

The Book of the Prophet ISAIAH

Chapter 8

Theme: God judged Israel and Judah by Assyria for hating His rule and word for alliances and witchcraft.

Outline:

- 1-7 Assyria to Destroy Israel and Syria
- 8 Assyria Would Also Punish Judah
- 9-12 Associations Would Not Work
- 13-15 God Would Be a Sanctuary or Snare
- 16-22 Trust God's Revelation Only

Preparatory Reading: II Kings 15:27 - 16:20; II Chronicles 28:1-27

Related Links:

- A. *Introduction to the Book of Isaiah (outline)* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/isaiah-introduction.pdf>.
- B. *Overview of O.T. Prophets (slides)* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/old-testament-prophets-slides.pdf>.
- C. *Chronological Table and Notes for Prophets* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/prophets-table-with-notes.pdf>.
- D. *The Prophets of God (sermon outline)* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/prophets-of-god.pdf>.
- E. *Bring It Back to the Bible* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/sermons/scripture/bring-it-back-to-the-bible/sermon.php>.
- F. *Author of Confusion* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/sermons/god/is-god-the-author-of-confusion/sermon.php>.
- G. *Much about Witchcraft (sermon)* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/sermons/heresy/witchcraft/sermon.php>.
- H. *A Vision of God (sermon outline)* ... <http://letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/vision-of-god.pdf>.
- I. *The Christian and Politics (sermon outline)* ... <http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/pdf/christian-and-politics-2.pdf>.
- J. *Proverb Commentary for Proverbs 16:5* ... http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/proverbs/commentaries/16_05.php.
- K. *Proverb Commentary for Proverbs 11:21* ... http://www.letgodbetruerue.com/proverbs/commentaries/11_21.php.

Introduction:

- A. Observe in this chapter, like much of Isaiah, fabulous jewels interspersed with warnings of judgment.
- B. Isaiah chapters 7-10 should be read together, for they form a section about Assyria against both houses.
 - 1. Isaiah 6 is relatively unrelated to Assyria for its other considerations, and so are chapters 11-12.
 - 2. Assyrians are specifically named eight times in these chapters (Is 7:17-18,20; 8:4,7; 10:5,12,24).
- C. We call this section (6-12), *Book of Immanuel*, for His name and emphasis (Is 7:14; 8:8; 11:1 – 12:6).
 - 1. Here is a gospel prophecy, Messiah jewels, and Messiah details (Is 7:14; 8:14,18; 9:6; 11:1 – 12:6).
 - 2. The previous section (1-5) was all about judgment; the next section (13-24) is about other nations.
- D. Review nations and kings that are in play in this and the following chapters for ease of understanding.
 - 1. Review four nations ... Judah (Jerusalem), Israel (Samaria), Syria (Damascus), Assyria (Nineveh).
 - 2. Four kings ... Ahaz (Judah), Pekah of Remaliah (Israel), Rezin (Syria), Tiglathpileser (Assyria).
 - 3. Assyria was a large and powerful empire greater than Syria and Israel and comparable to Babylon.
 - 4. Most know little of Assyria since Daniel did not mention it, because he lived under the Babylonian.
 - 5. Kings of Assyria after Tiglathpileser are Shalmaneser, Sargon, Sennacherib, and then Esarhaddon.
 - 6. Kings of Judah of Isaiah's life – Uzziah (52 years), Jotham (16), Ahaz (16), and Hezekiah (29).
 - 7. Their character was Uzziah (good), Jotham (good), Ahaz (very bad), or Hezekiah (very good).
- E. America is fearful, profane, and wicked comparable to Ahaz, so they should expect similar judgment.

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

- A. After warning Ahaz and Judah of judgment by Assyria (Is 7:17-25), God told him more.
- B. God wanted a very formal and official record about Isaiah's son, Mahershalalhashbaz.
 - 1. This lad's name would reveal a timed prophecy of God destroying Israel's alliance.
 - 2. The conception, which should not be overlooked, would give Judah a living promise.
- C. What is written in the next verses is all you need to know of this boy with a long name.
 - 1. It is a shame commentators invent things about Shearjashub and his younger brother.
 - 2. All that matters is that in 2-3 years Assyria would destroy the alliance against Judah.

