

Isaiah 8:1–22 – God with Us or Against Us?

1. A Child as a Sign (Isaiah 8:1–4)

God instructed Isaiah to write clearly on a scroll the words concerning *Mahe-Shalal-Hash-Baz*, a name meaning “*Swift to the plunder, quick to the spoil.*” Soon afterward, Isaiah’s wife gave birth to a son with this name. Before the child was old enough to say “my father” or “my mother,” the wealth of Damascus (Syria) and Samaria (Israel’s northern kingdom) would be carried away by the king of Assyria.

Lesson: God used Isaiah’s family as living object lessons to His people. The very names of his children became signs of judgment and hope. Sometimes God calls us to live out His message, not just speak it.

2. The Coming Flood (Isaiah 8:5–10)

The people of Judah rejected the gentle waters of Shiloah (symbolizing God’s quiet, sustaining presence) and instead trusted in human alliances. In response, God warned that the Assyrians would come like a raging flood, sweeping over nations and even reaching into Judah “*over all his banks.*”

Yet the chapter also contains reassurance: though enemies may conspire, their plans will fail. “*Take counsel together, but it will come to nothing... for God is with us*” (Isaiah 8:10).

Lesson: Rejecting God’s ways always opens the door to overwhelming forces. But for those who belong to Him, the truth remains—no matter what comes against us, God is with us.

3. Fear God, Not Man (Isaiah 8:11–15)

Isaiah was told not to fear what the people feared. Instead, he was to set apart the Lord as holy: “*Let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread*” (Isaiah 8:13). To those who trust Him, God becomes a sanctuary. But to those who reject Him, He becomes a stumbling stone and a rock of offense.

This prophecy points directly to Christ. Jesus is either the cornerstone of salvation or the stumbling stone of judgment (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:23; 1 Peter 2:7–8).

Lesson: Everyone must decide what Christ will be to them. Will He be your refuge or your downfall?

4. A Word Against Spiritism (Isaiah 8:16–22)

In times of crisis, the people turned to mediums, spiritists, and those who claimed to communicate with the dead. But Isaiah rebuked this: “*Should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living?*” (Isaiah 8:19). True guidance is found in God’s Word: “*To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them*” (Isaiah 8:20).

Lesson: Many today still look to horoscopes, psychics, spiritual “guides,” or even occult practices for wisdom. But real truth and direction come from God’s living Word, not from the voices of the dead or deceiving spirits.

Practical Application

Isaiah 8 draws a sharp line: either trust in God and find Him to be a sanctuary, or reject Him and stumble. When people refuse the “gentle waters” of God’s presence, they are swept away by the floodwaters of human schemes and false hopes. But for those who trust in the Lord, there is safety, peace, and guidance.

Invitation

Isaiah’s words point us to Jesus Christ, the ultimate Immanuel—*God with us*. He is both the cornerstone of our salvation and the stumbling stone for those who reject Him.

Friend, what is Jesus to you? Refuge or stumbling stone? He came once, not to condemn, but to save. He laid down His life on the cross and rose again so you could be forgiven and restored.

Today you can choose Him as your sanctuary.

Pray from your heart:

“Lord Jesus, I believe You are Immanuel—God with us. I confess my sins and turn to You for forgiveness. Be my Savior, my refuge, and my Lord. Help me to trust You and walk with You every day.”

For those who already believe, the call is clear: don’t fear the conspiracies of man. Don’t seek wisdom in empty places. Fear God, trust His Word, and rest in the truth that no matter what comes, God is with us.