WHAT ARE YOU RELYING ON?

**DATE: 2/15; 3/1/2017 Wed.**

**TEXT: Isaiah 8**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Ill.** The story is told about a dear, saintly old woman who was gradually losing her memory. Details began to blur. Throughout her life, however, this woman had cherished and depended on the Word of God, committing to memory, many verses from her worn and tattered Bible.

Her favorite verse had always **been II Timothy 1:12 – *“For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day”*** She was finally confined to bed in a nursing home, and her family knew she would never leave alive. As they visited with her, she would still quote verses of Scripture on occasion—especially **II Timothy 1:12**. But with the passing of time, even parts of this well-loved verse began to slip away. ***“I know whom I have believed,”*** she would say. ***“He is able to keep ... what I have committed ... to Him.”*** Her voice grew weaker. And the verse became even shorter. ***“What I have committed ... to Him”***

As she was dying, her voice became so faint, family members had to bend over to listen to the few whispered words on her lips. And at the end, there was only one word of her life verse left. ***“Him”*** She whispered it again and again as she stood on the threshold of Heaven. ***“Him ... Him ... Him”*** He was all that was left. It was all that was needed.

Beloved, do you understand that God is very concerned about where you place your Trust and what you rely on for your Peace, Protection, and Provision?

Do you understand that His desire for you is too implicitly Trust in Him and obey His Word?

That is the issue that is addressed here in this **8th chapter of Isaiah**

The events of this portion of the book of Isaiah will hopefully cause us to take a good look at …

… What /Who we are Truly Relying on in our lives

A number of questions will be raised

-- Are you trusting the Lord with your life?

-- How important are the opinions of the people that don't know the Lord?

-- Do you truly believe God's promises to take care of you?

-- Do you find that you have put your trust in something other than the Lord?

-- Do you live by faith or walk by sight?

-- Have you learned to be patient and wait upon God?

These are important, relevant questions that demand answers and we will try to provide some in this message

What are you Relying on? Where have you placed your Trust?

For many folks, their trust is in other people, their own abilities or schemes, their good works, their money or their jobs

Hopefully, you have put your trust or dependence in the Lord, but if not, then today could be a life-changing day for you

Previous chapters of Isaiah told us that Assyria was on the move and was considered a threat to the region

The northern ten tribes of Israel sought and alliance with King Rezin of Syria to protect them against Assyria

The southern kingdom of Judah placed their trust in the Alliance with Assyria to protect them against Syria and the northern ten tribes

What a mess

These Alliances angered the Lord because the people were not trusting and obeying Him

These Alliances were questionable at best, flimsy and unstable, as we will see

They were not trusting in God

They were trusting in pagan armies and weapons

So God was trying to Warn and to Wake up His people in order to get them to trust in Him by using Isaiah to deliver God's message

Let’s stand to read **vs. 1-10** and then …

**~~~Pray~~~**

First, let’s look at …

**I. THE “CONCERN” – vs. 1-4**

The **Concern** for the coming Judgment against Israel

The prophet commences the chapter by recording the

unusual events surrounding the conception of another son

**A. The Command of the Lord – v. 1**

***“Moreover the LORD said unto me, Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen concerning Maher-shalal-hash-baz”***

God commanded Isaiah to take a great scroll and to write the longest recorded name in the Bible upon it ...

How would you like to have that for a first name?

This name would have significant meaning though, in Isaiah's message to the people

This name has been given several meanings, all basically pointing to the same thing

The name is untranslated and essentially means *swift is booty, speedy is prey*

Others have considered it to mean, *haste ye, haste ye to the spoil*

Still others render the name - *hasten to seize the prey, and to take away the spoil*

The essential meaning is how the Assyrians would hasten to the spoil of Damascus and Samaria

It was a Warning to what was ahead for Israel and for Judah

God was announcing what He was about to do

Two years later, Syria and Samaria would be …

… plundered and taken away into captivity

Thus, this strange name of Isaiah’s next son was a prophecy in itself of the impending doom of the northern kingdom as well as of Syria

These were the two nations of which Ahaz, king of

Judah, was worried about in **chapter 7**

A Good Name means something

**Proverbs 22:1 *– “A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold”***

**B. The Chosen Witnesses – v. 2**

***“And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah”***

Isaiah summoned faithful witnesses to record this name

The word *“****faithful”*** means *reliable* or *credible*

They would be witnesses that the people would listen to when the time was right

**II Corinthians 13:1b –** ***“… In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established”***

**Revelation 1:5 – *“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, …***

***… and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood,”***

We do not know much about Zechariah

We do know he is not the Zechariah that wrote the book of Zechariah

The other witness was a corrupt priest named Uriah

We have info about him in **II Kings 16:10-16**

At the command of the king, Uriah constructed a pagan Assyrian altar and introduced it into the Jewish temple

Then the king offered a sacrifice to pagan gods

This man was the second witness to what Isaiah recorded

Like the Saviour, we need to be Faithful Witnesses

**Acts 1:8 –** ***“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth”***

**Acts 2:32 –*“This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses”***

We are to be Faithful Witnesses to the work of God

**C. The Conception of a Child – vs. 3, 4**

***“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” “For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria”***

The prophetess here is a reference to Isaiah's wife

She conceived and gave birth to a baby boy

The Lord was the One who named the baby

His name was the same name recorded on the tablet ...

