

To the Law and to the Testimony

Isaiah 8:1-22

Halifax: 10 May 2009

Introduction:

- Last week we saw how Ahaz, the King of Judah,
 - was trembling and distressed because Ephraim and Syria had conspired against him and wanted to set up their own king in Judah.
 - Because Ahaz did not serve God, he decided to look to Assyria for help.
- As he began to do this,
 - the LORD sent Isaiah the prophet to him and to tell him that the LORD was finished with Syria and Ephraim...
 - That they were like two sticks on a fire that were now nothing but stumps.
 - Isaiah told Ahaz that they and their threats would amount to nothing.
- And the LORD offered Ahaz a sign—anything he wanted—to confirm the word that Isaiah had spoken.
 - Isaiah had not been a prophet for all that long, so God offered a sign to confirm the word that Isaiah had spoken.
 - But you will remember that Ahaz’ response showed that his problem was not a lack of evidence that God would do what He had spoken...
 - but rather that he did not want to serve the Lord—
 - Ahaz refused to ask for a sign!
- This resulted in a sharp rebuke in which Isaiah accused Ahaz of making God Himself weary—and refused to any longer refer to God as His God!
 - Isaiah told him that Assyria, the very nation he was trusting in to save him—would end up nearly destroying all of Judah...
 - And though Ahaz refused a sign, Isaiah told him that the LORD would give a sign anyway—
 - It would not be so much a sign that Ephraim and Syria would be destroyed, but a sign that God would still accomplish His purposes concerning His people (despite the wickedness of Ahaz).
 - He told Ahaz that a virgin would conceive and bear a son and would call His name Immanuel which means “God with us.”
 - This showed that even though Ahaz, the son of David, was cut off,

- God would still keep His promise to the house of David and the remnant of Judah so as to bring His salvation to them.
- This sign was not for Ahaz' sake, but for the people who were still trusting in the Lord.
 - Through all the dark days that were to follow, it was for them to keep on trusting the LORD.
 - He would not forget His plan to save them.
 - God Himself would be with them as He had promised from of old—and He would be with them in this child that would be born.

And so I encouraged you to keep on trusting in the LORD through dark times because God is with us—Immanuel—Jesus Christ Himself abides with us forever.

- We see our society more and more casting off the law of God—
 - rejecting the Sabbath, murdering the unborn, refusing to punish offenders and defend the righteous, approving all sorts of immorality and wickedness...
 - And we see the church giving up the word of God for a man-made gospel, turning to idols, winking at sin, denying our desperate need of salvation from sin...
- But no matter what happens in our society or even in the visible church,
 - it is for us to continue trusting the LORD—holding on to Immanuel—God with us forever and ever.
 - Though we be few—even very few—it is for us to have confidence in Him forever.

And today in Isaiah 8, we see how God goes out of His way to bring this message of hope in Immanuel to His people...

- Isaiah's meeting with Ahaz was not a public meeting—
 - but in Isaiah 8, we see that God sends forth His word to all the people so that they can know about the promise of Immanuel.
 - He presents Christ to them in His Word, even as He presents Christ to us in His Word, so that we might trust in Him through the dark times.
- We shall see in this chapter...
 - First, how the LORD graciously brings His Word to us...
 - Second, how He graciously binds and seals His Word to us...
 - And third, how He warns us about casting off His Word.
- Let us look at each of these points in order.

I. First, see how the LORD graciously brings His Word to you...

- He makes it accessible, He makes it plain, and He makes it sure...
 - He might have left us to go about guessing—
 - uncertain as to what He thinks of us and about what He will do concerning us.
 - He is under no obligation to tell us anything, especially now that we are fallen into sin and rebellion...
 - You should never think that He is under some kind of obligation to communicate with you...
 - But He does—and here we see that He does.
 - He makes the word accessible, plain and sure to all who are in the visible Church—and in a way to the whole world.

A. First, see how He makes it accessible...

1. As I mentioned in the introduction, most of the people were not present when God met with Ahaz—
 - but here you see that God makes His word accessible to all the people...
 - a. He commands Isaiah to get a big scroll—
 - the word actually refers to any kind of large writing surface...
 - and write the words, “Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz” on it.
 - I will tell you what these words mean in just a minute...
 - b. But I want you to see that this was a very public communication... something that was done before witnesses...
 - You see in verse 2 that faithful witnesses were called to attest that Isaiah the prophet had written these words...
 - It was something along the lines of a bill-board posted in the public square for all to see.
 - It may have been at the temple gates.
2. We cannot miss the fact that in our day, God has called for the public reading and proclamation of His Word...
 - He has called us to make the word known to the people around us and to our children...
 - We are to tell them of the great things that God has done for us.
 - We are to tell them of that most public act in which God had His Son lifted up to bear the sins of His people in all the world...

