

only the hunter hunting the wild things of the thicket will be there, and tillable land will be so full of thorns and briers that tear clothes and flesh, no one will ever go there except animals to graze.

Precisely what Ahaz hoped to avert by becoming a vassal of the king of Assyria was what happened to the land because he refused to trust God and trusted in man.

QUIZ

1. How thoroughly did Ahaz subjugate himself to Assyria?
2. To what extent will the foreign armies come into Palestine because of the sin of Ahaz?
3. How does God "hiss" for these foreign armies to do His bidding?
4. Why was the devastation of the land of Palestine so great?
5. How did the plan of Ahaz to use the king of Assyria for protection turn out?

CHAPTER EIGHT

B. PREVISION OF IMMANUEL

1. THE PROPHECY 8:1-8

TEXT: 8:1-8

- 1 And Jehovah said unto me, Take thee a great tablet, and write upon it with the pen of a man, For Maher-shalal-hash-baz;
- 2 and I will take unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah, the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah.
- 3 And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son. Then said Jehovah unto me, Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz.
- 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 carried away before the king of Assyria.

- 5 And Jehovah spake unto me yet again, saying,
 6 Forasmuch as this people have refused the waters of Shiloah that go softly and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son;
 7 now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth upon them the waters of the River, strong and many, even the king of Assyria and all his glory: and it shall come up over all its channels, and go over all its banks;
 8 and it shall sweep onward into Judah; it shall flow and pass through; it shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of its wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.

QUERIES

- a. Why tell Isaiah to name his son thus (v. 3)?
- b. What are the waters of Shiloah?
- c. Who is the Immanuel of v. 8?

PARAPHRASE

Again the Lord sent me a message: Make a large signboard and write on it the birth announcement of the son I am going to give you. Use capital letters! His name will be Maher-shalal-hash-baz which means, Your enemies will soon be destroyed! I asked Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah, both known as honest men, to watch me as I wrote so they could testify that I had written it (before the child was even on the way). Then I had sexual intercourse with my wife and she conceived, and bore me a son, and the Lord said, Call him Maher-shalal-hash-baz. This name prophesies that within a couple of years, before this child is even old enough to say Daddy or Mommy, the king of Assyria will invade both Damascus and Samaria and carry away their riches. Then the Lord spoke to me again and said: Since the people of Jerusalem are planning to refuse My gentle care and are enthusiastic about asking King Rezin and King Pekah to come and aid them, therefore I will overwhelm

My people with Euphrates' mighty flood; the king of Assyria and all his mighty armies will rage against them. This flood will overflow all its channels and sweep into your land of Judah, O Immanuel, submerging it from end to end.

COMMENTS

V. 1-4 PLEDGE OF GOD'S DELIVERANCE: It appears as if Isaiah turns away from his ministry to the general public and concentrates his teaching upon an inner circle of loyal believers in the kingdom. He lets the nation with its stubborn rulers and fat-hearted people go their way. They have rejected his message. It seems that what immediately follows is for the understanding and edification of the "remnant" that will remain faithful. It begins with a pledge of God's faithfulness to be symbolized in Isaiah's children. The sign of Immanuel was abstruse and hidden. In its more spiritual sense it appealed to faith in an event far distant. Even in its contemporary fulfillment it would not do much to cheer and encourage more than a few since neither the *almah* nor her child was pointed out with any distinctness. A fresh sign therefore was given by God's goodness to reassure those of the people who would accept the sign—the sign of the son of Isaiah himself. This son was to be born immediately. His name signified the rapid approach of the spoiler. Maher-shalal-hash-baz means literally, "Plunder speeds, Spoil hastens." Men could verify the prophecy concerning Isaiah's son; they could check the fulfillment against the written statement. The tablet was probably a large wooden or ivory slab (customary signboards of that day). Besides the written statement the fact of the prediction was verified by two men who were evidently chosen for their acceptability to the people.

