Some decades past, old geezers ... will recall how a major toothpaste company’s TV ads described and illustrated an invisible shield called “Gardol.” In the animated ads, the Gardol Shield was illustrated as a bubble-like transparent dome that covered the dentin of those wise enough to brush with the minty-flavored toothpaste from the red tube with the white lettering. Try as he might, evil Mr. Tooth Decay could not break through. The invisible Gardol Shield would thus protect your mouth against the ravages of a hostile, albeit sugar-coated, world. It was pure hucksterism. It was wonderful mid-century fun, and a not-ineffective visual sales tool.”

So now your teeth are safe.

During the eighties Ronald Reagan decided it was necessary to put an invisible shield around the entire country. And so began the development of “Star Wars” a missile defense shield intended to protected us from attacks of our enemies. So now we are safe.

One of the really uncomfortable things about going into the B of A my mother-in-law used are the security precautions. There is an “invisible” shield in front of the teller cages. Well it really isn’t invisible. It is a Plexiglas wall intended to keep out bullets. This doesn’t do much for the customers’ sense of security, because they are on the same side of the shield as the gunmen. So now the tellers are safe.

The problem with shields, invisible or otherwise, is they create, at best, the delusion of safety. No toothpaste can totally protect your teeth. And as for “Star Wars”—even if it lived up to its expectations, it could have done nothing to protect us from 9/11. Sure the tellers in B of A are safe from gun toting bank robbers, but the shield doesn’t protect for being hit by a car after work, or being mugged in what is obviously a less than wonderful part of San Francisco. You may leave your heart, but in this part of the city it is more likely to be at the morgue.

The real danger of invisible shields is they lead us to believe we are secure. We are in danger of putting our confidence in the things that make us feel secure instead of that which makes us actually secure. And as we will see this morning, this was a major problem for Judah. They believed in creating their own visible shield and it was no more protective than a paper tiger.

“My shield is God Most High, who saves the upright in heart” (Psalm 7:10)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>Verses 1-3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Too Smart For Your Own Good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>A Defense Shield</td>
<td>Verses 4-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>The Fall of Assyria</td>
<td>Verses 6-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Introduction:** This morning we fill finish up this two chapter section on Judah and her efforts to make an alliance with Egypt for protection against Assyria. She is looking for a shield against her enemies. But she is looking in all the wrong places. Isaiah warned her that she was simply repeating her mistakes, her sins.

Judah had previously made an alliance against Israel and Syria with Assyria. Now Assyria was the threat. God had instructed Judah to depend on Him against the previous threat and now He said the same in regards to the Assyrian one. But apparently Judah was unwilling to learn from her mistakes. Even though the nation was chosen of God, she turned her back on Him. She thought she knew what was the best shield for her. But she was going to find you can’t do that without consequences.

In this chapter God continues to call Judah back to Him. He is the only one who can truly be their “Invisible Shield.” And, He can be ours. But we will talk about what that means a bit later. For now, let’s turn back to Judah

“… the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.”” (Genesis 15:1).

**Verse 1-3:** There is a very basic principle presented here. Isaiah says “woe” to Judah. The reason?—Because the leadership, specifically Hezekiah, was turning to Egypt with the expectation that military prowess would create the needed shield. The primary problem though wasn’t their turning to Egypt, it was their refusal to turn to God.

Involved in this turning to Egypt, their horses and chariots was a direct violation of God’s instructions to Israel. I guess we shouldn’t find it too surprising there are a multitude of sins tied up in their rebellion. So what was that sin? —

“When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say, “Let us set a king over us like all the nations around us,” be sure to appoint over you the king the LORD your God chooses. He must be from among your own brothers. Do not place a foreigner over you, one who is not a brother Israelite. The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the LORD has told you, “You are not to go back that way again.” He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.

When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the priests, who are Levites. It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees and not consider himself better than his brothers and turn from the law to the right or to the left. Then he and his descendants will reign a long time over his kingdom in Israel” (Deuteronomy17:14-20).

So not only were the people refusing to turn to God, but they were directly disobeying His instructions given to them prior to entering the Land. Talk about not remembering history.
Remember Judah had a covenant relationship with God. And in that agreement was a promise of protection that came with obedience. This is what Isaiah alludes to when he describes God as Holy one of Israel, the LORD. But of course the rulers are “too wise” to depend on God. They know safety comes from “going down to Egypt.” This is the delusion, that man-made shields are a greater source of security than the shield of God.

“You who fear him, trust in the LORD—he is their help and shield” (Psalm 115:11).

Verse 4-5: The scene changes. Judah shouldn’t put her trust in Egypt, but the day would come when God would come to their aid. And first, that aid would be relief from Assyria. But first an aside.

Once again, there can be a couple of readings of these two verses depending on who the lion is, how one translates the Hebrew. Either interpretation is acceptable and verse five clarifies the thrust of this section.

One way to understand the verse is to identify the lion as Assyria and the shepherds as Egypt reinforcing the helplessness of Egypt to aid Judah. This is a correct possible understanding of the verse, but …

a more natural interpretation is to understand the Lion as God. This is the approach I intend to follow. What is interesting is Amos within a few verses of the same chapter uses the image of the lion as applying to both Assyria and God.

“This is what the LORD says: “As a shepherd saves from the lion’s mouth only two leg bones or a piece of an ear, so will the Israelites be saved, those who sit in Samaria on the edge of their beds and in Damascus on their couches.”” (Amos 3:12).

“The lion has roared—who will not fear? The Sovereign LORD has spoken—who can but prophesy?” (Amos 3:8).

