

Isaiah 8 Commentary

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ISAIAH						
Judgment & Character of God				Comfort & Redemption of God		
Uzziah Jotham Ahaz 1-12			Hezekiah's Salvation & Blessing	True God	Suffering Messiah	Reigning Lord
	13-27	28-35	36-39	40-48	49-57	58-66
Prophecies Regarding Judah & Jerusalem Is 1:1-12:6	Prophecies Against the Nations	Warnings & Promises	Historical Section	Redemption Promised: Israel's Deliverance	Redemption Provided: Israel's Deliverer	Redemption Realized: Israel's Glorious Future
Prophetic			Historic	Messianic		
Holiness, Righteousness & Justice of Jehovah				Grace, Compassion & Glory of Jehovah		
God's Government "A throne" Is 6:6				God's Grace "A Lamb" Is 53:7		
Time 740-680BC						

To help keep this chapter in context observe the preceding table and the following outline adapted from Talk Thru the Bible which summarizes the first section of Isaiah dealing primarily with prophecies concerning the Kingdom of Judah...

Prophecies against Judah

A The Judgment of Judah Isa 1:1–31

B The Day of the Lord Isa 2:1–4:6

C The Parable of the Vineyard Isa 5:1–30

D The Commission of Isaiah Isa 6:1–13

E The Destruction of Israel by Assyria Isa 7:1–10:4

1 Sign of Immanuel Isa 7:1–25

2 Sign of Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz Isa 8:1–22

3 Prophecy of the Messiah's Birth Isa 9:1–7

4 Judgment on Ephraim Isa 9:8–10:4

F The Destruction of Assyria by God Isa 10:5–12:6

1 Destruction of Assyria Isa 10:5–19

2 Remnant of Israel Isa 10:20–34

3 Restoration of the Messiah's Kingdom Isa 11:1–16

4 Thanksgiving in the Messiah's Kingdom Isa 12:1–6

Fruchtenbaum has commented that...

CHAPTERS 7–12 of Isaiah constitute a single unit, sometimes referred to as **"The Book of Immanuel"** because the name "Immanuel" appears three times in the Hebrew text (Isaiah 7:14; 8:8,10) (**Ed**: Isa 8:10 = "God with us" transliterated "immanu'el"). (Messianic Christology: A study of Old Testament prophecy concerning the first coming of the Messiah. Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries)

Isaiah 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":

- **Take**: Jer 36:2,28,32
- **write**: Isa 30:8 Job 19:23,24 Hab 2:2,3
- **Ordinary letters**: Rev 13:18 21:17, Maher-shalal-hash-baz
- Isaiah 8 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Then - **When?** After prophesying of the desolation that was to befall Judah and Jerusalem (Isa 8:17-25). Remember that Isaiah 8 is a continuation of the prophecy in Isaiah 7 (and in fact continues through Isaiah 9:7), where God reassured Ahaz that Judah would not be defeated by the Aram-Ephraim alliance. But God wants to make sure His people get this message clearly and so He repeats the message with an object lesson in the form of Isaiah's son, Maher-shalal-hash-baz. It should be emphasized that while God does assure Judah she would not be defeated by the Assyrians, this promise did not relieve Judah of considerable suffering at the hands of the invading Assyrian forces. In the OT we see that God would often use enemies of Israel to chastise His chosen people (cp Hab 1:6 referring to the Babylonians He would send to Judah).

The LORD - Remember that in the **NASB**, when "**Lord**" is in all caps (**LORD**) in the text, it signifies the underlying Hebrew name is **Jehovah**.

Take a large tablet (not a parchment roll but more like a slab) - Only rarely is a prophet commanded to actually write out a message (cp Hab 2:2, 3 for another example). Clearly this is a message Jehovah wanted to be fully visible so that it could be read and understood by all.

In ordinary letters - The idea is write on the great tablet with a man's (i.e. an ordinary) stylus, in common characters, intelligible to all. The Amplified has "a graving tool and in ordinary characters [which the humblest man can read.]" The Jerusalem Bible has "ordinary writing," NEB has "common writing," and NAB has "ordinary letters," the NIV "ordinary pen.

Swift is the booty, speedy is the prey ("The spoil speeds, the prey hastes", "Speeding to the Plunder, Hurrying to the Spoil", 'Quick-pickings-Easy-prey' = J. B. Phillips) - This message is repeated as the name of Isaiah's son, **Maher-shalal-hash-baz** in Isaiah 8:3.

This name written out for all to see would signify the rapid advance of the Assyrian forces and the imminent fall of Damascus and Samaria before the Assyrians. An Egyptian name of the Eighteenth Dynasty similarly means "Hasten, Seize Booty."

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: A Timeline of Isaiah

- 790 - [Uzziah](#) (790-739BC) becomes king of Judah, reigns 52 years
- 759 - [Jotham](#) becomes king of Judah assuming reign when Uzziah becomes leprous
- 742 - [Micah](#) begins his prophetic ministry (cp ministry to Hezekiah Jer 26:18, 19, Mic 3:12)
- 739 - **Isaiah begins prophetic ministry in year King Uzziah died** (Isa 6:1f)
- 731 - [Ahaz](#) becomes king of Judah (2Ki 15:38, 16:1, 2Chr 28:1)
- 726 - [Hezekiah](#) becomes 12th king of Judah (2Ki 16:20, 18:1,2) and one of 3 best (2Ki 18:5)
- 722 - [Shalmaneser](#) (2Ki 17:3, 18:9) dies while besieging Samaria, Sargon seizes crown
- 722 - [Sargon of Assyria](#) ([Sargon](#)) (Is 20:1) conquers Samaria (2Ki 17:6, 18:9, 10, 11, 12)
- 701 - [Sennacherib](#) (son of Sargon) of Assyria lays siege to Jerusalem
- 695 - [Manasseh](#) becomes king of Judah (2Ki 21:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12)
- 627 - [Jeremiah](#) begins prophetic ministry
- 586 - [Nebuchadnezzar](#) of Babylon conquers Judah

(Source: [The Ryrie Study Bible: New American Standard Translation: 1995. Moody Publishers](#)) Note that most of these dates are approximations and not indisputable facts. They are listed to help give the reader have a general idea of the relationship of historical events in Isaiah's time.

Isaiah 8:2 And I will take to Myself faithful witnesses for testimony, Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah:

- **Take:** Ru 4:2,10,11 2Co 13:1
- **Uriah:** 2Ki 16:10,11 18:2
- Isaiah 8 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

JEHOVAH CALLS FOR FAITHFUL WITNESSES

This title begs a simple application question - Are you a faithful witness for your Lord? If not you can be -- see Acts 1:8 [note](#).

I will take to Myself faithful witnesses for testimony - The presence of two witnesses indicates that this prophecy had the force of a legal document. He names two witnesses in keeping with the Lord's own requirement in Deuteronomy...

A **single** witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of **two or three** witnesses a matter shall be confirmed. (Dt 19:15)

Uriah the priest - He was a priest during the reign of King Ahaz. [Uriah](#) means "the LORD is my light" and King Ahaz's request he built an idolatrous (Assyrian) altar like one the king had seen at Damascus when he met with Assyrian King [Tiglath-pileser](#). King Ahaz offered sacrifices on this idolatrous altar and moved the divinely prescribed bronze altar. (Read 2Ki 16:10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16). In the present context, Uriah (assuming this is the same Uriah) is taken as one of the two faithful witnesses concerning the matter of Maher-shalal-hash-baz.

Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah - **Zechariah** is the name of up to 28 different persons in Scripture but is not the famous prophet whose book is included in the "Minor Prophets" of the Bible. This Zechariah may be the same one who followed God and who taught King Uzziah to honor God which resulted in Uzziah succeeding (see 2Chr 26:5). Zechariah was a witness of Isaiah's prophecy against Syria and Ephraim (Recorded in Isaiah 7).

Jeberechiah means "Yah (Jehovah) blesses".

Isaiah 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;: (

- **prophetess:** Jdg 4:4 2Ki 22:14)(Ho 1:3-9
- Isa 7:13,14, Maher-shalal-hash-baz, Isa 8:1
- Isaiah 8 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Approached (07126) (**qarab**) conveys the basic sense of coming very near, which could simply be spatially near but also (as used euphemistically in this present passage) mean in proximity intimately, specifically in sexual relations (Ge 20:4, Dt 22:14).

The Prophetess (05031) (**nebiy'ah/nebiah**) describes a woman who speaks or proclaims the message of God. In the present context it could signify that she was the wife of a prophet, but in a sense she does fulfill the role of a prophet by giving birth to a son whose very name conveys a prophetic message.

There are a number of **prophetesses** in the Bible including **Miriam** (Ex 15:1-19, 20), **Deborah** (Jdg 4:4, 5, 6-note), **Huldah** (2Ki 22:14-20, 2Chr 34:22-29), **Noadiah** (Neh 6:14 = false prophetess), **Anna** (Lk 2:36, 37, 38), and Philip's four daughters (Acts 21:8, 9).

Nebiy'ah/nebiah - 6x in the OT - Ex 15:20; Jdg 4:4; 2Ki 22:14; 2Chr 34:22; Neh 6:14; Isa 8:3

Then the LORD said - Remember that names in Scripture were usually filled with meaning. It is almost like this son would be a "walking sermon" or message from God even as was Isaiah's first son whose name meant a "remnant will return."

Isaiah 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.:

- **before:** Isa 7:15,16 Dt 1:39 Jon 4:11 Ro 9:11
- **Wealth of Damascus:** Isa 10:6-14 17:3 2Ki 15:29 16:9 17:3,5,6
- Isaiah 8 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

For - Always be alert for this little preposition at the beginning of sentences, where it most often functions as **a term of explanation**. Then take a moment and ask "What (why, when, etc) is being explained?" In the present context, Isaiah is explaining why Jehovah has given his son such a long name, **Maher-shalal-hash-baz**.

Before the boy knows how to cry out 'My father' or 'My mother'- The prophecy conveyed by the birth of Isaiah's would be just a few years so that within probably 2 years (or even less) the Assyrian king **Tiglath-Pileser III** would plunder Damascus (circa 732BC).

map of Assyria which incorporates Damascus and Samaria).

Samaria - The capital city of Ephraim or Israel (the 10 Northern Tribe Kingdom) (1Ki 16:29; 22:51; 2Ki 13:1, 10; 15:8) originally built by **Omri** (1Ki 16:24).

Will be carried away before the king of Assyria - The Assyrian's practiced deportation of their defeated enemies as an impediment to local uprisings against their rule. The actual fulfillment of this prophecy occurred in 732BC for Damascus and 722BC for Israel.

Isaiah 8:5 Again the LORD spoke to me further saying:

- **Spoke: Isa 7:10**
- Isaiah 8 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Isaiah 7:10 records almost the same statement but there Jehovah spoke to King Ahaz. The same divine voice in Isa 7:10 and Isa 8:5 but different hearts and so different responses.

Again the LORD spoke to me further saying: Remember that when you read the Bible, God is speaking! Always! This begs the

question - Are you listening?

Isaiah 8:6 Inasmuch as these people have rejected the gently flowing waters of Shiloah and rejoice in Rezin and the son of Remaliah:

- 1Ki 7:16 2Ch 13:8-18
- **Shiloah:** Ne 3:15 Jn 9:7
- **rejected the gently flowing waters of Shiloah** Jer 2:13,18 18:14
- **rejoice:** Isa 7:1,2,6 Jdg 9:16-20
- Isaiah 8 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

These peoples - The Northern Kingdom of Ephraim (Israel). Young also feels this speaks of the Southern Kingdom of Judah who had despised the LORD and turned to Assyria for help.

Jeremiah 2:13; 18 "For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, To hew for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns That can hold no water....18) "But now what are you doing on the road to Egypt, To drink the waters of the Nile? Or what are you doing on the road to Assyria, To drink the waters of the Euphrates?"

Rejected (despised) - The rejection of the gently flowing waters was actually a rejection of God Himself as the context shows. So in a sense the metaphor stands for God Himself and contrasts with the raging Euphrates river mentioned in Isaiah 8:7.

The image of the Lord's satisfying waters is found often in Scripture: Ps 46:4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, The holy dwelling places of the Most High.

- See also Ezekiel 47; Jn 4:1-15, Jn 7:37, 38, 39; Rev 22:1.

The gently flowing waters of Shiloah present an apt picture of the spiritual refreshing found in Messiah (Isaiah 8:5-8; 33:21; 41:18; 48:18; 66:12).

I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river,
I've got peace like a river in my soul
(I've Got Peace Like a River)

The gently flowing waters of picture which symbolized divine protection and help (cp Jesus' charge to wash in the pool of Siloam and receive sight - Jn 9:7, 11). Because Judah had refused God's help (healing?), she would experience (figuratively) the flood of waters of the mighty Euphrates in the form of the mighty and destructive forces of the Assyrians (Isa 8:7).

Rezin - King of Aram.

The son of Remaliah - **Pekah** king of Ephraim (Israel). As in Isaiah 7, the writer does not refer to him by his name Pekah, possibly because he was a usurper who does not deserve the title he holds (but that is somewhat speculative).

Isaiah 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.:

- **Lord:** Isa 17:12,13 28:17 59:19 Ge 6:17 Dt 28:49-52 Jer 46:7,8 Da 9:26 Da 11:10,22 Am 8:8 9:5 Na 1:8 Lk 6:48 Rev 12:15,16 17:15
- **strong:** Ezr 4:10 Ps 72:8
- **king:** Isa 7:1-6,17 10:8-14 Eze 31:3-18
- Isaiah 8 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Now therefore - Term of conclusion - In view of the fact that Judah had rejected Jehovah's help and protection choosing to seek help from a pagan nation Assyria, God would now act. Instead of the gentle flowing waters, Judah's rejection would reap a raging torrent (Assyria)! Beloved, we must not read over this too quickly and think to ourselves "How could Judah be so hard hearted, so foolish?" Judah is a picture of our fallen flesh which (like Judah) rejects the help and protection of God and far too often seeks the

world's ways. But we always do so at our own peril (and I am referring to believers), for we too will reap the reward of God's hand of righteous discipline in our life! Do not be deceived when you sin, thinking that you will get away with it. You never get away with sin against God. And if we persist and refuse to confess and repent, we may reap a raging river like Judah! (cp Gal 6:7-note, Gal 6:8-note, Heb 12:5,6-note, He 12:7, 8-note, He 12:9, 10-note, He 12:11-note)

Lord - Note that "Lord" is not in all caps, which indicates this is not a translation of Yahweh (**Jehovah**) but of **Adonai - My Lord, My Master**.

