

# Book of Isaiah



## Chapter 8

*Theme: prediction of Assyria's invasion of  
Immanuel's land*

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## Chapter 8

Chapters 7 -- 12 constitute a series of prophecies given during the reign of Ahaz. Some have attempted to identify the virgin's Son of chapter 7 with the prophet's son in chapter 8. The names preclude that possibility, and the additional information in chapter 9 makes it an impossibility for the two to be identical. The prophet's son is a sign (see v. 18).

This chapter is rather significant as it contains the prediction of the invasion of Immanuel's land by the king of Assyria. God had kept the flood tide of foreign invasions walled off from His people for over five hundred years. Now He opens the floodgates and permits an enemy to cover the land like a flood. The people are looking to a confederacy rather than looking to God for help.

This chapter concludes with a warning against spiritualism as the last resort of people who have rejected God's counsel and turned in desperation to the satanic world. The end will be trouble, darkness, and anguish.<sup>1</sup>

This prophecy continues from Isaiah 7, where God assured Ahaz, king of Judah, that he would not be overthrown by the combined forces of Syria and Israel. God announced judgment against Syria and Israel, saying of their attack against Judah: It shall not stand, nor shall it come to pass . . . Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be broken, so that it will not be a people. Here, God gives Isaiah a sign to explain more about how soon the defeat of Syria and Israel will come.<sup>2</sup>

In our last study, we saw that Judah was being attacked by an alliance of King Rets-EEN of Aram and King PEH-kakh of Israel. Instead of trusting the Lord, as Isaiah exhorted him, he turned to Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria for help.

In that study, we also saw how prophecy is often fulfilled twice - through a near fulfillment and a far fulfillment. Through Isaiah, God had told King Ahaz,

Is. 7:14 "...Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel."

We saw how this sign was for the house of David, and was ultimately fulfilled in the birth of Jesus Christ.

But in the near fulfillment, we were told that before the boy knew to refuse evil and choose good, the kings of Israel and Aram would be forsaken (Isa. 7:16).

Tonight, as we begin our study of chapter eight, we see the boy who was the near fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy...<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.studyight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-8.html>

<sup>3</sup> <http://rondaniel.com/library/23-Isaiah/Isaiah0801.php>

**<sup>1</sup>Moreover the LORD said unto me, Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen concerning Mahershalalhashbaz.**

**Mahershalalhashbaz** = "In making speed to the spoil he hasteth the prey (or "haste makes waste")."

**[Mahershalalhashbaz]** The longest name in the Bible text, but there is another equally as long in the title of Ps. 56, Jonath-elem-rechokim.<sup>4</sup>

If you thought Shear-jashub was a strange name for a boy, try this one on for size! Maher-shalal-hash-baz is a remarkable name for a boy in any language. How would you like to carry this cognomen through life? That's what Isaiah's son had to do. I don't know what his nickname was. They may have shortened his name to Maher, or Hash, or even Baz. There is a reason, however, why God wants Isaiah to give his sons these unusual names. The reason is found in verse 18 which says, "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." Both sons are signs, and their names carry a message.

Maher-shalal-hash-baz means "hasten booty, speed prey." This simply means that God is against those who are against His people. Paul put it like this: "...If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31).

This boy's name is also a message for Ahaz, the man on the throne. He is a godless man, and God is trying to reach him. He tells Isaiah to get a great tablet and write on it with a "man's pen" -- or, the stylus of a frail, mortal man. He is then to hang it up in a prominent place like a billboard so that everyone can read it. God wants this boy's name written down so that the most humble person in the kingdom will see it, read it, and understand it. God is trying to reach Ahaz, first through Isaiah's first son, Shear-jashub ("a remnant shall return"), and then through Maher-shalal-hash-baz ("hasten booty, speed prey"). This second son's name is to assure Ahaz that God will take care of the enemies of His people.<sup>5</sup>

Maher mean "hurry" or "fast;" Shalal is the common word for "spoil" or "loot" taken as a result of war; Chash is another word meaning "quickly;" Baz is another common word for "booty." Thus the meaning of Isaiah's son's name predicted the same thing that is spoken of him. That is that the "Shalal" of Samaria and Damascus is soon to be taken by the King of Assyria before the child begins to speak. While She'aryashuv's name predicted the long range future return of the faithful remnant among the Israelites, Mahershalalhashbaz's name predicted the swiftness of the impending destruction coming on Damascus and Samaria soon after the birth of the son. Also note that the name is given before the son is conceived by the prophet's wife. A fact which Isaiah was careful to document and date. It is apparent then that this son is not to be confused with the virgin birth son, Immanuel, of chapter seven who is to be born of a maiden as a sign. Mahershalalhashbaz's birth was not a sign but a time mark from which to measure the truth of Isaiah's prediction. That is the reason for taking the witnesses to record the time and the promise followed by the conception by Isaiah's wife, here called "the prophetess." There is no such time limitation related to the virgin birth child of chapter seven; except that Samaria and Damascus would be kingless when he became aware of his own moral accountability. Here there is a very

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<sup>4</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>5</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

strict time limit attached to the event predicted. It would be a matter of a few years from the time the prediction was recorded until the beginning of the end for Damascus and Samaria.<sup>6</sup>

Isaiah was to use a visual aid to help secure the prophecy in the minds of his audience. On a large scroll Isaiah was to record the name of a son to be born to him soon. The son's name was to be announced even before he was conceived, thus pointing to the certainty of the birth. The name Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, the longest personal name in the Bible, means "quick to the plunder, swift to the spoil." Soldiers would shout these words to their comrades as they defeated and plundered their foes. Isaiah's listeners, remembering his prophecy of the fall of the Aram-Israel alliance (7:4-17), would have understood the significance of his son's name as they continued to listen to his prediction of impending doom for Aram and Israel.<sup>7</sup>

**Take a large scroll:** It isn't often that the prophets are commanded to write, but here is one instance. Isaiah will write concerning Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, which means speed to the spoil, hurry to the plunder.<sup>8</sup>