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

- A. It appears that Isaiah had no more to say directly to Ahaz, but to give a sign for Judah.
- B. This must be one of the most public, documented conceptions, births, and names ever.
 - 1. Isaiah took two witnesses to confirm an object lesson from God to time a prophecy.
 - 2. Isaiah did not write directly, but he used secretaries, much like Paul did in the N.T.
 - 3. These men were faithful, so their testimony of this timed prophecy would hold up.
 - 4. Most men are not faithful, so that such men are a blessing and rare (Pr 14:5; 20:6).

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

- A. We understand this woman to be Isaiah's wife who participated in procreating this sign.
 - 1. We reject any idea this woman was a virgin Isaiah impregnated to fulfill Isaiah 7:14.
 - 2. We reject any idea this was merely a vision of the event and not sex with a birth.
 - 3. Here is a wonderful powerful couple in a unique role to generate a timed prophecy.
- B. God told Isaiah to give his son a special name, which was documented by witnesses.
 - 1. *Mahershalalhashbaz* = speed to take the prey and spoil; Assyria as hunter (Is 8:3-4).
 - 2. The people now had another living indicator by God and Isaiah of their protection.

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.

- A. The name foretold an event before he would be 18 months (when such words are said).
 - 1. There is not a great deal of difference between the time interval in Is 7:15 and here.
 - 2. Isaiah 7:15-16 could cover three to five years for forming conscience and conviction.

3. Isaiah 8:1-4 could cover 27 months or longer for gestation and first, simple words.
- B. The event would be Assyria, under Tiglathpileser, crushing the alliance against Judah.
- C. Isaiah had two sons with special names to be seen again in this chapter (Isaiah 8:16-18).
 1. *Shearjashub* = a remnant shall return; this prophecy was past (Is 6:13; 10:21-22).
 2. *Mahershalalhashbaz* = speed to take prey and spoil; Assyria the hunter (Is 8:3-4).
 3. The two boys had special names for signs and wonders of deliverance from enemies.
 4. God would save to return (Isaiah 1:9; 6:13; 10:20-22; 11:11,16; 37:4,31-32; 46:3).
 5. His name looked backward (Is 6:13) and forward (Is 10:20-22) in Isaiah's preaching.
 6. Any effort to make these boys more meaningful cannot honestly be in Isaiah 7-10.
 7. It is a shame some want to speculate and invent purposes for God sending the two.
- D. If there was ever a get-rich-quick scheme that worked, it is right here for Tiglathpileser!

5 The LORD spake also unto me again, saying,

- A. After naming his son *Mahershalalhashbaz* to destroy the alliance, God gave him more.
 1. You just read all the Bible has to say about him. Do not try to invent more for him.
 2. This is not Immanuel, and Immanuel is not this lad. They are entirely unrelated sons.
 3. The only commonality is the timeframe for Judah's deliverance ... about 2-3 years.
- B. Let every reader with eager anticipation appreciate the words, *The LORD spake also*.
- C. We want to know every word of the living God that we can get (Is 8:16-17; Luke 4:4).

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

- A. God sees and knows all acts and attitudes – including the wicked Israelites (ten tribes).
- B. They rejected calm water of Shiloah – pool of Siloah or Siloam (Neh 3:15; John 9:7,11).
 1. This metaphor or similitude compared Judah's quiet kingdom to mighty Assyria.
 2. The reign of the house of David under Jehovah could have been for their great peace.
 3. Instead they had chosen a conspiracy of a wicked king and a pagan against Judah.
 4. Your life can be quiet, peaceful, prosperous by choosing submission to God's will.
- C. They would get instead the overflowing and wild waters of Assyria, Tigris or Euphrates.