Behold (02009) (**hinneh**) is an interjection (= a word in speaking or writing, thrown in between words connected in construction, to express some emotion or passion) often seeks to grab the reader's attention and says something like - Look! Pay attention! Don't miss this next point! Hinneh draws attention to an important fact or action that follows and in a sense demands our attention. W E Vine adds that Behold is notable that when behold (hinneh) is used in Isaiah, it always introduces something relating to future circumstances.

Uses of hinneh in Isaiah -

Isa 3:1; 5:7, 26, 30; 6:7f; 7:14; 8:7, 18, 22; 10:33; 12:2; 13:9, 17; 17:1, 14; 19:1; 20:6; 21:9; 22:17; 24:1; 25:9; 26:21; 28:2, 16; 29:8, 14; 30:27; 34:5; 35:4; 36:6; 37:7, 11, 36; 38:5, 8, 17; 39:6; 40:9f; 41:15, 27; 42:9; 43:19; 47:14; 48:7, 10; 49:12, 22; 51:22; 52:6, 13; 54:11; 58:9; 59:9; 60:2; 62:11; 65:1, 6, 13f, 17f; 66:12, 15

Strong and abundant waters of the Euphrates- First note the clear play on words - rejection of the gentle flowing waters of Shiloah, will reap a torrent of waters from the mighty Euphrates River (cp Hos 8:7 - you always sow more than you reap!)

Obviously strong and abundant waters is a figure of speech and a powerful one indeed, for if you have ever been caught in rushing, swirling waters (I have and almost drowned), you know the power of flowing water (cp hydroelectric power!). (Click map of Assyria - the river nearest to Israel is the Euphrates. Observe in the legend the striking expansion of the boundaries that occurred the years 824BC and 671BC. For context the events in Isaiah 8 are prophesied between 735-732BC - How do we know? See comments on Isaiah 8:4. Observe that Judah is not green but yellow - while the Northern Kingdom whose capital was Samaria was eventually defeated by Assyria, the Assyrian advances on Judah did not result in her defeat - Why? God's protective hand was on Judah. He would eventually use Nebuchadnezzar as His servant [Jer 25:9, 27:6, 43:10] to defeat and demolish Judah and Jerusalem in 586BC. **Beloved if God is in control of kingdoms rising and falling, what is there in your life which you think is beyond His control? And remember His timing is not necessarily your timing!**)

Isaiah 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:

- **pass:** Isa 10:28-32 22:1-7 28:14-22 29:1-9 36:1-37:38
- **reach:** Isa 30:28
- **spread:** Eze 17:3
- **Immanuel:** Isa 7:14 Mt 1:23 Isa 28:20
- Isaiah 8 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

WHEN TROUBLE COMES REMEMBER IMMANUEL - GOD IS WITH US!

Then - This time phrase (expressions of time) usually marks succession, in this case it describes the Assyrian invasion of Judah (circa 701BC) after the defeat of the Northern Kingdom in 722BC.

Then it will sweep on into Judah - In 701 B.C. [Sennacherib](#) invaded Judah (2Ki 18:13-19:37), and only Jerusalem escaped.

Sennacherib, in 701 BC, moved against the cities in the West... He claims to have conquered 46 strongholds of Hezekiah's territory, but he did not capture Jerusalem, for concerning the king he said, in his annals, "himself like a bird in a cage in Jerusalem, his royal city, I penned him." He states, also, how he reduced his territory, and how Hezekiah sent to him 30 talents of gold and 800 talents of silver, besides hostages.

It will reach even to the neck - The Assyrian invading "tide" would sweep, and cover the land of Judah but would go no higher than the neck. Thus Judah would be spared from being "drowned" (defeated and destroyed) by the Assyrian waters which did engulf and destroy Judah's sister Israel (Ephraim).

The spread of its wings will fill the breadth of your land- As a great bird of prey spreading its wings over its victim, so too would Assyria spread throughout the land of Israel (cp Isaiah 7:19-note)

O [Immanuel](#) - God with us. In context Isaiah is speaking of the land of Judah which belongs to God. God was indeed still with Judah (even though she had been rebellious and unfaithful) and He would not allow Assyria to defeat them. The fact is that THE LAND, the land of Israel (Judah), did not actually belong to either Judah or King Ahaz, but to the coming Messiah, Immanuel! He came the first time and was rejected. Rejection will not be an "option" when He comes the second time as King of kings and Lord of lords!

See - [Immanuel-Emmanuel](#)

Is not God's provision of a historical "salvation" of of Judah (A LAND) by Immanuel not a foreshadowing of the greater salvation provided for the Jews (A LIFE) through the first advent of Immanuel Christ Jesus?

TWOT...

Isaiah addresses Judah's king, of Davidic lineage, as Immanuel. The prophet also gives the meaning and application of the name by stressing that, in spite of what a disobedient king does, God will be with His covenant people (Isa 8:10).

The name Immanuel gives expression to the truth God had expressed in various ways to His covenant people in times previous to Isaiah. He had specifically said that He would be God to Abraham and his seed (Gen 17:7). He would go with Jacob (Gen 28:15) and Moses (Ex 3:12). God identified with His people saying he had taken them to be His possession (Ex 19:5, 6). The Angel of His Name (cf **Angel of the LORD**) would go with and guard his people (Ex 23:20, 24). To Joshua the word came, "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you" (Josh 1:5). To David God said, "I have been with you" (2Sa 7:9).

Solomon earnestly prayed that the Lord would be with him and Israel as he had been with David (1Ki 8:57 "May the LORD our God be with us (transliterated - "elohenu 'immanu"), as He was with our fathers; may He not leave us or forsake us."). By various visible means, i.e. cloud, pillar of fire, and the ark of the covenant the Lord confirmed his word. He was with his people. He led, upheld, and blessed them.

Isaiah, speaking to Ahaz, assured him that the faithful covenant God was present as he had been and as he would be in the incarnate Son to be born of the virgin. Thus the past, present, and future intimate relationship of God's presence with His people is summed up in the name Im-manuel. ([Harris, R L, Archer, G L & Waltke, B K Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament. Moody Press](#))

Constable adds that...

The reappearance of Immanuel in this passage that predicts the birth of Maher-shalal-hash-baz and so closely parallels the Immanuel prophecies in chapter 7 suggests that Maher-shalal-hash-baz was the initial fulfillment of the Immanuel prediction. ([Isaiah - Expository Notes](#))

NET Note - The appearance of the name **Immanuel** ("God is with us") is ironic at this point, for God is present with his people in judgment. Immanuel is addressed here as if he has already been born and will see the judgment occur. This makes excellent sense if his birth has just been recorded. There are several reasons for considering Immanuel and Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz one and the same. 8:3 is a birth account which could easily be understood as recording the fulfillment of the birth prophecy of 7:14. The presence of a formal record/witnesses (8:1-2) suggests a sign function for the child (cf. 7:14). As in 7:14-16, the removal of Judah's enemies would take place before the child reached a specified age (cf. 8:4). Both 7:17-25 and 8:7-8 speak of an Assyrian invasion of Judah which would follow the defeat of Israel/Syria. The major objection to this view is the fact that different names appear, but such a phenomenon is not without parallel in the OT (cf. Gen 35:18). The name Immanuel may emphasize the basic fact of God's presence, while the name Maher focuses on the specific nature of God's involvement. In 7:14 the mother is viewed as naming the child, while in 8:3 Isaiah is instructed to give the child's name, but one might again point to Gen 35:18 for a precedent. The sign child's age appears to be different in 8:4 than in 7:15-16, but 7:15-16 pertains to the judgment on Judah, as well as the defeat of Israel/Syria (cf. vv. 17-25), while 8:4 deals only with the downfall of Israel/Syria. Some argue that the suffixed form "your land" in 8:8 points to a royal referent (a child of Ahaz or the Messiah), but usage elsewhere shows that the phrase does not need to be so restricted. While the suffix can refer to the king of a land (cf. Num 20:17; 21:22; Deut 2:27; Judg 11:17, 19; 2 Sam 24:13; 1 Kgs 11:22; Isa 14:20), it can also refer to one who is a native of a particular land (cf. Gen 12:1; 32:9; Jonah 1:8). (See also the use of "his land" in Isa 13:14 [where the suffix refers to a native of a land] and 37:7 [where it refers to a king].)

Isaiah 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.

- **Be broken:** Isa 7:1,2 54:15 Jer 46:9-11 Eze 38:9-23 Joe 3:9-14 Mic 4:11-13 Zec 14:1-3 Rev 17:12-14 20:8,9
- **and give ear:** Isa 14:5,6 28:13 Ps 37:14,15 Pr 11:21
- **gird:** Isa 37:36 1Ki 20:11
- Note all verbs in **red** are imperatives/commands
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Note that Isaiah 8:9, 10 there is a shift in the prophecy from judgment to one of hope for Judah. The commands in both verses are spoken not to Judah but to the Assyrians (as if they were present to hear). Yes, Assyria would be allowed to invade Judah but would eventually be destroyed.

Be broken... be shattered - These commands are also prophecy. The NET Bible Note gives a helpful explanation...

The verb רָעוּ (ro'u) is a Qal imperative, masculine plural from רָעַע (ra'a', "break"). Elsewhere both transitive (Job 34:24; Ps 2:9; Jer 15:12) and intransitive (Pr 25:19; Jer 11:16) senses are attested for the Qal of this verb. Because no object appears here, the form is likely intransitive: "be broken." In this case the imperative is rhetorical (like "be shattered" later in the verse) and equivalent to a prediction, "you will be broken."... (in other words) The imperative form (Heb "be shattered") is rhetorical and expresses the speaker's firm conviction of the outcome of the nations' attack... One could paraphrase,

"Okay, go ahead and prepare for battle since that's what you want to do, but your actions will backfire and you'll be shattered."

This rhetorical use of the imperatives is comparable to saying to a child who is bent on climbing a high tree,

"Okay, go ahead, climb the tree and break your arm!"

What this really means is:

"Okay, go ahead and climb the tree since that's what you really want to do, but your actions will backfire and you'll break your arm."

The repetition of the statement in the final two lines of the verse gives the challenge the flavor of a taunt (ancient Israelite "trash talking," as it were). ([Isaiah 8 Commentary](#))

NET Note - The verb רָעוּ (ro'u) is a Qal imperative, masculine plural from רָעַע (ra'a', "break"). Elsewhere both transitive (Job 34:24; Ps 2:9; Jer 15:12) and intransitive (Prov 25:19; Jer 11:16) senses are attested for the Qal of this verb. Because no object appears here, the form is likely intransitive: "be broken." In this case the imperative is rhetorical (like "be shattered" later in the verse) and equivalent to a prediction, "you will be broken." On the rhetorical use of the imperative in general, see IBHS 572 §34.4c; GKC 324 §110.c. The imperatival form (Heb "**be shattered**") is rhetorical and expresses the speaker's firm conviction of the outcome of the nations' attack. See the note on "be broken." The initial imperative ("**get ready for battle**") acknowledges the reality of the nations' hostility; the concluding imperative (Heb "be shattered") is rhetorical and expresses the speakers' firm conviction of the outcome of the nations' attack. (See the note on "be broken.") One could paraphrase, "Okay, go ahead and prepare for battle since that's what you want to do, but your actions will backfire and you'll be shattered." This rhetorical use of the imperatives is comparable to saying to a child who is bent on climbing a high tree, "Okay, go ahead, climb the tree and break your arm!" What this really means is: "Okay, go ahead and climb the tree since that's what you really want to do, but your actions will backfire and you'll break your arm." The repetition of the statement in the final two lines of the verse gives the challenge the flavor of a taunt (ancient Israelite "trash talking," as it were).

Isaiah 8:10 Devise a plan, but it will be thwarted. State a proposal, but it will not stand, for God is with us:

- **Devise:** Isa 7:5-7 2Sa 15:31 17:4,23 Job 5:12 Ps 2:1,2 33:10,11 46:1,7 Ps 83:3-18 Pr 21:30 La 3:37 Na 1:9-12 Ac 5:38,39
- **for God:** Isa 7:14 9:6 41:10 Dt 20:1 Joshua 1:5 2Ch 13:12 33:7,8 Ps 46:7,11 Mt 1:23 28:20 Ro 8:13,31 1Jn 4:4
- Isaiah 8 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Young's Literal: Take counsel, and it is broken, Speak a word, and it doth not stand, Because of Emmanu-El!

GOD WITH US!

Devise a plan (take counsel) - Devise your strategy Assyria. Call your councils of war. Form a plan to take Judah.

NET Note - In these vv. 9–10 the tone shifts abruptly from judgment to hope. Hostile nations like Assyria may attack God's people, but eventually they will be destroyed, for God is with his people, sometimes to punish, but ultimately to vindicate.

It will be thwarted (06565) (**parar**) means to break (a treaty, etc Ge 17:14, Lev 26:15), to be broken (Jer 33:21, Zech 11:11), to thwart, frustrate, foil, cause to fail (2Sa 15:34, 17:14, Ezra 4:5, Ne 4:9 Job 5:12; 15:4; 40:8; Ps 33:10; 85:5; 89:34]; Pr 15:22; Isa 14:27; 44:25) or to be thwarted as in the present passage.

State a proposal - more literally "Speak a word"

For - Observe that this is a term of explanation. Isaiah explains why Judah is Immanuel's land and, therefore, cannot be conquered except as Immanuel permits.

God is with us - The literal Hebrew is Emmanu-El, which is emphatic and says something like "With us, God"! In other words this name emphasizes God's presence and in this case His protection (at least until 586BC when Judah fell to Babylon). However, in one sense God is always with Israel because of His immutable, unconditional covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, a covenant which will finally be fulfilled to the believing Jewish remnant in the last of the last days (see comments on the "remnant" in the previous chapter).

As noted earlier **Fruchtenbaum** feels that Isaiah 7-12...

constitute a single unit, sometimes referred to as "The Book of Immanuel" because the name "Immanuel" appears three times in the Hebrew text (Isaiah 7:14; 8:8,10) (Messianic Christology: A study of Old Testament prophecy concerning the first coming of the Messiah. Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries)

Gene Brooks writes...

