

Do Not Be Like Them!

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[0:00] Let's turn in our Bibles to Isaiah chapter 8. Isaiah chapter 8. Isaiah chapter 8 verse 1.

The Lord said to me, take a large scroll and write on it with an ordinary pen, I will call in Uriah the priest and Zechariah son of Jebachiah as reliable witnesses for me.

Then I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and gave birth to a son. And the Lord said to me, name him Mahar shalal hashbaz, before the boy knows how to say, my father or my mother, the wealth of Damascus and the plunder of Samaria will be carried off by the king of Assyria.

The Lord spoke to me again. Because this people has rejected the gently flowing waters of Shiloh and rejoices over Rezan and the son of Remelial, therefore the Lord is about to bring against them the mighty floodwaters of the river, the king of Assyria with all his pomp.

It will overflow all its channels, run over all its banks, and sweep on into Judah, swirling over it, passing through it and reaching up to the neck.

[1:16] Its outspread wings will cover the breadth of your land. Oh, Emmanuel. Raise the war cry, you nations, and be shattered. Listen, all you distant lands.

Prepare for battle and be shattered. Prepare for battle and be shattered. Devise your strategy, but it will be thwarted. Purpose your plan, but it will not stand. For God is with us.

The Lord spoke to me with his strong hand upon me, warning me not to follow the way of this people. He said, Do not call conspiracy everything that these people call conspiracy.

Do not fear what they fear, and do not dread it. The Lord Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy. He is the one you are to fear. He is the one you are to dread.

And he will be a sanctuary. But for both houses of Israel, he will be a stone that causes men to stumble, and a rock that makes them fall.

[2:15] And for the people of Jerusalem, he will be a trap and a snare. Many of them will stumble. They will fall and be broken. They will be snared and captured. Bind up the testimony, and seal off the law among my disciples.

I will wait for the Lord, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob. I will put my trust in him. Here am I, and the children the Lord has given me.

We are signs and symbols in Israel from the Lord Almighty, who dwells on Mount Zion. When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God?

Why consult the dead on behalf of the living, to the law and to the testimony? If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn.

Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land. When they are famished, they will become enraged. And looking upward will curse their king and their God. Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness, fearful gloom.

[3:20] And they will be thrust into utter darkness. Well, they came. And they came threatening some loss to you.

How did you do this week with those trials, those tests of faith? Did you trust in the Lord with all your heart? Or did you lean on your own understanding?

Did you look to the Lord for help or lean on the arm of the flesh? Who was the first person you told about your trial?

Was it Emmanuel, God who is with us to help us? Or was it some substitute for Emmanuel?

Man who has but a breath in his nostrils. We have a faithful God who will do whatever it takes to keep his promise to help and save his people.

[4:19] Even if it means raising up a supernatural son by a supernatural birth of the virgin. Now last week we saw the ultimate test that came to Ahaz.

The young king of Judah. The ultimate test of his faith. Assyria was the new superpower in the east. Growing with frightening speed and power.

And the nations in western Palestine could see that it was only a matter of time before Assyria would head west. And would swallow them up one at a time.

First Aram to the north. Then Israel the ten tribes. And then Judah the two tribes. So Aram and Israel got together and said.

If we stand and fight together against Assyria. We may be able to resist them. But as it is fighting alone. We cannot stand before them.

[5 : 22] And so they formed the triple A. The anti-Assyrian alliance. And they wanted Judah their neighbor to the south to join this alliance and make it complete.

But Judah refused to join. And so Aram and Israel together decided to invade Judah. And to force her to join their alliance.

Well their first invasion inflicted many casualties and losses. But they were unable to take the capital Jerusalem. So now. Now troops were swarming to make a second invasion.

To come into Judah and finish the job. And to once and for all remove the kings that have come from the line of David. To remove that dynasty.

And to establish a king of their own. A son of Tabeel. Who would do what they want. And join with them in their coalition. King Ahaz.

[6 : 27] Down here in Judah. Is trembling. He's panicking. He's shaking like the leaves on a tree. And so he sent an encouraging promise from God.

It will not take place. It will not happen. This invasion. And then he sent a sign to encourage his faith in the promise. And he sent a warning.

To be sure that you stand firm in your faith. Or you will not stand at all. Well that was the test of faith for Ahaz.