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:

- A. Israel chose to rebel against Jehovah and Judah and conspire with Syria against Judah.
- B. Since they refused the gentle water of Shiloah, the mighty Euphrates would drown them.
 1. The capital of Assyria was at Nineveh, which is situation on the shore of the Tigris.
 2. The general use of a great river is Euphrates (Gen 15:18; Deut 1:7; Josh 1:4; etc.).
 3. Babylon was built on the Euphrates, but the two eastern powers were closely related.

- C. The difference between the stream Shiloah and river Euphrates reflected an evil choice.
- D. Water is safe within its bounds, but this water would rage out of control to destroy Israel.

***** Assyria Would Also Punish Judah – Verse 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.

- A. God through Isaiah warned Judah that the king of Assyria would also ravage their land.
 - 1. Isaiah comforted Ahaz that Assyria would destroy Israel and Syria (Is 7:4-8; 8:1-7).
 - 2. Tiglathpileser crushed Syria (II Kgs 16:9), but he also hurt Judah (II Chr 28:16-21).
- B. The extent of this prophecy reaches to Sennacherib, described shortly (Isaiah 10:5-20).
 - 1. Understand that Isaiah may describe long processes as single events (Is 13:19-22).
 - 2. The Assyrians raided Israel many times (I Chr 5:26; II Kgs 15:29; 17:1-6; Ezra 4:2).
 - 3. The terms of this judgment far exceed the distress that Tiglathpileser caused Ahaz.
 - 4. Sennacherib did just this – took the land but not the head, Jerusalem (Isaiah 36:1-2).
 - 5. Sennacherib, king of Assyria, took all Judah’s fenced cities but could not its capital.
 - 6. He definitely overflowed his banks and filled Judah, but could not drown the head.
- C. All the details of the Assyrian scourge on Judah is yet to come – Isaiah chapters 36-39.
- D. Compare, *Immanuel*, here, to the words, *for God is with us*, applied to Judah (Is 8:10).
 - 1. This name and those words mean exactly the same thing. God was the help of Judah.
 - 2. No matter what punishment God did mete out, He would keep Judah for Immanuel.

***** Associations Would Not Work – Verses 9-12 *****

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.

- A. From various angles the prophet Isaiah comforted the Jews, but only the elect believed.
 - 1. Chapter 7 in its first half is full of comfort to Ahaz, which was rejected by that Ahaz.
 - 2. Isaiah named a son *Mahershalalhashbaz* for the Assyrians crushing the association.
 - 3. He had called the land of Judah, *Immanuel*, for God’s protection for His Son (Is 8:8).
- B. God by His ambassador and prophet mocked the idea of confederate armies working.
 - 1. Remember, the danger at hand was association of Israel (ten tribes) with the Syrians.
 - 2. The nation of Israel was larger than Judah, and Syria was a major force at that time.
 - 3. When the association and confederation was known, it caused great fear (Isaiah 7:2).
 - 4. But there is also temptation (likely already executed) of Assyria joining with Judah.

5. It is quite natural and normal to count armies and forecast outcomes (Lu 14:31-32).
 6. But there is another way to look at situations – by trusting the Ruler of all armies.
 7. By the terms of the following verses to the chapter’s end, Isaiah blasted Judah here.
- C. God here mocked those of Israel for conspiring with Syria to overthrow Judah (Is 7:2).
1. There is one verse to warn Judah that Assyria would come back to bite (Isaiah 8:8).
 2. Isaiah used the first seven verses of the chapter against Israel and Syria (Is 8:1-7).
 3. Do you get the message? *Ye shall be broken in pieces!* Isaiah declared it three times.
 4. They could gird themselves for war any way they chose, but God would break them.
- D. But Isaiah had just as much reason to rebuke the foolish notion of Judah to join Assyria.
1. His ministry was mainly to Judah and Jerusalem, and they sought to Tiglathpileser.
 2. When Isaiah said, *For God is with us* (Isaiah 8:10), he could not speak so of Israel.
 3. When God warned Isaiah about talking a confederacy, it was of his people Judah.
- E. Solomon, though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished (Pr 11:21; 16:5).
- F. It is a shame that so-called Christian patriots will waste even a minute on conspiracies.
1. They exalt fake insider information, which is from those with no security clearance.
 2. They find conspiracies everywhere e.g. Rothschilds, Rockefellers, Russians, etc.
 3. They worry about Communists in our government here and Cuba-Russia alliances.
 4. God condemns even meddling with those that talk of political change (Pr 24:21-22).
 5. But God promised to break enemy alliances or conspiracies in pieces for His people.
 6. The most important thing for us is to examine and prove that God is with us (Is 8:10).
 7. It is not difficult – it is in the next verses – God is with those that sanctify Him alone.

