

Specific Warning to Isaiah About Following the People

Isaiah 8:11-22

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I. INTRODUCTION

Feelings of fear, anxiety, uncertainty, and insecurity abound in our world today. It appears everywhere we look there is another tragic news' headline reminding us just how dark this world really is. Along with the tragedies and acts of violence, we experience, comes conspiracy theories, finger pointing and growing animosity between neighbors, political parties and nations. When we read Isaiah there seemed to be a parallel of what going on then and now. What hope if any did, they have with the impending attack and darkness? The answer was Hope in God's redeeming grace. There are certain marks that distinguish true believers from unbelievers, and it comes down to our attitude towards God, His Word and for us the belief in Christ.

II. The Lesson: Specific Warning About Following the People

1. vv.11-12.

Isaiah along with other prophets, were viewed as traitors because he did not support Israel national policies. He and the other prophets called for the people to commit themselves first to God and then to the King. Isaiah began this section with the revelation of how God had come to him. First God spoke and second it was with a strong hand. Strong hand is an expression of the power of God or feeling His presence. He felt the urgency of what God was instructing him not to do. God inspired Isaiah with compelling power to speak a message that by its nature distanced him from the people he ministered to. This was the Lord speaking and Isaiah was in the hand of the Lord. He was not an idolater like those around him. But he was God's ambassador with a message from Him. In verse 12, He should not take the view that the people are taking (that this was all a conspiracy and nothing more). Isaiah is telling the people not to make a deal with these Assyrians. He was calling those who are willing to stand up for God and be counted. Reminding them that their strength is in the Lord, and they should not fear what these worldly people could do. Isaiah knew that this would be divine judgment and he should not fear what the people feared. There will be judgment for the people infidelity but still there was protection through Immanuel (v.1-4). Isaiah knew that the hand of the Lord was heavily on him, so he better listen. The warning was for him and the remnant. From verse 11 there is a realization that even Christian nations or Christian people can go the wrong way and should not be followed. Rom.12:1-2 reminds Christians that we are not to allow the world to press us into its mold. We do not do a very good job of doing that. Like the ancient

believers, many conform to the world or societies ideologies and practices. Even our churches often do the same thing. God 's goal for us is to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, who is the express image of God (Heb.1:3). To go against the flow, to resist the tide (of public opinion, peer pressure, etc.) is not an easy thing and even God tells Isaiah here not to be afraid of their threats, nor to be troubled. When we stand with God and his word, we may have trouble and yet not be troubled. When we follow God's ways, we will have inner peace and assurance. But that will not exempt us from trouble from enemies of God, so called friends or even family.

2. **vv.13.** The direction and positive encouragement that the Lord of Host gives: (1) Him you shall sanctify; (2) Let Him be your fear; (3) Let Him be your dread. After you do all these things, He will be our sanctuary...

If Israel were to panic it should not be because of the enemies, but because of the Lord (who has power over the body and the soul) Matt.10:28. Israel was to learn that the Lord was not like other tribal gods or friendly spirits. He is a God who is concerned about our comfort, but even more he is concerned about your character. His blessings give us happiness, while His discipline imparts to us holiness. In Leviticus 19:2, Moses was instructed by God to tell the people: "You must be holy because I the Lord your God is holy". He was calling the people into a relationship with himself, and he wanted the people to not to just survive in a relationship but to thrive by being connected fully with him. They need to come to Him on His terms. As believers, we are literally set apart (sanctify) because of our relationship with the One who bridged the gap between a Holy God and sinful man. Sanctify in the verse means to separate the world from our worship of Him and fear (revere) Him.

Prov.10:27 tells us that the fear of the Lord prolongs days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened. Also Prov.9:10: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom which refers to having a deep respect and reverence for the Lord.

Reverence and obedience: When we fear the Lord, we show him the respect and obedience he deserves as our Creator and Judge. Fear of the Lord will prompt us to study His word to gain wisdom and fear of the Lord can lead to understanding of the Holy One.

3. **vv.14-15.** "Sanctuary...Stone of stumbling".

