

## WEEK TWENTY NINE INTRODUCTION

The kingdom of Judah, the southern kingdom, stands amid a sea of nations. The Lord (Yahweh) chose this people, created this nation, and sustained them thus far. The entirety of the story of Israel, even now in the divided kingdom, demonstrates the grace of God. Yet, as we have seen, God's people cannot seem to linger in the arena of faithfulness. At times they dip into sin and idolatry, while at others they seem to plunge headfirst. To vindicate His righteousness and chastise His people, God, who is ordering the events of history, raises up the Assyrian empire. The Assyrians conquer Israel in the north and set their sights upon Judah with its capital, Jerusalem, in the south. This is the crisis moment we confront in this week's reading. How will Judah, and King Hezekiah in particular, respond to the Assyrian threat? How ought we understand Judah in relation to the nations? Does Yahweh have claim over pagan nations?

## KEY SCRIPTURE

*The moon will be put to shame and the sun disgraced, because the LORD of Armies will reign as king on Mount Zion in Jerusalem, and he will display his glory in the presence of his elders. — Isaiah 24:23 CSB*

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Isaiah chapters 18-20 focus upon God's judgment of Cush and Egypt (18-19) followed by a poignant image of the inability of these nations to save Judah from the Assyrian onslaught (20). Yet, the poignancy of judgment, which comes at the hands of Assyria, pales in comparison to the shock of Isaiah 19:25, *The LORD of Armies will bless them, saying, 'Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance are blessed.* What God is doing leads ultimately to the blessing of the nations, and will lead the *nations* home to Mount Zion (18:7). How can you see the same pattern, judgment leading to greater salvation, demonstrated in the New Testament? What encouragement can you gather from this pattern that current difficulty, even judgment, can lead to greater life in the hands of God?

On the occasion of difficulty (chapter 22), the people of God in Jerusalem choose armament and self-preservation rather than turning to the Lord, which requires repentance. Can you give an instance when you have done the same, chosen to try to fix things/yourself rather than running to the Lord? How did that turn out?

*24:19-20, The earth is completely devastated; the earth is split open; the earth is violently shaken. The earth staggers like a drunkard and sways like a hut. Earth's rebellion weighs it down, and it falls, never to rise again.* The earth stands condemned under the righteous judgment of God. The contours of this world are marked by the Fall. Renewal comes by means of God's judgment. What is the remedy to the earth's predicament given in Isaiah 24:23?

Read afresh Isaiah 25:6-8. What is the Lord going to do? For whom will He do it? Where else in Scripture do you find these themes repeated?

Isaiah 26:8 states, *Yes, LORD, we wait for you in the path of your judgments. Our desire is for your name and renown.* The people, having experienced the gracious love of God, sing (26:1-6), and are consumed with the *name* and *renown* of the Lord. Another way to say that is that they find delight in the *glory* of God. God's fame captivates their vision. How much more ought we be who have been delivered out of the domain of darkness into the kingdom of God's beloved Son, Jesus? Is the glory of God your joy and aim in life? How can you live more and more in light of that aim?

In 2 Chronicles 29-31, identify the ways Hezekiah *did what was right in the LORD's sight just as his ancestor David had done.* (29:2)

In Psalm 76, where do you see the theme of God's salvation being worked out through God's judgment? How does that Psalm end? To whom is all human authority accountable?

#### **BE A DOER OF THE WORD**

“Whenever you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear this command behind you: ‘This is the way. Walk in it.’” **-Isaiah 30:21 CSB**

**What are three positive steps you can take today to walk more fully in the way of Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit?**