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Isaiah 8.

(2015)

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Isaiah 8.

Topics.

- Write on a tablet, belonging to Maher-shalal-hashbaz.
- The prophetess conceived and bore a son named Maher-shalal-hashbaz.
- Assyria will take Damascus before Maher-shalal-hashbaz cries father mother.
- The waters of Shiloah, Rezin the king of Syria and the king of Assyria.
- Do not call conspiracy what the people call conspiracy; do not be in dread.
- He will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling.
- Bind up the testimony; seal the teaching among my disciples.
- Inquire of God and not mediums and necromancers who chirp and mutter.
- They will look up and toward the earth, but behold gloom and darkness.

FOR INFORMATION: concerning people, places and the meaning of words see the title: "Map Locations and People of the Bible," and the title: "Bible Dictionary" on Website Menu.

INTRODUCTION: Isaiah is the exciting story of the Old Testament and the New Testament compacted into one book. It covers the wonder and splendour of Bible prophecy and echoes of the Lord Jesus Christ resound throughout Isaiah's visions and his messages. It teaches history as it affects God's people and constantly points to a future age when righteousness, justice, joy and peace will be established on earth. Isaiah prophesied about 740–700 B.C. He lived during the decline of Israel in the shadow of the powerful Assyrian Empire. He spoke the word of God to a people who were "deaf and blind" (Isaiah 6:10) who refused to listen to his warnings of looming disaster.

Isaiah warned the people of Judah's that their sin would bring God's judgment (i.e., seventy-years captivity) and declared that God is sovereign and would use Cyrus the Persian to return the people from exile. He spoke also of a servant and man of sorrows who would be wounded for our transgressions faithfully accomplishing God's purposes of salvation (Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12). The final chapters give a beautiful description of a new creation in which Christ will rule as King, judging the wicked and establishing God's Kingdom on earth. Following are four points that will help the reader understand the book of Isaiah as they travel through it: -

1. The history of Israel and Judah. At this time in the story Assyria has taken the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria into captivity and marched up to Jerusalem (the two tribes of Judah) to destroy it, but failed. Later in the story Babylon attacks Jerusalem and conquers the city and takes the people of Judah into captivity. After this victory Babylon conquers Assyria which resulted in Israel and Judah being brought under the submission of Babylonian rule and the tribes being brought together during the seventy year Babylonian captivity.
2. Many of Isaiah's visions are written as though they have already taken place, but a majority of these visions are predicting future events that are about to happen during Isaiah's generation while others will come to pass in a future age. Though these visions are of future events Isaiah speaks them in the present tense, because he spoke them as they came to his mind and as he saw the events unfolding before him. They are often spoken in this manner because of the certainty of it and because God had ordained them and revealed them to his prophets who spoke them to His people so they must come to pass, because God cannot lie.(Titus 1:2).

3. Though Isaiah is primarily speaking to Judah (the two tribes at Jerusalem) much of what he says applies to Israel (the ten tribes in Samaria) because both Judah and Israel are in the same corrupt spiritual condition.
4. All the promises to Israel are now in Christ. God's promises to Israel now include the Jews and the Gentiles. This is because under the New Covenant God is building an entirely new nation made up of Jews and Gentiles of which Christ is the head. In this new nation that God is creating in the Lord Jesus Christ Jews have no advantage over Gentiles since all are one in Christ Jesus.

The apostle Paul wrote: Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (i.e., one nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles). In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. (Eph. 2:1-22).

The practical application of what this means, is that all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel through Isaiah also apply to Gentiles who by faith belong to Christ.

Write on a Tablet, Belonging to Maher-shalal-hashbaz.

Isaiah 8:1-2 ----- ¹Then the LORD said to me, "Take a large tablet and write on it in common characters, 'Belonging to Maher-shalal-hashbaz.' ²And I will get reliable witnesses, Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah, to attest for me."

The word "then" links this back to the previous chapter. There is very little written about Isaiah's life other than that he was the son of Amoz. His name comes from the Hebrew word (*Y^esha'yah*) it literally means, Jah has saved and carries the idea of being safe and free. We know that his wife was a prophetess who is not named and that they had two sons who were given as signs (Isaiah 8:18).

