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Mighty Floodwaters: The King of Assyria

8: 5-10

Mighty floodwaters: the king of Assyria DIG: What do the waters of Shiloah in Jerusalem and the River Euphrates in Assyria represent? What then is the meaning of Judah rejecting Shiloah and rejoicing over Rezin (see 7:1), resulting in a sweeping flood? Why does Judah prefer Assyrian help over God's as they face this crisis (see Second Kings 16:7-9)? Why would idolatry lead to destructive political alliances? Is O Immanuel a cry of *despair* or *hope*? Why? What is the prophet's hope for Judah, even as he considered the coming siege from Assyria (see Chapters 36-37)? To whom is this prophecy addressed? Why? What is different about the way God with us is written here than the other times in the Book of Immanuel? Why is it different? What did it mean to Judah?

REFLECT: How has the LORD been like a gently flowing stream to you? When has your choice of allies resulted in a flood of overwhelming trouble? When has the LORD stopped the flood of your wrong choices from overwhelming you? What *Rezins* and *rivers* do people today flee from? Which ones affect you? What intrigue do you have in your life today? Do you thrive on activity or do you like serenity? But regardless of the busyness or quietness of your life, where is your resting place? Can you look back on your life and remember a time when you can say that God was with you in the midst of your troubles?

The same sign of **Maher-Shala-Hash-Baz (8:1)** that was a testimony of **ADONAI'S** faithfulness was also a sign of destruction to those who did not believe **(7:18-25)**. **He** disciplines those **He** loves. As Solomon wrote: **My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline and do not resent His rebuke, because the LORD disciplines those He loves, as a father the son he delights in (Proverbs 3:11-12; Hebrews 12:6)**. The more of **God's** revelation we receive, the more responsibility we have to obey it. Of all people, **Judah** should have known that. So **Judah** who delighted over the destruction of **her** enemies learned, to **her** dismay, that **Maher-Shala-Hash-Baz** applied to **her** as well.

The LORD spoke to Isaiah again, saying: This people has rejected the gently flowing waters of Shiloah (8:5-6a). This people is an expression used of Judah, in 28:14 for

example, but it refers to a foreign power in **23:13**, and to Isra'el in **9:16**. The context must decide the interpretation. **Because** the **Assyrian** domination of Isra'el in **Chapters 6** and **7** foreshadows its domination of **Judah** in **Chapter 8**, the natural sequence refers to **Judah**. The **people** of the southern kingdom are condemned for rejecting **the gently flowing waters of Shiloah**. Those **waters** were a spring that fed into the pool of Shalom, within **Jerusalem's** walls. It was a very smooth **flowing**, quiet stream. **Shiloah** was **Jerusalem's** water supply until the time of King Hezekiah (**Second Kings 20:20; Second Chronicles 32:30**). It came into **Jerusalem** from the Gihon Spring. Gihon was the site of King David's coronations (**First Kings 1:33-34** and **45**).

And when **the people** of **Judah** saw the destruction of Syria with its king **Rezin**, **and the** downfall of the northern kingdom of Isra'el with its leader Pekah, the **son of king Remaliah**, **they** rejoiced (**8:6b**). Of all people, **they** should have known better. Solomon had written: **Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when he stumbles, do not let your heart rejoice, or the LORD will see and disapprove (Proverbs 24:17-18a)**. But **Judah** did not heed the words of **ADONAI**, and rejoiced at their defeat at the hands of **Assyria**.

Therefore there were consequences. In light of **Judah's** choices, **ADONAI** was about to act. **Isaiah** prophesied: **The LORD** was **about to bring against them the mighty floodwaters of the Euphrates River**, which ran through **Assyria**. In other words, **God** would **bring against them the king of Assyria with all his pomp (8:7a)** In the *doctrine of the remnant* there is a contrast between noisiness and quietness. The quiet **flowing waters of Shiloah** that would save them are contrasted with **the noisy floodwaters** that would destroy the **people** of **Judah**. Whenever a flood is pictured in the Bible symbolically, it always refers to an army. Instead of trusting **ADONAI**, they trusted **the Assyrians**. Sometimes you need to be careful about what you ask for because you just might get it. **Judah's** payment for placing **her** trust in **Assyria** was **the mighty** vengeance of **the Assyrians**.

God's judgment would eventually come to **Assyria (10:5-15)** because it was not outside **His** rule. The **floodwaters** only go where **He** directs **them (8:8a)** and to the extent that **He** allows **them (8:8b)**. Consequently **Assyria** would not stop its advance when it fulfilled promises made to **Ahaz** to end the northern threat (**Second Kings 16:7-9**), but would then attack **Judah** also. This, and later behavior (**Second Kings 18:13-25**), gave **Assyria** a deserved reputation that **Isaiah** would never forget (**33:1**).



These **mighty floodwaters will overflow all its channels, run over all its banks and sweep on into Judah (8:7b-8:8a)**. And because they rejoiced so readily over the fall of Syria and Isra'el (in fulfillment of the prophecy of **Isaiah** in **Chapter 7**), **Assyria** would **sweep on into Judah, swirling through it and reaching up to the neck (8:8b)**. Even though **Assyria** was able to overrun 46 fortified cities, they would fail to take **Jerusalem**, the head of the nation. **Isaiah** then changes figures of speech and pictures **Assyria** as a giant bird whose **wings** will **cover** the entire **land**.