**Calvin on with a mans pen:** It denotes any many of ordinary rank; and the meaning is, that not even the most ignorant and uneducated persons may be unable to read the writing. Isaiah's message was meant to be public, and at a level any man could read and understand.<sup>9</sup>

Yahweh instructed Isaiah to take a large flat surface (Heb. gillayon) appropriate for posting as a placard. He was to write clearly on it Maher-shalal-hash-baz ("Speeding to the Plunder, Hurrying to the Spoil"). "Soldiers would shout these words to their comrades as they defeated and plundered their foes." This public notice had a double purpose: to announce a coming attack on Syria and Israel and to announce the birth of Isaiah's son. "Isaiah was to make his message as public and eye-catching as possible."<sup>10</sup>

**<sup>2</sup>And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah.**

**Uriah:** High priest (2 Kgs 16:10-16); used by Ahaz later. [Recorded before he was born (v.18).]

**Zechariah:** father of Ahaz's queen (2 Kgs 18:2; 2 Chr 29:1).

Uriah means "Jehovah is my light." Zechariah means "Jehovah remembers." Jeberechiah means "Jehovah will bless." This is an interesting combination, is it not? Thus, the one witness says by his name, "Jehovah is my light," and the other says, "Jehovah's purpose is to bless." The offspring of these is the grace of God -- that is, he will never forget His people.

In all of Isaiah's actions there is a message for the people. He is acting out and writing out his message so that the people will understand it. The Book of Isaiah is a picture parable. Our Lord

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/7-8.htm>

<sup>7</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-8.html>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-8.html>

<sup>10</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

used this method also. The reason is that people will look at a picture. It is somewhat like television. It is amazing how many of us will sit in front of the television screen and watch things from that idiot box which under different circumstances we wouldn't waste our time on. Because God knows the inclination of mankind, He tries to get a message across to these people by using a picture.<sup>11</sup>

God said He would call in two witnesses (Num. 35:30; Deut. 17:6; 19:15), who could confirm that His words were true. Uriah the priest is mentioned later in an unfavorable light (2 Kings 16:10-16) when he complied with Ahaz's order to change the temple worship after the Aram-Israel alliance had been broken. Apparently he was an influential priest. Zechariah son of Jeberekiah is nowhere else mentioned by that full title. He may have been a prophet during the time of Uzziah (2 Chron. 26:5) or a Levite who helped cleanse the temple in Hezekiah's day (2 Chron. 29:12-13).<sup>12</sup>

**I will take for Myself faithful witnesses to record:** The Lord appointed two witnesses, so the validity of this word would be established. By the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established. (Deuteronomy 19:15)<sup>13</sup>

**<sup>3</sup>And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son. Then said the LORD to me, Call his name Mahershalalhashbaz.**

"The prophetess" in this verse is Isaiah's wife, Mrs. Isaiah. She conceives and bears a son, and the child's name is given to him before he is born.

**8:3-4.** The prophetess, Isaiah's wife, is unnamed. She was called a prophetess either because she was married to a prophet or because she had the God-given ability to prophesy. The latter seems preferable. Isaiah's son, Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, was a sign of the coming break in the Aram-Israel alliance against Judah. In about a year and nine months (nine months for the pregnancy and one year of the child's life), Assyria would plunder both Damascus (Aram's capital city) and Samaria (Israel's capital). This happened in 732 b.c., which confirms the date of 734 for Isaiah's prophecy. When Damascus and Samaria fell, Judah should have turned to God as Isaiah had told them to. Unfortunately Uriah, one of the two witnesses (v. 2), followed Ahaz's orders after 732 b.c. and changed the temple worship to conform with the pagan worship practiced at Damascus.<sup>14</sup>

Then Isaiah had sexual relations with his wife. Since the expression "approached" is a euphemism used several times in the Old Testament for the first intercourse between a man and his wife, it is possible that Isaiah's first wife, the mother of Shearjashub (7:3), died and the prophet remarried.

In this case, the 'alma of 7:14 could refer to Isaiah's second wife, and Immanuel could have been Maher-shalal-hash-baz. However, "approached" (Heb. qrb) often describes sexual relations

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<sup>11</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>12</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.study-light.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-8.html>

<sup>14</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

in general (Gen. 20:4; Lev. 18:6, 14, 19; 20:16; Deut. 22:14; Ezek. 18:6). So this could have been Isaiah's first wife. By naming her son Immanuel, she made a prophetic statement: God would be with His people in the coming crisis. When she bore a son, Yahweh told Isaiah to name him Maher-shalal-hash-baz. The child's mother evidently gave him one name and his father gave him the other.<sup>15</sup>

**Then I went to the prophetess:** This refers to Isaiah's wife. She is called a prophetess, though it could be in the sense of simply being the wife of the prophet. However, she clearly brought forth prophecy on at least one occasion. The birth and naming of her son Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz was a word from God, so she certainly brought forth that prophecy!<sup>16</sup>

There are many examples of prophetesses in the Bible: Miriam (Exodus 15:20), Deborah (Judges 4:4), Huldah (2 Kings 22:14), Noadiah (Nehemiah 6:14), Anna (Luke 2:36), and Philip's four daughters (Acts 21:8-9). So, it may be that the wife of Isaiah had a prophetic ministry in her own right. But it may also be that she was simply the wife of the prophet, and her prophecy was giving birth to Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz.

**<sup>4</sup>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.**

(Confirmed by inscriptions of Tilgath-Pileser.)

