

Isaiah Chapter 8

Maher-shalal-hash-baz, his name was to symbolize the swift and successful Assyrian conquest of Damascus (Syria), and Samaria (Israel). Uriah is referred to as a faithful witness and may be the priest named (in 2 Kings 16:16). Zechariah is one of the 28 men so named in the Old Testament. He is here distinguished as the son of Jeberechiah.

Isaiah 8:1 "Moreover the LORD said unto me, Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen concerning Maher-shalal-hash-baz."

"Great roll" Isaiah was to prepare a large placard for public display. That placard read reiterated, from another perspective, the prophecies just concluded (in 7:18-25).

We know the sign that was to be given in the previous lesson was the sign of the virgin having a child, who would be their Messiah. We now see that the warnings Isaiah had given these people had not been heeded to the extent God wanted them to.

We see now, God tells Isaiah to take a tablet and write the warning on the tablet with a natural pen that can be read with natural eyes. The Message was just four words. The words being connected just shows that one will immediately follow the other.

The meaning of Maher-shalal-hash-baz means, plunder speeds, and spoil hastens. Not only was this a sign to be posted and read, but Isaiah named his son this. This sign being posted was a sign to all the people, and not just to the king.

Isaiah 8:2 "And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah."

"Faithful witnesses": After the prophecies fulfillment, the respected leaders Uriah and Zechariah verified to the people that Isaiah had spoken it on a given date before the Assyrian invasion. This verification accredited the Lord's word and upheld His honor (Deuteronomy 18:21, 22; Jeremiah 28:9).

Uriah was a priest who was not separated from the king. We will find in later lessons, that Ahaz had great influence on Uriah. It appears that at this writing he was respected as a true witness. The priesthood was to be Godly men, who were in direct contact with God and could not be controlled by the king. It seemed Uriah was not a strong priest.

The name "Zechariah" means Jehovah remembers. This particular Zechariah seems to have been just an ordinary man of this time in extraordinary circumstances. The name "Jeberechiah" means Jehovah blesses. Very little is known of him.

Isaiah 8:3 "And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son. Then said the LORD to me, Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz."

We got into the discussion earlier about the wife of a prophet not being a prophetess. The office of prophetess is a call from God, and not a station in life received because of marriage to a prophet. We know then, that Isaiah's wife was called of God to be a prophetess.

The reason I stress this is the fact, that a man being a preacher does not make his wife a preacheress. The call to be a prophet, or prophetess, is an individual calling. The fact that a woman is married to a prophet does not give her the messages from God that she would need; to be a prophetess.

Isaiah's wife was called a prophetess because the son to whom she gave birth was prophetic of the Assyrian conquest. Maher-shalal-hash-baz told the Assyrian invaders with no doubt as to who was to win the battle. Hash-baz told them to reap the benefits of the conquered land quickly, (5:26).

We mentioned earlier in this lesson, that Isaiah's son was named the same as the wording of the sign that Isaiah had posted.

Isaiah 8:4 "For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria."

Isaiah is speaking of the swiftness with which this prophecy will come. Many children can speak mother and father by the time they are a year old.

"Before the child" The time before the plunder of Aram, or Syria, and the northern kingdom of Israel began was very short. The Assyrians initiated their invasion before Isaiah's child learned to talk. That prophetic limit resembled the one set (in 7:16), but there the prophecy was more far-reaching. Fulfillment of the closer prophecy verified the one relating to the distant future.

The waters of Shiloah refer to the waters of the pool of Siloam, known for their healing powers (John 9:7). Since the people of Israel have refused the Lord in a time of peace, God will bring upon them the waters of the river, which are contrasted to those of the Gentile pool. This phrase is used figuratively of the overflowing of the Army of the King of Assyria.

Thus, Isaiah names in advance the nation that will destroy Israel. That this invasion will also pass through Judah, and will overflow even to the neck, indicates that the Assyrian invasion will wipe out the northern kingdom and nearly drown the southern kingdom. Judah's narrow escape is described (in Isaiah 36 and 37). "O Immanuel" indicates that Immanuel is no ordinary person born in the days of Isaiah. He is the One who owns the land Himself (a claim reserved in Scripture only for God).

Thus, the invading nations are told that their alliances will not stand against Judah because God is with us. There can be no doubt that the use of these terms is intended to connect this chapter with the prophecy of the virgin birth of Immanuel and to serve as a link to the prediction of His birth as King (in chapter 9).

Isaiah 8:5 "The LORD spake also unto me again, saying,"

We see from this, that God spoke to Isaiah more than once.

Isaiah 8:6 "Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son;"

"These people", literally "this people" (the Hebrew word is "sing"). These were the people of Judah (6:9), but perhaps secondarily the whole nation of Israel. Ahaz had called on Assyria for help rather than relying on the Lord.

"Waters of Shiloah" this was a stream from the Gihon spring outside Jerusalem's city wall flowing to the Pool of Siloam inside the city which supplied the city's water (see 7:3), symbolized the cities dependence on the Lord and His defense of the city, if they were to survive. First, the northern 10 tribes refused that dependence, later, King Ahaz of Judah in the South did the same.

