

Woes on Y'hudah and Ashur ~ Part 1 Yesha'yahu 10:1-4

In my last post, we learned about **Judgment Against Isra'el in Yesha'yahu 9:8-21**. We left off in our study by learning that **Efrayim** and **M'nasheh** together they oppose **Y'hudah**. In this post, we begin to examine the **Woes on Y'hudah and Ashur ~ Part 1** in **Yesha'yahu 10:1-4**.

The Woes of Y'hudah

¹ Woe to those who enact unjust decrees and draft oppressive legislation...

The reference here is not to create a justice system but to issuing decrees or regulations regarding specific issues. In the political climate that existed in **Yesha'yahu's** time, one of the particular problems that had to be addressed was the raising of funds with which to pay tribute. This was generally accomplished through special tax levies, though there were always exemptions granted to either a class of people or cities that had been given sacred status.

² to deprive the impoverished of justice and rob my people's poor of their rights, looting widows and preying on orphans!

In the culture of the ancient Near East, kings considered it part of their role as "*wise rulers*" to protect the rights of the poor, the widow and the orphan. God's law protected the socially vulnerable: the poor (see Exodus 23:6,11; Deuteronomy 15:4-11), widows (see Exodus 22:22), and the fatherless (see Deuteronomy 10:18). **Yesha'yahu** condemned human-made laws that corrupted justice.

Yeshua picked up this same theme when He talked about the P'rushim. "***Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You devour widows' houses and make long prayers just for show. This is why you will receive a harsher punishment.***" ~ Matthew 23:14 (HCSB) ¹

³ What will you do on the day of punishment, when calamity comes from afar? To whom will you flee for help? Where will you leave your wealth, ⁴ so as not to squat among the prisoners or fall among the slain? Even after all this, his anger remains, his upraised hand still threatens. ~ Yesha'yahu 10:1-4 (CJB)

With the fourth repetition of the refrain concerning God's anger (compare 9:12,17,21), the section on the Woes of Isra'el and Y'hudah comes to a close. The refrain identifies the central theme of the passage (9:8-10:4). Though punishment has occurred, God's people still have not repented. More judgment will follow.

We as individuals and as a nation need to spend some time meditating on the questions posed by **Yesha'yahu** in verses 3-4.

In my next post, we move on in **Yesha'yahu 10** to learn about the **Woes of Ashur** in **Yesha'yahu 10:5-11**.

¹ Admittedly, some translations (including the Complete Jewish Bible) don't have this verse.