

Isaiah 8

- Continue the Book of Immanuel, within Isaiah
 - Chapter 7 began this subsection featuring prophecy of a coming Messiah in the form of Immanuel, the Child Who is with us
 - The previous chapter spoke of His future birth
 - This chapter will pick up at a point after the Messiah's birth
 - The Child motif is embedded in another story of Israel's disobedience and God's plan to bring purposeful judgment in the meantime
 - Even as God promises a Savior for a future day

[Is. 8:1](#) Then the LORD said to me, "Take for yourself a large tablet and write on it in ordinary letters: Swift is the booty, speedy is the prey.

[Is. 8:2](#) "And I will take to Myself faithful witnesses for testimony, Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah."

- Chapter 8 opens with the Lord instructing Isaiah to make a sign
 - The word for tablet in Hebrew indicates a large placard or sign
 - Something you hang up to be seen
 - On the placard Isaiah is told to write a common phrase of war
 - Swift is the booty or speeding to the plunder
 - Speedy is the prey or hurrying to the spoil
 - Soldiers shouted this phrase as they ran into battle
 - By the nature of the tablet, we understand this is meant to be a public sign announcing something
 - God also directs that two men were to stand as witnesses of Isaiah's writing - Uriah and Zechariah
 - Zechariah we know nothing about
 - Uriah was a priest that set up false altars under King Ahaz, so he's not exactly a good guy in Israel

- Obviously, God doesn't select these men for their faithfulness to Him
 - Rather they will be faithful witnesses because they will be reliable in their testimony
 - They will be able to say that what Isaiah prophesied did come true
- What is God up to here?
 - Well, first consider that God wants Isaiah to prepare a public announcement of impending war
 - And then God implies that this coming war is a judgment against the people when He invites two faithful or reliable witnesses to observe the announcement
 - The Law provided a purpose for two witnesses:

[Deut. 17:6](#) On the testimony of two or three witnesses a man shall be put to death, but no one shall be put to death on the testimony of only one witness.

- Putting all this together, we understand God is pronouncing judgement on the nation
 - Sure enough, look what comes next

[Is. 8:3](#) So I approached the prophetess, and she conceived and gave birth to a son. Then the LORD said to me, "Name him Maher-shalal-hash-baz;

[Is. 8:4](#) for before the boy knows how to cry out 'My father' or 'My mother,' the wealth of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be carried away before the king of Assyria."

- As Isaiah has a child by his wife, the prophetess, God tells him to name the son maher-shalal-hash-baz
 - What do you think that name means?
 - Essentially the same thing: spoil speeds for a nation
 - The first written word has now become a word in the flesh
 - Here we begin to see the Child motif returning, with Christ in view

- In the case of Isaiah's son, before he can cry out "My father" or "my mother," the wealth of Damascus and Samaria will be carried away
 - The Hebrew words for Father and Mother are two syllable words
 - God predicts the coming Assyrian invasion of the alliance of Syrian and the Northern Kingdom of Israel who had conspired to attack Judah
 - This is the judgment upon the North for their sinful rejection of God and His Covenant
 - God elaborates further...

[Is. 8:5](#) ¶ Again the LORD spoke to me further, saying,

[Is. 8:6](#) "Inasmuch as these people have rejected the gently flowing waters of Shiloah
And rejoice in Rezin and the son of Remaliah;

[Is. 8:7](#) "Now therefore, behold, the Lord is about to bring on them the strong and abundant waters of the Euphrates,
Even the king of Assyria and all his glory;
And it will rise up over all its channels and go over all its banks.

[Is. 8:8](#) "Then it will sweep on into Judah, it will overflow and pass through,
It will reach even to the neck;
And the spread of its wings will fill the breadth of your land, O Immanuel.

- These people rejected the gentle waters that fed into Jerusalem's main water supply
 - These waters were quite, steady, reliable
 - They filled the pool of Siloam
 - It was this pool that God used to represent His quiet, steady faithfulness to His people
 - The people of the Northern Kingdom has rejected this source for water
 - And they ran to establish their own kingdom in the North
- And the people of Israel had rejoiced in the downfall of the kings of Syria and Israel - actually preferring the arriving Assyrians as liberators
 - But this coming flow of water from the Euphrates will not be quiet and steady
 - It will come like a flood and overtake the nation and go even further
 - The reference to Euphrates invokes the world vs. God

- It will overflow it's banks and continue on to Judah
 - Reaching even to the neck
 - What Isaiah means is up to the neck but not over the head
 - When Assyrian moved south into Judah in 701 BC they seized 46 Jewish cities, but they never captured Jerusalem
 - Assyrians dominated most of the settled world for nearly 200 years
- And the army will fill the land like a bird spreading it's wings over the land
 - Then Isaiah refers to Judah as Immanuel's land
- So the Lord uses Isaiah to tell Judah that Assyrian is coming, they will come swiftly as an arm of God's judgment against Israel and Judah
 - It will be to Israel's total end but it will not completely remove Judah from the Land
 - God confirms His lesson...