Isaiah 8:7 "Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, [even] the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks:"

"Waters of the river": In place of the waters of Shiloah, the waters of the River Euphrates were to overflow its banks and flood all the way to and including Judah. In other words, the King of Assyria was to sweep through the Land with his devastating destruction. Though outwardly Ahaz's submission to the Assyrians brought peace to Judah (2 Kings 16:7-18), Isaiah saw the reality that David's throne was merely a hollow sham.

People are many times spoken of as waters. This is the case here. This is speaking of the armies that come. Shiloah sometimes means Jesus. To refuse the waters of Shiloah would be to refuse to worship God who gave the water.

Rezin was the king of Damascus at the time Pekah was king of Israel, and the same time of Jotham and Ahaz in Judah. Pekah was the son of Remaliah.

This water coming up over the land is the flood of the Assyrian army. There could have been a natural flood that accompanied this, as well. The primary thought, I believe, is the flood of the army.

Isaiah 8:8 "And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach [even] to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel."

"O Immanuel". Because of the Assyrian onslaught, the land of Immanuel (7:14), was to be stripped of all its earthly glory. What a pity that He who owns and will someday possess the land must see it in such a devastated condition!

The word that gives this away as being an army and not a literal flood is "he". We will see this army continue on, until it is in Judah. They will be up to their neck with this army. There will be a remnant left, however. They do not go beyond the neck and totally destroy them.

It does not speak of this army covering their head. "O Immanuel" is a cry similar to "come quickly Lord Jesus". "Immanuel" means God with us. It is as if he is saying, O God be with us.

Isaiah 8:9 "Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces."

The "broken": Less Assyria and other foreign powers think they conquered in their own strength; the prophet reminded them that they were holy instruments for the Lords use and would eventually come to nothing.

If they resist, they would be fighting against the wishes of God. The army may be the Assyrians, but God allows this to happen to them, because of their idolatry.

Isaiah 8:10 "Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God [is] with us."

"God is with us". The Hebrew is Immanuel. The name of the virgin's child (7:14), guaranteed the eventual triumph of the faithful remnant of Israel.

Plans made against God and His people will never work. The Assyrians will be the sufferers in the end. These people the Assyrians are attacking are God's people. This could not happen, had God not allowed it. The victory for Assyria is short-lived.

Verses 8:11-18: The stone of stumbling and ... Rock of offense (in verse 14 is quoted in Romans 9:33 and 1 Peter 2:8), as predictably referring to Christ. A gin is a trap. Instead of finding asylum in the Lord, the unbelievers will stumble over Him in disbelief.

The prophet closes this section by stating that he and his children are intended to be "signs and ... wonders" to the nation of Judah. Their symbolic names were to serve as a final warning to the people of Zion.

Isaiah 8:11 "For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying,"

"With a strong hand". God inspired Isaiah with compelling power to speak a message that by its nature distanced him from the people he ministered to.

This is the LORD speaking to Isaiah. Isaiah was in the hand of the LORD. Isaiah was not an idolater. He was separated from the sins of this people. He was speaking all of this representing God. He was speaking as an ambassador for God with God's message to this people.

God was his protection. It was as if he were hidden in the hand of the LORD.

Isaiah 8:12 "Say ye not, A confederacy, to all [them to] whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid."

A Confederacy means conspiracy. Many in Israel considered Isaiah, Jeremiah, and other prophets to be servants of the enemy when they advocated a policy of non-reliance on foreign powers and complete dependence on the Lord alone (see Jeremiah 37:13-15).

Isaiah was to say, "Do not make a deal with these Assyrians". Isaiah is calling for the few who would, to stand up for God and be counted. He reminded them, their strength is in the LORD, and they should not fear what these worldly people could do to them.

Isaiah 8:13 "Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and [let] him [be] your fear, and [let] him [be] your dread."

"Sanctify" in the verse above means to separate the LORD and worship only Him. Fear God only. The fear, or reverence, of God is the beginning of wisdom. They were not to fear the Assyrians. This is a call to worship and fear only the LORD.

Isaiah 8:14 "And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem."

"Sanctuary ... Stone of stumbling": Isaiah found encouragement in the Lord as his holy place of protection from his accusers. The New Testament applies this verse to corporate Israel in her ongoing rejection of Jesus as Messiah (Luke 2:34; Romans 9:32-33; 1 Peter 2:8). Both the houses of Israel will be collapsed until the return of the Messiah to the earth restores them.

Those, who fear and reverence the LORD, will be hid in Him. He will be their safe haven. He will protect them from all harm. Those, who do not, will stumble and fall. The same Rock (Jesus Christ), which saves the believers is a stone of stumbling to those who do not believe. He is their downfall.

He is saying that those of the house of Israel, or of Judah, who do not continue in faith in the LORD, will fall. This message can be to the many Christians today who do not remain with the Lord.

Jerusalem would fall then. Zion (the church of the Lord Jesus Christ), will fall now, if we do not fear and reverence the Lord and walk daily in His ways.

Isaiah 8:15 "And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken."

Many will stumble, another prediction anticipated the stumbling of Israel, which included a rejection of her Messiah at His First Advent (Luke 20:18; Romans 9:32; 28:16).