Isaiah's first son: was Shear-jashub, who was old enough to be taken to meet Ahaz, his name means, "The remnant return" it was prophetic of the literal and spiritual return of Israel to their beloved city Jerusalem after their seventy years in captivity. (Isaiah 7:3).

Isaiah's second son: had the extended name, Maher-shalal-hash-baz, meaning, "haste, spoil, speed, prey," it implied that the Assyrians would speed to their prey, Syria and Samaria and hasten to their spoil. The name was prophetic of the flight of the Syrian and Samaritan armies before their Assyrian conquerors and fulfilled in 732 BC., when Tiglath-pileser III captured Damascus the capital city of the ten tribes of Israel.

Write the name: to write the name, "Belonging to Maher-shalal-hashbaz" on a tablet and then having two witnesses (Uriah the priest and Zechariah) testify to it would be like us today writing a legal document and having the signature witnessed to make it binding by law. This is what is happening here with the name Maher-shalal-hashbaz" being written on a tablet and witnessed.

Maher-shalal-hashbaz: comes from the following four Hebrew words Maher Shalal Chash Baz.

Maher: means hurrying, quickly, speedily, suddenly and soon.

Shalal: means booty, plunder, treasure, prey and spoil.

Chuwsh: means to hurry, to make haste and be ready; figuratively, to be eager with excitement and enjoyment.

Baz: means to prey, to plunder and carry away the spoil.

Putting it all together the name Maher-shalal-hash-baz is also the symbolic name of Isaiah's son to the prophetess (Isaiah 8:3) and carries the idea of being swift and eager to the enemy and filled with excitement and enjoyment with the spoil.

The Prophetess Conceived and Bore a Son Named Maher-shalal-hashbaz.

Isaiah 8:3 -----³And I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. Then the LORD said to me, "Call his name Maher-shalal-hashbaz.

Some suppose this child Maher-shalal-hash-baz to be the same child spoken of in the previous chapter that was spoken of as being born of a virgin birth, because of this the following sets out to discover if Maher-shalal-hash-baz was born of a virgin birth and if he is the same child named Immanuel spoken of in the previous chapter as some tend to think.

The English Standard Bible: says "I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son."

The King James Bible: says, "I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son."

The New International Bible: says "Then I made love to the prophetess, and she conceived and gave birth to a son."

The New Living Bible: says "Then I slept with my wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son."

The International Standard Bible: says after this, I was intimate with the prophetess and she conceived.

Added to this in (Isaiah 7:3) the LORD told Isaiah to go with his son Shear-jashub to meet Ahaz king of Judah which means he was already married to the prophetess and had one son prior to her giving birth to Maher-shalal-hashbaz.

Both Isaiah's sons were signs of God's judgment coming upon the house of David (the two tribes of Judah) and upon Ephraim (the ten tribes in the land of Samaria) (Isaiah 7), by the fierce armies of Assyria.

The only difference was that the name of Isaiah's first son Shear-jashub means, "The remnant return" so it carries within it a prophetic message of hope, whereas in the name Maher-shalal-hash-baz there is no hint of hope of any sort the focus is solely destruction. Maher-shalal-hashbaz was a sign that the king of Assyria would carry away the wealth of Damascus (the capital of Syria) and of Ephraim (the ten tribes of Israel in the land of Samaria) (Isaiah 7:8).

The prophet was to write on a large tablet the name Maher-shalal-hashbaz which meant, "Make speed to the spoil and hasten to the prey," pointing out that the Assyrian army would come with speed, and take great spoil. It was a sign that meant very soon the riches of Damascus the capitol of Syria and of Samaria (the ten tribes of Israel) which were secure and strong cities at the time of this prophecy would be taken away captive by the king of Assyria.

The name Maher-shalal-hashbaz: it is common for the meaning of Hebrew names to be fitting to the character of the person with the name or to the theme of the story. This principal is especially true of the name Maher-shalal-hashbaz. It means to plunder and be swift to the enemy and carry away the spoil with eager excitement and joy and we are told that before the boy knows how to cry "My father and my mother," the wealth of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be carried away by the king of Assyria

The prophetess: some theologians claim that the prophetess is only called a prophetess by name, because she is married to the prophet Isaiah, but this is only human reasoning and speculation since there is no evidence to support it. It is more likely she was a prophetess in her own right as the prophetesses Miriam (Exod. 15:20) Deborah (Judges 4:4) Huldah (2 Kings 22:14) (2 Chron. 34:22) and Anna (Luke 2:36) spoken of in the Bible were.

