

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Isaiah: Jahweh Is Salvation

XV. Personally Offsetting Errant Group Fear With The Fear Of The Lord (Isaiah 8:11-18)

I. Introduction

- A. There are times when a believer finds himself in a group of people that unbiblically fears something, and with such group fear comes a great pressure for individual believers to yield to that same fear out of peer pressure!
- B. Isaiah 8:11-18 is a passage on offsetting such errant group fear with a healthy reverence for the Lord:

II. Personally Offsetting Errant Group Fear With The Fear Of The Lord, Isaiah 8:11-18.

- A. After God through Isaiah had informed Judah's king and people to trust in Him regarding their feared Aram-Israel enemies (Isaiah 7:1-8:10), the Lord came to Isaiah with a personal message for him, Isaiah 8:11a.
- B. In this personal encounter from the Lord, Isaiah reported how God came literally "in strength of hand," or with a "peculiar force . . . exerted upon the prophet" that was "distinguished from ordinary prophetic inspiration," Edward J. Young, The Book of Isaiah, 1974, v. I, p. 310, ftn. 25; Isaiah 8:11b.
- C. With this unusual degree of added force in an evident effort to offset the peer pressure Isaiah faced, God warned him not to follow the way of the people of Judah, not to get caught up in their view, Isaiah 8:11c.
- D. To be specific, God told Isaiah not to call "conspiracy" all that the people of Judah called "conspiracy." This likely referred to the charge the people were making about Isaiah's message not to fear the Aram-Israel alliance, but to trust in the Lord, calling the message a conspiracy on Isaiah's part to leave Judah lax and so unprepared for the Aram-Israel attack on Judah! (Isaiah 8:12; *Ibid.*, p. 310). It is amazing that "when the prophets advocated that the theocracy act like the theocracy" by trusting in the Lord for deliverance, they would be "accused of conspiracy," of leading the nation down an errant, self-destructive path, *Ibid.*!
- E. Thus, Isaiah was not to yield to the peer pressure caused by this false charge against his message, which message was from God, but to regard the Lord Almighty as the One Who was holy as opposed to Judah's people, to regard God the One Isaiah was to fear and dread versus the people or their errant views, Isaiah 8:13.
- F. Indeed, if Isaiah chose to fear his accountability to the Lord as opposed to fearing the people for thinking he was advocating a conspiracy by his message, or by fearing their dread was valid as opposed to the message God had given him, God would be Isaiah's sanctuary from all foes, including Judah's people, Isaiah 8:14a.
- G. However, for both the houses of Israel, namely, for the Northern Kingdom of Israel that was in league with the Arameans against the Southern Kingdom of Judah as well as for Judah itself, God would be a Stone of stumbling, a rock that makes one fall, and for the people of Jerusalem He would be a trap and a snare by Whom many would stumble, fall, be broken, snared and captured by an invading nation, Isaiah 8:14b-15.
- H. Accordingly, God directed Isaiah to bind up the testimony of this private message of faith, to seal up the law among God's true disciples as it was only for believers in God versus Judah's faithless people, Isaiah 8:16.
- I. Isaiah accordingly heeded the Lord, privately choosing to wait in faith for the Lord to act and bless him, the Lord Who was hiding His face of blessing from the house of Jacob, meaning all twelve tribes in turning His back on the Northern Kingdom of Israel with the ten tribes and the Southern Kingdom of Judah with its two tribes, Isaiah 8:17a. Isaiah summed: "I will put my trust in Him," Isaiah 8:17b NIV.
- J. With this private decision to heed the Lord's private message of hope and protection from the Lord versus heeding the fear of Judah's people, Isaiah added that he and the children the Lord had given him were signs and symbols in Judah from God Almighty Who dwelt on Mount Zion, Isaiah 8:18. That is, Isaiah's name, signifying, "Jahweh is Salvation," his son Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz signifying the Aram-Israel alliance would be broken as the Assyrians defeated them and took their booty and, as we will see in Isaiah 10:21-22, Isaiah's other son, Shear-Jashub, signifying how a believing remnant would return to Judah from captivity -- each of these names were messages that signified that Judah should trust in the Lord, Bib. Kno. Com., O. T., p. 1052!

Lesson: God strongly led Isaiah to resist the humanly potent peer pressure he faced in faithless Judah's people to fear unbiblical fear through fearing his accountability to God more than the errant peer group and its false views. In doing so, he found God's protection where the faithless group would only suffer God's discipline for unbelief.

Application: (1) May we handle strong but errant group peer pressure to fear by realizing we are accountable to Almighty God to revere and to heed Him. (2) May we trust the strong signals of God's guidance to counter such peer pressure as encouraging evidence that He is the One Who is calling us to resist that pressure.