Isaiah ends both verses (Isa 8:8, 10) of destruction with "O Immanuel!" It is a reminder that in the midst of trouble, God is with us. For the faithful, it is comfort that God remains in control of history.

Application: What kind of trouble are you in? What is threatening you? What in the news is troubling you? God remains in control of history. And He remains in control of your history. So no matter the diagnosis, no matter the child's behavior, no matter the supervisor's attitude, no matter the employment situation, no matter the way the orders are going at work, no matter who is in the White House, no matter the issues at the courthouse, no matter the politics in the church house, God is in control. When you know He is in control and you know His character is good and that He has your best interest at heart, you can settle down... and trust Him. ([Isaiah 8-9](#))

NET Note explains that...

In addition to being a reminder of God's presence in the immediate crisis faced by Ahaz and Judah, [Immanuel](#) (whose name is echoed in this concluding statement) was a guarantee of the nation's future greatness in fulfillment of God's covenantal promises. Eventually God would deliver His people from the hostile nations (Isa 8:9,10) through another child, an ideal Davidic ruler who would embody God's presence in a special way (Isa 9:6, 7). Jesus the Messiah is the fulfillment of the Davidic ideal prophesied by Isaiah, the One Whom Immanuel foreshadowed. Through the miracle of the incarnation He is literally "God with us." Matthew realized this and applied Isaiah's ancient prophecy of Immanuel's birth to Jesus (Mt 1:22,23).

The first Immanuel was a reminder to the people of God's presence and a guarantee of a greater child to come who would manifest God's presence in an even greater way. The second Immanuel is "God with us" in a heightened and infinitely superior sense. He "fulfills" Isaiah's Immanuel prophecy by bringing the typology intended by God to realization and by filling out or completing the pattern designed by God. Of course, in the ultimate fulfillment of the type, the incarnate Immanuel's mother must be a virgin, so Matthew uses a Greek term (*parthenos*), which carries that technical meaning (in contrast to the Hebrew word *עַלְמָה* [*almah*], which has the more general meaning "young woman") (Ed: See comments on Isa 7:14-note). Matthew draws similar analogies between NT and OT events in Isa 2:15, 18. The linking of these passages by analogy is termed "fulfillment." In 2:15 God calls Jesus, his perfect Son, out of Egypt, just as he did his son Israel in the days of Moses, an historical event referred to in Hos 11:1. In so doing he makes it clear that Jesus is the ideal Israel prophesied by Isaiah (see Isa 49:3), sent to restore wayward Israel (see Isa 49:5, cf. Mt 1:21). In Mt 2:18 Herod's slaughter of the infants is another illustration of the oppressive treatment of God's people by foreign tyrants. Herod's actions are analogous to those of the Assyrians, who deported the Israelites, causing the

personified land to lament as inconsolably as a mother robbed of her little ones (Jer 31:15). ([Isaiah 8 Commentary](#))

See - [Immanuel-Emmanuel](#)

Immanuel - Since that first Christmas day 2,000 years ago, the assurance that God is with His people has taken on new meaning. Before Jesus was born, the Israelites were assured that even in judgment they could have hope because God was with them (Isaiah 8:8,10). Yet they didn't know God as fully as we can today.

We have a great advantage because through reading the New Testament we can see the glory of God "in the face of Jesus Christ" (2Corinthians 4:6). And we can sense His presence in all situations of life because He is made real to us by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:10-16).

When I need to be reassured that God is with me, I think about Jesus as He is revealed in the New Testament. I recall how He took little children in His arms and blessed them (Matthew 19:13-15). Then I think of His crucifixion, which reminds me of all He endured to be my Savior (Matthew 27:27-54). Finally, I reflect on His promise, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

The birth of Jesus gave new significance to the name Immanuel, which means "God with us" (Matthew 1:23). Because He lived among us, died for us, and sent His Spirit to indwell us, we can rejoice!

Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with men to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel.
—Wesley

God came to live with us so we could live with Him.

Isaiah 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,:

- **Mighty power:** Jer 20:7,9 Eze 3:14 Ac 4:20
- **instructed:** Ps 32:8 Pr 1:15 Jer 15:19 Eze 2:6, 7, 8
- [Isaiah 8 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries](#)

**BE RADICAL:
DON'T FOLLOW THE CROWD!**

For thus the LORD spoke to me - Jehovah spoke to Isaiah His prophet. (See Oswald Chambers - [How Could Someone Be So Ignorant!](#))

Mighty power - Literally strength of hand (cp Jehovah's strong hand on His prophet Ezekiel - Ezek 3:14).

Not to walk in the way of this people- The call to follow Jehovah has always been a radical call! Isaiah is strongly admonished to in essence be in the midst of the people but not be of the people. In other words, Isaiah was to resist any temptation to follow the prevalent pattern of belief and behavior of the people of Judah. This divine word to Isaiah reminds one of the words of Jesus prayer for His flock in John 17...

I have given them Thy word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. (Jn 17:14, 15, 16)

Isaiah 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.:

- **conspiracy:** Isa 7:2-6 51:12,13 2Ki 16:5-7
- **Not to fear:** Isa 7:4 57:9-11 Ps 53:5 Mt 28:2-5 Lk 12:4,5 21:9 1Pe 3:14,15
- Isaiah 8 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

New Living Translation ([NLT - Tyndale House](#)) "interprets" this "conspiracy" as directed against Isaiah (but not everyone agrees - e.g., see [Note on Isa 8:12](#)) and so paraphrases this passage as...

Do not be afraid that some plan conceived behind closed doors will be the end of you.

Comment: The NLT paraphrase "interpretation" makes the important point that every Bible translation is to some degree a "commentary". That is to say that the translation cannot help but reflect to some degree the bias of the translators and their "brand" of systematic theology. This is why serious Bible study is best performed with the most literal translations (See **Comparison of Bible translations - How literal is your version?**)

You are not to say - While this encouragement is directed primarily to Isaiah, the verb is second masculine plural indicating that it would also apply to all who are likeminded (with Isaiah), presumably the same ones referred to as "my disciples" in Isa 8:16).

You are not to fear what they fear or be in dread of it -Don't fear what men fear and in Isaiah 8:13 the charge is to fear God. The writer of Proverbs said that...

The fear of man brings a snare, but he who trusts in the LORD will be exalted. (Pr 29:25)

Comment: Notice in this verse God gives us the clear antidote for fear of men. What is it? It's faith. Faith in God will fight fear of man. (See related resource: **Fear, How to Handle It**)

Luke reminds us that the fear of God takes precedence over every other fear...

(Jesus speaking) But I will warn you whom to fear:**fear** (aorist imperative - command with a note of urgency) the One who after He has killed has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, **fear** (aorist imperative - command) Him! (Lk 12:5-note)

Isaiah 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.

- **Regard as holy:** Isa 26:3,4 Lev 10:3 Nu 20:12,13 27:14 Ro 4:20) (He shall be: Ge 31:53 Ps 76:7 Mal 2:5 Mt 10:28 Lk 12:5 Rev 15:4
- Isaiah 8 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

KJV: "Sanctify the LORD of hosts Himself"

Septuagint: **Sanctify** (**Aorist imperative** = command with sense of urgency. Do this now!) ye the Lord Himself and He shall be thy fear.

This word of comfort as well as warning to the professing followers of God in Isaiah's day, was applied by the Peter to believers who might suffer for the sake of righteousness. (See 1Pe 3:14,15-note).

The LORD of hosts - See study [Jehovah Sabaoth, LORD of hosts](#)

Regard as holy (06942) (**qadash**) means to set apart for a specific use by some agency. To consecrate, separate, set apart a person or thing from all common or secular purposes to some religious use. Everything consecrated to God was separated from all profane use. In the present context clearly God is Holy so we can't make Him more holy. But the charge is to think of Him as holy, remembering that the way one thinks affects (or at least should affect) the way one behaves! If we regard Jehovah as holy, we will seek to live in a holy or set apart way even as He is holy (cp 1Pe 1:15, 16-note).

The Septuagint uses the verb *hagiazō* from *hagios* [word study] which means to set apart for God, to sanctify, to make a person or thing (in the OT altars, days, priests, etc were set apart) the opposite of *koinos*, which means profane or common.

THE FEAR OF GOD CONQUERS EVERY FEAR

He shall be your fear, and He shall be your dread - As alluded to in the previous passage, if you fear God, you have nothing to fear from man, for the Omnipotent Almighty God of the universe is for you (Ro 8:31-note)

Oswald Chambers - The remarkable thing about fearing God, is that, when you fear God, you fear nothing else; whereas, if you do not fear God, you fear everything else.

A W Tozer - In God is complete safety. Whoever fears God enough never needs to fear anyone or anything else.

Spurgeon comments on the meaning of "**Sanctify the LORD of hosts**"...

You may clearly understand that the Lord does not need to be set apart for holy uses; the Lord of Hosts does not need to be purified, for He is holiness itself. However, what the sense of the word actually means is that we are to adore and reverence the Lord; with fear and trembling we must approach His throne and regard Him as the Holy One of Israel. Let me give you other instances of this.

When Nadab and Abihu, as recorded in Leviticus 10, offered a sacrifice to God and put strange fire on the altar, the fire of the Lord went forth and consumed them, and this was the reason given: "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me" (Lev. 10:3). By this He did not mean that He would be set apart, nor that He would be made holy by purification, but that He would be treated and regarded as a Most Holy Being, with whom such liberties were not to be taken.

Another example is found in Numbers 20, on that unfortunate occasion when Moses lost his temper and smote the rock twice, saying, "Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?" (Nu 20:10). Then the Lord said that Moses would see the Promised Land, but would never enter it, the reason being, "Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel" (Nu 20:12). By this He meant that Moses had not acted so as to honor God's name among the people.

An even more familiar instance occurs in what is commonly called the Lord's Prayer: "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name" (Matt. 6:9). The word hallowed is simply an English variation of sanctified, because the Greek reads, "Sanctified be thy name." Now, we know that God's name does not need purifying or setting apart, so the sense here can only be "Let thy name be revered and adored throughout the whole earth, and let men regard it as being a sacred and holy thing."

Don't They Believe in God? - During the chaos of a big city riot, a television news video showed a man pointing at looters who were racing in and out of the stores. The man cried in anguish, "This is stealing! Don't these people have any morals? Don't they believe in God?"

The prophet Isaiah made a similar point. The Israelites had done the unthinkable—they had fallen into the immoralities of their pagan neighbors. In addition, they had made a treaty with Assyria rather than relying on the Lord to protect them against their enemies (2Ki 16:1-9).

Isaiah said they were worried about the wrong things. Instead of fearing their enemies, they should have been thinking about the Lord (Isa. 8:12, 13). The Lord promised that He would be a sanctuary for those who put their trust in Him. But to those who rejected His offer, He would be "a stone of stumbling" and a hunter's snare (Isa 8:14).

We who profess faith in Christ need to make sure God is the one we fear. Whenever we join others in their sins or behave as if we are afraid of offending them, those who observe us will ask, "Don't they believe in God?"

Our challenge is to fear the Lord above everyone else, and to show it by what we do and say. [Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

Everywhere sin and disgrace are appalling:
Let us be faithful, make sure of our calling,
Let us serve Christ and follow His lead,
Let us be true in thought, word, and deed.
—H G Bosch

A friend of God will be a stranger to the world.

Healthy Fear - In June 6, 1944, five thousand ships departed England for the Normandy coast and the greatest invasion of World War II. From this military event comes the story of the skipper who lectured his crew on fear, and said, "Fear is a very healthy thing." A third-class yeoman yelled in reply "Captain, you're looking at the healthiest sailor in the United States Navy" We tend to associate fear with punishment and danger, but that shows our limited understanding of it. Perfect fear comes from our sense of awe and wonder as we get glimpses of God. John says, "Perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18). Fear, for the Christian, is not so much

about punishment as love. God-fearing people are God-loving people. —D J De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The fear of God can deliver us from the fear of men.

Isaiah 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:

- **shall be:** Isa 26:20 Ps 46:1,2 Pr 18:10 Eze 11:16
- **stone:** Isa 28:16 Lk 2:34 Ro 9:32,33 11:9-11,35 1Pe 2:8
- **snare:** Ps 11:6 69:22 Mt 13:57 Lk 21:35
- Isaiah 8 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**THE MESSIAH:
THE SANCTUARY
THE STONE
THE ROCK**

Young's Literal - And He hath been for a sanctuary, And for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of falling, To the two houses of Israel, For a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Then - In context this seems to function as a term of conclusion. If they fulfill the charge in Isaiah 8:13, Jehovah would be their sanctuary. Of course it is still an expression of time also.

He shall become a Sanctuary - Who is He? Christ Jesus it is He. He will be the Sanctuary when He returns to dwell among His people. This word emphasizes God's holiness as well as His protection in the storm (cp Pr 18:10-note). Ponder the numerous, striking metaphors used to describe Messiah. Is He your Sanctuary or is He the Stone over which you will stumble into the Lake of fire? May God grant all who read these solemn, weighty passages the grace to see and receive Messiah as their Sanctuary, the protection from the wrath to come (1Th 1:10-note). Amen.

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates miqdash with the noun hagiaσμα which means a space set aside for devotion.

Sanctuary ([04720](#))([miqdash](#) from qdash = set apart from profane or common use - see preceding verse) refers to a consecrated (set apart) place, especially the holy place, the tabernacle. In context miqdash refers to the place that God dwells in His holiness.

Miqdash - 71x in OT -

Ex 15:17; 25:8; Lev 12:4; 16:33; 19:30; 20:3; 21:12, 23; 26:2, 31; Num 3:38; 10:21; 18:1, 29; 19:20; Josh 24:26; 1Chr 22:19; 28:10; 2Chr 20:8; 26:18; 29:21; 30:8; 36:17; Neh 10:39; Ps 68:35; 73:17; 74:7; 78:69; 96:6; Isa 8:14; 16:12; 60:13; 63:18; Jer 17:12; 51:51; Lam 1:10; 2:7, 20; Ezek 5:11; 8:6; 9:6; 11:16; 21:2; 23:38f; 24:21; 25:3; 28:18; 37:26, 28; 43:21; 44:1, 5, 7ff, 11, 15f; 45:3f, 18; 47:12; 48:8, 10, 21; Dan 8:11; 9:17; 11:31; Amos 7:9, 13

But (**contrast**) **to both the houses of Israel** - Isaiah 7 and 8 have been related primarily to the Southern Kingdom of Judah, but now he expands the following prophecy to pertain to both Israel and Judah. Why the contrast? What is being contrasted? Isaiah 8:13 has just described treating God as holy and having a reverential fear of Him, both of which are markers of genuine faith and in context describe the "effects" of one who has genuine faith in the Messiah. In contrast Isaiah now describes Jews who refuse to believe in Messiah, the Sanctuary, the Stone, the Rock. So Immanuel, the Messiah, became to the Jews and still is a stone of stumbling until the veil is removed from their heart. (cp 2Cor 3:14,15, 16-note).