[Is. 8:9](#) ¶ " Be broken, O peoples, and be shattered;
And give ear, all remote places of the earth.
Gird yourselves, yet be shattered;
Gird yourselves, yet be shattered.

[Is. 8:10](#) " Devise a plan, but it will be thwarted;
State a proposal, but it will not stand,
For God is with us."

The Septuagint reads:

[Is. 8:9](#) Know, ye Gentiles, and be conquered; hearken ye, even to the extremity of the earth: be conquered, after ye strengthened yourselves; for even if ye should again strengthen yourselves, ye shall again be conquered.

[Is. 8:10](#) And whatsoever counsel ye shall take, the Lord shall bring it to nought; and whatsoever word ye shall speak, it shall not stand among you: for God is with us.

Dead Sea Scrolls:

[Is. 8:9](#) Band together, nations, but be shattered. Listen, all distant countries, gird yourselves but be shattered.

[Is. 8:10](#) Take counsel together, but it will be brought to nothing. Speak a word, but it will not stand. For Immanuel!

- There are two meanings here
 - First, God is stating the simple truth that any plan or conspiracy to bring down the house of David will be thwarted by God until the virgin birth
 - In other words, God will ensure that any Gentile attack will be shattered because God is intent on preserving the house of David for the sake of Immanuel, the Child He has promised
 - Secondly, God is about breaking the pride and stubborn will and disobedience of people
 - He does it first to His people of Israel, but the lesson doesn't end there
 - All the remote places of the Earth will know of this shattering and should learn from it
 - They may seek to strengthen themselves by their own work or knowledge or power, but God will always be stronger
 - But He desires to shatter us not so that we may be crushed, but so that we may be shattered
 - And in the place of human schemes and power, God will establish true power and wisdom through Immanuel
 - We must be brought low before we may be exalted
 - We must repent before we can be brought to glory in faith
 - And the power to bring low and the power to raise up again is God's alone through Christ
 - There is here a subtle but unmistakable gospel message building through the events of Israel
- Now as this invading army comes upon Judah, Isaiah will still be a resident of the city
 - So God gives Isaiah specific instructions for how to react when it happens

[Is. 8:11](#) ¶ For thus the LORD spoke to me with mighty power and instructed me not to walk in the way of this people, saying,

[Is. 8:12](#) "You are not to say, 'It is a conspiracy!'

In regard to all that this people call a conspiracy,
And you are not to fear what they fear or be in dread of it.

- Isaiah was prohibited from agreeing with the views of the population of Jerusalem
 - They attributed their circumstances to a conspiracy
 - Remember their king has decided to align with Assyrian in hope to counter the aggression of Israel and Syrian
 - And now their "friends" have attacked them - like Russian and Germany in WWII
 - And they will live in fear and dread of what will happen
 - But Isaiah should show no fear, not of Assyria and not of Israel and Syria before Assyria
- Instead, it is God Himself who Isaiah should fear and respect

[Is. 8:13](#) "It is the LORD of hosts whom you should regard as holy.

And He shall be your fear,
And He shall be your dread.

[Is. 8:14](#) "Then He shall become a sanctuary;

But to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over,
And a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

[Is. 8:15](#) "Many will stumble over them,

Then they will fall and be broken;
They will even be snared and caught."

- God will be Isaiah's sanctuary for him and the rest of the remnant living in Jerusalem
 - But God has determined to be a stone to strike Israel and a rock to stumble over
 - And a snare to trap the inhabitants of Jerusalem
 - Many among those in the city will stumble and fall and be broken and snared by God's hand
 - You probably noticed a secondary meaning in these words

- The second story is again about the Messiah
 - The Messiah is the Holy One
 - He is the One to fear
 - He is a sanctuary to those who seek after Him
 - But He will become a snare or a trap to expose the Jewish people in His day
 - Jesus Himself says he is the subject of this prophecy in Matt 21:44:

[Matt. 21:42](#) ¶ Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures, 'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone; THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES'?"

[Matt. 21:43](#) "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it.

[Matt. 21:44](#) "And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust."

- Paul makes use of Isaiah's double meaning when he explains why the Jews rejected their Messiah

[Rom. 9:30](#) ¶ What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith;

[Rom. 9:31](#) but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it.

[Rom. 9:32](#) Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the "stumbling stone."