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

- A. When men conspire together and make military or political promises, it means nothing.
1. Every election cycle requires us to hear the craziest promises or threats in four years.
 2. Those that waste their time believing or reading about conspiracies tempt the LORD.
 3. If all the men of all nations joined together, as they soon will, God still wins easily.
 4. If God is on our side, we surely should not fear man, whose breath is in his nostrils.
- B. The most crucial matter of life, of military or political fear, is to have God on your side.
1. The glorious promises of Psalm 91 are only for those with God as their hiding place.
 2. The glorious promises of Romans 8:28-39 are only for elect people that love Him.
 3. You get God on your side by following the rule in the next verses – sanctify Him.
- C. The remedy for Judah or Israel was not an earthly confederacy but repentance to heaven.
- D. Compare, *for God is with us*, here, to the name *Immanuel* applied to Judah (Isaiah 8:8).
1. These words and that name mean exactly the same thing. God was the help of Judah.
 2. No matter what punishment God did mete out, He would keep Judah for Immanuel.

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,

- A. God's true ministers have a holy calling to separate from all false doctrine and teachers.
- B. Isaiah described the LORD's charge against conspiracies to be said with a strong hand.
 - 1. God gave the condemnation in verses 9-10 with authoritative judgment against them.
 - 2. We must read the Bible for emphasis by repetition, intensity, promises, threats, etc.
 - 3. Kings and nations are the highest authority and power on earth, but God is greater.
 - 4. When we worry, we offend Him (Is 7:4-9); if we associate, we offend Him (Ps 146).
 - 5. Recall God's harsh and severe language for speaking evil of dignities, meddling, etc.
- C. God had blasted the people of Israel and Syria and other nations, and He warned Isaiah.
 - 1. God's ministers must separate from all false doctrine and teachers to be faithful.
 - 2. Sometimes they have to go a different direction and not walk with false teachers.
 - 3. Read Paul's warning to Timothy to withdraw from preachers (I Tim 6:5; II Tim 3:5).
 - 4. He strictly warned church leaders at Rome and Titus (Rom 16:17-18; Titus 3:9-11).
- D. There are popular fads and false doctrines that can endear a pastor to people. So what!
 - 1. The charge is *Preach the Word!* The method is to do it *intensely* regardless of people.
 - 2. Paul's charge to Timothy for perilous times of compromise is vital (II Tim 4:1-4).
 - 3. Ministers must show a difference by their lives (Heb 13:7; I Tim 4:12; I Pet 1:1-4).
 - 4. Carl McIntyre and false teachers like him with a political niche pollute Christianity.
 - 5. Pastors should have no regard for popularity with people, especially in known error.

