

Isaiah Chapter 8/2 Nephi 18

Isaiah's Words, [Old Testament/Book of Mormon Student Manual](#), [Micah's Additions](#)

1 Moreover, the word of the Lord said unto me: Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen, concerning Maher-shalal-hash-baz.

2 And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah.

3 And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived and bare a son. Then said the Lord to me: Call his name, Maher-shalal-hash-baz.

4 For behold, the child shall not have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, before the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria.

(13-47) [Isaiah 8. Warning of the Impending Assyrian Invasion](#)

The chapter is a continuation of the historical events introduced in chapter 7 (see Enrichment F). The prophet Isaiah is again to warn Judah against alliances, for, as he prophesies, they will be ineffective. The Messianic promise of Immanuel ("God is with us") would prevail in their behalf. The Assyrian invasion would come, but Judah would still survive. Isaiah concluded his writing with a warning against the false teachings and practices that would pull Judah away from the law and testimony that had been revealed to them.

Symbolic Names: Isaiah was the father of two sons, Maher-shalal-hash-baz (see 2 Nephi 18:3) and Shear-jashub (see 2 Nephi 17:3). Both names are symbolic of the Lord's intentions for the northern kingdom of Israel. Maher-shalal-hash-baz is a Hebrew term meaning "to speed to the spoil, he hasteneth the prey" (Isaiah 8:1d; see also 2 Nephi 18:1b). This name describes the events spoken of in 2 Nephi 18:4. The ten tribes were overrun and despoiled by the Assyrians when Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom, was besieged. Shear-jashub is a Hebrew term meaning "the remnant shall return" (Isaiah 7:3a). This is a reference to the day when Israel will be gathered from her scattered condition. Thus Isaiah could report: "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of Hosts" (2 Nephi 18:18)

The expression "prophetess" is used here only to designate the prophet's wife, not a prophetic office or gift (see Young, [Book of Isaiah](#), 1:303).

The first shall be last and the last shall be first. Identifying dualism: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is Isaiah's wife, is the virgin Mary who will conceive and bear a child and the name of the child shall be the New Jerusalem or Immanuel which means "God is with us." The prophet's warning to the president of the United States is clarified in which he says that once "the child" is born, not 3.5 years ("the child shall not have knowledge to cry...before") will pass before the alliance of Israel and the modern day Syria is broken, scattered and their wealth taken.

5 The Lord spake also unto me again, saying:

6 Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son;

7 Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria and all his glory; and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks.

8 And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.

9 Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear all ye of far countries; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces.

10 Take counsel together, and it shall come to naught; speak the word, and it shall not stand; for God is with us.

2 Nephi 18:6–7. “The Waters of Shiloah That Go Softly”

One commentary explains a possible meaning of the comparison between “the waters of Shiloah that go softly” (2 Nephi 18:6) and the “strong and many” (verse 7) waters of the river: “Isaiah describes and then contrasts two forms of waters—the soft, rolling waters of Shiloah, located near the temple mount of Jerusalem, and the waters of the Euphrates, a great river that often floods out of control. The waters of Shiloah are controlled and inviting, whereas the Euphrates is dangerous and destructive. The waters of Shiloah bring life to those who drink them; the Euphrates brings death to those who are swept up in its flood. Isaiah’s images of the two waters are symbolic: the former represents Jesus, the King of Heaven, who is likened to the waters of life; the latter is the king of Assyria, who leads his great, destructive armies and ‘cover the earth [like a flood ... and] destroy the inhabitants thereof’ (Jer. 46:8). Inasmuch as the inhabitants of Judah had rejected Jesus, or the waters of Shiloah, the Lord set upon them the king of Assyria, or the strong and mighty waters of the river that would overflow their banks and cover the entire land with its destruction” (Donald W. Parry, Jay A. Parry, Tina M. Peterson, *Understanding Isaiah* [1998], 83).

2 Nephi 18:8. “Even to the Neck”

The symbolic expression “even to the neck” indicates that the king of Assyria will conquer Judah’s lands, even to Jerusalem. By 701 B.C., Assyria had overrun all of Judah except its capital city.

2 Nephi 18:8, 10. “God Is with Us”

At the point when Assyria overran Judah, all seemed to be lost, but Immanuel, or “God is with us,” prevented the destruction of Jerusalem (2 Nephi 18:10). Isaiah 37:33–36 describes this miraculous event where not even an arrow flew over the walls.