- is Isn't it amazing how the way God weaves together a message for Israel concerning the coming Assyrian invasion
- With a story about a coming Savior who would shatter pride and rebellion among the Gentiles while yet remaining a barrier to the Jewish nation as a part of God's judgment
- Isaiah ends the chapter by returning to the first person to explain how he reacted to God's instructions

[Is. 8:16](#) ¶ Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.

[Is. 8:17](#) And I will wait for the LORD who is hiding His face from the house of Jacob; I will even look eagerly for Him.

[Is. 8:18](#) Behold, I and the children whom the LORD has given me are for signs and wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion.

- I really like the way the Septuagint renders verse 16
 - It says:

[Is. 8:16](#) Then shall those who seal themselves that they may learn the law be made manifest.

- Let those who believe the Lord's directions seal themselves and commit to His Law - or to His word - and stand apart in doing so
 - Let the faithful remnant emerge in response to the Lord's revelation
 - And this remnant is identifiable by their willingness to consult and follow God's word
- And then as their representative, Isaiah declares that he will wait for the Lord even as He brings this judgment
 - I will look eagerly for Him
 - Looking for God references looking forward to Messiah
- Then Isaiah says that he and his children are signs and wonders in Israel
 - How? Consider their names:
 - Maher-shalal Hash Baz means spoil speeds for a nation
 - Shear-Jashub means a remnant will return
 - Isaiah means Salvation of Jehovah
 - Isaiah and his sons tell the story of God's plan for Israel through their names
- In fact, the rest of the book of Immanuel tells the story of these three names
 - See chapter 9:

[Is. 9:12](#) The Arameans on the east and the Philistines on the west;
 And they devour Israel with gaping jaws.
 In spite of all this, His anger does not turn away
 And His hand is still stretched out.

- See chapter 10:

[Is. 10:20](#) ¶ Now in that day the remnant of Israel, and those of the house of Jacob who have escaped, will never again rely on the one who struck them, but will truly rely on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel.

[Is. 10:21](#) A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God.

- Then see 11:1-2

[Is. 11:1](#) ¶ Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse,
 And a branch from his roots will bear fruit.

[Is. 11:2](#) The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him,
 The spirit of wisdom and understanding,
 The spirit of counsel and strength,
 The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

- So Isaiah and his family are living testimony to God's plan for Israel
 - And they themselves look forward to Jesus' day

[Is. 8:19](#) ¶ When they say to you, "Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter," should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living?

[Is. 8:20](#) To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn.

[Is. 8:21](#) They will pass through the land hard-pressed and famished, and it will turn out that when they are hungry, they will be enraged and curse their king and their God as they face upward.

[Is. 8:22](#) Then they will look to the earth, and behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish; and they will be driven away into darkness.

- Now in contrast to those who will rely on God's word, Isaiah issues a warning against listening to the world's spiritual guidance
 - Mediums and spiritists
 - The world will consult worldly sources for counsel in the midst of their difficult circumstances

- Isaiah's use of those terms to capture ungodly counsel are not euphemistic
 - Often the true source of knowledge that the world seeks finds its source in the demonic realm
 - And it finds it's way to us by way of mediums and spiritists
- As Isaiah says, why should we consult the dead on behalf of the living?
 - Should we attempt to reach the dead by way of mediums for the sake of the living?
 - Clearly, the answer is no
- Rather, we should turn to the Law and Prophets - which means turning to the word of God
 - And if those we consult do not respond from this source, they are not of the dawn
 - They are not of the remnant
 - These will be the ones who pass through the land during God's judgment and be subjected to harsh treatment and starvation
 - And they will respond by looking upward and cursing God
 - And they will be in darkness, anguish, gloom
 - In chapter 9, Isaiah quickly turns the feeling around and brings light into this darkness

[Is. 9:1](#) But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make it glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.

[Is. 9:2](#) The people who walk in darkness
Will see a great light;
Those who live in a dark land,
The light will shine on them.

[Is. 9:3](#) You shall multiply the nation,
You shall increase their gladness;
They will be glad in Your presence
As with the gladness of harvest,
As men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

[Is. 9:4](#) For You shall break the yoke of their burden and the staff on their shoulders,
The rod of their oppressor, as at the battle of Midian.

- The her here is Israel who was placed into gloom by the Assyrian army
 - The land of Zebulun and Naphtali are two of the tribes in northern Israel
 - Specifically, they are regions immediately around the Sea of Galilee
 - Capernaum was located in Zebulun and Nazareth was located in Naphtali
 - These regions would see Jesus first years Earthly ministry
 - God treated them with contempt for their sin
 - But one day God will make these lands glorious in both Jesus first and second comings
 - In verses 2 through 4 Isaiah describes this coming light that will shine over the land
 - A time of gladness and without the yoke or burden upon Israel
 - In other words, God's judging is a present reality in Isaiah's day but in included plenty of clues to God's plan for a future redemption too