This was fulfilled about 21 months from the giving of this prophecy -- 9 months for the child to be born, and 12 months after its birth; or in the third year of Ahaz (2Ki. 16:7-18).<sup>17</sup>

Before this child is able to say "Mommy" and "Daddy," the Assyrians will invade Syria and Samaria. The enemy in the north that is planning to come against Judah is going to be taken away into captivity. It will not be due to the brilliant military ability of Ahaz to work out a strategy that will bring victory. The victory will be due to the sovereign grace of God -- God is making this perfectly clear.<sup>18</sup>

**For before the child shall have knowledge to cry My father and My mother:** Through the birth and naming of Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, the Lord gives a time frame for the invasion of Assyria that will punish Syria and Israel.<sup>19</sup>

**Before the child shall have knowledge:** The imminence of the overthrow of both Damascus and Samaria is spoken of here. This dates the prophecy at just a year or two before the fall of Damascus which took place in 731 B.C. Whatever the time frame, from the commandment to beget a son, until Isaiah's wife conceived, it would then be only a period of gestation and a year

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<sup>15</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-8.html>

<sup>17</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>18</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-8.html>

or two until he could cry "Mother or Father." There were nine years between the fall of Damascus which fell first, and the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C. Thus the prophecy probably was uttered in 733 or 734 B.C. and its fulfillment began a short time later with the fall of Damascus to Tiglath-Pilezer in 731 B.C. and was completed in the fall of Samaria nine years later.<sup>20</sup>

**<sup>5</sup>The LORD spake also unto me again, saying,**

[5-7] This is another remarkable passage of Scripture. The people "refuseth the waters of Shiloah," which means "sent." They refuse the peace God offered them, a peace here typified by this gentle, rippling brook. In contrast, we see in verse 7 "the waters of the river, strong and many." This is evidently the Euphrates River where Assyria was located. These waters came down like a flood. In other words, the flood waters of the Euphrates represent the judgment of God and are contrasted with the gentle waters of Shiloah. God is giving a message to His people through these two rivers. As Shakespeare put it in his play *As You Like It*, there are "tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good in everything."

Shiloah is a softly flowing little spring. It doesn't amount to much today, but it did in Isaiah's day. It flows between Mount Zion and Mount Moriah. There is a message in that little stream, a message that you will hear if you have a blood-tipped ear. It is a message sweeter than the rippling music of the stream itself. It is the story of grace, of Mount Zion, which stands in contrast to Mount Sinai, which is symbolic of the Mosaic Law. Moriah is where Abraham offered his son, where David bought the threshingfloor of Araunah, and where Solomon put up the temple. And down at the end of that great shaft of rocks is Golgotha, where Christ was crucified. This speaks of grace. Moriah is where God provided Himself a Lamb. He spared Abraham's son, but He did not spare His own Son.

So here God is speaking grace to this man, Ahaz. He is saying to him, "I'll spare you, if only you will turn to Me."<sup>21</sup>

**8:5-6.** This people could refer to the Northern Kingdom of Israel since she was the nation that rejected Judah in favor of aligning with Aram, under its king Rezin (cf. 7:1). The gently flowing waters of Shiloah, also called Siloam, then would refer by metonymy to the city of Jerusalem. These waters were a spring that fed a small reservoir within Jerusalem's walls. This gentle pool contrasted with the "mighty floodwaters" (8:7) which would destroy the people. On the son of Remaliah see comments on 7:4. Others interpret "this people" to refer to Judah (the house of Ahaz and his people). They had rejected God ("the gentle waters") and therefore the mighty flood (Assyria) would come and engulf them. This of course happened in 701 b.c. when the Assyrians invaded Judah.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/7-8.htm>

<sup>21</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>22</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

**‘Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah’s son;**

**Shilo:** “peace sent” (Cf. John 9:7). The waters that supplied the Temple via an aqueduct.

**Waters of Shiloah** Euphemism for Jerusalem.

**[this people]** The northern kingdom of Samaria referred to in Isa. 8:4. They were allied with King Rezin of Damascus, Syria (Isa. 8:4,6). Samaria refused to trust in Judah -- "the waters of Shiloah that go softly" -- but rejoiced in Syria. Because of this the Assyrians would overflow their land like a flood (Isa. 8:6-7). The king of Assyria would also invade Judah (Isa. 8:8). This was partially fulfilled about 3 years later when Assyria destroyed Rezin, king of Syria (2Ki. 16:5-18; 2Chr. 28:20-25); then more completely fulfilled with Israel some 18 years afterward when the ten tribes were taken captive (2Ki. 17). Some remained and were taken captive with Manasseh at the end of the 65 years of Isa. 7:8 (2Chr. 30:1; 31:1; 33:11).<sup>23</sup>

**[waters of Shiloah]** The waters beneath Zion running from Gihon to the pool of Siloam. The waters are figurative of Judah, as the waters of the river of Isa. 8:7 are figurative of Assyria.<sup>24</sup>

**<sup>7</sup>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:**

“**The river**” = the Euphrates.

**8:7-8.** Because Israel allied with Aram, she would be swept away by the mighty floodwaters from the River, a normal designation for the Euphrates River, which ran through the Assyrian Empire. The king of Assyria (cf. 7:17) would sweep down on the Northern Kingdom like a river in flood stage overflowing its banks. Amazingly this “floodwater,” that is, Assyria, would continue on into the land of Judah (701 b.c.). Assyria would cover Judah up to the neck, meaning that Judah would be almost but not quite drowned.

Isaiah changed figures of speech and pictured Assyria as a giant bird whose wings would cover the entire land, ready to devour it.

This message was given to Immanuel (“God [is] with us”). Isaiah had used that word (7:14) when he told Ahaz that a boy, soon to be born, would be a sign that the nation would not perish at the hands of Aram and Israel. Now the Assyrians would try to “drown” the land of Judah. But the word Immanuel assured the hearers that God had not forgotten His covenant people and would be with them (cf. 8:10). The next verses (vv. 9-15) discuss that fact.<sup>25</sup>

The capital of the Assyrian Empire was Nineveh, and the city of Nineveh was founded on a great river: the Tigris. The Assyrian Empire was also centered across another mighty river: the Euphrates. The whole land of Israel simply did not have a river like the Euphrates or the Tigris.