He got an F. Kids. He completely failed this test. Instead of trusting God in his promises. He trusted in man. He sent for the king of Assyria.

He gathered up his wealth in the temple. And in the palace. And he sent it off to Assyria. And he said. You come. And we'll buy your help.

[7 : 27] In fact. We'll give up the sovereignty of our throne. And we'll just be a puppet. Vassal state of Assyria. If you'll just come. And attack Aram and Israel over me.

Well Assyria is only too happy to come. They were on their way anyway. Now they're being paid to do so. And so they came. But Isaiah pronounces the word of the Lord.

That Assyria will not stop. Once she has devoured Aram. And Israel. But will continue to proceed to the south. And swallow up Judah. As well.

Now the first half of chapter 8. Covers much of the same ground. As we covered in chapter 7. It's a reminder. We don't get things the first time.

God has to bring to us again. And again. The same messages. And that's what he does. The first half of chapter 8. Then in the second half. He sounds a much needed warning for us.

[8 : 30] In our trials of life. So we begin. First of all. Isaiah and through him Judah. Is given two signs. Two signs.

The first sign. Was literally a sign. A billboard. If you will. The Lord told Isaiah. To write on a large scroll. And the word here for scroll. Could also be translated.

Tablet. Or placard. And that's probably a better translation. For the word in this context. It was to be a large tablet. With large letters.

To arrest the attention. Of passers by. The kind of sign. That you might take. To a football game. You want it to be large.

You want the letters large. Austin will eat you alive. And you want the folks. On the opposing team. To see that sign. And to tremble.

[9 : 25] It's to be big. And so it was. He's to write. A large sign. It's to be seen. In public. We don't know. We don't know. Where he was to display it. Whether in his yard.

Or in the temple. The marketplace. Or whether he wore it. As a walking billboard. He's to make this large sign. Clear. For all to read. Now what did the sign say?

Ah. It said. Meher shalal hashbaz. Quick to the plunder. Swift to the spoil. That's what it means.

But what does that mean? You see. It raises more questions. That it answers. And purposefully. Purposefully. So. What we know. Is that someone.

Is coming quickly. To get some plunder. But who? Who's coming? And who's he going to plunder? It's somewhat enigmatic.

[10 : 23] And it's meant to arouse attention. And to get the people. Wanting more information. And so it was the talk of the town. In every coffee house. And hair salon. Have you seen Isaiah's sign?

Yes. I have. Quick to. Swift to. Swift to the plunders. Swift to the spoil. What does that mean? I don't know. So a second sign is given.

And in the second sign. More information. Is given to understand. What the sign means. Now the second sign. Is a son. That was born to Isaiah.

And his wife. And the Lord tells him. What to name this son. And so all over the front yard. Of Isaiah's house. Is written. It's a boy. It's a boy.

It's a boy. Maher. Shalal. Hashbaz. And people say. There's that. Word again. There's that compound. There's that statement. Quick to the plunder.

[11 : 21] Swift to the spoil. What does it mean? And this time. The Lord gives more information. He tells Isaiah. Who presumably. Passes it on to Judah.

That before the boy. Knows how to say. My father. Or my mother. The wealth of Damascus. And the plunder of Samaria. Will be carried off. By the king of Assyria.

Judah. Well. The riddle is solved. All you need to know. Is that Damascus. Is the capital. Of Aram. And that Samaria.

Is the capital. Of Israel. Together. They make up. This. Anti-Assyrian coalition. That was threatening. Judah. And Assyria.

Is the nation. Coming swiftly. For the plunder. And Aram. And Israel. Are the plunder. They seek. Well. How soon. Will this happen? That too.

[12 : 16] Is told. Before Isaiah. His newborn son. Learns how to say. Dada. Or mama. How long is that?

Mothers. My official records. Say anywhere. From six months. To twelve months. I checked.

My own. Kept records. From our first born. Back when you kept. Those kind of details. And. We had to wait. Till ten months. To get. Our first word.

Bow wow. And so. We had to wait. Till fifteen months. For mama. And sixteen months. Finally. For papa.

Dada. At any rate. The point is. It's a very short time. Isn't it mothers. Before. Your precious. Learns to say. Those endearing. Words. My mother.

[13 : 14] My father. And so. Judah. Is given. This double sign. To assure them. Of God's promise. Protection. To urge them.