A Stone to strike (KJV = stone of stumbling, stone of offense) - The "Stone" is Christ (Lxx = lithos = stone or piece of a rock, used figuratively in NT of Christ = Mt 21:42). Messiah will be like a rock of refuge for the people (Isa 8:14; 17:10; 26:4; 28:16).

See related resources:

- Christ, the Rock, the Stone -- Scripture chain & chart
- [Isaiah 8:14 A Rock of Salvation and a Stumbling Stone - Wil Pounds](#)

Strike (KJV = stumbling) ([05063](#))(**negeph** can describe a plague (any great natural evil or calamity) (Ex 12:13; Ex 30:12; Nu 8:19;

17:11,12; Jos 22:17) or much less commonly describes the action of falling usually caused by an object, in the present passage referring figuratively to stumbling over the Messiah. How interesting that the Stone of stumbling, the Messiah, was foreshadowed in Ex 12:13+ where "The blood (of the lamb, a shadow of Messiah) shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I **strike** (negeph) the land of Egypt."

The **Septuagint** translates negeph with the noun proskomma (from prós = to, against + kopto = cut, strike) which can describe literal or figurative stumbling. It is something a person trips over. Thus proskomma can be an obstacle in the way which if one strikes his foot against he stumbles or falls or figuratively it can describe that over which a soul stumbles i.e. by which is caused to sin or which causes an occasion of apostasy. It is also used figuratively, to describe a cause of falling or an occasion of sinning (Ro 14:13, 20; 1Cor. 8:9; Septuagint: Ex 23:33; 34:12).

Negeph - 7x in the OT - Ex 12:13; 30:12; Nu 8:19; 16:46, 47; Josh 22:17; Isa 8:14

In summary a **Stone** that causes Jews from both Israel and Judah to stumble is Jesus Christ Who Paul refers to in Romans 9 as he explains what will happen to Jews who fail to believe in Messiah (Read Romans 9, 10, 11 which describes God's plan for Israel).

Why? (Why did the Jews not attain righteousness like the Gentiles did - Ro 9:30, 31-note) Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works (cp Isa 64:6, Ro 3:20-note). They stumbled over the stumbling stone (Messiah), just as it is written, (Quoting Isaiah 28:16 and Isaiah 8:14) "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE, AND HE WHO BELIEVES (pisteuo - present tense = as the general direction of their life) IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED (ashamed)." (Ro 9:32, 33-note)

Peter quotes from Isaiah 8:14, 15 writing that Christ is

(For those who refuse to believe in Messiah for salvation, He becomes) "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.

Writing to the Corinthians **Paul** said...

but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block (**skandalon**), and to Gentiles foolishness (1Co 1:23)

Comment: Skandalon originally referred to a movable part of a trap on which the bait was laid, and when touched caused the trap to close on its prey. Skandalon thus came to mean any entanglement of the foot. Figuratively, as used most often in Scripture, **skandalon** refers to any person or thing by which one is drawn into error or sin.

Snare (06341) (**pach/pah**) refers to a literal bird trap and thus means to ensnare, confine and control - As one would birds (Amos 3:5, Pr 7:23, Eccl 9:12). Most OT uses are figurative and refer to that which brings sudden danger and/or which entangles in difficulties, being held captive by circumstances. (Jos 23:13; Job 22:10; Ps 69:23; 91:3; 119:110; 140:6; 141:9; 142:4; Pr 22:5; Isa 24:17, 18; Jer 18:22; 48:43, 44; Hos 5:1; 9:8) The implication is that it is able to snare someone because it is deceptively attractive (eg, a woman who is not your wife - Pr 7:23).

Gilbrant - Occurring twenty-five times in the Hebrew Bible, the noun pach, which refers to a "snare" for birds, has cognates attested in Arabic, Christian Palestinian Aramaic, Syriac, Jewish Aramaic and Middle Hebrew. It is used exclusively in metaphors of humans being trapped by other humans or by the Lord. The effectiveness of the snare metaphor lies in the element of surprise. The victim does not sense danger until it is too late (Amos 3:5). The lure of the loose woman of Proverbs employs this simile (Prov. 7:23), as does a description of the effects of the syncretistic practices of the official priesthood of the northern kingdom of Israel (Hos. 5:1). The psalmist calls out for protection from the snares of the wicked (Pss. 140:5; 141:9; 142:3), as does Jeremiah (Jer. 18:22). Indeed, divine protection is characterized as rescue from a snare (Pss. 91:3; 124:7). The Lord accused the wicked of ignoring his word delivered through the prophets, as they instead set snares for them (Hos. 9:8). The Day of the Lord will be catastrophic for the wicked, as wherever they turn, there will be no escape from the traps which the omnipresent Lord will set for them (Isa. 24:17f; Jer. 48:43f). The wicked will stumble and be caught in traps so that justice may prevail (Prov. 22:5). Indeed, Job's condition was proof in the eyes of his visitors that the wicked would be ensnared, for they were certain that Job had committed a grievous sin which he refused to admit (Job 18:8f; 22:10). The wicked inhabitants of Canaan who were not exterminated would serve as a snare to the Israelites who chose to intermarry with them, ultimately causing the Israelites to perish from the land which the Lord gave them (Josh. 23:13). ([Complete Biblical Library - Incredible Resource](#))

Pach/pah - 25x in OT - snare(15), snares(4), trap(5). Ex 39:3; Nu 16:38; Josh 23:13; Job 18:9; 22:10; Ps 11:6; 69:22; 91:3; 119:110; 124:7; 140:5; 141:9; 142:3; Pr 7:23; 22:5; Eccl 9:12; Isa 8:14; 24:17, 18; Jer 18:22; 48:43, 44; Hos 5:1; 9:8; Amos 3:5

Proverbs 7:23 Until an arrow pierces through his liver; As a bird hastens to the **snare**, So he does not know that it will cost him his life.

Proverbs 22:5 Thorns and **snares** are in the way of the perverse; He who guards himself will be far from them.

Psalms 141:9 Keep me from the jaws of the **trap** which they have set for me, And from the snares of those who do iniquity.

Trap (4170) (**moqesh**) strictly speaking is the lure or bait that is placed in a fowler's (bird catcher's) net or a hunter's trap. The lure comes then to refer to the trap itself. Moqesh is sometimes used literally (Amos 3:5 = bait, Job 40:24). Other uses are figurative and describe entrapment that results in one being captured and/or controlled (this figurative sense composes the majority of the OT uses below).

Moqesh - 27x in the OT - Ex 10:7; 23:33; 34:12; Dt 7:16; Josh 23:13; Jdg 2:3; 8:27; 1Sa 18:21; 2Sa 22:6; Job 34:30; 40:24; Ps 18:5; 64:5; 69:22; 106:36; 140:5; 141:9; Pr 12:13; 13:14; 14:27; 18:7; 20:25; 22:25; 29:6, 25; Isa 8:14; Amos 3:5

CHRIST THE ROCK/STONE

cp Ex17:6

(1) To God Jesus = "Smitten Stone"

Ex 17:6; 1Co10:4; cp. Jn 4:13,14; 7:37, 38, 39

(2) To Israel Jesus = "Stumbling Stone"

1Pe 2:8-note, Ro 9:32, 33-note; 1Co 1:23

(3) To Church Jesus = "Cornerstone"

1Pe 2:6-note, Ep 2:20-note, 1Co 3:10,11,12
(foundation)

(4) To all the Gentile world powers Jesus = "Stone cut without hands"

Da 2:34-note

(5) To Israel at Second coming = capstone of the corner

Zec 4:7

(6) Stone that grows and fills the earth

Da 2:35-note

(7) To unbelievers = crushing Stone of judgment

Mt 21:44, cp Luke 2:34

Isaiah 8:15 Many will stumble over them. Then they will fall and be broken; They will even be snared and caught.!

- **stumble:** Mt 11:6 15:14 21:44 Lk 20:17,18 Jn 6:66 1Co 1:23

Alexander - This verse completes the threatening by an explicit declaration that Jehovah would not only be a stumbling block and snare to the houses of Israel but that many should actually fall and be ensnared and broken. ([The Prophecies of Isaiah](#))

Many - This refers to Jews who fail to believe in the Rock, the Messiah. They will stumble over the Stone instead of being safe in His Sanctuary.

Note that five verbs are used to describe their destruction.

Stumble (03782) (**kashal**) means to stagger, totter, falter - stumbling in and out of control (Lev 26:37). Literally kashal describes physically falling. Figuratively **kashal** speaks of falling in the sense of failing or falling into ruin (Ps 64:8, 2Chr 25:8, Isa. 3:8; Hos. 14:1)

Swanson - 1. (qal) stumble, falter, stagger, i.e., make a motion of falling or stumbling in an out of control manner (Lev 26:37), note: often referring to a weak, wounded, failing person; (nif) stumbled (1Sa 2:4); (hif) cause to fall (Pr 4:16); 2. (nif) be brought down, i.e., be in a state of destruction or ruin (Pr 24:16; Da 11:41); (hif) overthrow, bring to ruin (2Ch 25:8); (hof) be overthrown (Jer 18:23); 3. (qal) have a downfall, fail, have no success, i.e., a lack of obtaining a desirable state (Hos 14:2[EB 1]); (hif) cause to stumble (Jer 18:15); 4. (qal) fail, i.e., to have a condition or state cease, implying a defeat (Ps 31:10)

Vine - kashal (3782 ,קָשַׁל), "to stumble, stagger, totter, be thrown down." As in biblical Hebrew, this word is used in modern Hebrew in the sense of "to stumble, fail." It occurs in the text of the Hebrew Old Testament approximately 60 times, the first time being in Lev. 26:37: "And they shall fall one upon another..." This use illustrates the basic idea that one "stumbles" because of something or over something. Heavy physical burdens cause one "to stagger": "... The children fell under the [loads of] wood" (Lam. 5:13). This word is often used figuratively to describe the consequences of divine judgment on sin: "Behold, I will lay stumbling blocks before this people, and the fathers and the sons together shall fall upon them ..." (Jer. 6:21). Babylon, too, will know God's judgment: "And the most proud shall stumble and fall ..." (Jer. 50:32). When the psalmist says: "My knees totter from my fasting" (Ps. 109:24, NAB), he means: "My knees are weak" (as translated by KJV, NASB, RSV, JB, NEB, TEV).

Kashal - 61x in 58v- bring you down(1), bring down(1), brought down(1), cast down(1), downfall(1), fail(1), failed(1), failing(1), fall(4), fall down(1), feeble(3), feeble*(1), overthrown(1), **stumble**(26), stumble badly(1), **stumbled**(12), stumbles(2), tottering(1), weak(1).

Lev 26:37; 1Sa 2:4; 2 Chr 25:8; 28:15, 23; Neh 4:10; Job 4:4; Ps 9:3; 27:2; 31:10; 64:8; 105:37; 107:12; 109:24; Pr 4:12, 16, 19; 24:16f; Isa 3:8; 5:27; 8:15; 28:13; 31:3; 35:3; 40:30; 59:10, 14; 63:13; Jer 6:15, 21; 8:12; 18:15, 23; 20:11; 31:9; 46:6, 12, 16; 50:32; Lam 1:14; 5:13; Ezek 33:12; 36:15; Dan 11:14, 19, 33ff, 41; Hos 4:5; 5:5; 14:1, 9; Nah 2:5; 3:3; Zech 12:8; Mal 2:8. Some representative uses...

(Pr 4:16) For they cannot sleep unless they do evil; And they are robbed of sleep unless they make someone **stumble**. (figurative usage) ([Charles Bridges Commentary](#))

(Pr 4:19) The way of the wicked is like darkness; They do not know over what they stumble. ([Charles Bridges Commentary](#))

(Pr 24:16) For a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again, But the wicked stumble (sweep them away - in marked contrast to the security of the righteous - cf Ps 34:19) in time of calamity. ([Charles Bridges Commentary](#); J Vernon McGee = [Proverbs 24:16 Commentary](#))

(Jer 18:15) 'For My people have forgotten Me, They burn incense to worthless gods And they have **stumbled** (figurative usage) from their ways, From the ancient paths, To walk in bypaths, Not on a highway,

(Da 11:33) "Those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many; yet they will **fall** (idea of die) by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder for many days.

(Hos 4:5) So you will **stumble** by day, And the prophet also will stumble with you by night; And I will destroy your mother.

(Hos 5:5) Moreover, the pride of Israel testifies against him, And Israel and Ephraim stumble in their iniquity; Judah also has **stumbled** with them.

(Hos 14:1) Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God, For you have **stumbled** (figurative usage) because of your iniquity.

(Hos 14:9) Whoever is wise, let him understand these things; Whoever is discerning, let him know them. For the ways of the LORD are right, And the righteous will walk in them, But transgressors will **stumble** (figurative usage) in them.

Jesus said - And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me. (Mt 11:6)

Over them - **What/who is them?** In context it refers to the metaphors of the Stone and the Rock.

Be broken (07665)(**shabar** - see word study) means to break (in pieces, up, down) shatter, burst.

Snared (03369)(**yaqosh**) refers to setting a trap for the purpose of catching prey. It is often used in a metaphorical sense of the entrapment of people, of catching one in an undesirable situation. (Isa 28:13; Jer 50:24) A **snare** allures one from the safe path and results in his destruction. Saul tried to ruin David with his daughter Michal (1Sa 18:21). Moses was considered a **snare** to Egypt (Ex 10:7). Gold ensnares, as does the "god" (idol) covered by the gold! This warning principle applies to all of us! (Dt 7:25). As the trapper snares the unwary animal, so souls can be ensnared by sin (Ps 124:7-**note**, Ps 141:9-**note** = a great prayer for all God's saints to pray frequently!) Pride makes one susceptible to snares (Jer 50:24, cf Jer 50:31, 32)

Some of the uses of **yaqosh** are translated in the Lxx with the word **pagis** which describes anything that catches and holds fast, such as a snare, a trap, a noose, and like the OT uses is used metaphorically in the NT of a false sense of security that leads to a sudden and unexpected judgment (Ro 11:9) or as a deceitful method or trick of the devil for gaining control (1Ti 3:7) or generally of any allurements to wrongdoing, anything that entices, attempts or attracts us (1Ti 6:9 is a **prime example**!)