Assyria will take Damascus before Maher-shalal-hashbaz cries Father Mother

Isaiah 8:4 -----⁴for before the boy knows how to cry 'My father' or 'My mother,' the wealth of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be carried away before the king of Assyria."

Damascus: was the capitol city of Syria.

Samaria: was the capitol city of Ephraim (the ten tribes of Israel).

Before the boy knows how to cry "My father" or "My mother," (v4) these are commonly the first words children learn to say. It carries the idea of him speaking and knowing his parents which means that this must happen in a very short time from the time this prophecy was spoken.

Overview of Maher-shalal-hashbaz and Immanuel: in the previous chapter the LORD told Ahaz king of Judah to ask for a sign, but he refused and because of this refusal Isaiah told him, "The Lord himself will give the house of David a sign, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14). Then told Ahaz, "Before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land of the king of Syria and of Ephraim will be deserted (Isaiah 7:16) (Assyria took the people of Ephraim captive).

Since there is no actual child born of a virgin and named Immanuel that could visibly act as a sign to Ahaz, and Isaiah links this chapter which talks of a prophetess giving birth to a child named Maher-shalal-hashbaz it is most likely that Maher-shalal-hashbaz is the literal child born to act as a sign to Ahaz of impending doom while the child Immanuel in contrast to Maher-shalal-hashbaz is prophetic of a future child to be born that inspires hope, especially since it is not until the Angel of the LORD in the New Testament comes to Joseph in a dream and says to him: -

- That which is conceived in Mary is from the Holy Spirit, she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. (Matt. 1:19-23).

That we read of a literal child being born of a virgin. Matthew goes on to say that all of this took place to fulfil what the LORD had spoken by the prophet (referring to Isaiah) who said, "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). (Matt. 1:19-23) (Isaiah 7:14).

It appears that the child named Immanuel mentioned in the previous chapter is prophetic of Israel's coming Messiah and Saviour to give hope to the nation during the horrific disasters and wars that are about to come upon them, whereas Maher-shalal-hashbaz is the literal sign child born to the House of David that God's judgment is coming. Supporting this idea is the fact that within the meaning of the name Maher-shalal-hashbaz there is not even a hint of comfort for Israel, but only utter waste and destruction.

Should this be so the expressions, "Before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good," (Isaiah 7:16) and "Before the boy knows how to cry my father or my mother," (Isaiah 8:4) would simply be seen as different ways of saying the same thing, which is that the hostile kings of Syria and Ephraim will be carried away before the king of Assyria within a very short period of time. (Isaiah 7:14-16).

The Assyrian invasions: the Assyrians were a thorn in the side of Israel. Beginning in 733 BC under King Tiglath-pileser, Assyria took the Northern Kingdom's land (the ten tribes of Israel in Samaria) and carried the inhabitants into exile.

- In the days of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria came and captured Ijon, Abel-beth-maacah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and he carried the people captive to Assyria. (2 Kings 15:29).
- The LORD humbled Judah because of Ahaz king of Israel, for he had made Judah act sinfully and had been very unfaithful to the LORD. ²⁰So Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria came against him and afflicted him instead of strengthening him. ²¹For Ahaz took a portion from the house of the LORD and the house of the king and of the princes, and gave tribute to the king of Assyria, but it did not help him. (2 Chron. 28:29-27).

This was but the precursor of the great Assyrian invasions that came later under Sargon and Sennacherib kings of the Assyrian Empire. Throughout these wars the Israelites remained in Samaria, and maintained their religious practices and their own forms of a civil government and community. Three years later, beginning in 721 BC, the Assyrian king Shalmaneser powerful armies not only laid the land of Judah and Israel's capital, Samaria waste, but also took the people captive and set up new colonies in their land.