Not to fear. Aram and Judah. And the threat. But to trust in God. It will not happen. This invasion. Will not be pulled off. But.

The better part. Of Judah. Was not trusting. In God. But was trusting. In Assyria. For help. So the Lord.

Speaks again. To Isaiah. In verse five. And this must have been. A bit later. Because by now. The son. Was speaking. Mama. Dada. And by then.

Tiglath. Pelizer the third. The king of Assyria. Has already come. And plundered. Aram. And Israel. Ending their threat. Of invasion. On into Judah.

[14 : 09] So Judah. Is now relieved. Judah. Is a sigh. Of relief. And they're beside themselves. With joy. At the destruction. Of Aram. And Israel. To the north. And now.

They're told. Horror. Of horrors. That. Maher. Shalal. Haspaz. Applies. To them. As well.

That Assyria. Will not stop. At the plunder. Of Aram. And Israel. But would add. Judah. To its pile. Of plunder. To its spoils. Of victory.

As well. Now. The Lord. Makes this point. By speaking. About two rivers. That's our second point. Two rivers. And these rivers. Are symbolic.

Of God's help. And Assyria's help. First. God's help. Is likened to. The gently flowing. Waters. Of Shiloh.

[15 : 04] Verse six. Just east of Jerusalem. Was the Gihon spring. And that. Spring. Was the main source. Of water supply. For the whole city.

Of Jerusalem. And it would bubble up. From the spring. And those waters. Would trickle along. In what was called. The Shalom channel.

Right on into Jerusalem. Now. This Shalom channel. Could hardly even be called. A river. Hence. The gently flowing. Waters. Of Shiloh. But it was enough.

To sustain. The life. Of the whole city. To sustain. The Shalom. The peace. The prosperity. The protection. Of the city.

And as such. This little. Stream. Symbolizes. Pictures. God's. All sufficient. Help. For his people. [16:01] His provision. His protection. His peace. Indeed. The psalmist says. There is. A river. Whose streams. Make glad. The city of God.

This is that stream. This little. Rivulet. Coming. From the. Gihon spring. Into Jerusalem. It's the river. Of God's help. And care. By.

But in contrast. With this river. There's a second river. Mentioned. In verse seven. And this is the mighty. Flood waters. Of the river. The river.

There's no question. As to what. The river is. It's the mighty. Euphrates. A large river. Running right. Through Assyria. To the east. And Babylon. And down.

Into the Persian Gulf. And hence. We're told. That this river. Symbolizes. The king. Of Assyria. In all. His pomp.

[16:54] So. When the threat. Comes. Causing. Fear. To Judah. Which river. Will you trust. In. For help. The river.

Of God. God. Or the river. Of man. Of Assyria. The river. Of God. The sustenance. Of God. Or the sustenance. From God's substitutes.

That's always the issue. When threats. And trials. Come. Who will we trust? Which river. Will we drink from? For our help? Well. The gently flowing.

Waters. Of Shiloh. Didn't look like much. It was just a mere trickle. Compared. To the mighty.

Euphrates. So you're going to trust. In God?

Where is your God? I can't see him. What good is your invisible God. Against real armies. With real swords. And chariots.

[17:51] What good is your invisible God. With these visible problems. These real dangers. We are facing. So we need to recognize. Right away. That we should not be fooled.

By the seeming weakness. Of faith in God. Or the seeming strength. Of the world. Don't be fooled by that.

We are ever called. To live by faith. And not by sight. To believe. That one. Little promise. From our unseen God. Is worth more than all.

The visible troops. Of Assyria. So the. People. Of Judah. Look at their alternative. The little river. Of God.

Or the mighty. Swelling. Euphrates. Assyria. Assyria. And they choose. The latter. They rejected. The gently flowing waters. Of Shiloh.

[18:48] God's help. And they chose. Instead. To trust. In the king of Assyria. With all his. Pump and show. They. Regarded. God's help.

As inadequate. For the threat. The little river. Is inadequate. For this problem. Won't do any. Any good. For us. To trust here. And now.

They're rejoicing. Not only rejecting. God. As inadequate. But they're also. Rejoicing. Over Aram. And Israel's. Destruction. The text says. Celebrating. As if it were. Their own achievement.

Congratulating.