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<sup>23</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>24</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>25</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

God is using the difference between the small, humble, yet adequate waters of Israel and the mighty, yet uncontrolled rivers of Assyria to make a point. It is as if God is saying, You dont like what I have given you? You persist in rejecting what I give you? Then I will give you something different, but you wont like it either.<sup>26</sup>

**He will go up over all his channels and go over all his banks:** Like a large river in a flood, the Assyrian army will not stay confined to its banks. Instead, they will flow over their attack on Israel and Syria, and flood Judah with violence and destruction (He will pass through Judah).<sup>27</sup>

**<sup>8</sup>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.**

“Through” = “into.”

“**Even to the neck**”; i.e., but stopping short (Babylon). Immanuel: cf. 7:14.

**[Immanuel]** This is the second time Immanuel -- God with us -- is used in Isaiah (Isa. 7:14; 8:8). See Isa. 8:10, where it is translated "God is with us." The prophecy concerns the land of the Messiah, the land where He was to be born and where He will reign over all nations forever (Isa. 8:8; 9:6-7; Dan. 7:13-14; Zech. 14; Rev. 11:15).<sup>28</sup>

**O Immanuel:** The mention of the virgin birth child assures the "inhabitants of Zion" but not those who "look to the earth" that "God with us" is still in control and the land belongs to him and his will in spite of the Assyrians. It is Immanuel's will that the Assyrians come into the land to punish a sinning Israel. The LXX translates Immanuel as "God with us" here and not as a name. The Hebrew text (Masoretic and Qumran) writes the words as one word indicating they understood it as a name.

God will permit Assyrians to overflow the land of Judah, but He will never permit them to take Jerusalem.

Because the people of Judah rejected God's kindness, choosing instead to seek help from other nations, God would punish them. We see two distinct attributes of God—his love and his wrath. To ignore his love and guidance results in sin and invites his wrath. We must recognize the consequences of our choices. God wants to protect us from bad choices, but he still gives us the freedom to make them.

The heart of the Assyrian Empire was located between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. This flood is a poetic way of describing the overwhelming force of the Assyrian army.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> <http://www.studyLight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-8.html>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.studyLight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-8.html>

<sup>28</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>29</sup> Life Application Study Bible.

**He will reach up to the neck:** Assyria would completely conquer the northern nation of Israel. The ten northern tribes would cease to be a nation after the Assyrians conquered them. But the Assyrians would not conquer the southern nation of Judah. They would flood them (fill the breadth of Your land), and reach up to the neck, but not over their heads. Judah would survive the Assyrian invasion, but suffer much destruction from the Assyrians.

Indeed, 2 Kings 18:13 describes the extent of the Assyrian invasion against Judah: And in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. Yet, Hezekiah was able to keep the king of Assyria away from Jerusalem, and barely able to survive, by buying his favor with riches from the temple - even stripping gold from the temple doors to appease the pagan king!

The sacred history assures us that these things were fulfilled . . . for the Assyrians, whom the Jews called to their assistance, destroyed them. This was the just punishment of their distrust; and we see in it a striking instance of the wicked greediness of men, who cannot be satisfied with the promise and assistance of God. (Calvin)<sup>30</sup>

**Your land, O Immanuel:** This refers back to the Immanuel prophecy of Isaiah 7:14. The land the Assyrians will invade doesn't really belong to Judah or to King Ahaz. It belongs to the Lord God, to the coming Messiah, to Immanuel.<sup>31</sup>

The Assyrian tide would not stop at Syria and Israel, however, but would sweep into Judah as well. This invasion happened in 701 B.C. But its waters would stop short of completely engulfing Judah; they would reach only to her neck. Israel would drown, but Judah would keep her head above water. Seen from above, the deepening waters of Assyria's army filling every valley and rising higher and higher resembled the wings of a huge, ominous bird of prey that covered the whole land. Isaiah described the whole land as Immanuel's land. Probably this is a double reference to the child predicted to be born (7:14) and to Israel as a whole, the people whose God was with them and would not allow Assyria to devour its prey. The reappearance of Immanuel in this passage that predicts the birth of Maher-shalal-hash-baz, and so closely parallels the Immanuel prophecies in chapter 7, suggests again that Maher-shalal-hash-baz was the initial fulfillment of the Immanuel prediction. In view of the later fulfillment of the Immanuel prophecy in Jesus Christ, we have a reminder that Yahweh continued to be with His people and provided salvation for them ultimately in Christ.<sup>32</sup>

**<sup>9</sup>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.**

“Associate yourselves” = “Make an uproar.”

[Associate] Hebrew: ra`a` (HSN-<H7489>) and is translated various ways in other versions: associate yourselves; make friendships; make confederacies; do your worst; tremble; know this; rage away. The sense is that regardless of how the enemies of Judah make alliances, such

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<sup>30</sup> <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-8.html>

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-8.html>

<sup>32</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

enemies shall be destroyed; for God is with us and will protect Judah. It could read: Put forth your best effort, you nations; you shall be destroyed. Arm for the struggle; you shall be shattered. Form your plot; it shall not stand. Lay your plans; they shall not prevail; for God is with us (Isa. 8:9-10).<sup>33</sup>

This is a warning against nations who form an alliance against God's land. Beginning with Isaiah 13, we are going to have a series of messages to the nations that were contiguous to Israel, or at least had dealings with them in that day, and we will find the judgment of God will come upon them. That section which goes all the way from Isaiah 13 to Isaiah 35 is a most remarkable section in God's Word. Most of it is fulfilled prophecy. God says that the nations will never deter His purpose here on earth. It is interesting that the nations of the world no longer seek wisdom or counsel from God. God does have a purpose, and His purpose will prevail. If a nation goes in the other direction, judgment will come upon it.<sup>34</sup>

**8:9-10.** The great truth of chapters 7-9 is that God was with Judah. Isaiah uses the same term Immanuel to close verse 10—God is with us. Even though the nations would raise a war cry and prepare for battle against Judah, they would not succeed. They would be shattered, a fact stated three times in verse 9 for emphasis. Even though they would carefully work out a strategy and a plan for battle they would not succeed because God was with Judah (“Immanuel” in Heb.; cf. 7:14; 8:8). That great truth separated Judah from all other nations of the world. Because God has promised to be with His people they were to have faith in Him no matter how bad their circumstances. He would not desert them. Thus God and Isaiah were proved right, and Ahaz was rebuked for his lack of faith (cf. 7:9).<sup>35</sup>

**<sup>10</sup>Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us.**

“Devise a device”...