- In the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah, king of Israel, Shal-maneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria and besieged it, ¹⁰and at the end of three years he took it. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, which was the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. ¹¹The king of Assyria carried the Israelites away to Assyria and put them in Halah, and on the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes, ¹²because they did not obey the voice of the LORD their God but transgressed his covenant, even all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded. They neither listened nor obeyed. (2 Kings 18:9-12).

This event fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy that God would use Assyria as the "rod of His anger." (Isaiah 10:5-19). These verses show that the Assyrian Empire was implementing God's judgment against the idolatrous Israelites and that the sovereign God uses secular nations to achieve His plans, purposes and judgments.

The Waters of Shiloah, Rezin the King of Syria and the King of Assyria.

Isaiah 8:5-8 ----- ⁵The LORD spoke to me again: ⁶"Because this people have refused the waters of Shiloah that flow gently, and rejoice over Rezin and the son of Remaliah, ⁷therefore, behold, the Lord is bringing up against them the waters of the River, mighty and many, the king of Assyria and all his glory. And it will rise over all its channels and go over all its banks, ⁸and it will sweep on into Judah, it will overflow and pass on, reaching even to the neck, and its outspread wings will fill the breadth of your land, O Immanuel."

Rezin: was the king of Syria (Isaiah 7:1).

The son of Remaliah: was Pekah the king of Israel (Isaiah 7:1) the ten tribes in the land of Samaria.

The waters of Shiloah: (v6) Shiloah was a fountain, pool and river or brook which ran by city of Jerusalem it is an emblem of calm, quiet and peace which in this context is a symbol of God's Spirit and the Spirit His people should have embraced and been following.

The waters of the river: (v7) refer to the mighty waters of the River Tigris and the vast and forceful waters of the Euphrates Rivers, by which the Assyrian empire was fortified. These waters are a symbol of might, power and force which in this context refers to the powerful armies of Assyria and all the nations in league with him and to their armies.

The expressions, "the waters of Shiloah," and "the waters of the River" are contrasting the gentle and refreshing waters of Shiloah with the waters of the mighty river Euphrates where Assyria dwelt. It is a poetic way of saying that the mighty armies of Assyria will invade God's people Israel and Judah. Israel because they made a league with Syria to go to war against Judah and Judah, because they refused to believe the word of the LORD that Isaiah spoke to them in the previous chapter.

This people: (v6) primarily refers to the ten tribes of Israel who have refused to make peace with the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the people of Judah and have instead aligned themselves with Rezin the king of Syria to go up with his armies against Jerusalem with the intent of slaughtering the people and conquering the city. But the prophecy is not limited to Israel only since it speaks of the rivers of the waters (the Assyrian armies) overflowing its banks, which means they go beyond their primary purpose which was to bring God's judgment upon Israel and marched into the land of Judah burning their cities and slaughtering the people.

This is exactly what happened, Assyrian kings invaded the land of Israel and eventually laid their land waste and took the people captive and destroyed the cities of Judah. However they did not take the city of Jerusalem, but later Babylon did.

The neck: (v8) refers to Jerusalem, Israel can be seen in this prophecy pictured as a body with the inhabitants of Jerusalem being the neck, the people of Judah the chest and the ten tribes of Israel (the stronger part of the body) the thighs and legs and Assyria pictured as a swift predatory bird with its wings spread wide open ready to devour its prey.

The expression "O Immanuel," (v8) is a cry of deep despair and sadness, Isaiah in his vision sees the future horror that is coming upon God's people and is so troubled by the total destruction of the city of Jerusalem, the land of Judah and land of Israel and the suffering of the people he has no words to say, but "O Immanuel," meaning, "O my people," and "O the people of the LORD." It is much like the following cry of Jesus after he had finished speaking seven woes to the hypocritical scribes and the Pharisees in the city of Jerusalem: -

- O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! ³⁸See, your house is left to you desolate. (Matthew 23:37-38) (Luke 13:34-35).

Do not call Conspiracy what the People call Conspiracy; Do Not Be in Dread.

Isaiah 8:9-12 ----- ⁹Be broken, you peoples and be shattered; give ear, all you far countries; strap on your armour and be shattered; strap on your armor and be shattered. ¹⁰Take counsel together, but it will come to nothing; speak a word, but it will not stand, for God is with us. ¹¹For the LORD spoke thus to me with his strong hand upon me, and warned me not to walk in the way of this people, saying: ¹²"Do not call conspiracy (confederacy in KJV) all that this people calls conspiracy, (confederacy in KJV) and do not fear what they fear, nor be in dread.