Webster says a **snare** is a device for trapping birds or small animals, esp a flexible loop that is drawn tight around the prey. Anything that traps or entangles someone or something unawares. To catch or trap by trickery. **1828 Webster** adds "An instrument for catching animals, particularly fowls, by the leg. It consists of a cord or string with slip-knots, in which the leg is entangled. A snare is not a net. Any thing by which one is entangled and brought into trouble."

Swanson - (qal) control, formally, lay a bird snare, set a trap as a figure for capture and so control and rule another, or be controlled by another (Ps 124:7; 141:9; Jer 50:24); (nif) be ensnared, be trapped (Dt 7:25; Pr 6:2; Isa 8:15; 28:13+); (pual) (Eccl 9:12+),

Yaqosh - 8x in 8v in the OT -ensnared(1), set(1), set a snare(1), snared(4), trapper(1).

Deuteronomy 7:25 "The graven images of their gods you are to burn with fire; you shall not covet the silver or the gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, or you will be **snared** by it, for it is an abomination to the LORD your God.

Psalms 124:7 Our soul has escaped as a bird out of the **snare** of the trapper; The snare is broken and we have escaped.

Psalms 141:9 Keep me from the jaws of the trap which they have set for me, And from the **snares** of those who do iniquity.

Proverbs 6:2-**note** If you have been **snared** with the words of your mouth, Have been caught with the words of your mouth,

Ecclesiastes 9:12 Moreover, man does not know his time: like fish caught in a treacherous net and birds trapped in a **snare**, so the sons of men are ensnared at an evil time when it suddenly falls on them.

Isaiah 8:15 "Many will stumble over them, Then they will fall and be broken; They will even be **snared** and caught."

Isaiah 28:13 So the word of the LORD to them will be, "Order on order, order on order, Line on line, line on line, A little here, a little there," That they may go and stumble backward, be broken, **snared** and taken captive.

Comment: Israel is snared by their rejection of God's word (Isa. 8:15; 28:13). It follows that letting the Word of Christ dwell in us richly (Col 3:16) is a great preventative against being enticed and carried away by the lusts of our fallen flesh (James 1:14).

Jeremiah 50:24 "I set a **snare** for you and you were also caught, O Babylon, While you yourself were not aware; You have been found and also seized Because you have engaged in conflict with the LORD."

Comment: Yes, Babylon was God's instrument of punishment or chastisement for Judah, but because of their evil ways they too would receive just recompense for Jehovah, the Just One.

Caught (captured) (03920) (**lakad**) means to capture, seize, catch, as in a net, trap or pit (Ps 9:15). Literally and figuratively, the latter sense poignantly illustrated in Pr 5:22 where Solomon notes that the wicked is captured with the cords of his own sins (Josh 6:20, cf 1Sa 14:41-42). Captured (defeated) cities (Dt 2:34, 35; 3:4, Jericho = Josh 6:20; Jdg 1:8, 12-13, 18). Speaks of tribes providentially "taken" to discern who committed the sin that caused Israel to lose the battle at Ai (Josh 7:14-16) To be "immoveable, frozen, i.e., make a collection or mass hard and immoveable, as an extension of capturing or binding up and object (Job 38:30)" (Swanson) Used in Job 41:17 of Leviathan's strong scales that "clasp (**lakad**; Lxx = **sunecho/synecho** = held together) each other and cannot be separated."

In the present verse **lakad** serves as a figure of divine judgment. The Messiah, the Stone of Stumbling (Isa 8:14), will cause many to

be **captured** and suffer the pangs of eternal torment because they rejected God's only Son and the only solution for man's sin!

Walter Kaiser - Most of the 121 uses of **lākad** deal with men capturing or seizing towns, men, spoils, and even a kingdom (1Sa 14:47). It is used figuratively of the entrapment of men who are caught in snares of all sorts laid by their enemies (Jer 5:26; 18:22; Ps 35:8). In Pr 5:22 the wicked is captured with the cords of his own sins. Likewise, in Ps 9:15 the heathen are seized in the very net which they hid to capture others. They are captured by their pride, haughtiness, and the words of their lips (Ps 59:12; Pr 6:2; 11:6). This word also serves as a figure of divine judgment. The Stone of Stumbling will cause many to stumble, fall, be broken, be ensnared, and be captured (Isa 8:15). When God shakes the foundations of the earth, just prior to the Millennium ("many days" of Isa 24:22), the ungodly shall be seized in the trap (Isa 24:18) as were those who drunkenly mocked the prophet's message (Isa 28:13). When God moves in judgment, husband and wives (Jer 6:11), scribes and wise men (Jer 8:9) along with Moab (Jer 48:7, 44) will be included. Others are ensnared by a woman (Eccl 7:26) or are caught in the "cords of affliction" (Job 36:8).

Waltke - Lakad is used more often in warfare for capturing territory from an enemy (cf. Nu 21:32; 32:39, 41, 42; Pr 16:32) or from a person (Jer. 48:7), but the parallel and with the cords (ûbehablê) shows that it has its less frequent use in capturing an animal in a trap (Job 36:8; Ps. 9:6; 35:8; Pr. 6:2; Ec 7:26; Isa 8:5; Jer. 18:22; 48:44; Amos 3:5). (Waltke, B. K. The Book of Proverbs)

In Pr 5:22 Solomon warns (and sadly failed to heed his own warning - see 1Ki 11:1-11) of the **power of sin ('avon)** to capture and the power of sin (**chattat/chattath**) to hold - "His own iniquities (**avon**) will capture (Heb - **lakad** = catch in a net, trap or pit, figuratively of entrapment of men caught in snares laid by enemies as in Jer 5:26; 18:22; Ps 35:8; Lxx translates **lakad** in Pr 5:22 with verb **agreuo** used in " hunting or fishing = to take, catch; figuratively of taking advantage of someone in an unguarded moment, seeking to catch them in a mistake, try to get them to make a wrong statement as in Mk 12.13) the wicked, and he will be held (Heb = **tamak** = basic idea = "grasping securely"!)" with the cords of his sin (**chattat/chattath**)."

NAS Usage:

Lakad - 120x in 113v - capture(9), **captured**(57), captures(4), captures at all(1), catch(2), **caught**(12), clasp(1), imprisoned(1), seized(1), take(6), taken(13), taken captive(2), takes(3), took(8).

Nu 21:32; 32:39, 41f; Deut 2:34, 35; 3:4; Josh 6:20; 7:14-16; 8:19, 21; 10:1, 28, 32, 35, 37, 39, 42; 11:10, 12, 17; 15:16f; 19:47; Jdg 1:8, 12-13, 18; 3:28; Jdg 7:24-25; 8:12, 14; 9:45, 50; 12:5; 15:4; 1Sa 10:20-21; 14:41-42, 47; 2Sa 5:7; 8:4; 12:26-28; 1Kgs 9:16; 16:18; 2Kgs 12:17; 17:6; 18:10; 1Chr 11:5; 18:4; 2Chr 12:4; 13:19; 15:8; 17:2; 22:9; 28:18; 32:18; 33:11; Neh 9:25; Job 5:13; 36:8; 38:30; 41:17; Ps 9:15; 35:8; 59:12; Pr 5:22; 6:2; 11:6; 16:32; Eccl 7:26; Isa 8:15; 20:1; 24:18; 28:13; Jer 5:26; 6:11; 8:9; 18:22; 32:3, 24, 28; 34:22; 37:8; 38:3, 28; 39:1; 48:1, 7, 41, 44; 50:2, 9, 24; 51:31, 41, 56; Lam 4:20; Dan 11:15, 18; Amos 3:4f; Hab 1:10; Zech 14:2.

Here are some representative uses...

(Job 5:13) "He **captures** the wise by their own shrewdness, and the advice of the cunning is quickly thwarted.

(Ps 9:15) The nations have sunk down in the pit which they have made; In the net which they hid, their own foot has been **caught**.

(Ps 35:8) Let destruction come upon him unawares, and let the net which he hid **catch** himself; Into that very destruction let him fall.

(Ps 59:12) On account of the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips, Let them even **becaught** in their pride, And on account of curses and lies which they utter.

(Pr 5:22)-**note** His own iniquities will **capture** the wicked, And he will be held with the cords of his sin.

(Pr 6:2) If you have been snared with the words of your mouth, Have been **caught** with the words of your mouth,

(Pr 11:6) The righteousness of the upright will deliver them, But the treacherous will **becaught** by their own greed.

(Pr 16:32) He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit, than he who **captures** a city.

Isaiah 8:16 Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples:

- **Bind up:** Isa 29:11 Da 12:4

- **testimony:** Isa 8:20 Dt 4:45 2Ki 11:12 Jn 3:32,33 Heb 3:5 1Jn 5:9-12 Rev 19:10
- **seal:** Da 9:24 Rev 5:1,5 10:4
- **among:** Isa 54:13 Ps 25:14 Pr 8:8,9 Da 12:9,10 Mt 13:11 Mk 4:10,11,34 Mk 10:10 1Co 2:14 Rev 2:17)

This verse is difficult to interpret and one needs to be careful to not be too dogmatic. Oswalt writes that one interpretation says that Isaiah's "oracles were sealed up and committed to his disciples to be published at some later date when events would have vindicated him and them." In light of the fact that the law and the testimony together could denote the general revelation of the Word of God (cp Dt. 4:44, 45; 1Ki 2:3; Neh 9:34; Ps 19:8) another possible interpretation is that Isaiah is

referring to the revealed word of God (certainly so in v. 20), and that the binding and sealing is an act of affirmation and attestation? He is evidently including his own oracles in the statement (so Isa 8:18), but the context demands that he not be limiting the ground of his hope merely to his own experience (Isa 8:17). If this is a correct understanding, then Isaiah, in response to God's admonition of Isa 8:12-15, is reaffirming his dependence upon God as revealed in Scripture and challenging those who follow him to do the same (cf. Josh 24:14, 15). ([The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1–39](#)) (Ed: However see below for the explanation in the discussion of the verb *tsarar*.)

Bind up the testimony - Note the two successive commands. In context we see most of God's people rejected his message, but this would be a way of preserving the message. **Motyer** adds that

The imperatives suggest a definite act, a precise (even legal) securing of Isaiah's message against any accusation that he did not say this or that and against subsequent tampering or addition by others. ([The Prophecy of Isaiah An Introduction Commentary 1993](#)).

Bind (this is a **command**) ([06887](#))(**tsarar**) means to be narrow, to be cramped, to be straitened, to be constricted, to hem or be hemmed in.

Tsarar may refer to anything which is confining and in the context of Isa 8:16 it means to bind up, to tie or wrap up so as to safeguard from tampering (cf binding up in Pr 26:8, Ex 12:34, Joshua 9:4). This action refers most likely to the scribes binding the document into a sealed scroll for safekeeping. In Hos 13:12, **tsarar** figuratively depicts the record of Israel's sins being written down and permanently bound in a sealed scroll for safekeeping, thus assuring the that their sin would be retained.

Figuratively **tsarar** means to oppress or harass and thus to be hostile or be an adversary or enemy, the best known use being Ps 23:5 "in the presence of my **enemies (tsarar)**." (Ex 23:22; Nu 10:9; 25:17-18 Esther 3:10; 8:1; 9:10, 24; Ps 6:7; 7:4, 6; 8:2; 10:5; 23:5; 31:11; 42:10; 69:19; 74:4, 23; 129:1-2; 143:12; Isa 11:13; Amos 5:12).

Figuratively **tsarar** also means to feel hard pressed and thus to be **distressed** (13/36 uses), troubled, oppressed, cramped, anxious or worried. In contrast, that which is wide-open or broad gives a picture of freedom and/or deliverance. In Job 20:22 the idea is to be in narrow straits, to be in a bind, connoting the idea of pressure, stress or trouble.

To "bind up" a city is to besiege it (Dt 28:52, two uses, first use in **Lxxextribo** = to cause removal by irritation, to rub out, the second use in **Lxx = thlipsis** = press upon, make narrow, cause something to be constricted - the following passages translate **tsarar** in the **Lxx with thlipsis** - De 28:52; Jdg 10:9; 1Sa 28:15; 30:6; 2Sa 13:2; 1Kgs 8:37; 2Chr 6:28; 22; 33:12; Neh 9:27; Job 20:22; Ps 31:9; 69:17; La 1:20).

Tsarar means to keep out, shut out a person (2Sa 20:3).

Tsarar indicates something being cramped, shortened, cut back as in Job 18:7, where the trouble has hemmed him in, so that he cannot walk with full, vigorous steps as he had before.

John Hartley - *ārar* may refer to anything which is narrow or confining. A place may become too small for people to inhabit when they increase in number (2Kgs 6:1; Isa 49:19f.). Isaiah speaks of a blanket too narrow to wrap oneself (Isa 28:20). It also refers to being restricted (2Sa 20:3), and it may signify "to hamper something" (Pr 4:12). *ārar* means "to bind up" or "to tie." It is used for binding a stone in a sling (Pr 26:8), tying a kneading trough to a mantle (Ex 12:34), or mending an old torn wine skin (Josh 9:4, Pual). God is said to bind up the water in thick clouds (Job 26:8; cf. Hos 4:19). Hosea describes the sin of Ephraim as bound up; i.e. it was kept in store for the time of judgment (Hos 13:12). Since the people reject his message, Isaiah exhorts his disciples to preserve his teaching among themselves saying, "Bind up the testimony, seal the teaching among my disciples" (Hos 8:16). It further is used for preserving one's life (1Sa 25:29); "the life of my Lord will be bound in the bundle of the living." It also may refer to the strong emotional response that one experiences when pressed externally by enemies or internally by wrong decisions or passions; e.g. Jacob's confrontation with Esau (Ge 32:7). Israel was frequently placed in sore distress by her enemies during the period of the Judges (Jdg 2:15; 10:9). Even a great leader may be distressed by reaction to controversial decisions (cf. 1Sa 30:6). One can be

obsessed with a passion and be so bound up emotionally that he becomes ill; e.g. (Amnon's distorted desire for his sister (2Sa 13:2). One curse for violating the covenant states that enemies will besiege Israel's towns (Dt 28:52). Similarly God brings distress on any who have sinned (Zeph 1:17; Jer 10:18). Some under such distress become more faithless, as did Ahaz (2Chr 28:22), while others humble themselves and seek Yahweh, as did Manasseh (2Chr 33:12; cf. Dt 4:30f.).