“**God is with Us**” = Literally, Immanuel. This child is the same stone and rock as in verse 14.

Who is the us of God is with us? In one sense the us is the Assyrian army, because they were the instruments of Gods judgment against Syria, Israel, and Judah. Nothing could stop the Assyrian army, because even if they did not know it, or even if their own hearts were wrong in the matter, God was using them. But the us is also the prophet himself. As a messenger of God, his word would come to pass no matter what the three nations did to prepare against it.

God is with us also alludes to the Immanuel prophecy, because Immanuel means God is with us.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>34</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>35</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.studyight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-8.html>

As the king of Assyria discovered, you can "devise a plan, but it will be thwarted." No matter how certain the outcome seems, God can intervene. James warns us against the presumption of planning:

**James 4:13-15** Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that."

There's nothing wrong with making good plans, as long as we remember the proverb which says,

**Prov. 16:9** The mind of man plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps.

Sennacherib's plans weren't made with the Lord, or approved by the Lord. And so they were ultimately disrupted by the angel of the Lord.<sup>37</sup>

**<sup>11</sup>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,**

**"The Way"**: Remarkable phrase (Cf. Acts 9:27; 18:25, 26; et al.).

**8:11-15.** The Lord had promised to be with His people (v. 10), but many in both Israel and Judah refused to believe He would keep His promise. The Lord warned Isaiah not to be like many of those people (v. 11). Again Isaiah emphasized that the people of Judah should not be afraid of the Aram-Israel alliance or of the Assyrian threat looming on the horizon (v. 12). Rather they were to be afraid of the Lord Almighty. He is the One they should fear and dread (v. 13; cf. fear and dread in v. 12 and see the comments on "fear" in Deut. 4:10). The Lord will be a sanctuary, a place of safety, for those who believe in Him, but for those who do not believe Him, He will be the means of destruction (a stone a rock. a trap, and a snare). Peter quoted part of Isaiah 8:14 (1 Peter 2:8), referring to those who reject Jesus Christ. Isaiah's message follows an emphasis in the Old Testament. God promised that those who believe in and obey the Lord will be blessed but those who refuse to believe in and obey Him will be disciplined.<sup>38</sup>

Isaiah, along with most of the prophets, was viewed as a traitor because he did not support Judah's national policies. He called the people to commit themselves first to God and then to the king. He even predicted the overthrow of the government.

Isaiah now passed along instruction that Yahweh had powerfully given him, warning him against following the popular reliance on human strength. God had been teaching Isaiah that He had brought the Assyrians to power. To oppose Assyria now was to oppose God.

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<sup>37</sup> <http://rondaniel.com/library/23-Isaiah/Isaiah0801.php>

<sup>38</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

**<sup>12</sup>Say ye not, A confederacy, to all *them* to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.**

Regarding the attempt to terrify Judah by the confederacy between Syria and Samaria (Isa 7:1-2).

**Confederacy with the world:** Cf. Letter to Pergamos, Rev 2:12ff.

**[neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid]** Quoted in 1Pet. 3:14.

Judah is not to be alarmed by the confederacy of Syria and Samaria. Fear had caused those in the north to unite, and God urges His people, "neither fear ye their fear." In other words, they are not to turn to an ally among the nations, which probably would have been Egypt. Later on they will ally themselves with Egypt, which brings great tragedy to the land.<sup>39</sup>

**Do not say, A conspiracy . . . nor be afraid of their threats:** Isaiah, and all the people of Judah, were tempted to give into fear and panic, knowing the dangerous place they were in. At the time of this prophecy, the combined armies of Israel and Syria had destroyed much of Judah. Their armies either encircled Jerusalem or were on the way. They planned to depose King Ahaz of Judah and set their own man on the throne (Isaiah 7:6). Now, Isaiah's prophecy declared the armies of Syria and Israel would not succeed in conquering Judah, but the Assyrians (who they trusted to help them) would attack them and do much damage. In the midst of all this, it would be easy to let your heart or mind settle on conspiracies and threats. But God tells them not to.<sup>40</sup>

**<sup>13</sup>Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.**

**[Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear]** Isaiah continued by telling Israel whom to fear -- not Syria, Ephraim, Assyria, or any other nation or combination of allied nations. Rather, they were to sanctify (set apart, revere, and honor) the Lord of hosts, and let Him be their fear. This is quoted in 1Pet. 3:15.<sup>41</sup>

**[13-14]** They are to fear God above and look to Him. He will be either their salvation or a stone of stumbling. Cromwell was once asked why he was such a brave man. He had the reputation of being one of the bravest men who ever lived. He said, "I have learned that when you fear God, you have no man to fear." Paul said in 1Cor. 1:23, "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness." The Lord Jesus said that either you will fall on this stone -- and He is that stone -- for salvation, rest upon Him who is the only foundation, and you will be saved; or He, the stone, will fall on you, judge you, and it will grind you to powder (see Matt. 21:44). You have two options: you can either accept Him or reject Him. "Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself" is a strange injunction. Peter used this: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1Pet. 3:15). This is what God's people need to do. Today there is this light thinking about God, a lack of reverence for Him and for His

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<sup>39</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.study-light.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-8.html>

<sup>41</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

Word. There are those who sometimes ridicule things that are sacred, make light of things that should not be made light of. You and I need to sanctify the Lord God in our hearts, because there are multitudes of people today who are not convinced that "...the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him" (Hab. 2:20). If they believed, my friend, that He is in your church on Sunday morning, they would not be at the beach, at some picnic area, or out mowing the back lawn. They would be with you in church. You and I haven't convinced them, have we?<sup>42</sup>

**The Lord of hosts, Him you shall hallow;** let Him be your fear: Instead of fearing conspiracies and threats, fear God. Don't see yourself at the mercy of opposing armies; you are in God's hands. Worry about your place with the Lord instead of your enemies!<sup>43</sup>

**<sup>14</sup>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.**

Ezek 11:16; Ps 91.