This is just a warning to those who are not hid in the LORD. It was impossible then, and it is impossible now, to live victorious lives, unless we find our sanctuary in the Lord.

Isaiah 8:16 "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples."

"My disciples": These were God's faithful remnant, and hence disciples of Isaiah and a secondary sense. They have the responsibility of maintaining written records of his prophecies so that they could become public after the prophesied Syrian invasion (see 8:2).

A "disciple" is someone who has disciplined themselves to follow a particular teaching. In this instance, Isaiah is speaking of those who have disciplined themselves to walk with him.

These are a dedicated few, who still loved and revered the LORD. They were of one mind with Isaiah. God wants them to protect the testimony. They are to bind it up to keep it safe.

Isaiah 8:17 "And I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him."

"I will wait ... Look for him". The speaker is Isaiah whose disposition was to await the Lord's deliverance, the national salvation promised to the faithful remnant (40:31; 49:23).

Isaiah was willing to stand firm and wait as long as was necessary. Isaiah is saying that the house of Jacob had displeased the LORD, so the LORD would no longer look with favor upon them.

Isaiah 8:18 "Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me [are] for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion."

"I and the children": In their historical setting, the words referred to Isaiah and his two sons, whose names have prophetic significance (i.e., as "signs and wonders").

We know that the names that were given to Isaiah's children were actually living messages to these people. This could be the signs spoken of here. Mount Zion is speaking spiritually of the church, but it also speaks of God's holy hill in Jerusalem.

Verses 8:19-22: Familiar spirits refer to witches and wizards refer to male soothsayers. Peep and ... mutter is better translated "chirp and whisper." In times of distress people often turn to witchcraft instead of God.

The prophet warns them not to seek these mediums for the living to the dead, that is, "Do not consult the dead on behalf of the living." This warning speaks against Spiritualism and calls the reader back to "the law and ... the testimony" as the only basis for interpreting a claim to divine revelation.

Isaiah 8:19 "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?"

People of Isaiah's day were using spiritualists to communicate with the dead as king Saul did through the medium at En-dor (1 Samuel 28:8-19). The law strictly forbade such consultations (Leviticus 19:26; Deuteronomy 18:10-11).

We know that king Saul had made the terrible mistake of seeking information from those with familiar spirits. We should learn a lesson from that, not to ever seek for answers from wizards and those who have familiar spirits.

Those who do these things are dead and dying. They minister death to those who come to them. Jesus Christ ministers life. Isaiah was saying God is life. Do not choose death over life.

Isaiah 8:20 "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, [it is] because [there is] no light in them."

The law and the testimony is the Word of God. The Word of God is Light. Light came through the prophecies of God's spokesman, Isaiah. There is no darkness where the true Word is. Those who do not live by the Word of God are filled with darkness and death.

John 1:1-5 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "The same was in the beginning with God." "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." "And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."

The Word and the Light are the same One (Jesus Christ, as we know Him).

Verses 8:21-22: Contains a dismal picture of those who are frustrated, desperate and angry even to the point of cursing God, all because they refused to accept the truthfulness of what Isaiah had predicted regarding the nation's future hardships.

Isaiah 8:21 "And they shall pass through it, hardly bestead and hungry: and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward."

This is speaking of those who walk through life in darkness. They curse their own life, because they are not filled with the Light which brings life and hope. When these people are hungry, they have no one to go to, since they have rejected God.

Isaiah 8:22 "And they shall look unto the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and [they shall be] driven to darkness."

Darkness brings eternal death and no hope while you are alive.

John 3:19 "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

John 12:35 "Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth."

Isaiah Chapter 8 Questions

1. In verse 1, we know that God told Isaiah to write on the great roll with what?
2. Why was he to use this type of pen?
3. What was the message on the roll?
4. What did it mean?
5. Why was this to be posted so all could see?
6. Who was the priest that was carried for a witness?
7. What type of priest was he?
8. What does "Zechariah" mean?
9. Who was his father?
10. Who is verse 3 calling a prophetess?
11. Was her name this because she was a prophet's wife?
12. What did she name her son?
13. When will this prophecy come to pass?
14. What country will be the aggressor?

15. Does the LORD speak to a person more than once?
16. What was the waters of the river that the Lord would bring upon them?
17. Where did Rezin rule?
18. Who was Pekah's father?
19. What word tells us they were not completely overcome?
20. What does "Immanuel" mean?
21. What are the people saying, when they say, "O Immanuel"?
22. If they resist, they will be fighting against the wishes of _____.
23. What was the only reason the Assyrians could take them?
24. How was Isaiah different from these people?
25. What is God really saying to them in verse 12?
26. What does "sanctify" in verse 13 mean?
27. What is "fear" in verse 13?
28. What one word covers what the Lord is to those who put their trust in Him?
29. What is He to those who will not believe?
30. What is a "disciple"?
31. What had happened to the house of Jacob?
32. What are the signs spoken of in verse 18?
33. Why should you not seek information from a wizard?
34. Who had made that mistake and paid dearly for his mistake?
35. What is the law and the testimony?