Tsarar - 37x in 36v - afflicted(1), besiege(3), besieges(1), bind(1), binds(1), bound(3), bring distress(1), cause them distress(1), cramped(2), **distress**(6), **distressed**(6), frustrated(1), impeded(1), mended(1), oppressed(1), shortened(1), shut(1), small(1), trouble(1), wrapped(1), wraps(2).

Ge 32:7; Ex 12:34; Deut 28:52; Josh 9:4; Jdg 2:15; 10:9; 11:7; 1 Sam 25:29; 28:15; 30:6; 2 Sam 1:26; 13:2; 20:3; 1Kgs 8:37; 1Chr 21:13; 2Chr 6:28; 28:20, 22; 33:12; Neh 9:27; Job 18:7; 20:22; 26:8; Ps 31:9; 69:17; Pr 4:12; 26:8; 30:4; Isa 8:16; 28:20; 49:19; Jer 10:18; Lam 1:20; Hos 4:19; 13:12; Zeph 1:17

Note there are > 20 more uses of this Strong's number 06887 in the KJV, primarily in those passages translated as **adversary or enemy** - Ex 23:22; Nu 10:9; 25:17-18; 33:55; Esther 3:10; 8:1; 9:10, 24; Ps 6:7; 7:4, 6; 8:2; 10:5; 23:5; 31:11; 42:10; 69:19; 74:4, 23; 129:1-2; 143:12; Isa 11:13; Amos 5:12

The testimony (08584) (**teudah**) means attestation or testimony. A **testimony** is a solemn declaration or affirmation made for the purpose of establishing or proving some fact, in context referring to the prophecies given to Isaiah.

NET Bible Note - The "**testimony**" probably refers to the prophetic messages God has given him. When the prophecies are fulfilled, he will be able to produce this official, written record to confirm the authenticity of his ministry and to prove to the people that God is sovereign over events.

Seal (this is a command in Hebrew) ([02856](#))(**chatham/hatam**) describes the action of signing a document and then placing a personal seal on it (1Ki 21:8, Jer 32:10, 44). It can describe the act of sealing something to make it secure, the most likely meaning in this present passage (cp Da 9:24, 12:4, Dt 32:34 [in sense of lock or store away with respect to goods or property], Isa 29:11, Jer 32:11, 14). In the present passage the meaning could include the nuance of to attest as final and therefore guard from addition.

Chatham/hatam can mean to stop or hinder (Job 9:7, 37:7).

It is interesting that the related Aramaic verb **chatham** ([02857](#)) is used in Daniel 6:17-note when King Darius sealed up the mouth of the lion's den with his own **signet ring** (see also **Seal**) as a guarantee that Daniel would have no way of escape (As an aside, isn't that when God's presence and power are most evident in our lives -- when we have "no way of escape" and can only run into the Strong Tower of the Name of **Jehovah**, Pr 18:10-note?) (cf seal in Mt 27:66)

The placing of a seal on a document was equivalent to the modern use of signatures (Neh 10:1). Kings' seals were used on letters to give them the status of royal decrees (1Ki 21:8; Esther 3:12-note, Esther 8:8, 10-note)

In Job 14:17 he says "my transgression is **sealed** up in a bag."

In Song 4:12 "a spring sealed up" refers to the virginal state of Solomon's beloved.

A divine vision is "sealed up" in Isa 29:11 and signifies the termination of (finishing of) the prophecy in Da 9:24-note. Dwight Pentecost says "The verb **hatam** has the idea of sealing up. Here the thought is sealing something up with a view to punishment (cf. Dt. 32:34; Job 14:17). This emphasized that Israel's sin which had gone unpunished would be punished—in or through Jesus Christ, her substitute, who would bear the sins of the world on the cross. Then at Christ's second coming he will remove Israel's sin (Ezek 37:23; Ro. 11:20–27)."

Daniel 12:4, 9-note speak of that which is certain to happen but is reserved for a later time (thus sealed = "settled and sure"), coming to pass only after a passage of time.

Esther 8:8, 10(note) refers to sealing with a royal decree and in Jer 32:10-11 to the sealing of the title deed to the land.

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **chatham** with the verb **sphragizo** (**see word study**) in Isaiah 8:16 and in the following passages - Dt 32:34; 1Ki 21:8; Neh 10:1; Esther 8:8, 10-note; Job 14:17; 24:16; Song 4:12; Isa 29:11; Jer 32:10, 11, 44; Da 9:24-note; Da 12:4, 9-note

Chatham/hatam - 26x in 24v - obstructs(1), **seal**(6), **sealed**(15), **seals**(2), sets a seal(1), shut(1).

Lev 15:3; Deut 32:34; 1Kgs 21:8; Neh 9:38; 10:1; Esther 3:12-note; Esther 8:8, 10-note; Job 9:7; 14:17; 24:16; 33:16; 37:7; Song 4:12; Isa 8:16; 29:11; Jer 32:10, 11, 14, 44; Ezek 28:12; Da 9:24-note; Da 12:4, 9-note

The law (the instruction) (08451) (**torah**) means law (written code - Neh 8:2), instruction, teaching (as information imparted to a student - Ps 78:1, 1:8), direction, custom or manner (that is the usual way of doing something - 2Sa 7:19). Something which

should/must be done (Ex 12:49, Lev 6:2).

NET Bible Note -The **instruction** (law) probably refers to the prophet's exhortations and warnings. When the people are judged for the sins, the prophet can produce these earlier messages and essentially say, "I told you so." In this way he can authenticate his ministry and impress upon the people the reality of God's authority over them. (**Note:** Not everyone agrees this is the accurate interpretation.)

My - The natural question is to whom does "my" refer, the prophet or Jehovah. If it refers to Isaiah the verse would read almost like a prayer that God preserve what Isaiah has taught his disciples. Others favor that the My refers to God and that He is essentially claiming the disciples as His remnant who have the privilege of possessing His testimony and law.

Disciples means the taught ones, and in context those who follow the teaching of the law and the testimony.

Disciples (03928) (**limmud** from **lamad** = to learn in Qal, teach in Piel) means a disciple and as noted is derived from **lamad** which conveys the idea of training as well as educating and is used repeatedly in Psalm 119 which deals with the Word of God in some way (e.g, lamad is in (Ps 119:12, 26, 64, 66, 68, 108, 124, 135, 171). It is also interesting that the training aspect of this word group can be seen in the derived term for "oxgoad," (malmed in Jdg 3:31). In Hos 10:11 where Ephraim is taught like a heifer by a yoke and goad. One other aspect of the root word which is important is that lamad signifies that all learning and teaching is ultimately found in the fear of the LORD (Dt 4:10, 14:23, 17:19, note association of fear and obedience in Dt 31:12 - all uses in Lxx = manthano) (THIS BEGS A QUESTION - Do you have a healthy fear of the LORD? See notes on this topic -Fear of the Lord). And so the derivative word **limmud** describes a "taught one," and in Isa 8:16 are the Lord's disciples who know His Law. In Isaiah 50:4 note that the Servant of the LORD has both the tongue and the ear of the learned, so that His speaking and hearing governed by the learning which is in concert with the will and way of God. In Isa 54:13 we read "All your sons will be **taught** (limmud) of the LORD; And the well-being of your sons will be great." Of course this prophecy has not yet been fulfilled, for most of Israel today is secular, but it will be fulfilled in the glorious Messianic Age to come. Two times (Jer 2:24, 13:23) **limmud** is translated **accustomed** (NAS) and in Jer 13:23 the Septuagint translates **limmud** with the related Greek verb **manthano** which means to learn. The use in Jer 2:24 is more enigmatic. Finally, one other note of interest is that the root word lamad also gives rise to the word Talmid which means "scholar." In rabbinical times, the teacher of the law was called the **talmid** Rabbi and his pupils were known as talmidim, i.e. apprentices. Yet in another sense, all Israel were **talmidim**, apprenticed to the torah of God. The Jewish **Talmud** gets its name from this root.

Limmud -6x in 5v - accustomed(2), disciple(1), disciples(2), taught(1). Isa. 8:16; 50:4; 54:13; Jer. 2:24; 13:23

Isaiah 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.

- **I will:** Isa 25:9 26:8 33:2 64:4 Ge 49:18 Ps 27:14 33:20 37:34 39:7 40:1 Ps 130:5 La 3:25,26 Ho 12:6 Mic 7:7 Hab 2:3 1Th 1:10 2Th 3:5 Heb 10:36-39
- **Hiding:** Isa 54:8 59:2 64:7 Dt 31:17,18 32:20 Eze 39:23,24 Mic 3:4
- **I will look:** Isa 50:10 Lk 2:38 Heb 9:28
- Isaiah 8 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

WAITING FOR JEHOVAH

It is always a good thing to **wait** for Jehovah! Waiting for God is much better than [waiting on Godot!!!](#) (See [devotional](#))

We're waiting for You, Lord, to come
And take us home to be with You;
Your promise to return for us
Gives hope because we know it's true.
—Sper

And - connects to the previous difficult to interpret passage. **Guzik** offers this thought...

Waiting on the LORD is connected with His word. We can wait on the LORD by waiting on His word. (Isaiah 8 Commentary)

I will wait (02442) (**chakah/hakah**) to tarry, to delay action, but figuratively means to hope for something, most often something good (Ps 33:20; Isa 8:17; Hab 2:3; Zeph 3:8, Da 12:12).

NAS Usage: long(2), longs(1), wait(7), waited(1), waiting(1), waits(3).

Edwin Yamauchi - The book of Daniel closes with a blessing for those who would wait for the fulfillment of the prophecies (Dan 12:12). Habakkuk 2:3 urges believers to wait for the vision though it tarries. The Lord declares, "Wait for me" (Zeph 3:8). The expressions "to wait for the Lord" in Isa 8:17 and "to wait for him" in Isa 64:4, connote an attitude of earnest expectation and confident hope.

Baker - It indicates delaying an action (2 Kgs. 7:9; 9:3; Job 32:4). It refers to longing or hoping for something to happen (Job 3:21), such as death or, in a good sense, for the Lord to act (Ps. 33:20; Isa. 8:17; Hab. 2:3; Zeph. 3:8); or to resurrect (Dan. 12:12). But it means to wait in order to accomplish one's purpose, good or bad (Hos. 6:9).

Swanson - wait for, i.e., continue to be in a certain state until an expected event, implying a desire to see the event occur (Isa 30:18); (piel) lie in wait (2Ki 7:9; 9:3; Job 3:21; 32:4; Ps 33:20; 106:13; Isa 8:17; 30:18a; 64:4; Da 12:12; Hos 6:9; Hab 2:3; Zep 3:8+)

Lxx translates **chakah** in Isa 8:17 with **meno** meaning to abide, remaining in place, tarrying, keeping on with some context implying expecting someone (Acts 20:5).

Chakah - 15x in 13v -

2 Kgs 7:9; 9:3; Job 3:21 (Lxx = omeiromai = long for someone, 1Th 2:8); Job 32:4 (Lxx = hupomeno); Ps 33:20 (Lxx = hupomeno); Ps 106:13 (Lxx = hupomeno); Isa 8:17; Isa 30:18 (chakah used 2x; Lxx = meno = abide and emmeno = to persevere); Isa 64:4 (Lxx = hupomeno); Dan 12:12 (Lxx = hupomeno); Hos 6:9; Hab 2:3 (Lxx = hupomeno); Zeph 3:8 (Lxx = hupomeno), a command in Hebrew and Greek - aorist imperative)

Brown-Driver-Briggs Expanded Definition [חָכָה] **verb wait, await** —

Qal Participle pl construct חֹכְיִי Isaiah 30:18; with לְ *waiting for him* (י').

Pi'el חָכַה Job 32:4; חָכְתָּה Psalm 33:20; חָכִיתִי Isaiah 8:17; חָכּוּ Psalm 106:13; 2 כִּינּוּ Kings 7:9; *Imperfect* חָכֶה Isaiah 30:18; 2 תְּחַכֶּה Kings 9:3; *Imperative* חָכֶה Habakkuk 2:3; חָכּוּ Zephaniah 3:8; *Infinitive construct* כָּחִי Hosea 6:9 (Ephr for חָכֶה?); *Participle* מְחַכֶּה Daniel 12:12; construct מְחַכֶּה Isaiah 64:3; plural מְחַכִּים Job 3:21; —

1 *wait, tarry, absolute* 2 Kings 9:3 *tarry not*; with עַד till morning light 2 Kings 7:9; with accusative אֶת אִיּוֹב דְּבָרִים Job 32:4 *tarry for Job with words*.

2 *wait* (in ambush), חָכַה אִישׁ גְּדוּדִים Hosea 6:9 *as marauding bands wait for a man* AV RV Deuteronomy , or *as marauders lie in wait* Hi Ew (taking אִישׁ as construct)

3 *wait for, long for*, with לְ for י' Isaiah 8:17; Isaiah 64:3; Zephaniah 3:8; Psalm 33:20; for his counsel Psalm 106:13; for his vision Habakkuk 2:3; for death Job 3:21; יחכה יהוה לחננכם *Yahweh waiteth to be gracious unto you* Isaiah 30:18 (Di regards this as threatening and refers it to

1); absolute *waiteth* (and cometh to the days of blessedness) Daniel 12:12. חָכָה **see** below חָנַךְ.

חָכַל (√of following; compare Arabic IV. *be confused, vague; barbarousness, or impediment in speech*; Assyrian *akâlu, be gloomy, êklu, dark, eklitu, darkness*, DI in Zim^{Bp} 115, w. 385 ff., compare Jäger^{BAS} ii, 282).

To **wait for Jehovah** conveys far more than our English word means when we speak of waiting for the plane to take off. To the contrary the idea of the Hebrew verb **chakah** affects one's attitude so that there is not just a passive waiting but that this individual has an attitude of earnest expectation and confident hope.

Guzik agrees adding that...

Waiting on the LORD is not passive inactivity. It means to wait on the LORD as a waiter would wait on a table. It means to be totally attentive to the LORD, focused on His every move, and responsive to His every desire. At times it means inactivity, but even that is an "active inactivity," where we stand before the LORD, totally focused on Him, waiting for what He wants next.