The rock, stone, again..

**[he shall be for a sanctuary]** This gives another direct prophecy of the coming Messiah and His ministry in Palestine (Isa. 8:14; Lk. 20:17; Rom. 9:32-33; 11:11; 1Pet. 2:7-8).<sup>44</sup>

**[both the houses of Israel]** This shows that the Jews to whom Christ ministered were of all the tribes of Israel.

**But a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense:** For those who trust Him, the Lord will be as a sanctuary. But for those who don't, He will be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. Instead of finding protection from the Lord, they will trip over Him, falling to destruction. Indeed, many among them shall stumble; they shall fall and be broken.

We love to sing the song, What A Friend We Have In Jesus, and every line of the song is true. But for those who reject the Lord, they could sing, What An Enemy I Have In God. Instead of being as a sanctuary, He will be a trap and a snare. Instead of being protected, they shall fall and be broken. No wonder Psalm 2:12 says, Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him.

We know that Jesus is this stone of stumbling and a rock of offense (1 Peter 2:6-8). This is a strong statement of the deity of Jesus, because clearly in Isaiah 8:13-14, the Lord of hosts is the stone, and clearly in 1 Peter 2:6-8, Jesus Christ is the stone.

This is the same idea behind the statement of Simeon when he held the child Jesus, as recorded in Luke 2:34: Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.studyight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-8.html>

<sup>44</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.studyight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-8.html>

**Stone of Stumbling:** God warns his people "dwelling in Zion" in these passages that the coming of Immanuel will cause confusion. The irony and paradox is that the savior is to be rejected and become a stumbling stone and an offense to many in both Judah and Israel and the natural Jerusalem. He gives strong encouragement to learn these details in advance which are given in these passages where there are thrilling descriptions of Immanuel, the virgin birth child who is in control now and in the future, will control this land which belongs to him. Bind these messages up so you will understand them when the time comes. The restoration of Israel and Judah is again taken for granted in this passage. See notes under 10:24 for the meaning of those "dwelling in Zion."<sup>46</sup>

**<sup>15</sup>And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.**

Cf. Paul's warning to the Ephesians (Acts 20; Rev 3:1ff.)

Many did stumble and fall and were destroyed by rejecting the Messiah (Mt. 21:33-45; 23:37-39; Lk. 21:20-24).

**<sup>16</sup>Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.**

Because some people faithfully preserved the teaching of God and passed on these words from generation to generation, we have the book of Isaiah today. Each of us needs to accept the responsibility to pass on God's Word to our children and grandchildren, encouraging them to love the Bible, read it, and learn from it. Then they will faithfully pass it on to their children and grandchildren.<sup>47</sup>

Bind up (close) the testimony, the record of the prophecy (witnessed by Uriah and Zechariah of Isa. 8:1-2); seal (secure by keeping safe for time to come) the law among my disciples, for it is yet for an appointed time to be fulfilled.<sup>48</sup>

**8:16-18.** Having been warned by God "not to follow the way of this people" (v. 11), Isaiah reaffirmed his dependence on God. By binding the testimony and sealing the Law (cf. v. 20), Isaiah was in effect inscribing it on the hearts of the Lord's disciples. Because Hebrews 2:13 ascribes Isaiah 8:17c-18a to Christ, some interpreters feel that all of Isaiah 8:16-18 was spoken by the Messiah. Certainly the attitude conveyed in these verses was that of the Lord Jesus Christ. But in the context of Isaiah 7-9 these words should be ascribed to Isaiah (with the writer of Heb. applying them to Christ). This was the prophet's attitude in spite of all the opposition he saw around him. Isaiah's confidence is expressed twice in 8:17. I will wait for the Lord and I will put my trust in Him. The fact that the Lord was hiding His face (withholding His blessings) was no surprise to the people of faith. The Lord's withdrawal was because most of the Judahites failed to

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<sup>46</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/7-8.htm>

<sup>47</sup> Life Application Study Bible.

<sup>48</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

follow Him. Even so, Isaiah still had confidence in the Lord, knowing that he and his children were signs and symbols of the Lord's sovereign rule on Mount Zion (Jerusalem; cf. 2:3).

In what way were they signs and symbols? Each one had a name that held significance for the nation's future. Isaiah's name, "Yahweh is salvation," was a reminder that God will ultimately deliver His people. Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz's name reminded the people that the Aram-Israel alliance would be broken by the Assyrians who would plunder those nations. The name Shear-Jashub kept before the people the truth that a believing remnant would return from captivity (cf. 10:21-22).<sup>49</sup>

**Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples:** Waiting on the Lord is connected with His word. We can wait on the Lord by waiting on His word.<sup>50</sup>

Isaiah's audience needed to return to God's revelation and recommit themselves to it, which the prophet led the way in doing (cf. Josh. 24:14-15). Those who followed his lead became his disciples and disciples of the Lord.

"Once his [Isaiah's] message had been rejected by the court (Isa. 7:1-17) and the people (Isa. 8:1-8), he turned to his disciples (Isa. 8:16-18), thus preparing the way for the judgment that God had already pronounced (Isa. 6:11-13)." Jesus did the same thing (cf. John 12—16).<sup>51</sup>

**<sup>17</sup>And I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.**

**And I will wait on the Lord:** Waiting on the Lord is not passive inactivity. It means to wait on the Lord as a waiter would wait on a table. It means to be totally attentive to the Lord, focused on His every move, and responsive to His every desire. At times it means inactivity, but even that is an active inactivity, where we stand before the Lord, totally focused on Him, waiting for what He wants next.