Maher-shalal-hash-baz

God was reminding Isaiah again that judgment was coming quickly

Plunder and captivity were on the horizon

Before the baby could say *Mommy and Daddy*

Syria and Samaria would be conquered and plundered by the Assyrian army

That is exactly what happened

Names are important

When God intervened to name a child, that child becomes a walking message

In the New Testament, the Lord told Joseph to name Mary's baby, Jesus

Jesus means *Jehovah is salvation*

He would be the ultimate fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy of the virgin who would give birth to *Emmanuel*, which means *God with us*

When Christ came into the world, God was with us

He was the God-man

When you put your faith in Him, He is with you always

**Hebrews 13:5b – *“…for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”***

The Warning of an Impending Judgement as been given

Trust Jesus or Perish

**John 3:36 *– “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him”***

**THE “CONCERN”**

**II. THE “CONSEQUENCES” – vs. 5-8**

The **Consequences** of Rejecting the Care of God

The Lord continued to speak through Isaiah about the attitude of the nation and the judgment to come

God compared His care of His people to the gentle, flowing stream of Shiloah

These waters came from the spring Gihon and were Jerusalem's source of water which God provided for the city

This stream was a symbol of God's care, of which the people were refusing

The word ***“refuseth”*** is a very intense word

It is a Hebrew word which not only means to *refuse*, but it also means *to despise or reject*

They hated God's care over their lives and rejected Him

This is what happens when people allow sin in their lives

They want to have nothing to do with the Lord (at all)

People get this way because they have become arrogant and rely upon something else to make them happy or secure

To maintain their rebellion and resistance toward God's blessings, they actually become bitter

Their anger and hate fuel their resistance

Notice what Nehemiah and Solomon said about this issue

**Nehemiah 9:26 –** ***“Nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against Thee, and cast Thy Law (Word) behind their backs, and slew Thy prophets which …***

***… testified against them to turn them to Thee, and they wrought great provocations”***

**Proverbs 1:23-32 …**

God's people rejected God and embraced something else for their security

Those who backed the Alliance with Assyria in Judah were thrilled when the army of Assyria conquered Syria and destroyed King Rezin and King Pekah

They felt the Alliance was a smart decision

Assyria, however, would inflict even greater pain upon them

Assyria was compared to a mighty river that would flood and overrun the land, even into the kingdom of Judah

The Assyrians would threaten Judah's existence as well

They would be like flooding waters rising to a person's neck and almost ready to drown

Assyria would spread its wings over the entire land of Judah, inflicting great damage

Others contend that the wings are a reference to God's protection in dire days

We do know this, that, God offered His people peace but in unbelief, they opted for war

They were people who were walking by sight and not by faith because their Reliance was not in the Lord

Big mistake!

Beloved, when you reject God's Care and Leadership, you will invite a variety of complications and problems into your life

If you place your Reliance in something other than the Lord,

Eventually that object will either Dominate you or Disappoint you

Why do people reject the Lord in the first place?

There are several reasons

**A. Man by his Very Nature is Rebellious**

Simply stated rebellion is the defiance or disobedience against authority

People resent authority, especially God’s

They don't like to be told what they can and cannot do

The consequences of rejecting the Lord affect both your physical and spiritual health

They consist of reaping the consequences of wicked thoughts and intense trials

**Jeremiah 6:19 *– “Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto My Words, nor to My Law, but rejected it”***

**B. They Doubt God’s Promises and Power**

At the border of the Promised Land, Israel could not enter because they focused on the size of their enemies instead of the power of God and His promises

For the next 40 years, they wandered in the wilderness

They did not believe God's promises and power to enable them to defeat their enemies

Doubt and unbelief cause people to reject the Lord and His Word today

**Romans 3:3 – *“For (so) what if some did (do) not believe? shall their unbelief make (your) the faith (in) of God without effect?”***

**C. The Wrong Direction**

The nation of Israel eventually rejected God's rule over their nation and wanted a king to rule over them because they wanted to be like the other nations around them

**I Samuel 10:19 –** ***“And ye have this day rejected your God, who Himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto Him, Nay, but set a king over us”***

**D. The Desire for Sinful, Wasteful Living**

People also reject the Lord because they have a greater love for their sin than for Him

The result of such living results in Fear, Panic, and Paranoia

**II Kings 17:15 – *“And they rejected His statutes, and His covenant that He made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the Lord had charged them, that they should not do like them”***

**Isaiah 66:4 – *“I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not”***

**E. Self-Determination**

Some folks reject the Lord because they are determined to live their own way

In spite of the truth that is presented to them, they willfully and deliberately reject Christ

These folks refuse to trust anything about God

They want to live their lives any way they wish with no one telling them what to do and how to live