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. God warned the prophet Isaiah to not agree or participate with association-minded Jews.
 - 1. Here is a wonderful rule to a minister – do not agree or participate with false teachers.
 - 2. Remember Micaiah and his rejection of the ministerial association (I Kgs 22:13-14)!
 - 3. Read Paul's warning to Timothy to withdraw from preachers (I Tim 6:5; II Tim 3:5).
- B. Understand the terms of this verse – for they may appear a little obscure at first pass.
 - 1. God told Isaiah not to agree or support any discussion for an alliance with Assyria.
 - 2. Isaiah was not to say ... *A confederacy* ... meaning approval ... to any discussing it.
 - 3. Much more is intended here by the words ... *A confederacy* ... than just the syllables.
 - 4. God told Isaiah not to fall for those despairing about Israel's confederacy with Syria.
 - 5. Note the whole verse – the warning was not to fear what the people feared (Is 7:2).
 - 6. The warning here is against fear of a confederacy causing desire for a confederacy.
- C. God's ministers should have greater faith and less fear than those they serve for God.
 - 1. There was indeed great danger in the combination of two nations against just Judah.
 - 2. However, if anyone understood God's promises thus far, it should have been Isaiah.
 - 3. Paul told the Hebrews to submit to Christian teachers to follow their faith (Heb 13:7).
 - 4. God prepares His men in ways to not fear ordinary fear e.g. politics, enemies, etc.
 - 5. Sanctifying God for His sanctuary require fearing and dreading Him alone (Is 8:13).

- D. Of course, associations or confederacies are allowed, if pursued after total faith in God.
1. Abram had confederates, and he used them, and God blessed them (Gen 14:13-24).
 2. David had pagan friends and used them widely, and God blessed it (I Kings 5:1-12).
 3. There are many more Bible examples e.g. Joseph, Hezekiah, Esther, Nehemiah, etc.
 4. There are practical, ethical examples e.g. praying to God to bless medical treatments.

***** *God Would Be a Sanctuary or Snare – Verses 13-15* *****

13 Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.

- A. This wonderful axiom is how we should approach every aspect of life now and forever.
1. The verse alone is beautiful and profound – nothing should move us from Jehovah.
 2. There is a tremendous blessing in the next verse, but it is merely icing on this cake.
- B. The LORD Jehovah is God of hosts; we should fear and dread Him only in our lives.
1. Before you bask in God’s love, make sure you know He must be your fear and dread.
 2. We should never be tempted to look anywhere else for help but to the Creator God.
 3. Efforts to escape chastening or judgment by natural means is an offence to this God.
 4. Fearing a confederacy is folly – fear God; desiring a confederacy is folly – trust God.
 5. Jesus told His apostles to fear only God, Who can far outdo any men (Luke 12:4-5).
- C. How can a person sanctify Jehovah? Consecrate and identify Him as your only helper.
1. Sanctify = consecrate, or set apart, or designate for divine worship, or to make holy.
 2. We sanctify God Himself when we by stated purpose and loyal action look to Him.
 3. We let nothing else creep in to compromise total reliance and expectation from Him.
 4. We neither fear the enemy we face or think to trust natural escape – He is all in all.
 5. Peter used these words to help N.T. believers facing trial and persecution (I Pet 3:15).
- D. Fear of an enemy is not a sin, if you put your trust in God, otherwise it can be (Ps 56:3).
1. To the degree you fear anything in life other than Him is to compromise (Isaiah 7:4).
 2. To the degree you dread anything else is to doubt His promises or power. God forbid!
 3. Nehemiah feared Artaxerxes greatly, but he quickly prayed to Jehovah (Neh 2:1-8).

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.

- A. The LORD Jehovah is a sanctuary – a place to hide – for any that sincerely seek Him.
1. David wrote a glorious promise about God’s pavilion in the time of trouble (Ps 27:5).
 2. David wrote a glorious description of God as hiding place in such times (Psalm 91).
 3. Many examples – Joseph in Egypt, Hannah with Peninnah, Daniel in Babylon, etc.