Its outspread wings refer to the extending **floodwaters** that **will cover the breadth of the land of Judah**. However, **the floodwaters** do not cover the head and drown the victim, and the bird of prey looms but does not kill. It was as if **ADONAI** had said, "This far, but no further." The final blow against **Judah (6:11-13)** would come from Babylon as seen in the book of **Jeremiah**, not **Assyria**. But in the final analysis, **Judah** would be saved. Why? Because she was so wise or powerful? No, because of **Immanuel**.

Your Land, O Immanuel (8:8d). This message was given to **Immanuel** (*God [is] with us*). **Isaiah** had used that word (**7:14**) when **he** told **Ahaz** that **a boy**, soon to be born, would be **a sign** that **the nation** would not perish at the hands of Syria and **Isra'el**. Now **the Assyrians** would try to destroy the land of **Judah**.

Ultimately, **Immanuel** owned the **Land** and was **the One Assyria** attacked. Therefore, the word of **Immanuel** assured **His** hearers that **He** had not forgotten **His** covenant people and would be with **them**. Sin always takes us further than we want to go and costs us more than we wanted to pay, and that was certainly the case with **Judah**. **She** made a deal with the devil, and **Assyria** almost destroyed **her**. **Ahaz** thought **he** could use **Assyria** for **his** own ends. That sounds like us doesn't it? We think we can control our favorite sin, which, if left unchecked, only comes back to ravage us. Just like **Judah**.

Throughout **Isaiah's** ministry **Judah** was threatened by superior powers and here, under the influence of **the Ruach ha-Kodesh**, **he** meditates on the fact that where **the LORD** is, there is security. We are reminded of **Psalm 46:7** that affirms: **the LORD of heaven's armies is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.**

The tone shifts dramatically in these verses. It seems like the thought of **Assyria** in **Immanuel's Land** had changed his perspective. **He** saw beyond **Judah's near historical** defeat to **the far eschatological** victory. Yes, at that time **she** might be the pawn of the Gentile **nations**, **her** sins may have driven **her** further into **their** web of deceit than **she** realized. In the final analysis, however, all their plots and schemes would only align themselves with **God's** will.

Therefore, this is a message to the **nations**. In the TaNaKh, whenever the word **nations** is used, it always means Gentile **nations**. These nations are in **distant lands**. **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 (8:9)!** The Hebrew word **be shattered** is a second imperative and often expresses an outcome that it is inevitable. For emphasis, this verse stresses the unavoidable three different times. It is a warning that *any* conspiracy to do away with the House of David **will be thwarted**. Yes, **Judah** was the pawn of other **nations**. **Her** sins had plunged **her** into the midst of their plotting schemes. But **Isaiah** warned: **Devise your strategy, but it will be thwarted; propose your plan, but it will not stand (8:10a)**. When all was said and done, all **their** plots would **not stand**. Even though **they** might **raise the war cry**, it wouldn't matter. **They** could make all the noise **they** wanted (again we see the contrast between noisiness and quietness regarding the believing remnant), but all **their** efforts would not succeed because of the promise made regarding **Immanuel** and the prophecy contained in **7:14**.

Why will the plotting schemes not succeed? Because the House of David could not be reduced to a point of insignificance until the birth of **the virgin-born Son, the stump of Jesse. A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit (to see link click [Dc - A Shoot Will Come Up From the Stump of Jesse](#))**. The point is that not until the glorious House of David is reduced to what it was in **Jesse's** day, nothing but a cut down **stump**, will **the Messiah** appear. At that point the Davidic dynasty had lost its power and glory.

So the great truth of **Chapters 7-9** is that because of **Immanuel**, **God** was **with Judah**. That great truth separated **Judah** from all other nations in the world. Because **God** has

promised to be **with His people**, they were to have faith in **Him** no matter how bad **their** circumstances. **He** would not desert **them**. Therefore, the **nations** would not succeed because **God** was **with Judah**. This is the third time **God with us** is mentioned (**7:14, 8:8** and **8:10b**) in the Book of **Immanuel (7:1 to 12:6)**, but this time the word is written: **God is with us**.

It is hard to overstress the significance that **God is with us**. The world seeks to be **with God**. The Biblical view, however, reverses the process. **God** is distinct from **His** world. This means that it is impossible for people to find **God** on their own. **He** had to take the first step and come to us through **Yeshua Messiah**, thus bringing us into fellowship with **Himself (John 3:13, Romans 10:6, Second Corinthians 4:6, Colossians 1:15-20)**.

The LORD had promised to be **with His** people, but many in both **Isra'el** and **Judah** refused to believe **He** would keep **His** promise. I am sure that there were times, with the enemy bearing down on them, that **Judah** did not *feel* that **God** was with **them**. But **He** was. What does it mean when we say **God is with us**? Does it mean that everything is going to turn out well for us? No, it doesn't. To confirm that all we have to do is remember the Babylonian Captivity (see the commentary on [Jeremiah Gu - Seventy Years of Imperial Babylonian Rule](#)), the destruction of **Jerusalem** (see the commentary on [The Life of Christ Mt - The Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple on Tisha B'Av in 70 AD](#)), or the Holocaust. **Indeed, all who want to live a godly life united with the Messiah Yeshua will be persecuted (Second Timothy 3:12 CJB)**. What it does mean is that **God is with us** in the midst of our troubles.

We have just as much controversy, intrigue, rumors, and turmoil as **Isaiah** did in his day, and **the LORD** continues to be our secret of contentment today. When we choose **God** as our sanctuary rather than our stumbling block, then we can truly rest in the safety of **Immanuel**. **He** is still with us today.