Their attitude is – *I want NO disruptions*

When Christ removed the demons and sent them into the pigs, He disrupted the lives of the people, who in turn, rejected Him and commanded Him to leave

**Matthew 8:34 – *“And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw Him, they besought Him that He would depart out of their coasts”***

The determination to shut God out of your life and live your own way leads to destruction

**Isaiah 65:12 – *“Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not”***

**Proverbs 14:12 – *“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death”***

**F. Self-Deception**

The deceptions of sinful living causes people to reject the Lord

People believe they won't get hurt or they make light of their sin

They develop habits that eventually enslave them

And causes them to make serious errors in their choices

**Amos 2:4 – *“Thus saith the Lord; For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have despised the law of the Lord, and have not kept His commandments, and their lies caused them to err, after the which their fathers have walked”***

People also reject the Lord because they have deceived themselves into thinking they don't need Him or there is nothing wrong with them

The Jews rejected Christ because they thought they were righteous and had no need for a Saviour

The focus of the gospel then shifted to the Gentiles

**Acts 13:46 – *“Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles”***

**G. The Message of the Cross is Foolish (pride)**

The message of Christ and the cross seems foolish to those who are headed for destruction!

Isaiah prophesied that the Lord would be rejected because He would be considered not important at all

This is why folks reject Him today

Jesus is not important to them

**Isaiah 53:2b, 3 – *“For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him” “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not”***

Notice what Paul says …

**I Corinthians 1:18, 23 – *“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God” “But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;”***

**H. Dissatisfaction**

Dissatisfaction with God's Plan

God's plan was to provide His people with manna in the wilderness

Eventually, they became dissatisfied with God’s provision

They griped and complained and longed for the days in Egypt

Their ungratefulness led to bitterness toward the Lord

**Numbers 11:6 – *“But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes”***

**I. Defects in people’s Lives**

Unfortunately, some folks will reject Jesus Christ because of the sinful or rude behavior of Christians

People watch what we do and how we live

Any flaw or weakness in your life will be magnified in the eyes of people looking for your mistakes

When we are inconsistent, indifferent, immoral, inconsiderate, ill-mannered, intolerable, and impossible to reason with, we flat-out turn people off

They reject the Lord because they reject us

Christians are to be ambassadors for Christ

God uses His people to reach out to others

**II Corinthians 5:20 – *“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God”***

Sad to say, some do a lousy job in representing Him!

We are warned about being a stumbling block to others

**Romans 14:13 – *“Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way”***

**I Corinthians 8:9 – *“But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak”***

**THE “CONCERN”**

**THE “CONSEQUENCES”**

**III. THE “CAUTION” – vs. 9, 10**

The **Cautions** from God to the Other Nations

The focus of Isaiah’s audience now shifts from Judah to her Adversaries

***“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” “Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us”***

The phrase ***“associate yourselves”*** is speaking of the Alliances

The nations of the world that sought to do evil to Judah would be broken into pieces

God warned them - *You better listen to what I am saying to you*

If you get together to attack My people, you will be broken into pieces

God repeats this twice

If you make counsels or scheme for war, your schemes will be thwarted and come to nothing

They will be worthless

Whatever strategies are proposed for the destruction of God's people will not stand

They will not succeed

Whatever orders are issued will not be executed

The nations cannot stand up against the God who has promised to protect his people!

Assyria did try to destroy Judah, but God foiled their plans

Sennacherib's army camped around Jerusalem, certain of victory, but God wiped them out with a single blow in one night as 185,000 soldiers were destroyed by the Lord

**Isaiah 37 …**

Why were their plans foiled?

The answer was the fact that God was with Judah

Immanuel - God is with us

Those are four powerful words

They are words of a person who has made the Lord his Reliance

They are words of Confidence, Conviction, Calm, and Certainty

As a Christian, you can enjoy those traits if you will make the Lord your Reliance

**Psalm 46:1 – *“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble”***

**Proverbs 14:26 – *“In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge”***

Thank the Lord that we can say - God is with us

He is our refuge and strength

In Death, Disease, Danger or Defeat

**Psalm 34:7** tells us that God is with us -

***“The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them”***

**Psalm 16:8** says that God is with us -

***“I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved”***

Thank God, He is with us

God in His Mercy and Grace warned these pagan nations of judgment if they would attempt to destroy His people without His consent

God did use heathen nations throughout the history of Israel to punish His people when they were wayward and wicked

But if these enemies would endeavor to do this without His consent, He would destroy Israel's enemies

We have seen this even in our own day, especially in 1967 when God gave Israel a miraculous victory over the enemies that ganged up against her in the Six Day War

The Lord continues to warn the world today of the wrath to come if people choose to reject Jesus Christ as their Saviour

**Jude 14, 15 –** ***“Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him”***

**Rev. 20:11-15 …**

**II Peter 3:9 – *“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished”***

**CONCLUSION**

**THE “CONCERN”**

**THE “CONSEQUENCES”**

**THE “CAUTION”**