

Isaiah

The Lord Is Salvation

A Promise And A Threat

Isaiah 10:20-34

Lesson Nineteen

Mission Arlington/Mission Metroplex Curriculum

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A Promise and A Threat

Our lesson today includes both hope for those who survive the attack by the enemy, as well as the threat of the attack. There is a detailed account of the approach of the Assyrians...that probably took place around 701BC.

There are two Hebrew words, *shear*, pronounced just as it is in English, and *jashub*, pronounced jaaa'-shub, that mean a remnant will return. They make up the name of one of Isaiah's sons. We met Shearjashub when God told Isaiah to take his son with him to meet the king in Isaiah 7:3. Literally, the words can be a promise or a threat. In verse twenty-one the words seem to be a promise of hope. The return of the remnant will please God.

In verse twenty-two, the words should be understood as a threat; **only** a remnant will return. In other words, God is warning that the destruction and lives lost, would be great and there would only be a few who would be left behind.

In verses 24-27, we see God's encouragement not to be afraid of the Assyrians. Read Isaiah 10:24-27. Their escape from Assyrian captivity would be like it was when Israel escaped from slavery in Egypt. He also said that it would be like it was when Gideon drove the Midianites away under the leadership of Gideon. Judges 6-8.

This promise was fulfilled as we see in II Kings 19:35. Hezekiah was king of Judah. God promised him that Judah would be saved, but the king of Assyria was camped just outside Jerusalem and ready to take the city. One night the angel of the Lord visited the Assyrian camp and 185,000 soldiers died. Sennacherib, king of Assyria, quickly marched the remainder of his army back to Assyria. There is a sad ending to Sennacherib's story, not long after this, two of his sons assassinated him. Many see this as the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophesy in these verses... especially verse twenty-five.

You can imagine what it would be like to have a powerful nation, with a great army threatening you all the time. It would feel like someone else was making decisions for you. It would be like having a harness on you from which you could not escape. God promises that what seemed like the heavy burden of a yoke would be removed from their neck.

Then, came the picture of an approaching army. From the North, God lists the towns through which Sennacherib would pass. The enemy advanced town by town...one step at a time. Do you remember the childhood game when the index and middle finger are legs advancing up your chest toward your nose? Every movement of the fingers brought the forefinger closer to your nose. Ultimately your mom or dad would tap you on the end of the nose and say, "gotcha!"

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Well, Sennacherib was getting closer and closer. They had to store some of their heavier equipment and provisions at Michmash (Mick'-mash). There was a narrow pass on the way to Geba (Gee'-buh). They had to move the army through that pass and there was no room for the bigger things. They spent the night camped there.

Closer and closer they came. They shouted warnings...step by step. The residents of these towns hid. They stopped at Nob and shook their fists at Jerusalem...we're coming! Nob was probably on the side of a mountain Northeast of Jerusalem. Read Isaiah 10:28-34

Some scholars insist that the advance of Sennacherib's army in 701BC was down the Mediterranean coast to Philistia and then East to Jerusalem. That is a possibility, but if that happened it means that there was a two-pronged attack, the one listed here and the advance of another part of the army down the coastline. This was not an uncommon military tactic.

But, Assyria's success in attack was brief. God promised that He would act like a powerful woodcutter. He would take his giant ax and begin cutting down like the woodcutter would cut down the trees of the forest one at a time. The forests of Lebanon were famous for great cedar trees. David had cedar brought from these forests for Solomon to use in building the Temple.

The promise is that God, that great "lumberjack," would take His ax to the enemy of Judah and cut him down to size. He would be humiliated before the nations. Others would fear him no longer. As we have seen, that is exactly what happened.

When the prophet saw history, he realized that all kinds of people can be used by God to accomplish His purpose. They may not be aware that God is using them. And when He uses them it doesn't mean that they will turn to Him and become His children.

God has a plan, and even though many humans and evil forces try to change His plan, it will not happen. God will work His plan even when He has to use those who are not His friends.

*Underlined words and phrases are to be used in completing the Student Worksheet.

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Scripture Memory: "What will you do on the day of reckoning, when disaster comes from afar? To whom will you run for help? Where will you leave your riches?" Isaiah 10:3

Lesson Goal: To help students understand the way God works in this world.

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Student Worksheet

A Promise and A Threat—Isaiah 10:20-34

As the teacher goes through the lesson, listen for answers to these:

1. What do the two Hebrew words, *shear* and *jashub* mean, and what are the two ways they can be taken?
2. To what very special events in Israel's history does God compare Judah's escape from the threat of the Assyrians?
3. From what town did the Assyrians *shake their fists* at Jerusalem?
4. When the prophet saw _____, he realized that all kinds of people can be used by God to accomplish His _____.

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How to begin a Personal Relationship with God:

First, believe that the God of the Bible is the true God.

Second, believe that Jesus, God's Son, was sent to earth to die so that you can have a relationship with God.

Third, ask God to forgive your sins in Jesus' name. Jesus' death on the cross paid the price of every sin you commit.

Fourth, ask Jesus to be your Savior and the Lord of your life.