At the time Isaiah spoke, the leaders and the people of Judah were waiting on the armies of Israel and Syria, because they were under attack. As they heard of the danger from the Assyrians, they would be tempted to put their focus on them. But their focus was on these armies, not on the LORD. Isaiah says, "Battle against Syria and Israel by setting your focus on the LORD. Prepare for the coming attack from Assyria by waiting on the LORD instead of your enemies." (Isaiah 8 Commentary)

Isaiah mentions **waiting for Jehovah** again near the end of his prophecy...

For from of old they have not heard nor perceived by ear, Neither has the eye seen a God besides Thee, Who acts in behalf of the one who waits for Him. (Isa 64:4)

Daniel closes with blessing for those who **wait** for the fulfillment of the prophecies

How blessed is he who **keeps waiting** and attains to the 1,335 days! (Da 12:12-note).

Habakkuk writes...

For the vision is yet for the appointed time (context is referring to God's judgment of Babylon, the very instrument He would use to punish Judah!); It hastens toward the goal, and it will not fail. Though it tarries, **wait** for it; for **it** (changed by the writer of Hebrews to "He" - see below) will certainly come, it will not delay. (Hab 2:3-note)

Comment: This verse almost certainly refers to a future fulfillment at the Second Coming of Christ, which is substantiated by its quotation in Hebrews 10:37-note

A. J. Pollock comments: The Old Testament passage and the altered quotation in the New Testament are alike verbally inspired and equally Scripture. The **IT** in Habakkuk refers to the vision—and deals with the coming of Christ to reign. **IT** becomes **HE** in Hebrews (He 10:37-note) and refers to the Rapture. (Modernism Versus the Bible - writing from the Plymouth Brethren)

The LORD Who is hiding His face - Clearly this reflects divine disfavor to those in the **house of Jacob** (Israel) who refuse to trust Jehovah. Jehovah hiding His face is the antithesis of the great Aaronic blessing which declares...

Yahweh make His face shine on you, and be gracious to you; (Nu 6:25).

The **NLT paraphrase** of Isaiah 8:17 conveys the sense...

I will wait for the LORD to help us, though He has turned away from the people of Israel. My only hope is in Him.

I will even look eagerly for Him - Isaiah is looking for his Redeemer. God's saints throughout the ages, both Old and New Testament, have always had a fervent, vital, active longing and watching and waiting for their Redeemer.

Wait and **look eagerly** together picture Isaiah's expectant faith in Jehovah. So in face of a soon coming judgment, Isaiah (and his disciples) chooses to fix his gaze on Jehovah, a **good pattern for all God's children to emulate. This is especially needful as we move inexorably toward the last of the last days and as we (if you are in America) see the power and the prestige of our great nation under God slowly ebbing as it continues to reject the good hand of the Almighty.**

Isaiah was like the renowned preacher **G Campbell Morgan** who said...

I never begin my work in the morning without thinking that perhaps he may interrupt my work and begin his own. I am **not looking** for death, I am **looking for Him!** (Amen!)

Comment: **Child of God, what are you looking for? Success, a promotion, a vacation at the beach, a second home, etc, etc. Remember this axiom - What you are looking for will surely impact what you are living for! If you are looking for the Eternal One, you will find that you are living for eternity not for time. Your daily choices will reflect your future focus mindset.**

Look eagerly (06960) (**qavah** - **see word study**) has the root idea of to wait or look for with eager expectation (hope and confidence), look for patiently, to be confident (to trust). For a good picture of the meaning see Job 7:2 (think about Rev 22:12-note). The **Lxx** translates **qavah** in this passage with the **peitho** which conveys the sense of having confidence or trust in this case, Jehovah. ("I trust in Him" in the perfect tense which conveys a permanent trust).

Related resources on Hope:

- The Blessed Hope: Part 1
- The Blessed Hope: Definition
- The Blessed Hope: Source of
- The Blessed Hope: Part 2
- The Blessed Hope: Stabilizing Effect
- The Blessed Hope: Sanctifying Effect
- Other Resources on the Blessed Hope

Isaiah 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 and the:** Isa 8:3 7:3,16 53:10 Ps 22:30 Heb 2:13,14
- **signs:** Ps 71:7 Eze 14:8 Zec 3:8 Lk 2:34 1Co 4:9-13 Heb 10:33
- **Who:** Isa 12:6 14:32 24:23 1Ch 23:25 Ps 9:11 Zec 8:3 Heb 12:22
- Isaiah 8 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**LOOK AT US! LISTEN TO US!
WE ARE THE MESSAGE!**

Behold (Isa 7:14, 8:7, 8:22) - This word commands attention. Isaiah is calling the people of Judah to listen carefully to his message. Isaiah is presenting his witness and words (and his sons) as lights in the midst of impending, imminent doom and darkness. The interjection behold is a warning cry as it were. Isaiah's name and his son's names are to be heard and heeded! **Have you ever felt like Isaiah? Your changed life (2Cor 5:17-note) is a clear "sign and wonder" to those around you and yet they are not able to see or hear this supernatural sign from the LORD! You are the "message" to the unbelieving world around you. Is your message bold, clear and unwavering?**

Spurgeon on "behold" (in English) - "Behold" is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation.

I and the children whom the LORD has given me are for signs- Referring to Shear-jashub ("A remnant will return") (Isa 7:3) and Maher-shalal-hash-baz (Speed to the spoil, hurry to the plunder) (Isa 8:3). Remember that the purpose of signs is to point the way and these signs were ultimately to direct the Jews to their Messiah. And even Isaiah's name conveyed the clear message to the Jews that "Salvation is of the LORD." In addition we see Isaiah personally take the role of a sign/wonder in Isaiah 20:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Young references John Calvin explaining that

The unbelieving multitude... is concerned with material advantage and possessions. When it sees the true people of God despise these things and cleave unto the Lord, it despises that people. Here we may learn that one mark of the true Christian is his willingness to sacrifice material possessions for the kingdom of Christ.
([The Book of Isaiah 3 Vol. Edward J. Young](#))

Signs (0226)('oth) means a signal, a mark a miracle and is used to describe amazing events such as God bringing Israel out of Egypt (Ex 4:8, 9, Nu 14:22) or a sign serving to authenticate the message as from God (1Sa 2:34, 10:7, 9) in contrast to the signs from false prophets (Dt 13:1, 2). King Hezekiah received a **sign** from Jehovah that He would add fifteen years to his life (Isa 38:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8; Gideon - Jdg 6:17-note)

Wonders (04159) (**mopet**) are events which are given by God in order to arrest one's attention. **Mopet** is a portent which is something that foreshadows a coming event, something that indicates a future event, especially a momentous or calamitous one.

Mopet - 35v in the OT -

Ex 4:21; 7:3, 9; 11:9f; Deut 4:34; 6:22; 7:19; 13:1f; 26:8; 28:46; 29:3; 34:11; 1Kgs 13:3, 5; 1Chr 16:12; 2Chr 32:24, 31; Neh 9:10; Ps 71:7; 78:43; 105:5, 27; 135:9; Isa 8:18; 20:3; Jer 32:20, 21; Ezek 12:6, 11; 24:24, 27; Joel 2:30; Zech 3:8

Oswalt comments on the phrase "**I and the children**" that...

Their very existence, as well as the strangely evocative names he had felt led to give them, was testimony of God's working among his people. Furthermore, they were evidence that although God's face might be hidden for a time, it was still true that his dwelling was upon Mount Zion (Isa 2:2). They were thus an indication that the coming upheaval and destruction was ultimately only temporary. ([The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39](#))

David Guzik draws a great point of application from this passage reminding us that as followers of Christ...

We are also the children of God, and we are His message. Hebrews 2:11, 12, 13-note quotes this passage to communicate this truth:

For both He (Jesus) who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He (Jesus) is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, "I WILL PROCLAIM THY NAME TO MY BRETHREN, IN

THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION I WILL SING THY PRAISE." And again, "I WILL PUT MY TRUST IN HIM." And again, "**BEHOLD, I** (Jesus) **AND THE CHILDREN WHOM GOD** (The Father) **HAS GIVEN ME.**" (**Note:** In NAS, NT passages in all caps signify direct OT quotations).

Comment: Isaiah's statement about his natural family is quoted by the writer of Hebrews who applies it to Christ and His spiritual family.

Just as much as Isaiah's children were living witnesses of the truth of God's word, so are we as God's children. (Isaiah 8 Commentary)

From Jehovah - In other words Isaiah is saying these signs and wonders are not something he has concocted but are received from the very presence of the great I Am. Thus they are worthy of our full attention. In addition the fact that these signs/wonders are from the LORD undergirds the prophet's own faith in the face of the coming storm. **Beloved, a storm is coming. Are you going into the presence of Jehovah, bowing down and in humility receiving His trustworthy Word of Life that by it your faith might be strengthened for the future fray?**

The LORD of hosts - See study of **Jehovah Sabaoth, LORD of hosts (of armies)**. The people of Isaiah's day were eager to consult inadequate and dead sources (next verse) about the future, while ignoring the living God. Unbelieving Judah had living among them the signs of their own fate and faithlessness, but they choose to ignore/reject them. **Is this not similar to what many unbelievers do today - they have a believing spouse or relative or co-worker as a "sign" in their very midst and yet they refuse to hear and heed his or her testimony, instead rejecting their words of warning and of hope which is found in Christ and seek for other lesser gods (money, success, false religions, etc) who are no gods at all!**

Who dwells on [Mount Zion](#) - **Who?** Christ Jesus. He promises to dwell in Zion (Jerusalem) forever and ever amen.

Young comments that...

The wicked majority of the nation appealed to the Temple (**Ed:** cp Jer 7:4 - False prophets deceived the people with promises that God would never permit the temple to be destroyed.). Outwardly they were worshipers of Yahweh. Isaiah now points out to them that their confidence is vain, for it is this very Yahweh who dwells in the Temple on Zion that has set forth the Messiah and His own for signs and wonders. Many there are who make an outward profession of orthodoxy whose hearts are in reality far estranged from the Lord (**Ed:** See Mt 7:21-note, Mt 7:22, 23-note, cp Isaiah records the same problem of professors who were not possessors of faith in Messiah - Isa 29:13). Such a condition is about us today in the fact that the great Protestant denominations, while retaining ancient creeds, have nevertheless for the most part departed far from the faith once for all delivered unto the saints (Jude 1:3). ([The Book of Isaiah 3 Vol. Edward J. Young](#))

A number of OT passages refer to the LORD dwelling in Zion...

Cry aloud and shout for joy, O inhabitant of **Zion**, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel (Messiah). (Isa 12:6)

Then (At the **Second Coming**) the moon will be abashed and the sun ashamed, for the LORD of hosts (Messiah) will reign on **Mount Zion** and in Jerusalem, And His glory will be before His elders. (Isa 24:23)

Thus says the LORD, 'I will return (Messiah at the **Second Coming**) to **Zion** and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Then (**When?** In the **Millennium**) Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts will be called the Holy Mountain.' (Zech 8:3)

Therefore thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I am laying in **Zion** a Stone, a tested Stone, a costly Cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it (Christ Jesus) will not be disturbed. (Is 28:16).

Isaiah 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?:

- **Consult:** Isa 19:3 Lev 20:6 Dt 18:11 1Sa 28:8 1Ch 10:13 2Ch 33:6
- **Mutter:** Isa 29:4
- **Should:** 1Sa 28:16 2Ki 1:3 2Pe 2:1
- **the living:** Ps 106:28 Jer 10:10 1Th 1:9
- Isaiah 8 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

ABSENCE OF FAITH INCREASE IN SUPERSTITION

When they say to you - They refers to unbelieving Jews who try to pressure the "disciples" (true believers) to turn from the Truth and to Lies. Isaiah is forewarning the disciples that they will be confronted by "popular religion" and superstitions. **Beloved, things have not changed much, for if you take an orthodox stand, you can be assured that before long you will be exposed to various winds of doctrine** (mysticism, churches subtly drifting from sound doctrine, e.g., 2Ti 4:3,4-note, Ep 4:12, 13-note, Ep 4:14-note, Ep 4:15, 16-note) **and the only way to withstand these constant doctrinal winds is to stand firm on truth** (cp Titus 1:9-note) **in full dependence on God's Spirit and strengthening grace** (cp 1Pe 5:12-note)

Mediums (0178) (**ob**) describes a necromancer who supposedly conjure the spirits of the dead for purposes of revealing the future or influencing the course of events.

Ob - 15v in the OT -

Lev 19:31; 20:6, 27; Dt 18:11; 1Sa 28:3, 7, 9; 2Ki 21:6; 23:24; 1Chr 10:13; 2Chr 33:6; Job 32:19 (different meaning here = wineskin!); Isa 8:19; 19:3; 29:4

Spiritists (03049) (**yiddeoni**) are those who contact dead spirits in search of information.

Yiddeoni - 11v in the OT - Lev 19:31; 20:6, 27; Dt 18:11; 1 Sam 28:3, 9; 2Ki 21:6; 23:24; 2Chr 33:6; Isa 8:19; 19:3

Whisper (KJV = peep) (06850) (**sapap**) means to speak in low-volume, muttering tones, as a figurative extension of the chirping sound a bird makes and thus is used again by Isaiah (Isa 10:14) to describe the sound of birds, a figurative description of those who had been conquered by the Assyrians.

These **mediums and spiritists** "chirp" like birds!

Sapap - 4v in OT - Isa 8:19 Isa 10:14 Isa 29:4 Isa 38:14 (twitter)

Mutter (01897) (**hagah**) strictly speaking it means to utter any dull, confused sound and hence it is employed of inward utterance, of the words a man speaks to himself; and also of giving open and loud expression to the thoughts. The meaning of hagah is a low sound, characteristic of the moaning of a dove (Isa 38:14; 59:11). Most of the OT uses refer to the positive, profitable discipline of **Biblical Meditation** (E.g., see first use = Joshua 1:8-note), but as used here by Isaiah **hagah** refers to wizards, necromancers, etc, who made strange noises when they practiced their occult techniques.

Brenton's English translation of the Greek Septuagint of Isaiah 8:19 is interesting...