The promise was that before this son of Isaiah could utter the first words that a child is supposed to be able to speak, Damascus and Samaria would be despoiled. The scripture does not record fulfillment of this prophecy, but archaeology does. Inscriptions of Tiglath Pileser state that he "sent population, goods of the

people of Beth-Omri and their furniture to the land of Assyria." That he "appointed Husih (Hoshea) to the dominion over them" and fixed their annual tribute at two talents of gold and a thousand talents of silver. (Cf. *Records of The Past*, Vol. 5, pg. 52). King Sargon also wrote, "Samaria I besieged, I captured. 27,290 people from its midst I carried captive. Tributes and taxes I imposed upon them after the Assyrian manner."

v. 5-8 PREDICTION OF GOD'S JUDGMENT: "Waters of Shiloah" referred in a general sense to the streams, springs, reservoirs (pools) and conduits which supplied the temple service and worship in Jerusalem. This then would be the same as refusing the temple service and worship which is exactly what Israel had done from the time of Jereboam. The gentle and soft persuasion of God through His priests and prophets the people had rejected. They set up their own priesthood and hired their own false prophets in Israel. God was going to send upon them the raging flood of the "River"—the king of Assyria and his massive horde of soldiers. That mass of Assyrian humanity would completely inundate the northern kingdom of Israel and sweep it away like a great flood. The "flood" would overflow even into Judah, the southern kingdom, "up to its neck." Assyria did sweep into the land of Judah and occupy all that territory except the city of Jerusalem and its immediate environs in the days of Hezekiah (son of Ahaz). God preserved Jerusalem and slew 185,000 Assyrian troops in one night and sent the Assyrians back to their land (Cf. Isaiah ch. 36-39; II Kings ch. 18-20).

The "Immanuel" of v. 8 is, we believe, the land or nation which is a type of the Messiah. Centuries later the Messiah is attacked by the god of this world and almost overwhelmed, but the Messiah is delivered by the omnipotent and miraculous act of God when He raised Him from the dead. Here the land or nation is almost overwhelmed but delivered by the omnipotent miraculous act of God—all in type. Later, in the book of Isaiah the nation of Israel is made to be a type of the Servant-Messiah (Cf. Isa. 44:1ff).

QUIZ

1. Why does it appear Isaiah is turning to a ministry to the "remnant"?
2. What is the significance of making Isaiah's son a sign?
3. Where is the record of the fulfillment of the prophecy contained in Isaiah's son?
4. What are the "waters of Shiloah" and what do they symbolize?
5. When did Assyria come into Judah up "to its neck"?
6. Who is the "Immanuel" of v. 8 and what of its symbolic or typical relationship?

2. THE PROMISE 8:9-15

TEXT: 8:9-15

- 9 Make an uproar, O ye peoples, and be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and be broken in pieces.
- 10 Take counsel together, and it shall be brought to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us.
- 11 For Jehovah spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me not to walk in the way of this people, saying,
- 12 Say ye not, A conspiracy, concerning all whereof this people shall say, A conspiracy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be in dread thereof.
- 13 Jehovah of hosts, him shall ye sanctify; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.
- 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.
- 15 And many shall stumble thereon, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.

QUERIES

- a. Why does God direct the peoples to make an uproar?
- b. To whom did God speak "with a strong hand"?
- c. How would Jehovah become a "stone of stumbling"?

PARAPHRASE

Do your worst, O Syria and Israel, our enemies, but you will not succeed . . . you will be shattered. Listen to me, all you enemies of ours: Prepare for war against us . . . and perish! Yes! Perish! Call your councils of war, develop your strategies, prepare your plans of attacking us, and perish! For God is with us. The Lord has said in strongest terms: Do not under any circumstances, go along with the plans of Judah to make an alliance with Assyria. Don't let people call you a traitor for staying true to God. Don't panic as so many of your neighbors are doing when they think of Syria and Israel attacking you. Don't fear anything except the Lord of the armies of heaven! If you fear Him, you need fear nothing else. He will be your safety; but Israel and Judah have refused His care and thereby stumbled against the Rock of their salvation and lie fallen and crushed beneath it: God's presence among them has endangered them!

