

The Prophetic Message Yesha'yahu 8:11-23

In my last post, we learned more about **The Assyrian Invasion** of **Y'hudah** in **Yesha'yahu 8:1-10**. In this post, we learn about **Y'hudah's** response to **The Prophetic Message** in **Yesha'yahu 8:11-23**.

11 For this is what Adonai said to me, speaking with a strong hand, warning me not to live the way this people does:

God spoke to **Yesha'yahu** (*me*), so he would not conform to the world's beliefs. Rabbi **Sha'ul** instructs us to ***not let yourselves be conformed to the standards of the 'olam hazeh. Instead, keep letting yourselves be transformed by the renewing of your minds; so that you will know what God wants and will agree that what he wants is good, satisfying and able to succeed.*** ~ Romans 12:2 (CJB)

12 "Don't regard as alliance what this people calls alliance, and don't fear what they fear or be awestruck by it;

The **alliance** may refer to the partnership between **Aram** (Syria) and the northern kingdom of **Isra'el** against **Y'hudah** or perhaps a secret cooperation against the pro-Assyrian party of **Achaz**. Whatever the exact alliance in view, the point was that **Yesha'yahu** must not be afraid like the people were.

13 but Adonai-Tzva'ot - consecrate him! Let him be the object of your fear and awe!

The fear of God [here called the God of Heaven's Armies] overshadows all other concerns (see Luke 12:5). The reason **Yesha'yahu** and others must not fear threatening alliances is that God is the only One who should be feared. There is a difference in the quality of the two fears described in these verses. The fear of human beings may be defined as terror (v. 12), while the fear of **Adonai-Tzva'ot** is described as awe.

14 He is there to be a sanctuary. But for both the houses of Isra'el he will be a stone to stumble over, a rock obstructing their way; a trap and a snare for the inhabitants of Yerushalayim.

The sanctuary image highlights God's holiness and suggests that He protects His people, but because they have rejected Him, the people of **Y'hudah** will experience Him as a stumbling stone.

The trap and snare are used for hunting birds and small animals. This provides a fascinating image of what God thinks of this rebellious people.

Who shall be our sanctuary? **Yeshua**. If you come to Him, you'll find a place of safety. If you turn from Him, you'll only stumble and fall.

15 Many of them will stumble and fall, be broken and trapped and captured. 16 "Wrap up this document and confine its teaching to those I have instructed."

Scrolls could be sealed either by tying a string around them and sealing the knot with clay or by placing them in a jar and sealing the cover. The clay or the seal around the lid would be impressed with the owner's seal. The seals were intended to ensure the integrity of the contents. They warned against tampering and, if intact, attested to the authenticity of the document.

17 I will wait for Adonai, who is hiding his face from the house of Ya'akov; yes, I will look for him.

Because of their sin, God will withdraw His saving presence (hiding His face) from His people (the house of **Ya'akov**). The faithful, represented by **Yesha'yahu**, will wait for His sure return.

18 Meanwhile, I and the children whom Adonai has given me will become for Isra'el signs and wonders from Adonai-Tzva'ot living on Mount Tziyon.

The children who are signs and wonders are **Sh'ar Yashuv** (7:3) and **Maher Shalal Hash Baz** (8:1).

19 So when they tell you to consult those squeaking, squawking mediums and fortune-tellers; [you are to answer], "Shouldn't a people seek their God? Must the living ask the dead²⁰ for teaching and instruction?" For they will indeed give you this unenlightened suggestion.

Because of the well-developed ancestor cult permeating much of the ancient Near East, the dead were considered to have some power to affect the living. It was believed that if libations were poured out on behalf of the deceased ancestors, their spirits would then offer protection and help to those still living. ¹

Yesha'yahu realized that things would be coming down in the northern tribes. So, he gathered his talmidim together and said, *"I will seek the Lord's face and spend time in His Word. As for you, when others tell you to listen to the astrologers, wizards, or channelers, turn instead to the Word alone."*

21 Distressed and hungry they will pass through the land, and because of their hunger they will grow angry and curse by their king and by their God. But whether they look up [to God]²² or [down] at the earth, they will see only trouble and darkness, anguished gloom and pervasive darkness.

Those who look for a new light, a new age, a new way or a new green deal will find only the old darkness and despair. **Yesha'yahu** contrasts his counsel with that of his ungodly contemporaries. **Yesha'yahu's** message gives light, whereas the message of the spiritists led to darkness and death.

1 But there will be no more gloom for those who are now in anguish. In the past the land of Z'vulun and the land of Naftali were regarded lightly; but in the future, he will honor the way to the lake, beyond the Yarden, Galil-of-the-Goyim. ~ Yesha'yahu 8:11-9:1 (CJB)²

In my next blog, we learn of the Future Hope in **Yesha'yahu 9:1-7**.

¹ Bible Background Commentary - The IVP Bible Background Commentary – Old Testament.

² Verse 9:1 is actually 8:23 in the Jewish Bible. I will save a discussion on that verse until the next post.