

Isaiah 8:14-22
March 25, 2018

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Before I could get on the volunteer shuttle bus to the WGC Dell Match Play event, I had to pass security. First, they asked me to open my fanny pack so they could inspect it. Once it passed inspection, they attached an adhesive “security” label around the strap of my bag to indicate it passed inspection. Second, they asked me to stand in place and hold out my arms so that they could run the wand around the perimeter of my body. Once that was done, I was allowed on the bus.

Q: Why do you think they went to all that trouble? What were they trying to detect? [Let people engage. They want to identify anything that is harmful and remove it.]

Transition: You might recall from last week that God placed His hand on Isaiah’s shoulder to get his undivided attention. His message to him was “don’t be like this people who are living in fear. Don’t worry about the things they’re worried about. In fact, if you’re going to fear at all, then fear ME! Then He started to give reasons as to why we should fear HIM!

Last week, we learned that God should be feared because He is our ALMIGHTY God, and He is a HOLY God. Today, we are going to read additional reasons WHY Isaiah (and the Israelites) should be fearing Him. But more importantly, we will be reminded as to where we should place our trust, and where NOT to place our trust. As we go through today’s lesson, we might ask ourselves if we’ve misplaced our trust in any way.

Analogy: If God took a wand and moved it around our head and our hearts, would you be setting it off because He detected worry and fear? Or would it be silent because your trust is in Him?

As we go through today’s study, I still want us to succeed in maintaining a strong faith in God BY remembering the ATTRIBUTES of God that we see in today’s study. Let’s start with v.14-18.

BOOK (NIV 1984):

V.14:

- and he will be a sanctuary; but for both houses of Israel he will be a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. And for the people of Jerusalem he will be a trap and a snare.

V.15:

- Many of them will stumble; they will fall and be broken, they will be snared and captured.”

V.16:

- Bind up the testimony and seal up the law (inscribing it on the hearts) among my disciples.

V.17:

- I will wait for the LORD, who is hiding his face (withholding His blessings) from the house of Jacob (b/c the Israelites failed to follow Him or put their faith in Him). I will put my trust in him.

V.18:

- Here am I, and the children the LORD has given me. We are signs and symbols in Israel from the LORD Almighty, who dwells on Mount Zion.

Process Observations/Questions:

Q v.14: What ATTRIBUTES do you see in this verse? [God is our “sanctuary” and our “rock” for those who believe.]

Q: What does it mean for God to be our “sanctuary.” [He’s always our place of refuge. He’s that safe person we always want to be around. HE envelops us with His presence, so He is our sanctuary at all times.]

Q: What does it mean for God to be our “rock?” [He is our chosen and precious cornerstone. X-Ref I Peter 2:6-8]

Q v.15: What happens to those who don’t believe? [They will stumble and fall; they will be snared and captured.]

Q: They will be “snared and captured” by whom? [God! He will be the means of destruction for those who refuse to believe in Him. The Message uses the word picture of God being like a barbed-wire fence that many will run into.]

Transition: Having been warned by God “not to follow the way of this people” (v. 11), Isaiah reaffirmed his faith in God. Let’s look at v.16-18 to see the three ways he will do it.

Q v.16: The nation had rejected Isaiah’s message, but what was Isaiah’s first way to show his faith in God? [“Bind up the testimony and seal up the law (inscribing it on the hearts) among my disciples.”]

Observation: His true disciples received God’s Word and treasured it in their hearts. He was going to continue to teach God’s Word.

Q v.17: What was Isaiah’s second way to show his faith in God? [He was willing to be patient for God’s Word to be fulfilled; He will continue to put his trust in God;]

Q: How do you stay “patient” for God’s Word to be fulfilled? [Let people engage. Ex: praying for Gene’s salvation – this is God’s will, thus I’m confident that someday this will happen.]

Q v.18: What was Isaiah’s third way to show his faith in God? [Continue to be a sign and symbol in Israel.]