Themselves. On their. Wise diplomacy. Of having made. An alliance. With Assyria. Which was really. Just their unbelief. And their rejection. Of God.

As their helper. And because of this choice. God tells them. Judah. You're celebrating. Too soon. Assyria. You want.

[19:43] Assyria. You will get. But not as the savior. You thought. She would be. But as your own. Destroyer. She will come.

As a flooding river. That will sweep. Over you. Notice. This is something. That God will do. He brings. The flood. Of the Assyrian army. To do.

His work. Now you've seen. Flooding rivers. Perhaps. Just on TV. Maybe in person. Overflowing. Their banks. Well. They refuse. To be controlled. Don't they? They're no respecter. Of boundary lines. Or treaties. And neither was Assyria.

When the mighty. Flood waters. Of the Assyrian army. Swelled. And overflowed. All of its channels. And all of its banks. And came and destroyed. Aram.

[20 : 38] And Israel. It didn't come. To a line. In the sand. That said. You are now. Enter. Leaving. Israel. And now. Entering. Judah. And suddenly. Say. Oh. Why? I'm a stop here.

No. The flood waters. Just. Kept. Right on. Coming. Right. In. To Judah. Indeed. The message. Was. It will sweep. Right on. Into Judah. Verse 8. Swirling.

Over it. Passing. Through it. And reaching. Up. To the neck. It's. Out. Stretched. Wings. Like a bird. Of prey. Will. Will. Cover.

The breadth. Of. Your land. Oh. Emmanuel. So. The whole. Of the land. Of Judah.

Is. To be. Overrun. And covered. With the Assyrians. Now. That's a sobering. Judgment. For their unbelief. Whatever.

[21 : 32] We trust. In. Instead of. God. In the end. Ruins. Us. But there was one. Itsy bitsy. Bit of hope. In that prophecy.

Did you catch it? The waters. Would only come. Up to the neck. They would be able to keep their head. Above.

Water. Judah would not be entirely. Annihilated. Like Israel. Their brethren. To the north. Assyria. Would. Wipe them out.

They would never be a nation again. But. Judah. Would have their nose. Above water. And survive. Devastated. Yes. But spared. Spared.

Well. That leads us. To the third point. Isaiah's. Confident. Challenge. Facing. This new. Threat. Of God's. Judgment. Now. Coming. Not from the north. But coming. From the east.

[22 : 28] From the Assyrians. Isaiah. Ends. Verse 8. With this. Desperate. Prayer. To the coming. Messiah. He speaks about the waters covering. Not our land. But your land.

Oh. Emmanuel. Emmanuel. God with us. This is your land. You own it. You protect it. Oh.

Emmanuel. Emmanuel. This is the supernatural son of the supernatural birth. The virgin born son of chapter 7. And.

He. He. Is Isaiah's. Is Isaiah's. Only hope. Against this coming. Disaster. From Assyria. Emmanuel. God. With us.

Because. Emmanuel. Is able to say. To the flood. Of Assyria. Thus far. And no further. This far.

[23 : 25] But no further. This is Emmanuel. Who controls nations. Who sets up kings. And deposes them. And he can say.

Only that far. Assyria. This is Emmanuel. Who at Calvary. Would have the flood waters. Of God's wrath. Come not just up to.

His neck. But over his head. The billows. Piled. That he might spare us. He. Was not spared. That we might be spared.

Oh. Emmanuel. So fixing his eyes. On Emmanuel. Isaiah is emboldened. And he issues. This confident challenge. To the threatening. Warring nations.

Whoever they may be. That attack God's people. From this point on. Be they the Assyrians. At present. Or any other nation. It's a more general. Challenge.

[24 : 25] To all who attack. And oppose God's people. Verses 9 and 10. You all go ahead. And raise the war cry. You nations. And be shattered. Listen.

All you distant lands. Prepare for battle. And be shattered. Prepare for battle. And be shattered.

Your. Divise your strategy.

It will. Be thwarted. Propose your plan. It will not stand. For. Emmanuel. God is with us.

God is with us. So Judah may now look like. A powerless pawn. Of the mighty nations. But this is not the final chapter. Emmanuel writes. The final chapter. And they cannot go.

One inch beyond. What. Emmanuel. Has planned. So. Assyria. With all of its pomp. What's it doing? It's now thinking. That they're really something. Look at.