COMMENTS

v. 9-10 ENEMIES DEFEATED: Although God warned (8:1-8) that the people would suffer the ravages of Assyrian invasion, here Jehovah promises that the forces of the world will not be able to defeat His purposes nor harm His faithful believers. Jehovah, in effect, challenges the pagan nations to assemble themselves, arm themselves and do their very best against His chosen remnant ("Immanuel"). Jehovah assures His remnant their enemies will come to nought for He is with His remnant. This is a common expression of Jehovah through the prophets

(Cf. Joel 3:9ff; Isa. 10:5ff, etc.). Actually, Jehovah takes the evil machinations of worldly powers and uses them to serve His own purposes. In this instance Jehovah used the evil devices of Assyria to punish His rebellious land and strengthen His remnant.

v. 11-15 FAITHFUL PROTECTED: The Lord spoke to Isaiah in some dramatic and emphatic manner warning him not to go along with the plans of Judah to become an ally of Assyria. The people were crying against Isaiah that he was a "conspirator" against the policies of the king. But who were the real "conspirators"? Isaiah, Jeremiah and other prophets advocated a policy of dependence upon the Lord and not upon foreign powers. And for this they were accused of treason! Ahaz, the son of David, of all men, should have understood the pleas of the prophets. The nation was so low, spiritually, however, that when the prophets advocated that the theocracy act like the theocracy, they were accused of conspiracy. Those forces attempting to "enter the kingdom by violence" in the days of Jesus accused Him of treason because He called the people of God back to their divine mission.

Man seems bent on fearing and respecting and reverencing the wrong power. The tendency of man is always to fear and respect the power he can see and feel—worldly power. Surely Jehovah has manifested His power in the world sufficiently to direct man's fear toward Himself. Yet man in his pride refuses to trust and turns to his own devices for his salvation. Jesus reminded men, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28).

God is sanctified by man when man sets God apart in His rightful place—as sovereign of man's mind and motives and actions. When man thus sanctifies the Lord, the Lord becomes a "sanctuary" to man—a refuge, a place of safety. When man refuses to sanctify the Lord as sovereign of his life, the Lord becomes a means of man's destruction. Man is created a moral being whose life is dependent upon truth, innocence, good, beauty, righteousness and justice. God is the author and perfect source of all of man's need. When man rejects this only source and rebels against it, man's death is inevitable! This has been

demonstrated historically again and again. It was being demonstrated before the very eyes of the people of Israel and Judah in Isaiah's day. This text (esp. v. 14-15) is quoted as a typical prophecy of the evil forces arrayed against God's purposes in the Messiah when they sought to kill him (Cf. Matt. 21:44; Lk. 20:18).

QUIZ

1. What is Jehovah's challenge to the pagan nations in v. 9-10?
2. What does God do with the evil actions of His enemies?
3. Why were the people calling Isaiah a "conspirator"?
4. How does God become a "stumbling block" to those who reject Him?

3. THE PEDAGOGY 8:16-22

TEXT: 8:16-22

- 16 Bind thou up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.
- 17 And I will wait for Jehovah, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.
- 18 Behold, I and the children whom Jehovah hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from Jehovah of hosts, who dwelleth in mount Zion.
- 19 And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits and unto the wizards, that chirp and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? on behalf of the living should they seek unto the dead?
- 20 To the law and to the testimony! if they speak not according to this word, surely there is no morning for them.
- 21 And they shall pass through it, sore distressed and hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse by their king and by their God, and turn their faces upward:
- 22 and they shall look unto the earth, and behold, distress and

darkness, the gloom of anguish; and into thick darkness they shall be driven away.

QUERIES

- a. Who were Isaiah's or the Lord's "disciples"?
- b. How were the children of Isaiah "signs" in Israel?
- c. Why were the people seeking "familiar spirits"?

