

Sent: Wednesday, November 2, 2022 1:59 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Isaiah 8

"It is the Lord of hosts whom you should regard as holy! And He shall be your fear, and He shall be your dread!" (Isaiah 8:13)

Remember last week's lesson, on Isaiah 7, where we saw how the heart of Ahaz, king of Judah, and the hearts of his people "shook as the trees of the forest shake with the wind," when faced with the threat of Rezin, king of Aram (Syria) and Pekah, the son of Remaliah, king of the northern kingdom of Israel! And particularly when "it was reported that the Arameans were camped in Ephraim" and how they planned to "breach the walls of Jerusalem" and replace him as king of Judah! And how the Lord told Isaiah to meet with Ahaz and tell him not to fear because all this "would never come to pass"--and, in a second appeal, that he should ask for "a sign" from the Lord that would answer all his concerns! Yet how Ahaz refused to ask of a sign, or seek and trust in God, but, instead, made an alliance with Tiglath-Pileser, the king of Assyria (according to II Kings 16), to deliver him from the hands of Rezin and Pekah, even telling him that he was "his servant and son" and taking silver and gold from the house of the Lord to give him! II Chronicles 28 adds how "in the time of distress Ahaz became yet more unfaithful to the Lord," even sacrificing to the gods of Damascus and changing temple procedures in Jerusalem to please Tiglath--and how this aroused the Lord's anger and led to "the downfall of him and all of Israel"! Israel prophesied that the Lord would "bring on him, and on his people, and on his father's house"(the house of David) "such days as have never come since the day that Ephraim separated from Judah"!

But we also learned that despite Ahaz's despicable acts, and the coming judgment for Judah, the Lord (through Isaiah) would give to the "house of David" perhaps the greatest sign and promise ever given in all the Bible! The sign of "the virgin who would be with child and bear a son and call His name Immanuel" (meaning "God with us!") Why at this particular time, we asked? Was there ever a greater time that God's people needed the promise of a Savior and the hope for a future--though its fulfillment would come (unbeknownst to Isaiah) only after many years (and centuries!) of onslaughts and exiles, and silence until finally (Galatians 4:4 says) "when the fulness of the time would come, and God would send forth His Son (Immanuel), born of a woman ("the virgin"), born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we (and they!) might receive the adoption as sons!"

And that sets the scene for last night's lesson on Isaiah 8--where God would tell Isaiah to post another "sign" and announce the soon coming of another "son"--the second son of Isaiah's (with the strangest of names)! Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, with a special meaning and strangest message for all Jerusalem to see and grasp: "Swift is the booty, speedy is the prey!" Common words apparently that soldiers in that day would shout in battle to their comrades as they defeated and plundered their foes! But this one referring to how "the wealth of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria would be carried away before the king of Assyria"--even before "the boy" (can you pronounce his name?) would reach the age where he would know how to cry out 'My father' or 'My mother"! Soon! The two nations and kings so feared by Ahaz that he rejected the King of Kings!

And, interestingly, Isaiah would even have the words and date of the sign posting attested to by two witnesses as a testimony and reminder to all the people that Isaiah was speaking for the God of Israel and that they could assuredly count on his prophecies and believe and trust in his God and His promises and, most of all, be assured of the ultimate coming of the Messiah and Savior of the world, Immanuel!

But Isaiah was just beginning his proclamation! He's on a roll! In Isaiah 8:6-8 he would make a "telling contrast" (as Motyer calls it) between those people who "rejected the gently flowing waters of Shiloah" (God's faithful provisions for the people of Jerusalem!) for the "strong and abundant waters of the Euphrates" (man's dependence of "the world"!) And how God would cause the waters of the Euphrates (symbolizing the armies of the Assyrians) to overflow its banks and totally sweep away Syria and Israel (the northern kingdom which had rejected Jerusalem, the city of God), and also later sweep into Judah, but stop short of totally engulfing it- - "reaching even to the neck" (thus allowing Judah to survive, with its "head still above water" (but barely)! Wow!

Isaiah would next address the nations of the world who would "gird themselves" and "devise plans" against God's people! Their plans would be "thwarted"! Their words "wouldn't stand"! Their people would be "broken" and "shattered"! Because, he declared, "God is with us!" Immanuel!

Isaiah said the Lord spoke to him "with mighty power" and instructed him not to "walk in the way of the people" or to think like they think, or to "fear what they fear"! Then our memory verse: "It is the Lord of hosts, whom you should regard as holy, and He shall be your fear (reverence!) and He shall be your dread!"

"Then He shall become a sanctuary" (where God would come to dwell with His people), Isaiah asserted! "But (sadly!) to both houses of Israel" (both the northern and southern kingdoms), He would become (instead!) "a stone to strike, and a rock to stumble over"! How prophetic! Jeremiah would also prophecy how the Lord would "lay a stumbling block before this people"! And Jesus, teaching in the temple, would refer to this very passage in telling how "the stone which the builders rejected (referring to Himself!) became the chief corner stone... taken away from them and given to another people"!

But Isaiah's not finished! In verse 16 and the following verses he seems to distinguish between those people ("his disciples") who (along with him) "wait for the Lord" even in the darkest hour, when He is (seemingly) hiding His face from them," and those who do not wait but, rather than following the Lord by faith, stoop to "consulting with mediums and necromancers who whisper and mutter" and do not speak (or know) God's "law and testimony" and therefore "have no dawn"! No light!

The consequences for these people are grim! Verses 21-22 say "they will pass through the land hard-pressed and famished...become enraged and curse their God"! And whether they look upward to the heavens or downward to the earth, they "behold only distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish; and will be driven away into darkness!" Wow! What an ending to Isaiah 8!

What should be our response? Walk with the Lord! Wait on the Lord! Regard Him as holy!
Stay in His Word! Don't lose hope! Be a part of the "remnant"!

May God go with you this week!

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