At the time Isaiah spoke, the leaders and the people of Judah were waiting on the armies of Israel and Syria, because they were under attack. As they heard of the danger from the Assyrians, they would be tempted to put their focus on them. But their focus was on these armies, not on the Lord. Isaiah says, Battle against Syria and Israel by setting your focus on the Lord. Prepare for the coming attack from Assyria by waiting on the Lord instead of your enemies.<sup>52</sup>

**[I will look for him]** That is, I will put my trust in Him. As such, it is quoted in Heb. 2:13.

Isaiah committed himself to waiting expectantly for the Lord to act in harmony with His Word, rather than turning to another source for strength and courage (cf. 40:31; Heb. 2:13). Presently God was not doing anything that indicated that He was working. The "house of Jacob" refers to the Northern Kingdom.

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<sup>49</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-8.html>

<sup>51</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-8.html>

**18Behold, 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.**

Two sons of Isaiah, *Majer-shal-hash-baz* (8:3), “Hast ye, haste ye to the spoil”, and *Shear-jashub* (7:3) “A remnant shall return,” a sign of the return at the end of the 70 years captivity (Jer 25:11-12; Dan 9:2); the larger and final fulfillment at the Lord’s return (Heb 2:13-14).

**[I and the children whom the LORD hath given me]** This has a double fulfillment:

1. Of Isaiah and his sons (Isa. 7:3,15-16; 8:1-4,18)
2. Of Messiah and His disciples, the church (quoted in Heb. 2:12-13)<sup>53</sup>

**Here am I and the children whom the Lord has given me! We are for signs and wonders in Israel:** Isaiah had been called to prophesy, and to use his children in his prophetic messages (Isaiah 7:3, 8:3). So he declares, Here am I and the children whom the Lord has given me! It is as if he is saying, Look at us! We are the message!

The name Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz means, Speed to the spoil, hurry to the plunder. This spoke of the coming attack on Syria, Israel, and Judah by Assyria. The name Shear-Jashub means, A Remnant Shall Return. This spoke of the restoration God would eventually bring. The name Isaiah means, Salvation is of the Lord. This spoke of the attitude and hope Judah needed to have.

We are also the children of God, and we are His message. Hebrews 2:11-13 quotes this passage to communicate this truth: For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying . . . Here am I and the children whom God has given Me. Just as much as Isaiahs children were living witnesses of the truth of Gods word, so are we as Gods children.<sup>54</sup>

"The Epistle to the Hebrews 2:13 quotes these words as the distinct words of Jesus, because the spirit of Jesus was in Isaiah,—the spirit of Jesus, which in the midst of this holy family, bound together as it was only by the bands of 'the shadow,' pointed forward to that church of the New Testament which would be bound together by the bands of the true substance.

**19And 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?**

**“Wizards that peep and mutter..”** (Cf Isa 29:4). Lev 19:31. [Saul and the Witch at Endor (1 Sam 28:7-20). Manoah, 2 Kgs 21:6; 2 Kgs 17:17.]

**[peep]** Hebrew: tsaphaph (HSN-<H6850>), to coo or chirp as a bird; whisper. Translated peep (Isa. 8:19; 10:14); whisper (Isa. 29:4); and chatter (Isa. 29:4). It refers to the gentle whisperings which the ancients ascribed to the dead. It was believed that departed spirits did not speak

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<sup>53</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.studyight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-8.html>

clearly, but with an indistinct, suppressed voice. The medium's physical motions implied calling the dead from under the earth.<sup>55</sup>

The phrase “wizards who whisper” is a reference to ventriloquists who sought to disguise their voices as representations of ghosts or spirits from another world.

**[should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?]** Should not the people seek God for revelation instead of the dead? This makes it clear that so-called communications with the dead are not of God and should not be sought.<sup>56</sup>

We are seeing a resurgence of spiritualism today. More than fifteen years ago I wrote, "God forbids His people to dabble in this satanic system. When a people turn from God, they generally go after the occult and abnormal" (see Lev. 20:27; Deut. 18:9-12).

There is a great turning today to the occult, to the spirit world, and to demonology. There are churches of Satan in Southern California and in the San Francisco Bay area. The members worship the Devil; many are worshiping Satan today. Even Christians are dabbling in the occult. Many of them talk about casting out demons. My friend, I am not in that business. I preach the gospel of the grace of God and the Word of God. That will take care of all the demons. I say that we need to let the occult alone because it is dangerous, and it is growing by leaps and bounds. Some people don't believe there is any reality in it, but it is real, just as Satan is real. God warns us against it. Let us heed that warning.<sup>57</sup>

The people would consult mediums and psychics, seeking answers from dead people instead of consulting the living God. God alone knows the future, and only he is eternal. We can trust God to guide us.

When you are in trouble, shouldn't you seek your God? If you can't rely on your God when you are in trouble, then what good is your God?

What sense does it make to seek the dead on behalf of the living? The dead are the dead, the living are the living. The living God speaks through His living Word and His living people to guide us. There is no reason to seek the dead.

This passage also exposes the foolishness of praying to the saints. The exact same question should be asked: Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living?<sup>58</sup>

**8:19-22.** Isaiah again spoke of the people's sinful bent. Most people want to know the future. Even people in Judah were pulled into the pagan practice of consulting mediums and spiritists, who specialized in trying, by whispering and muttering, to contact the dead (cf. comments on Deut. 18:10-12). Isaiah questioned the rationality of going to the dead to find out the future instead of inquiring of the living God. The place to look was in the Law and the testimony (cf. Isa. 8:16), which contained everything the nation needed to know about her future. A person's failure to heed God's Word means he has no spiritual light (cf. John 3:19-20). Spiritists and mediums and those who consult them will eventually be judged by God (Isa. 8:21-22). In their

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<sup>55</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>56</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>57</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.studyight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-8.html>

distress they will look up to God and curse Him and look to the earth where they will face distress and then be thrust into darkness (cf. 2 Peter 2:17). Ironically those who seek to consult the dead will be forced to join them!<sup>59</sup>

Loss of faith in God results in an increase in superstition. The unfaithful in Judah were encouraging their brethren to seek advice about the future from mediums, wizards, and spiritists—instead of from their God (cf. Lev. 19:31; 20:6; Deut. 18:11). Their unusual speech, used to call up spirits, portends unreliable revelations. How ironic it is to consult the dead for information about the living (cf. 1 Sam. 28:6-8)!<sup>60</sup>

**<sup>20</sup>To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is* because *there is no light in them*.**

**[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 prophet's great call to all men to try everything by the revealed Word of God. Anything contrary to the written revelation of God is satanic spirits, not the Holy Spirit. The written Word of God is the true light, and those who want light and truth will follow it and reject all things to the contrary.<sup>61</sup>

**To the law and to the testimony!** Forget about mediums and wizards and the dead. Instead of all that deception and foolishness, To the law and to the testimony! Go to Gods Word!