- And how He raised Him for our justification and publicly presented Him as the one and only sacrifice to satisfy divine justice!
 - He has called us to proclaim the word to every nation...
 - And He, in His providence, sends forth His church with the word, translating it into the language of the people all over the world.
 - The sound of His word has gone out into all the earth!
3. And my friends, this precious Word is accessible to you...
- a. You have the precious Word of God in your own language...
 - You have your Bibles...
 - You have it explained from the pulpit...
 - It is accessible to you and how thankful you should be, for without it, you would have no access to God.
 - In His kindness, He has brought His word near to you so that you might know Him.
 - b. How eager you should be to receive this word!
 - It is God's Word!
 - It tells you the will of God...
 - It is the Word of life...
 - God has brought it near to you—receive it with gladness!

B. And not only is it accessible—it is also plain...

- 1. Isaiah was to write the words “Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz” on this big board...
 - These words were in the language of the people and simply meant,
 - “Speed to the spoil, hasten to the booty.”
 - And you can see in verse 3-4 that Isaiah is given a son and the son is given the name “Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz.”
 - along with a clear explanation of what this name means.
 - In verse 4 the Lord says:
 - Isa 8:4: for before the child shall have knowledge to cry ‘My father’ and ‘My mother,’ the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be taken away before the king of Assyria.
 - God is telling the people on no uncertain terms that before this little child can even say mommy and daddy,
 - the two nations that Ahaz was so afraid of—

- Syria and Ephraim—would be conquered and plundered by the Assyrians.
- He calls them Damascus and Samaria because Damascus was the capital of Syria and Samaria was the capital of Ephraim...
 - but the point is, these two nations that Ahaz was so afraid of will be destroyed in less than two years...
 - Assyria is going to “speed to the spoil” and “hasten to the booty” before this little child can even say mommy and daddy!

TRANS> No one needed to doubt what was being said here!

- The message was plain!
2. And so is God’s message for the nations of a Saviour crucified and risen again.
- God has made the message plain...
 - Whoever repents and believes in Him will have eternal life.
 - Nothing about the message itself is complicated or difficult to understand...
 - It is more that people do not want to see than that they cannot see...
 - They do not want to see that they are sinners who must depend on a Saviour if they are to be saved.
 - The message is clear, but they do not want to be saved...
 - They do not want to be restored to the service of God...
 - They want to continue in their rebellion—or in the pride that they can please God without a Saviour.
 - My friends, do not pretend that God’s word is complicated...
 - It is quite easy to understand if you will humble yourself and look to be reconciled...
 - If you seek Him, you will have no problem understanding...
 - He has made the message very plain...
 - do not try to complicate it and make it obscure—rather receive it and believe it and practice it.
 - And speak it to others in its simplicity.
 - For God will be very displeased with you if you muddy it up for others.

TRANS> So you see that the message is both accessible and plain...it is a message for the people...

- C. And next I want you to see that God also makes the message sure.
1. Here, perhaps, as much as anything, the LORD was affirming to the people that Isaiah was his prophet...
 - a. The LORD knew that most of the people would not believe Isaiah when he declared how quickly Syria and Ephraim would be destroyed...
 - You will remember that Judah had already suffered much at the hands of these two nations—
 - Syria had taken away 200,000 captives from Judah,
 - And Ephraim had slaughtered 120,000 fighting men of Judah on the battlefield.
 - It was hard for the people to believe that in less than two years, these nations would be despoiled.
 - b. So everything is done to make certain that everybody can remember that Isaiah had prophesied this destruction beforehand...
 - There is the public billboard with the words Maher–Shalal–Hash–Baz plainly imprinted and with credible witnesses attesting that Isaiah had written this before the fact...
 - And there is Isaiah’s son who was already named Maher–Shalal–Hash–Baz so that he would be a standing testimony that Isaiah had spoken these words beforehand when they were fulfilled...
 - c. The purpose was to get the people to recognise that Isaiah was a true prophet who spoke the word of God so they would listen to him in the future...
 - so they would know that what he spoke was true and sure.
 - so they would know that it was certain of fulfillment.
 2. God has always been pleased to affirm those who speak His Word to His people...
 - He never has asked expected his people to believe every prophet that comes along, but rather to test them—to see if they are of God.
 - a. You will remember how He gave Moses many signs so that the people would trust what he said...
 - how he was given the rod that turned into a serpent and the sign of the withered hand...
 - And then the 10 plagues that occurred exactly as he spoke,
 - and then the parting of the Red Sea and all the miracles in the wilderness...

