentary*, p. 117-118).

### **The Assyrian Coalition: 10 Nations of Psalm 83**

“History transmits **no record of the national crisis when the nations enumerated in this psalm formed a league to wipe out Israel**” (*Anchor Bible, Psalms*, p. 273).

Therefore this 10-nation Assyrian coalition is still future.