[25 : 25] We devoured Aram. We devoured Israel. We'll just devour Judah. They think it's all. By the might. And power of their hand. They don't even know. Assyria. Doesn't even have a clue. That they're just the tool.

Of Emmanuel. And he's going to use them. To chasten his people. To destroy. The northern kingdom. And to chasten. The southern kingdom. And when he's done.

With his purposes. He's going to destroy. The tool. That he used. They will be shattered. They will be broken. So come.

And do your worst. You will be shattered. Kick against this rock. You will be broken. Because in fighting us. You'll find that you're fighting against. Emmanuel.

God with us. So Emmanuel is a truth. As well as a name. He's a person. But he's also a reality. And God has always been with.

[26:23] His true people. That was his covenant promise. From the beginning. And that's where it's headed. God dwelling with his people. Forever and ever. And it's our security.

Our comfort. It's our confidence. It's why Isaiah. Could look at the enemy. Nations. And make such a challenge. There's nothing. To strengthen our faith. Like a look.

At Emmanuel. At our savior. Nothing to chase away. Our fears. Like thinking on him. Studying him. Fixing our eyes on him.

God is within her. She will not fall. God will help her. At break of day. So that's the first half. Of chapter 8. It covers much of the ground.

Covered in chapter 7. But now the second half. Of the chapter. Looks back over. All of 7. In the first half of 8. And it. Leaves us with some important lessons.

[27:17] For life. In this threatening world. Life. With all of its problems. And trials. That press in. And threaten us loss. And so number 4.

Is there are 2 ways. To live. There's God's way. And there's the world's way. Now by this time. Most of the people. In Judah. Were now embracing. The world's way. You couldn't tell the difference. Between the world. And Judah. And that's precisely. When this warning. Came to Isaiah. The prophet. Verse 11. Notice it came to him. The Lord spoke to me.

With his strong hand. Upon me. With intense pressure. He brought a word home. To my heart. Warning me.

Not to follow the way. Of this people. Prophets. And pastors. Are not beyond the need. Of this strong warning.

[28:17] Isaiah needed it. And so he got it. The warning.

Is to not be conformed. To the world. In its ways. There's this permeating. Pressure. All around us. In the world. Seeking to squeeze us. Into its mold.

And there is a part. Of me. Brothers and sisters. And a part of you. That wants to be. Like the world. The world. So if we are not. Fighting against this.

Pressure to conform. Then we are being. Conformed to it. It's just that plain. You sit still. You will come out. Like the world. The warning is. Do not follow the way.

Of this people. Don't be like them. Don't fear what they fear. Don't. Trust what they trust. And don't go. Where they go.

[29:12] For guidance. We'll look at each one of these. Marks of the true people of God. First of all. Don't fear what they fear. Don't call conspiracy. Verse 12. Everything they. These people call conspiracy.

Don't fear what they fear. Do not dread it. The Lord Almighty. Is the one. You're to regard as holy. He is the one. You are to fear. He is the one. You are to dread.

God. So Judah's. Paralyzing fear. Trembling like leaves on a. Wind tossed. Tree. She is paralyzed with fear.

Because she fails to be afraid. Of the Lord. When God is small. And people are big. And right now in Judah.

God was a small. Insignificant. Nobody. Inadequate. To help us. Against this problem. And so men were big.

[30:12] They were fearing man. Man who has but a breath. Up his nose. They feared the conspiracy. Of men from Aram. And Israel. They feared the multitude. Of men coming from Assyria.

And the losses. That they threatened. They were afraid of man. But they were not afraid. Of God. They didn't stand. In awe of God. They didn't tremble.

Before him. And see him. As the awesome. God. Who is like none other. They disregarded him. As irrelevant.

To the problem. Unable. To give any help. Like a doctor. In Indianapolis. Who told a friend of mine. About his cancer. This kind of cancer. Is something.

That even prayer. Can't help. Well he saw that. As a challenge. And he's. Been doing well. For 15 years now. Still with a cancer.

[31:05] But not a sign. And evidence. Of its symptoms. Oh your God. Is. Is good in his place. But his place. Is in church. He's not adequate.

For the hospital. Don't be like them. Don't think like that. He's the great physician. Oh your God's fine.