Conspiracy: (confederacy in KJV) (v12) comes from the Hebrew word (*qesher*) it literally means an unlawful alliance, conspiracy and act of treason. It carries the idea of joining together to conspire against another.

Do not call conspiracy all that this people call conspiracy: (v12) means the faithful should not consent to any confederacy with strangers and idolaters since any such confederacy is an unnatural combination for the people of God who should be trusting in the LORD their God and not powerful secular nations. It can apply to the following two confederacies God's people had with secular nations.

1. To the confederacy Pekah the king of the ten tribes of Israel had in Samaria with Rezin the king of Syria. For Israel to unite with a secular nation for the purpose of going to war against their own people Judah was an utter abnormality to the body God had called them to be.
2. To Ahaz king of Judah who united with Assyria to protect him from the two hostile kings of Syria and Ephraim (the ten tribes of Israel in Samaria). Isaiah is saying, "Do not join with the king of Assyria, because of fear about the threatened invasion of the kings of Syria and Samaria or agree with Ahaz's purpose to form an alliance with the king of Assyria. The reason why they should not do this is stated in the following verse: -

- The LORD of hosts, him you shall regard as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. (Isaiah 8:13).

Isaiah is exhorting the nation to put confidence in the LORD rather than in man. King Ahaz of Judah trembled before the united armies of Syria and Samaria and from this fear sought the assistance of the king of Assyria. It is probable that he was encouraged by the leaders of the people and that this would be a popular measure with the mass of the nation, but it was a total distrust in God and, therefore, Isaiah is calling the people not to unite with those seeking this confederacy, but to oppose it.

He is saying do not vote or speak of conspiracy and confederacy with Assyria as a right thing or encourage others to come into it

Do not fear what they fear, nor be in dread: (v12) means, let not the same fear possess the faithful as does the unfaithful that are in fear and dread of the two hostile kings of Syria and Israel combining together against Judah. Do not allow them to inflict you with their fear and dread of the united armies of Syria and Samaria intended plan to invade the land of Judah and the city of Jerusalem, but rather put confidence in God, and believe that he is able to save.

If the people had remained faithful and heeded the word of the LORD spoken through the prophet Isaiah there would have been nothing for them to fear, because it would have been impossible for the kingdom of Judah to fail since God's desire was to protect the nation rather than bring His judgment upon it.

However history shows that Ahaz king of Judah did call on Assyria for help and entered into a confederacy with the king, but through various treacheries Assyria eventually turned on the people of Judah and not only laid the land of the ten tribes of Israel waste, but also invaded the land of Judah and burned their cities and took the people of Israel and of Judah captive. (They could not take Jerusalem, but later Babylon did).

He will become a Sanctuary and a Stone of Offense and a Rock of Stumbling.

Isaiah 8:13-15 ----- ¹³But the LORD of hosts, him you shall regard as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. ¹⁴And he will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. ¹⁵And many shall stumble on it. They shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken."

Isaiah tells the faithful at Jerusalem and the people of Israel to trust the LORD their God and fear Him and not the king of Syria and king of Israel (the ten tribes in the land of Samaria) and He will become their sanctuary and protection, while at the same time become a stumbling stone to the unfaithful in the house of Israel and a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem who put their trust in the king of Assyria and the people of Israel who put their trust in the king of Syria.

The apostle Peter cites this verse: -

- The honour is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," ⁸and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. (1 Peter 2:7-8)

In the same way that the LORD the God of Israel was a stumbling stone to those who would not believe Isaiah who was a true prophet of God and would not heed the words he spoke, Jesus Christ Israel's Messiah was a stumbling stone to the unfaithful at Jerusalem and of Israel who would not believe in him or heed the words he spoke even though he was the promised Messiah the Christ and Saviour and because of their rebellion, stubbornness and unbelief he became the stumbling stone to both Judah and Israel (the entire house of Israel).

They shall fall broken, snared and taken (v15) this is exactly what happened Assyria invaded the land of Samaria (the ten tribes of Israel) and laid their land waste their fierce armies then overflowed into the land of Judah and burned their cities and took both the people of Judah and of Israel captive (Assyria could not take the city of Jerusalem, but later Babylon did).