Isaiah found encouragement in the Lord as his holy place of protection from his accusers. The New Testament applies this verse to corporate Israel in their ongoing rejection of Jesus as Messiah (Lk.9:32; 1 Pt.2:2). Both the houses of Israel will be collapsed until the return of the Messiah to earth to restore them. Those who fear and reverence the Lord, will be hidden in Him. He will be their haven and protection. The same Rock (Jesus Christ), which saves the

believers is a stone of stumbling to those who do not believe. He is their downfall. Isaiah is telling of the house of Israel and Judah, who do not continue in faith in the Lord, will fall. This message can be to the many Christians today who do not sanctify themselves, reverence the Lord and walk daily in His ways. It was impossible then and is impossible now, to live victorious lives, unless we find sanctuary in the Lord.

4. **vv.16-17.**

“My disciples “were God’s faithful remnant and therefore were Isaiah’s disciples. They had the responsibility of maintaining written records of his prophecies so they could become public (8:2). God wanted them to protect the testimony. In verse 17 he said he would wait and look for the God who has hidden His face from the house of Jacob, for that deliverance, the deliverance promised to the faithful remnant (Is.40:31;49:23). He was willing to stand firm and wait, no matter how long it took to come to pass.

5. **v.18.**

We know that the names that were given to his sons were living messages to the people. Mt Zion is believed to be speaking spiritually of the church, but also could be God’s holy hill in Jerusalem.

6. **vv.19-20.**

The prophet warns them not to seek mediums for the living, that is, do not consult the dead, on behalf of the living. This warning speaks against Spiritualism and calls them back to the “law and the testimony” as the only basis for interpreting a claim to the divine revelation. The Law strictly forbids such consultations (Lev.19:26; Deut.18:10-11). Those who do these things are minister of death to those who come to them, while Jesus ministers’ life. The law and testimony are the Word of God. The word of God is Light. Light came through the prophecies of God’s spokesman, Isaiah. There is no darkness where the true Word is. Those who refuse to live by the Word of God is filled with darkness and death. Read John 1:1-5. The Word and the Light are the same One, Jesus Christ.

7. **vv. 21-22.**

The imagery used here predicts a time of despair (faces turn upwards) and gloom and darkness. The images of darkness and light are implied comparisons; darkness would represent the effect of sin—oppression, pain, evil, gloom, and hopelessness. Light would reflect the effect of righteousness through the Messiah which is joy, freedom, hope, knowledge and righteousness. But Isaiah the prophet declared that the people will be filled with gloom judgment.

Notice that hard times come, when life isn't fair, when God seems to have abandoned us, when ample quantity of goods are no longer available to enjoy, when that lucrative position is terminated or when loved ones leave or disappoint us. Also, when we try to do what is right but are met with resistance or beaten down by the world and even the church. Where do we turn? Remember Job lost his family, all his possessions and stricken with boils all over his body. His wife told him to curse God and die. But his faith was greater than his trials and he was able to reply- "Though He (God) slay me, Yet I will trust Him".

John 3:19: "And this is the condemnation, the light came into the world, but man loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

John 12:35: "Then Jesus told them, you are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. Whoever walks in the dark does not know where they are going.

III. **CONCLUSION.**

Here at Second Baptist, we do a smile check, when we greet our visitors on Sunday. I implore us to all do a faith check. What kind foundation is our house (faith) built upon? Matt.7:24-27. Are we allowing ourselves to be pressed into the mold, looking and acting no different than the world? – maybe it's because we aren't any different. The Bible teaches us that if a person is "in Christ" he is a new creation, old things has passed away and all things become new 2Co.5:17: God says Come out from among them and be separated". 2 Co.6:17

Using the symbolism of a name, the prophet announces the swift and certain destruction from the invasion of the Assyrians and warns that genuine faith in the Lord is the means of escape and not foreign alliances or idolatry which will lead to doom and despair.

The instruction that Isaiah relayed was: "Make God your fear; Wait for the Lord (Hope); Should not a people seek their God? This applicable to us as Christians today, who knows that judgment will fall on this world and only those who remain faithful will be spared. Just like Immanuel was with them and they should have looked to Him, today we have a choice, who we will look to in our times of despair and uncertainties.