Law and testimony each refer to Gods Word. We might say that law refers to Gods holy commands, and testimony refers to His dealings with His people as recorded in His Word. But that may be slicing it too thin, because often similar terms for Gods Word are repeated, not for the sake of distinction, but for the sake of emphasis.

How it needs to be proclaimed to our pulpits today: To the law and to the testimony! Enough with your over-use of anecdotes and jokes! Enough with your emphasis on entertainment and sappy stories! Enough with your catering to itching ears! Enough with your hobbyhorses and pet peeves! To the law and to the testimony!

Let us remember, as ministers of the Gospel, what MChayne beautifully said; Depend upon it, said he, it is Gods Word not mans comment upon Gods Word, that saves souls; and I have marked, that if ever we have a conversion at any time, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the conversion is rather traceable to the text, or to some Scripture quoted in the sermon, than to any trite or original saying by the preacher. It is Gods Word that breaks the fetters and sets the prisoner free, it is Gods Word instrumentally that saves souls, and therefore let us bring everything to the touchstone. (Spurgeon)<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> The Bible Knowledge Commentary

<sup>60</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

<sup>61</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

<sup>62</sup> <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-8.html>

If there is a disagreement between God's word and the word of the messenger, it isn't hard to figure out who is wrong. The messenger is wrong. The word judges the messenger; the messenger doesn't judge the word.<sup>63</sup>

Back to the Bible, Isaiah preached. If the predictions of the false prognosticators did not harmonize with written revelation, their counsel was darkness rather than light. The "law" probably refers to the Torah, and the "testimony" to royal tradition and theory. This "testimony" comprised the oral and written traditions passed down from former generations, which, while not inspired, were nevertheless important reliable sources of information.

"More than anything else today there is need that all our thinking be based upon and in conformity with the Holy Scriptures."<sup>64</sup>

**<sup>21</sup>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.**

**[And they shall pass through it]** They who don't live in the light of God's Word will live and walk in spiritual darkness. They shall wander here and there through it (Immanuel's land, Palestine -- the subject of this prophecy, Isa. 8:8) hungry and oppressed by the judgments of God through other nations, fretting in spite of their trust in demons who promise them help; and they will curse the king and God for their miseries (Isa. 8:21). They shall look up to heaven and down to the earth for help and shall find none. They shall have trouble and spiritual darkness and anguish to the point of despair (Isa. 8:22).<sup>65</sup>

**[hardly bestead and hungry]** This means that people who look to evil spirits will be so confused and in such darkness that they will be beset with many troubles and suffer many hardships.<sup>66</sup>

After rejecting God's plan for them, the people of Judah would blame God for their trials. People continually blame God for their self-induced problems. How do you respond to the unpleasant results of your own choices? Where do you fix the blame? Instead of blaming God, look for ways to grow through your bad choices and failures.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-8.html>

<sup>64</sup> <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

<sup>65</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>66</sup> Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

<sup>67</sup> Life Application Study Bible.

**22And they shall look unto the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness.**

These final verses reveal the final issue of pursuing a life of disobedience which will lead you into spiritualism. The result is dimness, darkness, and despair. Disobedience will take you there every time.<sup>68</sup>

When they forsake Gods word and trust in mediums and wizards and the dead, they are courting darkness, not light.

Dimness of Anguish: Isaiah is noted for poetic hyperbole and the use of "play on words." The meaning of the text is often dependent on these untranslatable literary devices. Sometimes these are merely rhyming words which do not rhyme in translation and therefore the play upon words is missed. At other occasions there is the use of "double meaning" or a similarity in sound and meaning that continues the idea in the context of a passage as the form of the word may continue to be used to carry along what is being spoken about in the context. When the device of "double entendre" is connected to words that have similar written configuration and /or sound it is not possible to show it in translation as the translated words will have no such similarities and the original meaning is obscured or at least less certain, unless we are told. This is noticed by Keil and Delitzsch's commentary on Isaiah in the use of the terms that are repeated in Isaiah 8:22 - 9:1. There is a play on the words "mu'aph and mutsaq," that are properly commented on by Delitzsch as such a play on similar sounding and similar meaning words. The literary device of "play on words" is more pronounced in Isaiah than any other prophet. Rawlinson says:

Play upon words is also a common feature in Hebrew literature but only a few of the sacred writers use it so frequently or give it such prominence as Isaiah...As, however, this ornament, depending generally on the assonance of the Hebrew words, is necessarily lost in translation and can only be appreciated by a Hebrew scholar, we do not propose further to dwell on it.

Even though the subtlety of the use of play on words is lost in translation it should not be thought of as an ornament. It is a part of the inspired thought process and in at least one case it is a vehicle of miraculous revelation. (The use of the word Nazar or Branch) It is also an essential part of the connecting thoughts in the context of 8:22 to 9:2, where the sense is lost by not seeing the mind of Isaiah. "Play on words" establishes "dimness of anguish" as that which is left unmentioned in the contrasts of verse 9:1 following. It also makes it clearer that the verses are linked and it identifies the "first affliction" with Tiglath-Pilezer. The "play on words" also requires that the contrast of the "second time" will also be "dimness of anguish."<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

<sup>69</sup> <http://www.moellerhaus.com/7-8.htm>