



Let's Recap What We Have Learned from the Cedar of Lebanon in Lesson Eight:

1. The nation of Assyria was once a dominant world power. It lay north of Israel in the upper region of Mesopotamia and its main cities were Nineveh, Asshur, and Calah. In Ezekiel 31, God describes Assyria as a tree, proclaiming that it was "once" a well-watered cedar in Lebanon that towered above all other trees.
2. After the death of Solomon, Israel split into two sovereign nations—Israel and Judah. Jeroboam son of Nebat ruled over the northern ten tribes of Israel (Ephraim), while Solomon's son Rehoboam retained control over Judah. This time period in Israel's history is known as the "Divided Kingdom."
3. In the days following Israel's separation from Judah, Jeroboam son of Nebat, and subsequent kings like him, caused the people of Israel to abandon the Lord, embrace idolatry, and look to other nations for support and protection. Since the people of Israel failed to repent and seek the guidance and care of Jehovah, God stirred up the mighty cedar of Assyria against them. Assyrian troops invaded the land of Israel, devastated its cities and towns, and forced the people of Israel into exile.
4. Judah also felt the scourge of Assyria during the time of the Divided Kingdom. When trouble was on their doorstep, King Ahaz and the people of Judah refused to place their faith and trust in the Lord; therefore, God promised to "shave" them, at a future time, with the "razor" of Assyria. God's words were fulfilled in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah. Unlike his predecessor Ahaz, Hezekiah humbled himself before the Lord; and, even though all other fortified cities in Judah had been captured by the king of Assyria, Jerusalem—Judah's capital city—was spared.
5. God was the One who had made Assyria strong like a cedar in Lebanon; and He was the One who had sent Assyria to carry out His judgments on the people of both Israel and Judah. Nevertheless, instead of acknowledging these facts and giving glory to God, the leaders of Assyria became prideful, proclaiming that their winning exploits among the nations had been accomplished solely through their own power. Thus, when God had finished executing His righteous judgment on the people of Israel and Judah, He wielded His ax of judgment against Assyria and chopped the conceited cedar tree down.
6. We, too, would be wise to heed God's warning through Assyria's example. To do this, we must abandon our pride, humble ourselves before the Savior, and adopt a Christ-like lifestyle of humility that is both God-centered and people-oriented.