And if they should say to you, Seek those who havein **them a divining spirit**, and them that **speak out of the earth**, them that **speak vain words** (The Greek word here actually means "ventriloquist" or familiar spirit [of a ventriloquist]), **who speak out of their belly**: shall not a nation diligently seek to their God? why do they seek to the dead concerning the living?

Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter - Who are they? As alluded to above, **they** refers to Isaiah's audience in Judah who lacked the trust in God which the prophet possessed and who therefore stumbled over Immanuel, the Stone, the Rock. In their fear of pending doom they were forced to seek answers to their concerns and doubts from **the mediums and the spiritists**." Someone has well said that when a society turns from faith in the true God, there is often a "revival" of superstition in proportion to the loss of faith. Does this not describe America in the 21st century? **Beloved, if one refuses the Holy Spirit of Christ, he opens himself to the unholy "world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places!"** (Ep 6:12-note)

Erwin Lutzer writes - To try to contact the dead is to invite fellowship with hosts of darkness pretending to be helpful angels of light. Isaiah the prophet warned the people that to consult a medium was to turn one's back on God. "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? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn" [light] (Isaiah 8:19–20). The point, of course, is that all information about life after death that comes from spiritists or channelers is unreliable. Those who turn to the occult world for knowledge of death are misled. Yes, there is life after death, but we cannot learn the details from demons, whose chief delight is to confuse and deceive. No wonder the theology allegedly given by Pike's son was so convoluted. We have no right to try to peek behind the curtain by communicating with those on the other side. Once the curtain has opened to admit a fellow traveler, it closes and we must not try to peek behind the veil. (One Minute After You Die)

Related Resources:

- [What does the Bible say about praying to / speaking to / talking to the dead?](#)
- [Did the witch of Endor really summon Samuel from the dead \(1 Samuel 28:7-20\)?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about praying for the dead?](#)
- [What is a séance?](#)
- [Can I ask God to deliver a message to a loved one who has died?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about necromancy?](#)

A NATION SHOULD SEEK GOD NOT SPIRITS

Should not people consult their God? - Rhetorical question. Clearly calls for an affirmative answer. The living God speaks through His living Word and it is He alone we should consult (cp Isa 44:6, 45:5, 6, 7, Isa 43:10, 11, 12, 13). **Who do you consult when you experience adversity and/or affliction? Isaiah tells us who to consult in the next passage -- go to the law and the testimony!**

Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living? - How tragic and utterly foolish is such a godless process (cf. 1Sa 28:6, 7, 8)! This temptation is ever before us, especially in times of national or personal sorrow. The effect of these practices is to forget God and to deny His very existence! How tragic when men want to hear muttering and chirping from the darkness in place of a clear "thus saith the LORD" in the light!

W A Criswell comments that...

People through the ages have turned away from God during times of great distress, when actually they need Him most, and consulted those who offered false hope. The Lord strictly forbids any kind of divination, fortune-telling, astrology, or necromancy (cf. Dt. 18:10; 1Sa 28:7-20; 2Ki 21:6). The phrase "wizards who whisper" is a reference to ventriloquists who sought to disguise their voices as representations of ghosts or spirits from another world. ([Criswell, W A. Believer's Study Bible: New King James Version. 1991. Thomas Nelson](#))

Henry Morris...

Throughout Scripture, the Lord unequivocally condemns consultation with spirit mediums, fortune-tellers, astrologers, witches and all other occult sources of supposed knowledge and guidance (**Ed**: Lev 19:26, Dt 18:9-14). The New Age movement involves a plethora of such activities and should be avoided by all Christian believers.

Isaiah 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

- **the law:** Isa 8:16 Lk 10:26 16:29-31 Jn 5:39,46,47 Ac 17:11 Gal 3:8-29 Gal 4:21,22 2Ti 3:15-17 2Pe 1:19
- **it is:** Isa 30:8-11 Ps 19:7,8 119:130 Jer 8:9 Mic 3:6 Mt 6:23 22:29 Mk 7:7-9 Ro 1:22 2Pe 1:9
- **dawn:** Heb. morning, Pr 4:18 Ho 6:3 Mal 4:2 2Pe 1:19
- [Isaiah 8 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries](#)

BACK TO THE BIBLE

To the law and to the testimony - In Psalm 19:7 we see this same combination which in that context refers to the Word of God. God's Word is the plumbline by which all of men's opinions are to be judged.

NET Bible translation...

Then you must recall the LORD's instructions and the prophetic testimony of what would happen. Certainly they say such things because their minds are spiritually darkened.

The law reveals God's will for man, what He requires of him. The testimony reveals God's will, bearing witness that what is stated or written is from God.

They (and we) were not to go to mediums and spiritists but to the written Word of God which provides all the counsel and guidance one will never need for life and godliness (cp 2Pe 1:3-note). God's Word is the only absolute and absolutely trustworthy standard for our short time here on earth! Returning back to the Bible (the Truth) assures counters the false predictions (the Lie) obtained by consulting the dead. **When you find yourself in a difficult situation, do you run to horoscopes, fortune tellers, etc, are do you run to**

the Word of God allowing it to renew your mind and guide your thinking. (cp Ro 12:2-note).

Teed comments...

It is always amazing to me to see how many Christians will consult the daily horoscope in the newspaper. They see no harm in it and apparently are not aware of the several places where God distinctly forbids such activities (Deuteronomy 18:9, 10, 11, 12; Leviticus 20:27; 1Samuel 15:23). Looking to astrology, psychics and other such individuals is not only sinning, it is putting oneself in alliance with the devil and his evil ways. ([Isaiah 8 Teed Commentaries](#))

Leupold comments on the law and the testimony that...

It was important then. It is important now. In fact, the giving heed to it is the most important issue of the day. It could therefore be aptly paraphrased: Let the nation turn back to that basic instruction which has come to it from God in the past; to do so is their only hope.

It is because they have no dawn - Isaiah is explaining why they **do not speak according to** God's Word (this is the great need today even among "Bible believing" Christians - to order their thinking according to God's Word - cp Ro 12:2-note). As Vine says these people without dawn "abide in perpetual darkness". Those who do not speak according to "thus saith the LORD" are those who have no light of salvation and thus are spiritually dead in unbelief and the darkness of their trespasses and sins. They possess no spiritual light (cp Jer 23:16)

John explains how such individuals respond to the True Light...

This is the judgment, that **the Light** has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. (Jn 3:19, 20).

This verse introduces the theme of divine light, which is important later in the passage. The true source of light is God's word, for God is Himself light (Isa 10:17; cp 1Jn 1:5).

Isaiah was a man who had God's light, and he was not afraid to let it shine.

Warren Wiersbe...

When you obey God's word, you walk in the light and don't stumble (Prov. 3:21–26; 4:14–19), but when you reject the Word, you walk in the darkness and can't find your way (Isa. 8:20). Worldly and ignorant spiritual leaders produce worldly and ignorant people, and this brings destruction to the land. (Wiersbe, W. W. Be Amazed. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books)

Six Marks of a False Prophet - Any one of the Bible's six marks of false prophets is sufficient identification:

- (1) Through signs and wonders they lead astray after false gods (Dt. 13:1, 2, 3, 4)
- (2) Their prophecies don't come to pass (Dt. 18:20, 21, 22)
- (3) They contradict God's Word (Is. 8:20)
- (4) They bear bad fruit (Mt. 7:18, 19, 20);
- (5) All men speak well of them (Lk. 6:26)
- (6) They deny that Jesus, the one and only Christ, has come once and for all in the flesh (1Jn. 4:3). (From Dave Hunt)

Isaiah 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.:

- **through:** Isa 8:7,8
- **hard pressed:** Isa 9:20 Dt 28:33,34,53-57 2Ki 25:3 Jer 14:18 52:6 La 4:4,5,9,10
- **Will be enraged:** Pr 19:3
- **curse:** Ex 22:28 2Ki 6:33 Job 1:11 2:5,9 Rev 9:20,21 16:9-11
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FORSAKE THE LORD FORSAKEN BY THE LORD

They - Those who did not speak according to this Word, those who refused to believe Isaiah's prophecy and ultimately who failed to believe in the Rock of their Salvation, the Messiah.

They will pass through the land - Literally they will traverse the land of Judah but it will not be an easy journey as Isaiah explains.

Hard-pressed (07185)(**qasha/qashah**) is a work that apparently arose from an agricultural milieu and emphasizes the subjective effect exerted by an overly heavy yoke. Their passage **through the land** would be cruel, oppressive and hard to bear just as if they were wearing a heavy yoke!

The other nuance of **qasha/qashah** is that of the rebellious resistance of oxen to the yoke, an apt description of stubborn and stiff-necked individuals (Ex 32:9KJV ~ making of a golden calf, cp Dt 10:16, Jdg 2:19 2Ki 17:14; Neh 9:16).

FAMINE FOLLOWED BY FRETTING

Famished (07456) (**ra'eb**) means to be hungry, intensely starved, exhausted from want of proper sustenance. While this may speak primarily of physical food, there is no doubt that these rejecters of the law and the testimony were experiencing serious spiritual malnourishment of their souls.

Will be enraged and curse - When they should repent and return to their Maker, they become angry and curse Him! Famine "feeds" fretting which leads to anger in one's heart which manifests itself in vile, evil words (Mt 12:34 15:19).

Solomon describes a heart which rages against Jehovah...

The foolishness of man subverts (twists) his way, and his heart rages (Pictures one who storms against Jehovah like a raging sea - Jonah 1:5) against the LORD. (Pr 19:3)

Comment: This proverb states that men run into troubles and failures because of their own folly, and then they blame the Lord for their failures!

They... curse their king and their God - These individuals have become in effect "spiritually insane." God Who would/could be their rightful help (See **Jehovah Ezer: The LORD our Helper**) is intentionally rejected and reviled! That's what happens when one turns from the Truth of God's Word and from the Living God to the false gods and lying counselors of this dark, godless world! (cp the deceivers who themselves become progressively more deceived 2Ti 3:13-note, see also the retributive effect of those who actively turn away from the truth - they are left in a state in which they are spiritually open to be turned aside to myths! 2Ti 4:3,4-note)

They face upward - Apparently toward heaven, the abode of God. They know where He lives, but they don't want any part of His Person or His plan for their life! And so they are enraged when they begin to reap the fruit of the evil seeds they have sown. And they blame God not themselves for they are spiritually blind to the fact that they themselves are ultimately to blame for their hard pressed, famished state! Their attitude and actions are but a foreshadowing of those who dwell on earth (**Earth Dwellers** = a specific name for unbelievers in the Revelation) in the days of of the final outpouring of God's holy and righteous wrath...

And men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues; and they did not repent, so as to give Him glory. And the fifth angel poured out his bowl upon the throne of the beast; and his kingdom became darkened; and they gnawed their tongues because of pain, and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds. (Re 16:9-note, Re 16:10-note, Re 16:11-note)

Earlier **Isaiah** had stated those who rejected God would receive no light...

And it will growl over it in that day like the roaring of the sea. If one looks to the land, behold, there is darkness and distress; Even the light is darkened by its clouds. (Is 5:30-note).

Isaiah 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:

- **look** Isa 5:30 9:1 2Ch 15:5,6 Jer 13:16 30:6,7 Am 5:18-20 Zep 1:14,15 Mt 8:12 24:29 Lk 21:25,26 Jude 1:13
- **driven away into darkness:** Job 18:18 Pr 14:32 Jer 23:12 Mt 22:13

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Then they will look to the earth - After looking up and cursing God they turn to terra firma but still find no help and no hope! The distress is unrelieved. They have had light in the form of signs and wonders, but they have rejected the light God graciously gave.

Behold (02009)([hinneh](#)) is an interjection which says in essence "Pay attention to what I am going to say!". "Listen up!"

Spurgeon reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

Gloom (04588) (**ma'up**) describes a dejection of spirits as a figurative extension of physical darkness and thus a sense of sullenness, of despondence, of sadness or of discouragement. **Gloom** in English describes a partial or total darkness, a cloudiness or heaviness of mind; melancholy; sullenness. **Baker** says **ma'up** "pictures a place of distress overhung with the gloom of anxiety and despair" ([Baker. The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament](#))

Anguish (06695)(**tsoq**) refers to distress, oppression, trouble, a state of hardship. (Pr 1:27 = anguish = Isa 30:6). The English definition of **anguish** is a state of extreme pain, distress, anxiety, this word suggesting a torturing grief or dread.

Distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish - They look for light which is the only thing that can dispel their darkness and gloom. But they look in vain, for they have willfully turned away from and against the Holy One of Israel, Who Alone is the Light of the world (Jn 8:12, 9:5 cp Jn 1:4, 5, 9, 12:35, 36, 46, 3:21, 2Ti 1:10-note, Isa 9:2, Malachi 4:2).

They will be driven away into darkness - They refuse the living light so they reap the only alternative perpetual darkness. Isaiah's words are a sad shadow of their eternal destiny described by Jesus Himself stating that...

the sons of the kingdom (Refers to non-believing Israel) will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Mt 8:12, cp Mt 22:13, 25:30, Jude 1:6, 13, 2Pe 2:17-note).

In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being thrown out. (Lk 13:28-note)

John Martin comments: Ironically those who seek to consult the dead will be forced to join them! [Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., et al: The Bible Knowledge Commentary. 1985. Victor](#)

Young comments that...

The people are cast out into darkness. He who consults dark omens and does the deeds of darkness can only expect an affliction that is characterized by darkness. In the Bible sin is described as darkness. Gloom is oppressive and constraining. Those who regard it as light and freedom are deceived. The end of those who live in the dark is to be driven into the darkness. Sinners think that they are in the light and that they possess freedom, independence, truth, an unprejudiced mind; actually they walk in darkness and are the slaves of gloom, subject to falsehood and prejudiced in favor of evil. ([The Book of Isaiah 3 Vol. Edward J. Young](#))

Oswalt rightly leads us from this gloom and doom passage to the light and hope of the following verses in Isaiah 9 commenting that...

God will not be satisfied that his people have experienced the just results of their rebellion. That experience is not an end in itself but a means, a means whereby God's goodness can be manifested in the salvation of a land now aware of the true source of its life. When every human attempt to bring **light** has failed, then God will bring **light**, not because He must, not because human craft has discovered the key to force Him, but merely out of His own grace. It is part of that grace that the source of the **light** will be in the very part of the land which first felt the lash of Assyria—the area around the Sea of Galilee. So God never permits a humiliation for which there is not a corresponding exaltation planned. ([The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1–39](#))