

Chapter 16: The Beginning of the End



Discussion Questions

1. When you think of empires and conquest what comes to mind?
2. If you put conquest in terms of ideas and people taking no prisoners for the advancement of their particular worldview (*and/or greed*) does that change your perspective?
3. Israel was a kingdom that had been quite successful economically, (*spiritually not at all*) but their king had stopped paying tribute to Assyria, what happened?
 - a. What was the reason The Story gives for the successful conquest of Assyria?
4. What was the result of the Assyrian conquest of Israel?
 - a. Where did the Israelites (*the northern ten tribes*) go?
 - b. Thinking in terms of refugees where would a likely place for many Israelites be before or during this conquest?
 - c. What kind of influence would having these Israelites become neighbors have on a country?

5. The Assyrians were not content with gobbling up Israel – they soon set their eyes on Judah.
 - a. What was their expectation of this move?
 - b. What do you think Judah expected to happen?
 - c. Have you ever faced an overwhelming, and seemingly unwinnable situation?
 - i. What happened?
 - ii. What was your response?
 - iii. What was the result?
6. Who was king of Judah at this time?
 - a. How does The Story describe his character?
 - b. How was this different from the other kings we've read about?
 - c. Why do you think Hezekiah experienced so much opposition?
 - d. What does having a leader with godly character do to inspire those who are fearful?
7. The Assyrian general got to Jerusalem and made some confident boasts about what they were going to do –
 - a. What did he say?
 - b. What was he basing his statements on?
 - c. What was he **not** expecting?
8. "Do not listen to Hezekiah" or "don't listen to godly leaders, or follow a godly way of life" is a message we hear often today,
 - a. To what do you attribute this?
 - b. What are ways a Christ follower can combat this particular (*and oft repeated*) message?
9. Is it difficult to have hope and faith when what you believe is under attack?
 - a. Have you ever had opportunity to see when your faith was made sight and you met with victory in spite of opposition?
 - b. What happened & What was the result?
 - c. Do you think obedience to God guarantees success or freedom from hardship? Why or why not?
10. What was Hezekiah's response to the taunts from the Assyrians?

- a. Why is this such a good idea?
 - b. What can you do to remind yourself to do the same?
11. The Assyrians also brought God into the conversation stating what they had done to all of the other gods & expected to happen in a contest between them and Judah's God.
 - a. What happened to the Assyrian army?
 - b. What occurred in Assyria soon after this event?
 - c. What was the result of God's victory in Judah?
12. Isaiah was the prophet who brought the message to Hezekiah of God's plan –
 - a. What ways did Isaiah describe Assyria
 - b. Why God wouldn't allow Jerusalem to be conquered?
13. Isaiah was called to be a prophet of God, and had a vision of being in God's holy presence –
 - a. What was his response there?
 - b. What did God do because of Isaiah's humility and confession?
 - c. What ways are we confronted with God's holiness today?
 - i. How should we respond?
 - ii. What are the ways we often respond?
14. God also told Isaiah to prophesy that Jerusalem would one day be conquered, because of the people's unfaithfulness to God.
 - a. What are a couple ways the prophet describes this defeat?
 - b. This was pretty dire news; what kinds of bad news are unpopular in today's world?
 - c. What ways do Christians give encouragement even though we speak 'bad news'?
15. What did Isaiah say to give encouragement and hope, despite his message of a future conquest? Who was his message about?
16. What are some of the ways Isaiah was describes this future redeemer?
17. Isaiah wrote 700+ years before the birth of Jesus
 - a. what does knowing a God who is able to speak so clearly and fulfill such prophecies give you confidence to do?

b. How would you have responded if you were an Israelite?