- B. But in the gospel of Jesus Christ, He is a sanctuary from the just wrath of God for sin.
 1. We cannot overlook this application, for this verse is used by the apostles (I Pet 2:8).
 2. We pass on Paul's use of similar words in Romans 9:32-33 for differences (Is 28:16).
 3. There is no sanctuary like the Lord Jesus Christ to save us in the great day of wrath.
 4. When reading Isaiah, always be looking for these gospel-era jewels kindly inserted.
- C. But God's Messiah – the virgin-born Immanuel – would offend and anger most Jews.
 1. They wanted a carnal leader to throw off Rome and give them Semitic superiority.
 2. They wanted earthly blessings of a carnal sort and had little regard for God's heaven.
 3. They put their trust in their birth certificates identifying Abraham, rather than God.
 4. There was a great division because of Jesus (Luke 2:34-35; John 7:43; 9:16; 10:19).
 5. Because they were offended in Him, Jesus judged them horrible (Matthew 22:1-14).
- D. What is there about Jesus Christ that disappoints you? Get over it, and get over it now.
 1. If you say nothing disappoints about you about Him, then why not serve Him better?
 2. You say by actions that He is not worthy of your attention or affection (Mal 1:6-14).
 3. What of His religion disappoints or frustrates you? Get over it! Hate such thoughts!
 4. Do not be afraid to pray in public (like restaurants) or you move toward the Jews.
- E. Jesus summarized it – *Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me* (Matt 11:6).
- F. Jesus condensed it – *Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind* (Matt 15:12-14).
- G. Jesus summarized it – *Fall on me to be broken, but I will grind to powder* (Matt 21:44).

15 And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.

- A. Contrast the many here to the remnant not blinded – the many rejectors to few believers.
 1. The wide gate and broad way leads to destruction; most Jews went into it (Mat 7:13).
 2. The strait gate and narrow way leads to life, and few – remnant – found it (Mat 7:14).
- B. We do not alter the gospel message to multiply the multitude, not ever (II Cor 2:14-17).
 1. Consider John 6 and how Jesus got rid of the insincere seekers there (John 6:24-71).
 2. Paul had intentional efforts not to remove the stumblingstone (I Cor 1:22-24; 2:1-5).
 3. Paul did not kowtow to philosophers in Athens, he rebuked them (Acts 17:22-31).
 4. Though Paul's preaching was fabulous, the Jews stumbled at it (Acts 13:38-52).

***** *Trust God's Revelation Only – Verses 16-22* *****

16 Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.

- A. Revelation of valuable information is one of the most precious gifts man can receive.
 1. The more valuable the information and its effect on men, it enhances the revelation.
 2. There is no revelation or information that can compare to God's prophecies of Christ.
 3. How terrible the judgment of lies and how great the blessing of truth (II The 2:9-13).

- B. God declared to Isaiah His revelation of truth was to be bound up and sealed from most.
 1. Recall how God had commissioned Isaiah to blind and hide the truth (Isaiah 6:9-10).
 2. This is also one of the great features of the 70-weeks prophecy to Daniel (Dan 9:24).
 3. For the key feature of Daniel ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/six-things-determined.pdf>.
- C. But God has His elect remnant, which know the truth of His Son and duties (Rev 12:17).

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

- A. The terrible judgment of blinding deception is not for those who fear and love Jehovah.
 1. How terrible the judgment of lies and how great the blessing of truth (II The 2:9-13).
 2. God righteously hid His face, presence, power from both houses of Israel (Is 8:14).
 3. Jehovah God hid His face, presence, and power from His own church – His people.
- B. God hides His truth from wise and prudent rebels but reveals it to childish believers!
 1. Isaiah was not deterred – read his commitment and hope of blessing by and in God.
 2. Jesus made this glorious observation and declared an axiom of truth (Mat 11:25-27).
 3. While Annas and Caiaphas could not see anything, a eunuch and a jailor saw it all!
 4. Scribes, priests, Levites, and lawyers were blind; redneck fisherman were masters!
 5. Nicodemus could not follow easy doctrine; several Marys were way past the Jews!
- C. Let every reader tremble to read the judgment but rejoice to read this encouragement.
 1. Do you love being a babe? Like Solomon declared? You shall receive the blessing!
 2. How do you show or tell the LORD Jehovah that you are His infant seeking truth?
 3. Are you always open to His revelation, counting Him and His things above all else?

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.

- A. These words may first be applied to Isaiah and his sons with special names of salvation.
 1. *Shearjashub* = the remnant shall return; this prophecy is declared later (Is 10:21-22).
 2. *Mahershalalhashbaz* = speed to take prey and spoil; Assyria the hunter (Is 8:3-4).
 3. The two boys had special names for signs and wonders of deliverance from enemies.
 4. But when reading Isaiah, more than any other writer, see more than just one meaning.
 5. This glorious Messianic prophecy has more gospel jewels inserted than any other.
- B. The mighty God – the Almighty God – the LORD Jehovah reigns from mount Zion.
 1. He is the LORD of hosts – meaning all the armies of heaven’s angels do His will.
 2. Mount Zion in the Old Testament was the fortress of God’s church/city of Jerusalem.
 3. We have a new and better Mt. Sion with David’s son reigning there (Heb 12:22-24)!
- C. Though both natural and spiritual were hid from the Jews, the gospel news is greatest.
- D. Jesus took these words and applied them to you and me before God’s throne (Heb 2:13).
 1. The spiritual signs and wonders are God’s great salvation of sinners by Jesus Christ.

2. God designed salvation to overwhelm the angels with His wise mercy (Eph 3:10).
3. They desire to grasp these things – things greater than winning wars (I Pet 1:10-12).

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?

- A. This and the next verse are a pair for the antidote and response to blasphemous sorcery.
- B. The Jews would say to the true followers of God to join them in their use of witchcraft.
 1. When men are terrified, like Saul and Americans, they consult sorcerers. God forbid!
 2. A familiar spirit is a devil that may be called up by a witch, most usually a female.
 3. A wizard is a male witch or wise man skilled in dark arts of sorcery and witchcraft.
 4. Both in this context are necromancers – peeping and muttering from dead persons.
 5. Peeping and muttering are part of the deception – muffled answers from the grave.
 6. God ordered the death penalty for all such persons (Lev 20:27; Deut 18:9-14; etc.).
 7. Saul, much like Ahaz, went to a witch with a familiar spirit to call up poor Samuel.
 8. For more about witchcraft ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/heresy/witchcraft/sermon.php>.
- C. The second half of this verse – the questions – are either by the sorcerers or believers.
 1. If the sorcerers, then it is further explanation for their religious efforts to find truth.
 2. If believers, then it is Isaiah's advice to the faithful for how to rebuke the sorcerers.
 3. We choose to make this the faithful's response to sinners by virtue of how to answer.
 4. Verse 19 needs a response, for a response is implied, *When they shall say unto you*.
 5. Verse 20 is not an answer to sorcerers, but it is the truth to believers about sorcerers.
 6. The sorcerers did not believe they were contacting God but rather the spirit world.
 7. The sorcerers were in cahoots with the idolaters in the land – idols were their gods.
 8. The colon is inferior only to the period to interrupt and separate clauses or reasoning.
- D. Therefore, the questions are Isaiah's advice for the faithful to mock the evil sorcerers.
 1. When solicited to devils, they were to say, *Should not a people seek unto their God?*
 2. The ellipsis is clearly implied to also say, *Should living people seek to dead people?*
- E. We ought to have a strong response to all that even gets close to anything of witchcraft.
 1. Christians should hate everything from Merlin the magician to Harry Potter novels.
 2. Christians should hate everything from Ouija boards to horoscopes to palm reading.
 3. The only living and true God is our Father, and He hates all such pretenses to truth.
 4. For more about witchcraft ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/heresy/witchcraft/sermon.php>.

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.

- A. This is the axiom of all true followers of God – our only and final authority is scripture.
- B. The law and testimony is scripture – these are two of many terms for it (Ps 19:7-10) – see law, testimony, statutes, commandment, fear, judgments. See also Psalm 119:1-176.

- C. We have one and only one final authority in all matters of life and eternity – the Bible.
1. We esteem each point of God’s revelation to be right and hate all else (Ps 119:128).
 2. Any idea or opinion contrary to our scriptures has no validity and is true darkness.
 3. This form of absolute and dogmatic speech is how we should reverence the scripture.
 4. Paul’s judgment of any idea or opinion against scripture was also harsh (I Ti 6:3-5).
 5. Scripture is fully sufficient to make pastors perfect in all parts of life (II Ti 3:16-17).
 6. Response and remedy for perilous times is to preach the word (II Tim 3:1-5; 4:1-4).
 7. We should mock any other source of truth and wisdom like Isaiah did here (Is 8:19)!

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.

- A. *Hardly bestead* = sorely beset and pressed by evil circumstances ... not barely troubled.
- B. The Jews, whether Judah or Israel matters little, would wander in their desolated land.
1. Recall the description of their land being overthrown in chapter seven (Is 7:17-25).
 2. They shall be hungry because God had brought them low for Ahaz (II Chron 28:19).
- C. The hardship God brought on them would lead to fretting rather than fasting – the fools!
1. When trouble comes in life, go to God your Father in heaven and plead with Him.
 2. Fretting is the faithless mark of fools, who instead should be praying and fasting.
 3. If the situation is difficult and not remedied by prayer, then add fasting (Matt 17:21).
 4. Thus, even the best of Hollywood movies never go to God in the time of trouble.
 5. Man’s folly perverts his way to harm his life, and then he frets against God (Pr 19:3).
 6. Fretting, worrying, or getting angry at God are sinful, stupid, and wasteful responses.
 7. The response by Jews in 70 A.D. was noted by Titus as being exceeding perverse.
- D. The Jews would curse the king God had given them and curse the God that gave him.
1. Why curse the king? He cannot control the affairs of nations, no matter how strong.
 2. Why curse their God? Because He had told them this is what He would do to them.
 3. Such cursing is noted (Is 5:18-19; Jer 17:15; Am 5:18-19; Mal 3:13-15; Re 16:9-11).
 4. Do not get angry with God or His providence. It is perfect compared to your wisdom!
- E. They shall look up like a hunger-bitten wolf howls at the moon ... in vain for their help.
1. There is no repentance here, as the next verse clearly shows, but vain eyes to heaven.
 2. Reprobate pagans, but especially people taught truth, know that divine help is above.
 3. However, they are not sincere in their look nor is there any answer to their look up.
 4. God laughs at those who look up without repentance or righteousness (Pr 1:24-32).

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

- A. They cannot get divine help from heaven due to character, so they look for natural help.
- B. But all they can find on earth is further confusion and confirmation of their sore trouble.

1. They called upon the Assyrians for help, but it was the Assyrians that troubled them.
 2. Read the description of those that will not repent – trouble, darkness, and anguish.
 3. You have no idea how much worse your life can get, if you do not fully obey God.
- C. There is no repentance here, so their efforts to save themselves take them farther down.
1. Let Isaiah’s glorious words later help give the sense of darkness here (Is 50:10-11).
 2. I have seen these kind of results in men’s lives, a downward spiral of pain and grief.
 3. If you do not repent to sincerely seek God by passion and effort, you are going down.
 4. You have no idea how bad your life can get – far worse than any trouble thus far.
- D. Repent! Pray! Fast! There is deliverance and delight in God for any truly seeking Him.
- E. For more about the power of repentance ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/pdf/repentance-factor.pdf>.

Find verses in this chapter for comfort or warning to be better than Israel or Judah.

1. *His way or the way to hell ... 8:6-7 ... good or evil is a choice (Pr 1:22-33; 8:17-21,36).*
2. *Immanuel is God with us ... 8:8,10 ... is He with you, family, and church (II Cor 13:5).*
3. *Sanctify Jehovah Himself ... 8:13 ... exalt Him for a sanctuary (Ps 27:4-6; 91:14-16).*
4. *Look and wait for God ... 8:16-17 ... who hides from others (Psalm 25:14; Jer 29:13).*
5. *Absolute and final truth ... 8:20 ... we must not apologize or compromise (II Ti 4:1-4).*