

# Holy Trinity Bible Study - Isaiah Lesson #8d

Primary Sources:

Webb - The Message of Isaiah, Barry G. Webb

Motyer – The Prophecy of ISAIAH, J. Alec Motyer

## Isaiah 8:14 – 22

.<sup>14</sup> And he will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.<sup>15</sup> And many shall stumble on it. They shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken.”

<sup>16</sup> Bind up the testimony; seal the teaching among my disciples.<sup>17</sup> I will wait for the Lord, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob, and I will hope in him.<sup>18</sup> Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given me are signs and portents in Israel from the Lord of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion.<sup>19</sup> And when they say to you, “Inquire of the mediums and the necromancers who chirp and mutter,” should not a people inquire of their God? Should they inquire of the dead on behalf of the living?<sup>20</sup> To the teaching and to the testimony! If they will not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn.<sup>21</sup> They will pass through the land, greatly distressed and hungry. And when they are hungry, they will be enraged and will speak contemptuously against their king and their God, and turn their faces upward.<sup>22</sup> And they will look to the earth, but behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish. And they will be thrust into thick darkness.

Reading: The Message of Isaiah pages 66-68

## Questions to Consider

### 1. What does Sanctuary mean to you in your life today?

*Merriam-Webster*: a consecrated place: such as the ancient Hebrew temple at Jerusalem or its holy of holies; or, the most sacred part of a religious building (such as the part of a Christian church in which the altar is placed)

*Google*: a place of refuge or safety. "people automatically sought a sanctuary in time of trouble"

### 2. What is your place of Sanctuary?

### 3. What is the nature of the sanctuary offered in verses 14 and 15?

“Sanctuary is not a place of asylum, but a holy place where God dwells in all his holiness. The sanctuary is the coming of the Lord to dwell among his people but, as in the tabernacle and in the temple, coming in all the reality of his holy presence.”

*Motyer – The Prophecy of ISAIAH, J. Alec Motyer, page 95.*

### 4. How can a sanctuary be a “stone of offense and a rock of stumbling?”

“while to some his presence offers a glad opportunity to repent, believe and by the

appointed means of grace to enter into his fellowship and peace, to others his presence spells doom. To them he is 'a stone of tripping, a rock of stumbling . . . a trap and a snare'. The first pair of words express the people's attitude to God – they ignore him and therefore trip over him; the second pair express his hostility to them."

*Motyer – The Prophecy of ISAIAH, J. Alec Motyer, page 95.*

- Psalm 91** He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High  
will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.
- <sup>2</sup> I will say<sup>[a]</sup> to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress,  
my God, in whom I trust."
- <sup>3</sup> For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler  
and from the deadly pestilence.
- <sup>4</sup> He will cover you with his pinions,  
and under his wings you will find refuge;  
his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.
- <sup>5</sup> You will not fear the terror of the night,  
nor the arrow that flies by day,  
<sup>6</sup> nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness,  
nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.
- <sup>7</sup> A thousand may fall at your side,  
ten thousand at your right hand,  
but it will not come near you.
- <sup>8</sup> You will only look with your eyes  
and see the recompense of the wicked.
- <sup>9</sup> Because you have made the Lord your dwelling place—  
the Most High, who is my refuge<sup>[b]</sup>—
- <sup>10</sup> no evil shall be allowed to befall you,  
no plague come near your tent.
- <sup>11</sup> For he will command his angels concerning you  
to guard you in all your ways.
- <sup>12</sup> On their hands they will bear you up,  
lest you strike your foot against a stone.
- <sup>13</sup> You will tread on the lion and the adder;  
the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot.
- <sup>14</sup> "Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him;  
I will protect him, because he knows my name.
- <sup>15</sup> When he calls to me, I will answer him;  
I will be with him in trouble;  
I will rescue him and honor him.
- <sup>16</sup> With long life I will satisfy him  
and show him my salvation."

It is as if a rock were put across a road to block the traveller from danger but, in

carelessness or scorn, he refuses the warning and stumbles to his death. The stress in these verses is that what gives most offence to the sinner and what at the same time constitutes his greatest danger is the presence of the divine. The same God in his unchanging nature is both sanctuary and snare; it depends on how people respond to his holiness.

*Motyer – The Prophecy of ISAIAH, J. Alec Motyer, page 95.*

**5. Who is speaking in verse 16 and what does it mean to bind up and seal?**

It could be Isaiah is talking about binding up his followers, “But it is better to understand it as meaning that the Lord is claiming the remnant as his own.

*Motyer – The Prophecy of ISAIAH, J. Alec Motyer, page 96.*

**6. How are we to understand verse 17 when Isaiah says, “<sup>17</sup> I will wait for the Lord, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob, and I will hope in him.”**

“each testifies to an expectant faith which patiently awaits what the Lord will do... Faith is made for the dark Day.”

“Isaiah and his disciples were not immune from the ensuing calamities. But within the gathering darkness they had a sustaining, expectant faith and a sure hope.”

*Motyer – The Prophecy of ISAIAH, J. Alec Motyer, page 96.*

**7. What is the sign that Isaiah offers in verse 18?**

“Isaiah offers himself as an example of the faith of the remnant in the dark hour. He fortifies himself by recalling first, the personal dealings of God with him and his family, and secondly, the objective reality of God’s choice of Zion and the divine promise which that implies.”

*Motyer – The Prophecy of ISAIAH, J. Alec Motyer, page 96.*

**8. Where does Isaiah find his confidence?**

“it is not grounded finally in the disciples but in the LORD (17) . Even the disciples may fail to live up to the expectations Isaiah has of them, but the LORD himself will never let him down.”

*Motyer – The Prophecy of ISAIAH, J. Alec Motyer. Page 67*

“This is Isaiah’s confidence in the divine origin and communication to him of the message he and his sons embody. Since God had thus dealt with him in personal experience, he can fortify his faith for the testing darkness ahead.”

*Motyer – The Prophecy of ISAIAH, J. Alec Motyer, page 96.*

**9. Where do King Ahaz and the people of Judea seek their sanctuary?**

They put their faith in human wisdom. Seeking guidance from spirits of the dead. “

1 Samuel 28:15-17 - <sup>15</sup> Then Samuel said to Saul, “Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?” Saul answered, “I am in great distress, for the Philistines are warring against me, and God has turned away from me and answers me no more, either by

prophets or by dreams. Therefore I have summoned you to tell me what I shall do.”<sup>16</sup> And Samuel said, “Why then do you ask me, since the Lord has turned from you and become your enemy? <sup>17</sup> The Lord has done to you as he spoke by me, for the Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David. “to embrace a merely human wisdom ( even spirit - sought ) is to reveal a hopeless state and to lose the possibility of repentance ; according to the latter two , to reject the word of the Lord is to embrace hopelessness . Either way, the hopelessness is an objective fact; in the next verses Isaiah speaks of it as a subjective experience.

*Motyer – The Prophecy of ISAIAH, J. Alec Motyer, page 97.*

#### **10. What is the result?**

“It certainly adds to the pathos and despair of the situation if the people are heard invoking a curse on their lot in the name of a system (the Davidic kingship) they had betrayed and a God they had refused to trust... They had loved darkness, the darkened rooms in which they consulted the shrouded dead, and divine justice has given them what they loved: darkness all around and a dark future ahead, the nemesis of abandoning their God and of refusing his testimony and law .”

*Motyer – The Prophecy of ISAIAH, J. Alec Motyer, page 98.*