PARAPHRASE

Complete the written testimony which I have given you, authenticate and corroborate it among My faithful remnant, said the Lord to me. But, I will trust the Lord, who is presently withdrawing from this rebellious nation, but my hope is in Him because He has promised to be with us again. Behold, I and the children God has given me are signs that He keeps His word and fulfills His promises. Now when the unbelieving people shall advise you to try to find out the future by consulting mediums and witches, do not listen to their superstitions and jargon. Should not the people seek the truth from the God of all truth? How can they ever expect to find out about living from the dead? Seek for truth in the law and testimony of God! Check these so-called revelations of the witches and mediums and if they are different than God's testimony then you know they do not speak for Him; there is not even the slightest dawning of light in them. My people are going to be led away captive, stumbling, weary and hungry. And because they are hungry, those who do not trust Me will rave and shake their fists at heaven and curse their king and their God. Wherever they look there will be trouble and anguish and dark despair. And they will be thrust out into the darkness of captivity.

COMMENT

v. 16-20 TRUE AND FALSE TEACHING: The real crisis in the nation was in its choice of its source for truth and light. Isaiah was commanded by the Lord to "bind up" (complete) the "testimony" (revelation from God) and "seal" (authenticate, prove, corroborate) it among God's "disciples" (followers, the faithful remnant). The "testimony" was all that God had revealed through Isaiah concerning the condition of Israel and Judah and how they might turn to God and be saved. The prophet and his children had even been named to symbolize God's promises. *Isaiah* means "Jehovah will save (His people);" *Shear-jashub* means "A remnant shall return;" *Maher-shalal-hash-baz* means "Your enemies will soon be preyed upon and spoiled."

Isaiah and his sons, displaying the image of God in their lives, in the midst of an unbelieving society, were given for testimony of God's presence and protection for those who trust Him. Their testimony is where the nation is to seek for Jehovah, not in the obscure and ambiguous and false teachings of witches and mediums. It is nothing short of shocking that even Christians are sometimes seduced into seeking the answers to life in witchcraft and spiritism. Seeking to learn from such false and demonic sources is absolutely condemned in both the Old and New Testaments. Verse 18 is quoted in Hebrews 2:13 as messianic. Christ, the Great Prophet, the Divine Being coming into the world in the form of flesh, and His disciples, partaking of the divine nature through faith, both displaying the image of God in the midst of an unbelieving society, are given for a testimony of God's power, presence and protection. Thus Isaiah and his children are types of the Messiah-Prophet and His children.

"To the law and to the testimony!" There is no alternative if man wants light and truth. Every claim to light and truth must be measured by God's law and testimony—God's revelation. If any teaching does not "speak" according to God's word there is no light in that teaching. It is darkness, falsehood and condemnation. Whatever it is or wherever it is found, if it is true it will agree in fact, principle and practice with God's revelation.

Witchcraft and necromancy does not agree with God's word. Therefore, there is not even the dawning of light in it.

v. 21-22 CONSEQUENCES OF CONSULTING FALSE TEACHING: When men choose ignorance falsehood and sin, deliberately, they lose the power to reason to relate and to understand. Nothing makes sense. Man suffers a dehumanizing, deranging, despairing experience. When calamity strikes, as it surely will do those who disobey God's moral principles of human social existence, chaos reigns. Distresses of many kinds are the consequences of casting away Divine truth—both physical and psychological. Such conditions are described in these verses—distress, famine, anxiety, cursing one's fellowman, cursing God, searching, darkness, gloom, anguish, being driven away. Such is a description of the chosen people at the time of their captivities.

QUIZ

1. Where was the real crisis in the nations of Israel and Judah?
2. What was the "testimony" that Isaiah was to bind up and seal?
3. What does the word "seal" mean here?
4. How did the prophet and his children become a testimony for Jehovah?
5. How does verse 18 apply to the New Testament?
6. What are the consequences of false teaching?

CHAPTER NINE

C. PEACE BY IMMANUEL

1. HIS PERSONALITY

TEXT: 9:1-7

- 1 But there shall be no gloom to her that was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali; but in the latter time hath he made