- And you know how similar things were done with all the other prophets and apostles who have given us the scriptures.
 - God has made His word sure to us by many infallible proofs...
- b. And you know how Jesus Himself came into the world working signs and wonders which He said were God's witness that He was true...
 - How He raised the dead and gave sight to the blind, how He fed the five thousand, and at last how He Himself was raised from the dead...
 - And how men who obtained no earthly benefit for it testified that He was risen...
 - even holding on to their testimony to the point of death...
 - Why would these men die if they were spreading a lie?
 - And how the prophecy of God that was given centuries before told that when Jesus came,
 - the nations would be drawn to Him and become worshippers of Jehovah...
 - Even as the LORD saw to it that no one could claim that Isaiah had prophesied of the ruin of Samaria and Damascus after the fact,
 - so He saw to it that the testimony concerning Jesus could not be questioned...
 - He has made it very sure to all who care to honestly look into it...
 - It is fully attested forever.
 - No one can claim that the Jewish scriptures that were written before concerning Him were altered.
 - The Jews did not change their scriptures to fit with Jesus!
 - Apart from God's revelation, no one can explain how these Old Testament prophets knew that the worship of Jehovah that had been the worship of one nation would suddenly spread into the whole world when Messiah came.
- c. The LORD has made His word sure to us and there is no reason for us to doubt it except that we are rebellious and do not want to serve God.
 - It is for all of you to gladly receive this word!
 - In it you find the words of life!
 - It is accessible to you, it is plain, and it is sure...
 - God has graciously made it so.

TRANS> And now, having seen how the LORD has graciously given us His word,

II. See secondly how the LORD graciously binds and seals His Word to you...

- What I mean is, He gives it to you so that it is received by you—joined to you as your own—united to us as His people.

A. This is something to ask the LORD to do.

1. This is something Isaiah prays for in Isaiah 8:16—

a. Isaiah wants the word he has spoken—God’s word—to be secure with his disciples...

- Look at the words he uses:
 - **bind up the testimony...** so that nothing can be lost...
 - **seal the law...** so that it cannot be tampered with...
 - You know how something is sealed up so no one can mess with it—as when you seal an envelope or as when a king seals a document.
 - Isaiah wants nothing to be lost and nothing to be added or changed.
- When Moses had given the people God’s word, he commanded them something very much related to this...
 - He commanded them that they must not add to God’s word or take anything away from it...
 - It was sealed so that it could not be added to...
 - And it is was bound up so that nothing could be taken away.

b. Isaiah prays this because he recognises that this is something the LORD does among disciples...

- He is the one who gives His word to us...
 - He is the one who opens our heart to receive it...
 - He is the one who works in us so that we continue in the word and the word in us.
 - He causes us to receive it as the Word of God so that it effectively works in us.

2. Jesus Himself prayed a very similar prayer in John 17:6-9 for His disciples...

- He said,

- John 17:6-9: "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. I pray for them.
 - He goes on to pray that the Lord would keep them and sanctify them in the truth which is the word.
 - Essentially, Jesus is praying the same thing that Isaiah is praying...
 - That His disciples will continue in the word...
 - That the Lord would bind up His testimony and seal His law among them so that they would always have it and would not depart from it.
 - This is how the disciples of Jesus will be kept and even future generations of disciples who will believe through their word.
 - Jesus says...
 - John 17:20: "I do not pray for these alone [the eleven], but for those who will believe in me through their Word."
 - The word must continue in these future disciples in every generation if they are to be saved.
 - Jesus prayer is answered because still today we have the Word of God among us, bound and sealed.
3. And my friends, do you see how important this is?
- Is it not true—has it not been seen again and again in history—
 - as soon as a people begin to drift away from the word...
 - as soon as they begin to neglect the word and to ignore certain commandments they do not like,
 - or to avoid certain doctrines that make them uncomfortable,
 - or add things of their own devising...
 - It is not long until the very gospel itself is lost among them!
 - Oh how we ought to pray that the Lord would bind up His testimony and seal His law among us and among all His people everywhere!
 - It is a most dreadful thing when you start to drift from this word!
 - It is certain to bring ruin.
 - Ask God to bind it and seal it up among us that we might never lose it.

- B. It is necessary to pray that the word will be bound up and sealed among us because staying in the Word is a struggle...
1. Isaiah anticipates a struggle...a struggle in which the true disciples will abide in the word when all around them gives way...
 - In other words, he sees that it will not be easy to continue in the word, but that by grace they will...
 - a. Look at what he says in verse 17
 - Isa 8:17: And I will wait on the LORD, Who hides His face from the house of Jacob; And I will hope in Him.
 - There is the struggle.
 - Isaiah sees that God is going to hide His face from the house of Jacob.
 - He has already spoken of the hard times that are coming...
 - not from Syria and Ephraim, but from Assyria... the very nation that Ahaz was looking to for help!
 - Look back in verses 5-8...
 - Here Isaiah describes the Assyrians as like unto a mighty river that overflows its banks...
 - The Lord is compared to the gently flowing waters of Shiloah that supplied the city of Jerusalem with life giving water...
 - But the Assyrian in whom they are now trusting is like the Euphrates gone completely out of control—
 - a destructive river in a violent flood...
 - Isaiah prophesies here that after Assyria has swept through Syria and Ephraim which he here calls by the names of their kings...Rezin and Remaliah's son (Pekah, the king of Israel),
 - that Judah will rejoice...
 - She will rejoice until she realises that the river is not stopping with Syria and Ephraim!
 - It will come into the land of Judah and rise right up to the neck...
 - that is, Assyria will take everything except for Jerusalem.
 - Jerusalem is pictured as the head above the water, barely surviving in this great flood.
 - In most striking language, