

Isaiah 8

Like us the prophets are living testimonies to their contemporaries.

Hebrews 11:36-39

And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

Isaiah was sent as a living example and a sign to the people. We are also a living gospel and walking billboard to the world.

V. 1 Isaiah was told to take out a large tablet or flattened part of a scroll and a pen. God told him that this has to do with his future son who will be named **Mahershalahashbaz**. It is important to have the tools to do a word study to know what is being discussed. The name of this child means to *rapidly spoil/plunder*.

Chapter 7 was about how God was comforting his people by prophesying that the threatening confederation of the 10 northern tribes/Ephraim and Syria would lose both kings soon. In fact God tied the timing to the unborn child Isaiah would have someday. Before this child could be old enough to reason, both enemy kings would be removed.

The scriptures frequently have at hand and future fulfillments. The virgin who would conceive was actually a female virgin prophet whom God would have Isaiah impregnate. The message then and now is the same: God is with us (Immanuel).

VV. 2-4 God had Isaiah go to two trustworthy witnesses to verify that Isaiah is writing this before it happens. This writing is prior to impregnating the virgin prophet, before the two enemy kings are removed. God predicts that Assyria will take away the riches of Syria and all of the stolen wealth in Samaria/Ephraim/Northern 10 tribes. So the name of the child signifies that like a clock this will happen before the child can speak.

God disciplines us with hardened tools (people). He often destroys the tool after it serves its purpose in our lives.

VV.5-8: Now God adds more to the picture. Assyria is described as an overflowing river. The Old Testament symbolism of a country is a river or stream. The mixed nations and combinations are symbolized as the sea. In other words all countries add to the totality of mixed humanity. Israel is symbolized as solid ground or land. When you see something come out of the sea it is from the Gentile nations. When you see an overflowing river it symbolizes a country that has gone beyond its territory to invade/flood abroad.

VV. 9-13: God further instructs Isaiah that the people should not gather together and strategize solutions, or they will be destroyed. They need to pray and recall God's word and promises. We are not to fall into the popular gossip and talk show hysteria.

We are called apart. That means have a completely different point of view and expectation.

V. 13: The better question is: Do we fear God, and trust him? Running around like Chicken Little is to display a lack of confidence in God's deliverance and goodness. It is to show that we are trying to rescue ourselves.

VV. 14-15: God is to be our refuge. We are to run into him for protection. To unbelievers he is a stumbling stone. A stumbling stone is a nuisance and causes pain. We are not to ignore what we keep stumbling on in life. We need to go back and examine the cause. To the Gentiles Jesus was a stumbling stone against intellectualism and sophistication. To the Jews Jesus was a stumbling stone relating to signs and fulfilled prophecies. God will let us keep tripping; but some day that stone will crush all kingdoms outside of his kingdom.

A stumbling stone causes someone traveling without considering something to pause and look down. If a person ignores this reminder they become hardened. Saying no to God hardens our heart and makes us ignorant.

VV. 16-17: God is going to have this prophecy rolled up and hidden from his people. Read Isaiah 6 where God states that the people are not hearing or seeing the truth of the matter.

V. 18: The Jews are a sign to the world. Somehow they continue to exist despite being killed off and rejected so many times. We are a sign to the world. We are saved despite our sinful nature. The prophet was an especially visible, contrary, bold sign from God.

VV. 19-20: Why do people look elsewhere for wisdom and answers? Idols have nothing to help us or enlighten us. NASA's Origins program is designed to discover the origin of the universe. Many bright thinkers add to the imaginary logic apart from God. Organic and vegan enthusiasts envision world health, peace and unity. Military geniuses plot out moves like a chess game. Apart from God our problems only get more and more complicated and unsolvable.

VV. 21-22: The goal of God allowing men to consult mediums, rely on evil alliances, and scheme is that all roads lead to pain and destruction...except for the road to life. Men will have another opportunity to repent as the demons torment them and their idols fail.