With dualism we understand that it is America that is warned of the contrast of choosing the Lord (calm waters) to the Assyrian (dangerous waters). With dualism we understand that

Jerusalem will be allied with modern day Syria as an antithesis to Assyria. Because America chooses to ally/pay tribute to the modern day Assyrians the Lord will allow the land to be conquered by the Assyria economically, politically, socially and potentially even physically. The Assyrian will pass through all of Ephraim and get all the way to “the neck.” We have the neck identified with “God is with us”, it is the New Jerusalem. The Lord will protect New Jerusalem in the same miraculous fashion as he protected Old Jerusalem as referenced above. It is explained from this point on the wicked will begin to be swept from the earth and there will be no plan, council etc that can stop this.

11 For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying:

12 Say ye not, A confederacy, to all to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.

13 Sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.

Footnote for confederacy (Isaiah 8:12a): Judah should not rely on secret plots with others for safety.

America will try to make secret confederacies, plots, alliances with the Assyrian. The prophet warns against this which was discussed in the previous chapter. In the previous chapter we learn that the president of the United States did not want a sign from the Lord because he does not want the Lord interfering with his plans. With that knowledge and the knowledge we learn in this chapter, we learn that by the time the prophet goes to warn the president of the United State, the president is already to some degree or another, already involved in the schemes. The prophet warns to not rely on those things, meaning whatever deal you have struck with the modern Assyrian won't work. Instead, put your trust in the Lord and the New Jerusalem.

14 And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling, and for a crock of offense to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

15 And many among them shall stumble and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.

2 Nephi 18:14. A Sanctuary, “a Stone of Stumbling”

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles noted the ability of “Immanuel” to both save and condemn: “When the stone of Israel comes, he shall be a sanctuary for the righteous; they shall find peace and safety under the shelter of his gospel; but he shall be a Stone of Stumbling and a Rock of Offense (as also a gin and a snare) to the rebellious and disobedient in Jerusalem and in all Israel. They shall stumble and fall because of him; they shall take offense because of his teachings and be condemned and broken and snared and taken for rejecting them” (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 3 vols. [1971–73], 3:292–93).

Once again with dualism, Immanuel is the New Jerusalem. We have already learned in previous chapters that Joseph Smith must return. These verses once again clarify the marvelous work and a wonder spoken of in 1 Nephi 14:7 “which shall be everlasting either on the one hand or the

other.” McConkie says that the teachings will be the cause of the people stumbling. We have identified in previous chapters that one of these teachings will be that of plural marriage.

16 Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.

17 And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.

To bind up your testimony is to have your testimony turned to knowledge. This is referred to as “the more sure word of prophecy” and is explained in the Book of Mormon:

Alma 32:34

34 And now, behold, is your knowledge perfect? Yea, your knowledge is perfect in that thing, and your faith is dormant; and this because you know, for ye know that the word hath swelled your souls, and ye also know that it hath sprouted up, that your understanding doth begin to be enlightened, and your mind doth begin to expand.

Ether 3:19

19 And because of the knowledge of this man he could not be kept from beholding within the veil; and he saw the finger of Jesus, which, when he saw, he fell with fear; for he knew that it was the finger of the Lord; and he had faith no longer, for he knew, nothing doubting.

Jacob 4:12

12 And now, beloved, marvel not that I tell you these things; for why not speak of the atonement of Christ, and attain to a perfect knowledge of him, as to attain to the knowledge of a resurrection and the world to come?

To seal up the law is to have your calling and election made sure. This verse is clearly referring to people seeing the risen Lord, having their faith turned to knowledge and then having their calling and election made sure. This is a reference point to the 144,000 and the Church of the Firstborn in New Jerusalem. The next verse (17) describes the world waiting on the Lord who is hiding his face from the world, waiting for the Lord to “reveal himself.” These two verses together are describing the opening of the seventh seal. In Revelation 7 John sees the 144,000 and the church of the Firstborn have their calling and election made sure (compare to verse 16 above). He then sees after that event the seventh seal being open. John then says “after he had opened the seventh seal there was a silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.” We learn in D&C 77:10 that the events tied to the 144,000 and the church of the firstborn are to occur during the sixth seal. This event in the New Jerusalem opens the seventh seal, at which point in time there is a silence in heaven for about half an hour (the Lord hiding his face). This is explained in D&C 88:95-

95 And there shall be silence in heaven for the space of half an hour; and immediately after shall the curtain of heaven be unfolded, as a scroll is unfolded after it is rolled up, and the face of the Lord shall be unveiled;

Take note of Isaiah's use of poetic language, the Lord "hiding his face" was symbolic of women in this time period veiling their faces. We then learn that the world must wait patiently for the "great and dreadful day of the Lord" in which the Lord will "unveil his face". This event of the Lord unveiling his face for the whole world only occurs at the Great and Dreadful day. An understanding of an ancient veil is important in order to understand what is taking place during this half an hour of silence. When Moses came down from the mount his face shone so brightly from being transfigured and being in the presence of the Lord that it physically hurt the children of Israel's eyes. The veil placed over Moses' face to protect the people, not to protect Moses.