Q: What do you think Isaiah means by being “signs and symbols in Israel?” [Isaiah’s name means “Yahweh is Salvation.” The names of his two sons along with “Immanuel” reminds God’s

people of his ongoing presence. Each one had a name that held significance for the nation's future.]

Transition: Now Isaiah speaks of the people's sinful bent and their desire to know the future.

[Read Isaiah 8:19-22]

V.19:

- When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living?

V.20:

- To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn.

V.21:

- Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land; when they are famished, they will become enraged and, looking upward, will curse their king and their God.

V.22:

- Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness.

Process Observations/Questions:

Q v.19: Who did the people of Judah often consult? [Mediums and spiritists]

Q: Who should they have been consulting?! [The Law and the testimony, which contained everything the nation needed to know about her future.]

Q v.20: Why should everyone avoid a medium or spiritist? [A person's failure to heed God's Word means he has no spiritual light. If a person is consulting someone associated with the demonic world, they have by definition *increased their spiritual darkness*. God's Word is our only dependable light in this world's darkness.]

Q v.21-22: What is the destination for mediums or spiritist? [Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land; when they are famished, they will become enraged and, looking upward, will curse their king and their God. Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness. Ironically, those who seek to consult the dead will be forced to join them!]

Q: What does this remind you of? [People who have chosen to reject Christ and face hell.]

Q: Do you see any ATTRIBUTES of God that would inspire you to maintain a strong faith in God? [Just]

LOOK:

It's so important to remind ourselves of WHO HE IS. If fear and worry creep into our hearts, the Holy Spirit will detect it and make you aware of it. He knows it's harmful to our spiritual and

emotional well-being. So if it's detected, remember that we have a God who is faithful and trustworthy to take care of any needs or concerns or worries of any kind.

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *Be Comforted* (pp. 35–36). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

They chose a snare instead of a sanctuary (Isa. 8:14–15). Isaiah compared the Lord to a sanctuary, a rock that is a refuge for believers but a snare to those who rebel. The image of Messiah as a rock is found again in 28:16 (and see 1 Peter 2:4–7 and Rom. 9:33). “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Ps. 46:1).

They chose darkness instead of light (Isa. 8:16–22). The nation had rejected Isaiah's message, but that didn't mean that his ministry was a failure. The true disciples of the Lord received God's Word and treasured it in their hearts. By faith, the prophet was willing to wait patiently for God's Word to be fulfilled.

But even if his words fell on deaf ears, Isaiah and his family were themselves a “living prophecy” that the nation could not ignore. Isaiah's name means “Jehovah is salvation,” and this would remind the people to trust the Lord to deliver them. His older son's name means “A remnant shall return,” and this was a word of promise when it looked as though the nation was destroyed. A believing remnant did return to Jerusalem from Babylon and they were encouraged by what Isaiah wrote in chapters 40–66. The name of the younger son, Maher-shalal-hash-baz, means “quick to plunder, swift to the spoil,” and pointed to the fall of Syria and Ephraim. Verse 18 is quoted in Hebrews 2:13–14 and applied to the Lord Jesus Christ.

In their time of crisis, instead of turning to God for wisdom, the people consulted demons (Isa. 8:19; Deut. 18:10–12); and this only increased their moral and spiritual darkness. The increase of the occult in our own day is evidence that people are deliberately rejecting God's Word and turning to Satan's lies. “If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn” (Isa. 8:20, NIV). Judah's leaders anxiously looked for the dawning of a new day, but they saw only a deepening darkness. God's Word is our only dependable light in this world's darkness (Ps. 119:105; 2 Peter 1:19–21).

Martin, J. A. (1985). *Isaiah*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, pp. 1051–1052). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

8:14–15. 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.

d. The names that confirm God's coming help (8:16–18)

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 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).

e. The coming deliverance of Judah by God's Word (8:19–22)

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 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!