

Notes

The Sign of Maher-shalal-hash-baz (8:1–22)

- During the Syro-Ephraimite crisis, Ahaz turned to Assyria for help - a foolish decision with grave consequences. His failure to trust God raises an important question: where do we look when fear rises?

1. The Sign of Maher-shalal-hash-baz – God’s Word Stands (8:1–4)

- God told Isaiah to write the name Maher-shalal-hash-baz, meaning: “Swift to the spoil, speedy to the prey.” This name announced the coming defeat of Syria and Israel by Assyria. Important details:
 - *“A great roll”* – a large public tablet so everyone could see it.
 - *“With a man’s pen”* – written clearly so the message could not be misunderstood. God publicly declared what was about to happen.
 - *“Faithful witnesses”* – Uriah (2 Kgs 16:10-16) and Zechariah (2 Kgs 18:2??) would document and verify the prophecy (Deut 19:15).

History would simply unfold according to God’s Word.

- Isaiah’s wife, called “the prophetess,” conceived and bore a son. Isaiah’s son was given the name Maher-shalal-hash-baz as a living sign. God said that before the child could say “my father” or “my mother,” Assyria would plunder Damascus and Samaria. History confirmed this prophecy:
 - Damascus fell in 732 BC and Rezin was killed (2 Kings 16:9).
 - Pekah of Israel was assassinated (2 Kings 15:30).
 - Assyria carried away their wealth as spoils.

God’s Word is certain. When God speaks, history obeys.

- Isaiah’s children symbolized God’s message:
 - Shear-jashub - “A remnant shall return” – a promise of covenant mercy.
 - Maher-shalal-hash-baz - “Swift to the spoil, speedy to the prey” - a warning of covenant discipline.

God disciplines His people, but He never abandons His covenant.

2. The Rising Flood of Assyria – God Governs History (8:5–10)

- Isaiah compares two waters to expose Judah’s misplaced trust:
 - The Quiet Waters of Shiloah - The waters of Shiloah flowed quietly through Jerusalem, channelled from the Gihon Spring in the Kidron Valley. These quiet waters symbolized: God’s gentle rule; His faithful provision; and His covenant protection. God’s ways often appear quiet and require faith. But Judah rejected these quiet waters because they preferred a political alliance with Assyria. Their problem was unbelief.

- The Overwhelming River of Assyria - The Euphrates was massive, powerful, and capable of devastating floods. Because Judah rejected God's quiet help, God allowed Assyria to become a flood that would sweep through the land.

- o Overflow its channels - Assyria would not respect borders.
- o Sweep into Judah – the invasion would extend into Judah.
- o Rise "even to the neck" - Judah would barely survive.

This prophecy was fulfilled in 701 BC when Assyria invaded & captured many fortified cities of Judah, yet Jerusalem was spared (2 Kgs 18:13). Assyria is pictured as a raging flood & a spreading wing. Yet it was not acting independently; it was God's instrument of judgment.

- Isaiah reminded the people: "*O Immanuel... God with us*" (cf 7:14). Even in judgment, God had not abandoned His people. Remarkably, Isaiah calls Judah "Immanuel's land." The land ultimately belongs not to Ahaz, nor to Assyria, but to the LORD - and to the promised Messiah.
- The surrounding nations may form alliances, prepare for war and devise strategies. Yet their plans will ultimately fail. No confederacy can overturn God's decree. No strategy can nullify His sovereign will (Prov 19:21). History is not driven by empires - it is governed by Immanuel. Trust the quiet ways of God. God remains sovereign over history. Immanuel is our anchor.

3. A Call to Fear the LORD – God Alone Must Be Feared (8:11–15)

- As national anxiety spread, Isaiah received a solemn charge: Do not walk in the way of the people. Judah had become obsessed with conspiracies, alliances, and political intrigue. God said:
 - Do not call everything a conspiracy.
 - Do not fear what they fear.
 - Do not live in dread.
 Instead of being swept along by public panic, God's people must anchor themselves in the sovereignty of God. Isaiah says, "Fear God." God's people must fear Him alone, and refuse to be governed by panic.
- The solution to misplaced fear is not self-confidence but reverence for God. "*Sanctify the LORD... let Him be your fear.*" Whoever you fear most will control you. The object of your deepest fear will shape your obedience.
 - Fear people → compromise
 - Fear circumstances → anxiety
 - Fear God → courage

- Depending on the response of the heart, the same God produces opposite outcomes:

- A sanctuary for those who trust Him.
- A stumbling stone for those who reject Him.

The imagery ultimately points to Jesus Christ (Matt 21:44; Rom 9:32-33; 1 Peter 2:8). The same Rock produces opposite results (1 Cor 1:18). Christ is either our sanctuary of salvation or a stumbling stone of judgment. There is no neutral response.

4. The Centrality of God's Word – God's Word Is Our Light (8:16–22)

- As darkness deepens, Isaiah commits himself to preserving God's Word: "*Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.*" Even when the nation rejects God's message, faithful believers must hold firmly to Scripture.
- Isaiah declares: "*I will wait upon the LORD.*" Waiting means trusting God instead of panicking. It implies attentiveness - like a servant alert for his master's command. Waiting for the LORD expresses deep trust in His plan and timing - even when circumstances appear dire (Ps 27:14).
- Isaiah and his children were living signs:
 - Isaiah – "Salvation is of the LORD" (hope).
 - Shear-jashub – "A remnant shall return" (mercy).
 - Maher-shalal-hash-baz – "Swift judgment" (judgment).
 Their lives proclaimed God's message. Truth is not only proclaimed with lips; it is also displayed in lives (cf Heb 2:13).
- Fear drove the people to seek help from mediums and spiritists. Isaiah exposes the absurdity of seeking the dead when the living God has spoken: "*Should not a people seek unto their God? For the living to the dead?*" Spiritual curiosity outside God's revelation leads to deception. Instead, the Bible directs believers to seek God Himself through His Word: "*To the law and to the testimony.*" Every spiritual teaching must be tested by God's Word. If a message contradicts Scripture, it has no light (1 John 4:1; 1 Thess 5:21). God's Word is sufficient and authoritative for our faith and practice. Those who reject God's Word are plunged into darkness.
- When fear rises and darkness spreads, remember: God governs history. God alone must be feared. God's Word stands and is our light. History is not controlled by empires, alliances, or crises. History is governed by Immanuel - God with us. To the Law and to the Testimony!