*An interesting side note is that women in the church used to wear veils over their faces in the temple- this was done for a similar purpose to that of Moses- women's spiritual power was so impressive/emanating that veils were put over their face to protect the men in their presence, not to protect or hide the women. The women in the church today no longer need these veils. People view this as a sign of progression when in reality it is a sign of regression, a losing of spiritual power of women in the church today. *

In like fashion, there needs to be a veil of some degree placed over the Savior so that the world can be in his presence without dying. Will the world be in his presence? Yes, at the event in New Jerusalem. Will the world know of it? No. The Lord comes to claim his kingdom and dwell on the Earth with his saints in the New Jerusalem without the knowledge of the world. Brigham Young said about this time period that the world will think that the only reason why New Jerusalem is succeeding is because of the cunning of wise men. The only way the Lord can live on the earth at this time is to have his power, his face veiled. There is then a space of half an hour in heaven before the Lord unveils his face for the whole earth. The effects of the Lord unveiling his face will cause the very elements to melt and anything of telestial glory or lower will be utterly destroyed. An interpretation of the silence in heaven is: the reason there is no voice coming from heaven is because the voice from heaven (the Savior) is on the earth.

18 Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of Hosts, which dwelleth in Mount Zion.

(13-50) Isaiah 8:18. "I and the Children Whom the Lord Hath Given Me Are for Signs and for Wonders in Israel"

The name Isaiah means "Jehovah saves." The names of his two known sons, Shear-jashub (Isaiah 7:3) and Maher-shalal-hash-baz (Isaiah 8:1), also convey a message to the people in Judah. (See Notes and Commentary on Isaiah 7:3; 8:1-4.) Whenever anyone saw or heard Isaiah and his sons, he was given a message through their names, which were a sign or witness against the people.

The duality of this is Judah to Ephraim. The signs of Isaiah were to Judah and in the last days the signs from the prophet will be to Ephraim and the signs to Ephraim will be the names of Isaiah's sons in reality. The remnant shall return, God will be among us, and Jehovah will save and deliver us from our enemies.

19 And when they shall say unto you: Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and mutter—should not a people seek unto their God for the living to hear from the dead?

20 To the law and to the testimony; and if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

21 And they shall pass through it hardly bestead and hungry; and it shall come to pass that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward.

22 And they shall look unto the earth and behold trouble, and darkness, dimness of anguish, and shall be driven to darkness.

(13-51) Isaiah 8:19. Warning against Familiar Spirits, Peepers, and Mutterers

The expression “familiar spirits” is not an accurate term to convey the significance of the Hebrew term used anciently. The Hebrew word ‘ob means “a leather bottle or bag” (see William Gesenius, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, p. 15). This object was used by the practitioners of necromancy, a deceptive craft of pretended communication with the dead. The art involved a kind of ventriloquism wherein the voice or message of the “departed spirits” was called forth from the bag or sometimes a pit. (See G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, 1:131, 133–34.) The peeping (chirping) and muttering (twittering) somewhat like birds was intended to invoke the departed spirits or to convey the pretended message (see Young, *Book of Isaiah*, 1:318). The Lord warned Israel and Judah of such deceptions early in their history (see Leviticus 19:31; 20:27; Deuteronomy 18:10–11). President Joseph Fielding Smith in commenting on these ancient practices gave this warning that applies even today:

“To seek for information through ... any way contrary to the instruction the Lord has given is a sin. The Lord gave positive instruction to Israel when they were in the land of their inheritance that they were to go to him for revelation and to avoid the devices prevalent among the heathen nations who occupied their lands. ...

“All through the Bible, the New Testament as well as the Old, the Lord and his prophets have expressed their displeasure when the people turned from the Lord to ‘familiar spirits.’” (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, 4:33.)

When Moses’s staff turned into a serpent then Pharaoh’s “spiritualists” mimicked the result to a lesser degree. Moses’ serpent ate Pharaoh’s serpents. Satan is the great imitator, the great mimicker, the great deceiver. When Joseph Smith is resurrected, Satan will seek to mimic it with “necromancy.” This necromancer is an Anti-Christ. When the Lord says, “cling unto the law and to the testimony” we know that “the law will go forth from New Jerusalem and the word from Old Jerusalem.” We know that the testimony is the 144,000 whose job it is to “bring people into the Church of the Firstborn.” In contrast, those who do not cling to the law and testimony will be hard pressed and oppressed, hungry and driven to darkness.