In church. But he doesn't belong. In Washington D.C. In the White House. Or. The Pentagon.

Or the. The Congress. Excuse me. He. He is the king. Of kings. He is the only. Lawmaker.

And judge. Your God's okay. And he's. He's adequate. In. In your churchy things. But. But he. He doesn't do well. In the Pentagon. Oh he's a mighty warrior.

[32:07] Your God's fine in church. But don't. Bring him to school. Well. But the fear of the Lord. Is the very beginning. Of wisdom.

And knowledge of the Holy One. Is understanding. He's the great prophet. You see. That's the way the world thinks. God is nobody. He. He's good for religion. But he's not good for.

The real problems of life. Do not follow the ways. Of this people. Don't be afraid. Of what they're afraid of. You see. Judah was.

Taken up with entirely. Horizontal. Thinking. That thinks. No higher. Than man. So. There's those scary. Aram. And. And.

Israelite soldiers. And there's those scary. Assyrians. And they're viewing them. Without. God in sight. And all their thoughts. There's no room for God. And man.

[33:03] It's scary. Down here. Do not. Be like them. Don't fear. What they fear. You are to fear God. You are to break through. That unbelief.

And fix your eyes. On. Your God. And to fear him. To stand in awe. Before him. To see him as. None other. To regard him as holy. Without.

Any other. In his class. Sanctify him. That's what it means.

To regard him as holy. Sanctify him. Set him apart in your heart. As sovereign. Over everything. Is that how you think of your God? Well. If so. Then. Then what are these guys down here?

They're nothings. They're just smoldering stubs of firewood. That's all. One breath up their nose.

And. They're done. Their history. Our God is the everlasting God.

[34:00] So don't allow yourself. To look at any problem. Without seeing God. In it. The one who is mighty.

To save. Reject fear. And all we see. God. As the most important factor. In whatever you're facing. Okay. You get the doctor's report.

You bring it right. You bring it right. Into the presence of God. As. As. Ahaz's son. Hezekiah. Will do.

When he hears the threat. From Assyria. He'll spread the matter. Before God.

He'll see the Assyrian threat. With God in view. Bring your problems. Into the light. Of who God is. Because when God is big.

Man. Is small. Do not fear. What they fear. Fear the Lord Almighty. Now Peter. In the New Testament. Quotes this. In his first epistle. And he applies it to Christ.

[34:57] He says in 1st Peter 3. Do not fear what they fear. Don't be frightened. But in your hearts. Set apart Christ. As Lord.

Regard him. As the Holy One. Set him apart. As Lord. Over everything. Sanctify him. See him. As he is.

High. And lifted up. Did you do that this week. In your problems. Did you sanctify. The Lord in your heart. Did you see him. For who he is. Did you see.

Him as Lord. Over all. That concerns. And threatens you. Or did you see. As the world sees. And he was nowhere in sight. Do not. Fear what they fear.

Now. Your attitude. Towards God. Determines. What. He will be. To you. Let me say that again.

Your attitude. Towards God. Whether it be. Faith. Or fear. Or.

[35:59] Or. Unbelief. I should say. Or faith. Your attitude. Towards God. Determines. What he will be to you. He will either be. To you. In your troubles. A sanctuary. Or.

A stone. Of stumbling. To threaten. People. Who fear him. And set him apart. As Lord. Over all. He will be a sanctuary. The passage says.

A sanctuary. Sanctuary. And we shouldn't think. First of all. And only of. A church building. A

sanctuary. There's some application. To that. I believe. But. Outside of Port Elizabeth.

South Africa. Is the African Dawn. Wildlife Sanctuary. And this sanctuary. Is a fenced in. Protected. Area. For many.

Endangered. Animals. And over. 300. Species. Of birds. And so. If you're a little wallaby. And you're wandering around. Out in the wild.

[36:55] You're open game. To any predator. To any. Any hunter. Trapper. You're. You're vulnerable. But inside. This sanctuary. You're safe. There's no hunting. There's no.

Trapping. Allowed. That's what the Lord is. To those. Who set him apart. As Lord. Over all. He will be your sanctuary.

Right in the midst. Of all the threatening. Things. Of men. And God's wrath. There's this sanctuary. Sanctuary. The safe.

Hiding place. That's what he is. To all who put their trust in him. But for those who do not regard him as holy. To those who do not set him apart as Lord. In their lives.