Considering the next image is that of a bird hovering over its nest, protecting it from her enemies, the over all picture is a day when God will protect Judah/Jerusalem from her enemies, Assyria. Bruksbazen states:

“In two epic similes, reminiscent of Homer, Isaiah describes the manner in which the LORD will fight for Jerusalem and protect His people; He will fight like a roaring lion and like a flock of birds which hover in the air to protect their nest.”

The last phrase reminds Judah of just who God is and who they are. God is their shield and deliver and He will “pass over” them for their protection. The word is the same as the one found in Exodus. Isaiah is taking Judah back to the “Passover.”

“The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike

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Egypt.” … “When the LORD goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down” (Exodus 12:13, 23).

And so, the point, don’t settle for “Gardol,” when you can have God.

“O house of Israel, trust in the LORD — he is their help and shield” (Psalm 115:9).

Verse 6-9: One day Assyria will truly fall. As Grogan says:

“The ultimate fate of Assyria is its annihilation as a nation by a coalition of states headed by the Chaldeans of Babylon and the Medes. The Babylonian Chronicle describes how Nineveh falls to an allied army led by Nabopolassar of Babylon and the Median ruler Cyaxares in 612. The final battle at Carchemish in 605 demonstrated the ability of the Babylonian leader Nebuchadnezzar to totally demoralize the formerly invincible Assyrian shock troops and their Egyptian allies. Thus the hand of Yahweh and the loss of strong Assyrian leadership after the death of Ashurbanipal in 627 spelled elimination of that people’s influence from the ancient Near East.”

But more importantly is God’s call to Judah and hope. In some future day, the nation will reject the idols they have followed. The people will no longer put some one, some nation, so god ahead of the God of Israel, the Lion of Judah.

And so Judah and Israel will be restored and will have a true shield which will protect them from, not just an Assyria, but from all their enemies.

“Blessed are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD? He is your shield and helper and your glorious sword. Your enemies will cower before you, and you will trample down their high places” (Deuteronomy 33:29).

The rock or fortress of Assyria shall pass away.

“The rock is generally understood as reference to Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, who hastily abandoned his preparation for the siege of Jerusalem in 701 B.C. when his army was decimated by a terrible epidemic.”

So while Assyria, and later nations may have been used of God to break and restore Israel, they will be judged for their evil and accordingly destroyed. Assyria would be defeated by the hand of God, not the work of men. His enemies were to be terrified by His wrath.

“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness” (Romans 1:18).

“The fire may refer to the fire of the altar of burnt offering that burned continually, and the furnace is literally a baking oven. By protecting Judah, God would see that the fire on the alter continued to burn.”

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4 Buksbazen, p. 266.
… states Martin. And Judah’s enemies would be consumed in the oven of God’s wrath.

**Conclusion:** *What are the shields we depend on?* We’re right in the middle of a presidential campaign. For many their shield from the “fill in the blank” is their candidate. The only one who can save us from the left/right is Bush/Kerry. Our shield from the attack against Christianity is having the right people in the judiciary. Our shield against the ACLU is the ACLJ.

There are of course the economic shields. Real Estate is a shield against the vagaries of the stock market. Gold will protect from the economic collapse which will occur any moment and has been going to occur for decades.

And Egypt is the shield which will protect us from Assyria, or so said the leaders of Judah. Looking for the invisible shield has been going on since Adam and Eve put on fig leaves. But, says Wiersbe, …

“Think of the money Judah would have saved and the distress they would have avoided had they only rested in the Lord their God and obeyed His will. All their political negotiations were futile and their treaties worthless. They trusted the words of the Egyptians but not the Word of God?

As God’s church today faces enemies and challenges, it is always a temptation to turn to the world or the flesh for help. But our first response must be to examine our hearts to see if there is something we need to confess and make right. Then we just turn to the Lord in faith and obedience and surrender to His will alone. We must trust Him to protect us and fight for us.

A friend of mine kept a card in his office desk that read: Faith Is Living Without Scheming. In one statement, that is what Isaiah was saying to Judah and Jerusalem, and that is what He is saying to us today.”

Remember there is only one shield that will never fail,

1 Not to us, O LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness.
2 Why do the nations say, “Where is their God?”
3 Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.
4 But their idols are silver and gold, made by the hands of men.
5 They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but they cannot see;
6 they have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but they cannot smell;
7 they have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but they cannot walk; nor can they utter a sound with their throats.
8 Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them.
9 O house of Israel, trust in the LORD—he is their help and shield.
10 O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD—he is their help and shield.
11 You who fear him, trust in the LORD—he is their help and shield.
12 The LORD remembers us and will bless us: He will bless the house of Israel, he will bless the house of Aaron,
13 he will bless those who fear the LORD—small and great alike.
14 May the LORD make you increase, both you and your children.
15 May you be blessed by the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.
16 The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to man.
17 It is not the dead who praise the LORD, those who go down to silence;
18 it is we who extol the LORD, both now and forevermore. Praise the LORD. (Psalm 115).

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Isaiah

“The Invisible Shield”

Isaiah 31

I  Introduction
II  Too Smart For Your Own Good  Verses 1-3
III  A Defense Shield  Verses 4-5
IV  The Fall of Assyria  Verses 6-9
V  Conclusion

I  Introduction:
   (Psalm 7:10; Genesis 15:1)

II  Too Smart For Your Own Good:
   (Deuteronomy 17:14-20; Psalm 115:11)
III A Defense Shield:
(Amos 3:12, 8; Exodus 12:12, 23; Psalm 115:9)

IV Call to Repentance:
(Deuteronomy 33:29; Romans 1:18)

V Conclusion:
(Psalm 115)

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Personal Application: Look around your world for any leftover Gardol. If you find any, replace it with your true shield, the LORD.

Prayer for the Week: Lord, search my heart and show me where I need to grow in dependency on You. In Jesus’ name, amen.