Likewise Jesus became a stumbling stone to the unbelieving people of Israel of his generation (he continues to be so even today). His death and resurrection entirely abolished the need for the Jewish high priest, the Levitical priesthood and all their ceremonial rites, holy days and religious customs and traditions.

This is because no one (Jew or Gentile) needs a human priest to be united to the invisible, immortal, Holy Almighty God the creator of all things and source of all life. Every man and woman regardless of what family or nation they are born into; regardless of what language they speak; regardless of whether they are male or

female, rich or poor, noble or lowly can be untied to God through faith in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

Bind up the Testimony; Seal the Teaching among My Disciples.

Isaiah 8:16-18 ----- ¹⁶Bind up the testimony; seal the teaching among my disciples. ¹⁷I will wait for the LORD, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob, and I will hope in him. ¹⁸Behold, I and the children whom the LORD has given me are signs and portents in Israel from the LORD of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion.

Isaiah is told to seal up this testimony and wait for the LORD who at the time of giving this prophecy to Isaiah, is hiding His face from Israel, meaning He has withdrawn His blessing and favour from the nation (v16-17).

The reason for God hiding his face is because of the rebellion and extreme wickedness of His people.

During the sixteen years of king Ahaz of Judah reign in Jerusalem: -

- He did not do what was right in the eyes of the LORD. (2 Kings 16:1).
- He burned his sons as an offering, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel. (2 Kings 16:2) (2 Chron. 28:3).
- He sacrificed and made offerings on the high places and on the hills and under every green tree. (2 Kings 16:4).
- He asked Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, to come and rescue him from the king of Syria and the king of Israel who were attacking him rather than trust in God. (2 Kings 16:7).
- He took silver and gold from the House of the LORD and sent them as presents to the king of Assyria. (2 Kings 16:8).
- He had the priests make an exact copy of the altar of Syria and offered sacrifices on it. (2 Kings 16:10-13).
- He made metal images for the Baals. (2 Chron. 28:2).
- He sacrificed and made offerings on the high places and under every green tree. (2 Chron. 28:4).

I and the children whom the LORD has given me are signs and portents in Israel: (v18). They were signs in the following ways: -

- In the meaning of Isaiah's name: Jehovah has saved and Jehovah brings salvation.
- In the meaning of Isaiah's first sons name Shear-ashub: a remnant will return which means that even the name of Isaiah son carried within it a sign of the promise of Israel's deliverance at the end of their seventy year captivity in Babylon. It was prophetic of the literal return of Israel to their beloved city Jerusalem and the nations spiritual return to the LORD their God.
- In the meaning of Isaiah's second son's name, Maher-shalal-hash-baz, which means be swift to plunder the enemy and carry away the spoil which was fulfilled by Assyria and Babylon in amazing detail.
- In the meaning of Isaiah's name and his two son's names are prophetic signs of future events to happen during his generation and also carry prophetic messages for a future age to come.
- In the detailed and amazing fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecies.
- In their faithfulness in standing with Isaiah and adhering to the word of God as he did.

- In that those who remained faithful to the LORD were protected during their seventy year captivity in Babylon and returned to their beloved city Jerusalem with triumphant joy.

The LORD of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion: (v18) Zion comes from the Hebrew word (*Tsiyown*) and refers to the mountain the city of Jerusalem is built upon. It carries the idea of a permanent capital mountain of Jerusalem in the sense of being readily seen and easily visible and noticed as an important sign (i.e., a significant and historic sign and guiding pillar). It is called God's Holy Mountain because Jerusalem God's Holy City sits on it.

Though Mount Zion is not distinguished for its elevation or grandeur and though it had nothing in itself to claim attention or to excite wonder, it was the most exalted and honoured above all mountains because it was selected as the place where God was to be worshipped and the place where God's city and God's temple is built and God's worship was established.

Even though Mount Sinai had all the awesome glory of the Almighty God descend upon it and the law came from there, Mount Zion excels in excellence over it. This is because from Mount Zion came the Messiah the Christ attended by a multitude of angels celebrating his birth and on Mount Zion the Messiah the Christ came into his own temple as Malachi in the following verse prophesied concerning him.