Even for both houses of Israel. He will be not a sanctuary. But a stone that causes men to stumble. And a rock. That makes them fall.

[37:52] A trap. And a snare. Many of them will stumble. They will fall. And be broken. They will be snared. And captured.

God is either the safe hiding place. In the sanctuary. Or he's one of the trappers. That will snare you. And destroy you. A stone over which you will stumble.

And fall to your eternal ruin. You can try to live. As if he doesn't exist. You can try to get on without him. Just looking to men for help. Just leaning on your own strength.

And trying to get yourself through the problem. But he still exists. And you will bump into him. It's his world. You'll meet him in the day of judgment. He's there.

And he won't go away. So you either take refuge in him. And be saved. Or you stumble over him. To your everlasting ruin. He's not safe to ignore.

[38:52] How shall we escape? If we neglect. If we just ignore. So great. A salvation. And when we come to the New Testament.

It's full of this passage from Isaiah. Isn't it? You know that. And it tells us this stone is Christ. This stone that Isaiah spoke of. Is Emmanuel.

Simeon at his birth. This child is set for the falling and rising of many in Israel. The Lord Jesus himself. Talks about himself as a stone. That will crush.

Those on whom it falls. And the Apostle Paul. Writing to the Romans. Quotes this very passage from Isaiah. And Peter as well. And applies it to the Lord Jesus.

Now to you who believe. This stone is precious. But to those who do not believe. He has become a stone. That causes men to stumble. And a rock.

[39:48] That makes them fall. They stumble because they disobey the message. Which is also what they were destined for. So if I'm reading my New Testament right.

It's telling me that this prophecy of Isaiah is still being fulfilled today. People in their problems. People up against the trials of life.

Have two choices. Take refuge in the sanctuary. Christ. And be saved. God. And try to find your own way.

And you'll meet him anyway. And you'll stumble over him. And he will ruin you forever. You cannot ignore him.

You must wake up. You must come to him. Don't fear what they fear. Fear the Lord. and then secondly don't trust what they trust since in their unbelieving eyes man is big and God is small well they'll trust in man every time they'll go to the mighty rushing Euphrates here's some power for us Assyria and his pomp and so they trust in men their armies, their kings, their horses their idols, their money anything except God man's maker and man's only savior God is deemed inadequate for this problem praying, well that's that's wasted time, let's do something more practical, let's get some real help in on this problem and they find that what they trust in to deliver them actually ends up destroying them, don't be like them, is the warning do not trust what they trust rather be like Isaiah who says in verse 17

[41:52] I will wait for the Lord who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob I will put my trust in him if waiting is not something that you are very good at it's because your faith is either weak or non-existent unbelief is impatient and cannot wait faith is patient and waits now it's hard to wait in the darkness while God is hiding his face from us he was bringing judgment down upon Judah indeed he was hiding his face there was no light it's hard to wait in those kind of circumstances but faith can afford to wait because it has an awesome God who acts on behalf of those who fear him an awesome God mighty to save who acts in almighty power and grace so faith can afford to wait and we wait patiently and expectantly for him to act believing that he knows best when to act and

how to act unbelief can't afford to wait it has no such awesome God remember God's little man's big unbelief and so if unbelief is to have any help he's got to get it for himself and so he acts come on

Assyria come on over he's out here leaning on his own understand because he has no faith in God acting for him don't follow the way of this people don't trust what they trust trust in the Lord run into him as your sanctuary let him be the first one you run to the first one you tell the one you pour out your heart to and you you roll the burden and cast the care upon the one you continue to wait on in your present trials knowing that he will act on your behalf and then lastly don't go where they go for guidance don't fear what they fear don't trust what they trust and don't go where they go for guidance now when God hides his face it's dark the Bible speaks of the sunshine of his face shining on us but when God hides his face it's dark we don't like walking in the dark so we seek some light don't we for our path we seek some knowledge some understanding to make sense of it all well where do we go for this light where do we go for guidance in our dark nights well the righteous turn to the law and the testimonies the written word of

God these people are a people of the book and no treasure is treasured more than the revelation of scripture here is inside information here we know things that we otherwise would never know about the future about how to live what's coming next where do I go when I die we find this information in our darkness from this book of light so let him who walks in the dark who has no light trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God and this is the book where we learn of our reliable almighty helping God but the world turns its back on this book the world says that is inadequate for my problem you see I've got this psychological problem I've got this relational problem I've got this addictive problem

