

QUOTATIONS (2)

8:13-15: “The bottom line is that the Lord cannot be ignored. Whether he is experienced as savior or as judge depends on how we respond to him” (Webb 1996: 66).

8:14-15: “Those who will not make a place for him will keep colliding with him and tripping over him, for he is there, whether they acknowledge him or not. Because he is a fact of which their hypothesis does not take account, their experiment will keep failing and he will be the cause of it, not because of some vindictive streak in him, but simply because he is and they are trying to live as if he were not” (Oswalt 1986: 234-35).

“If people do not treat God as holy and fear him (8:13), then they will end up fearing man and his power (8:12). Thus God, who wants to protect his people, will end up being a snare that will bring about their demise. The nation’s only hope lies in fearing and trusting God and his divine revelation (8:16-17); any other source of hope or information is useless and deceptive (8:19). If people reject God and his Word, then there is no other source of light. Life without God leads to destruction, painful distress, and darkness (8:21-22)” (Smith 2007: 232).

Good summary of chapter: “The royal Davidic dynasty refused to trust God and instead depended on Assyria. The nation refused to accept God’s promise to deliver them from Syria and Israel; they rejected God and rejoiced in their own political alliance to eliminate the threat of Syria and Israel (7:4-9; 8:6). They continued to fear conspiracies rather than God (8:12-13). Isaiah’s preaching from God was rejected; therefore, all he could do was to preserve the words of God in the hearts of his disciples (8:16), wait for God to act according to his promises (8:17), and meanwhile encourage more people to reject all sources of ‘light’ other than God’s word (8:19-22)” (Smith 2007: 228).

SOURCES CITED

- J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 1993.
John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39*, NICOT, 1986.
Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 1-39*, New American Commentary, 2007.
Barry G. Webb, *The Message of Isaiah*, The Bible Speaks Today, 1996.

ISAIAH 8: DESCENT INTO DARKNESS

I. JUDAH’S FUTURE PROPHESED: DESTRUCTION AND SALVATION (vv. 1-8)

A. A Child is a Sign of Assyria’s Coming (vv. 1-4)

B. Assyria’s Coming Will Destroy Judah (vv. 5-8)

C. The Nations Will Be Destroyed Because Immanuel/God with Us (vv. 9-10). See Psalms 2, 46, 47, 48.

II. THE NEED FOR FAITH IN GROWING DARKNESS (vv. 11-22)

A. Fear God or Fail (vv. 11-17)

B. Failure to Trust God Brings Darkness (vv. 18-22)

EIGHT REASONS IMMANUEL ≠ MAHER-SHALAL-HASH-BAZ

1. Though the Lord says that the child will be called Immanuel, and though it is in Isaiah's power to do so, the prophet gives him a different name, without giving any indication that this is the same child.
 2. The name that Isaiah gives the child has a symbolic meaning which is unrelated to Immanuel. Immanuel means "God with us"; Maher-shalal-hash-baz (MSHB) means "quick to the spoil, speedy to the plunder."
 3. The mother of the child is not a virgin (*almah*) but a prophetess (*nebiah*), the wife of Isaiah. Since Isaiah already had a child, his wife could not be described as an *almah*. Attempts to suggest that the prophetess was Isaiah's second wife are without evidence.
 4. Isaiah, not the mother, names the child.
 5. The time frames given for the two sons are different. For Immanuel, the time is that to "reject the wrong and choose the right," which is about 20 years of age (see Deut 1:39; Num 14:29-30; 32:11). For MSHB, the time is saying "mommy," about 1 year of age.
 6. The reference to a prophet's son in 8:8 does not make sense. The land is said to belong to Immanuel, which surely points to one greater than a regular citizen of Judah. The relationship of v. 8 to vv.9-10 supports this understanding.
 7. Immanuel grows up in "exile." MSHB was born while Judah was still sovereign.
 8. Isaiah misses many opportunities to inform us that the two children are one and the same.
- Better:** MSHB is a sign of Judah's "salvation" at Assyria's hands; Immanuel is a sign of Judah's salvation from all nations when "God is with us." Immanuel in chapter 8 links Immanuel in chapter 7 (same name) with the child ("Mighty God") born in chapter 9 (same job description).

QUOTATIONS

"This unit deals with the same events as chapter 7, and the fact that the name *Immanuel* occurs in 8:8 and is alluded to again in 8:10 suggest that, in general, what we have here is the further outworking of the word spoken to Ahaz in 7:14. That word was double-edged, involving both judgment and salvation. Its outworking is now depicted in terms of darkness and light. In the short term it means gathering darkness (judgment), but in the long term brilliant light (the coming of the Messiah and the dawning of a new age)" (Webb 1996: 64).

8:6-7 "The motif of the two rivers Shiloah (6) and Euphrates (7) offers a telling contrast between the seeming weakness of faith and the seeming power of the world. To the human eye the way of faith (Jerusalem and its vulnerable water supply) is full of insecurity and hazard, but the believer sees all this and says, 'He is faithful who promised' (Heb. 10:23). But to choose the world is to be overwhelmed by the world. Isaiah will not allow people to escape the rigour of their own choices; to choose a saviour other than the Lord is to find a destroyer" (Motyer 1993: 91).

8:8-10: "Ultimately, Immanuel is the owner of the land, the one against whom Assyria's threats are ultimately lodged, the one upon whom deliverance finally depends. That cannot be Isaiah's son, nor even some unknown son of Ahaz. It can only be the Messiah, in whom all hope resides. It is as if Isaiah, plunging deeper and deeper into the dark implications of his sign, is suddenly brought up short by the deepest implication: God *is* with us and, best of all, will be with us, not merely in the impersonal developments of history, but somehow as a person" (Oswalt 1986: 227).

8:13: "To set God apart as holy requires one to perceive him as the high and exalted king praised by the seraphim in Isa 6. He is totally different from man in his essence, glorious presence, magnificent power, and character. Those who treat God as holy do not ignore his words, dishonor his name, or fail to trust in him. They bow in awe, give him due reverence, and in faith obey what he says. People do not honor God as the holy king of this universe when they do not trust his promises, but instead allow themselves to be guided by the common fears of unbelievers" (Smith 2007: 227).