- Behold, I send my messenger and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. (Mal. 3:1).

Added to all this royal glory, multitudes of angels ministered to the Lord in his temptation, at his resurrection and accompanied him in his ascension all from Mount Zion.

- Mount Sinai is the mountain of the Old Covenant of Law in contrast Mount Zion is the mountain of the New Covenant of Grace.
- Mount Sinai's glory of the law pales when stood before Mount Zion's grace and Christ's death and resurrection upon it.

Neither Mount Sinai nor Mount Zion can glory and boast in themselves for the following reasons. Mount Sinai is not famous or respected as a holy mountain and a mountain of God because of any majesty of itself, but because it was upon this mountain God descended and gave the Ten Commandments. It is this awesome and holy event that exalts Mount Sinai and not the mountain itself.

Likewise Mount Zion has no fame or glory of itself, its glory comes from being the honoured mountain God chose to build His Holy city upon and is the mountain that the Messiah the Christ the Saviour of the world died and rose again from. The real strength is not in Mount Zion itself, but in the LORD who is the head of the thousands of chariots and the heavenly host surrounding it and as such is the protector of his chosen dwelling-place.

Zion is sometimes used as an ancient name for Jerusalem itself and because it is often used in poetic and prophetic passages it can refer to:-

- The hill the city of Jerusalem is built on.
- The city of Jerusalem.
- The temple and by extension Judah and the people of God.

Inquire of God and Not Mediums and Necromancers who Chirp and Mutter.

Isaiah 8:19-20 ----- ¹⁹And when they say to you, "Inquire of the mediums and the necromancers who chirp and mutter," should not a people inquire of their God? Should they inquire of the dead on behalf of the living? ²⁰To the teaching and to the testimony! If they will not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn.

Mediums and necromancers: were men and women who people believed spiritually connected with the dead and spoke on their behalf. Such people were believed to be able to channel the spirit of the dead from the world beyond and communicate with them in this present world and present time no matter how long the deceased had been dead. The expression, "Mediums and necromancers who chirp and mutter," means that they speak a lot of words and say many things, but they have no real truth in them and are therefore worthless.

In the previous verses Isaiah said that he and the faithful would wait and hope in the LORD in contrast to listening to mediums and necromancers. It is certain that the corrupt king Ahaz and his counsellors who had turned from God to offer sacrifices on pagan altars were asking advice and counsel from such people.

They have no dawn: (v20) means they are utterly devoid of any light which means that they are spiritually dead to God Himself and totally devoid of any understanding of His word.

They will Look Up and Toward the Earth, but behold Gloom and Darkness.

Isaiah 8:21-22 ----- ²¹They (those who listen to mediums and necromancers) will pass through the land, greatly distressed and hungry. And when they are hungry, they will be enraged and will speak contemptuously against their king and their God, and turn their faces upward. ²²And they will look to the earth, but behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish. And they will be thrust into thick darkness.

This is exactly what happened, Assyria invaded the land of the ten tribes of Israel in Samaria and of Judah, the people looked to their earthly kings, but they could not save them and to God, but he had hidden His face from them so during this time of utter darkness the rebellious and wicked people of God were taken captive into Assyria and some years later during a time of great famine Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon with his mighty armies invaded Jerusalem burned the city, pillage the temple of God and took the people of Judah captive for seventy years.

The practical application today: multitudes of Christians today are in a very similar position as the faithful of Isaiah's day were. The faithful today as in Isaiah's day live amongst a people who not only give God no thought and no respect, but have actually gone a step further by deliberately teaching evolution in our schools to each new generation. This false teaching proclaims that God does not even exist, no wonder when we look at plant earth it is in rapid decay, turmoil and crisis.

Amongst all this disregard for God Christians are to remain faithful and see themselves as those in Isaiah's day did, a reflection of the LORD God on earth and His Son the Lord Jesus Christ knowing that their faith is more precious than gold.

The apostle Peter wrote: -

- All who belong to the Lord Jesus Christ are being guarded by God's power through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:5-7).

FOOTNOTE.

- Chapter seven and nine also embrace this prophecy of Isaiah.

End.