I have this governmental financial whatever and this is deemed inadequate and they go to some other source of light even Judah was tired of God's word and wanting something more jazzy more exciting like occult mediums who chirped and peeped and muttered in contacting the dead and demons to gain knowledge of the future guidance in life some light just to give meaning to this darkness that we're in and when men turn away from the light of God's word all they're left with is poor substitutes and you see it today young people the horoscopes astrologists palm readers as if there's a track in your hand that will tell you what you ought to do the path you ought to take fortune tellers spiritual mediums superstitions new age gurus with their secrets for life all forbidden in scripture and interest in the occult and supernatural spiritism increases whenever faith in God's word decreases and that's what was happening in Judah it's not in man that walks to direct his steps we look for light we need light it's dark down here where do we go

Isaiah says should not a people inquire of their God is he not the God of truth does wisdom not dwell with him so when Saul's in darkness he goes to the witch of Endor when David was in darkness we read this morning he inquired of the Lord that's it two ways to live two ways why consult the dead on behalf of the living don't go to the gibberish!

[47 : 48] of the occult when God has spoken clearly in his word how blessed we are dark to have a sure word from heaven the entrance of which gives light your word is a light to my feet a lamp to my path the commands of the Lord are radiant giving light to the eyes how firm a foundation you saints of the Lord is laid for your faith in his excellent word what more could he say than to you he hath said to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled so here is the standard by which to judge all truth claims to the law and the testimony if they don't speak according to this word they have no light of dawn I don't care if they're in a pulpit in a seminary where you find them there is no light of dawn at all they have no light to give you they have nothing to contribute to the argument they're still in the dark they're in darkness and if you follow them you'll both fall into the ditch no the light all the light you need is right here in

God's word and when a people forsakes God's word when an individual forsakes God's word their darkness goes to ever increasing darkness and ends in utter darkness they're still in the dark and their darkness and distress grows worse leaving them totally unprepared for the judgment of God that is coming so when the disaster comes upon them looking up they'll see no help there and curse God looking toward the earth they'll find no help but will see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom and they will be thrust into utter darkness!

to ever increasing living in darkness until at last they are cast into outer darkness utterly hopeless a night that has no dawn and that's where the chapter ends now praise God there's a chapter nine and we'll see it Lord willing next week here are the three distinguishing marks of God's people they fear God they trust God they turn to God for guidance in church of Christ will we learn from the light

that God has shined across our path this morning he's come with light will we walk in it or will we say you know that's that's okay for these churchy things but not for my problems the Old Testament church had become like the world they feared man instead of God they trusted man instead of God they followed man instead of God's word for guidance and

God's warning comes do not follow the way of this people can't we see in the same way that the church of the modern church much of it today is becoming like the world and the God being preached is no longer someone to be feared buddy no one to shake before to stand in reverence to regard as holy as so high above us that with a word the nations obey with a whistle they come and do his will and he shatters them do we have this view of God or is God not a God to be feared today and since God is not regarded as holy and great and awesome well then when we're in ourselves and our strategies and human things and as for God's word well it's just an old book anyway we live in modern times these are the days of the enlightenment

John Gerstner called it days of endarklement what do you have when you set aside the light of God you have nothing but darkness and sadly the church today is setting aside this light from heaven for peeping and muttering and other substitutes and if they do not speak according to this word there is no light of dawn in them well church of Christ will we will we heed the warning will we heed the warning and learn from the light God has shed across our path don't follow the way of this people and we don't need to because we have an awesome God to reverence and an almighty God to trust in a God to take sanctuary in to run into and to be safe a

[53:07] God who has all the light we need in our darkest hour God God God to God to God to to him your fears bring to him your distress take refuge in him run under his sanctuary trust in this Christ this Emmanuel God with us to help you pray and then I'll close thank you our mighty God that in all of our trials you are our God and your word is our light teach us more to fear you in a way that will drive out all other fears teach us to trust you and so to honor you as the great sanctuary and helper that you are and oh thank you so much for this word that shines into our hearts and reveals to us

Emmanuel our only Lord and Savior and we pray in his name amen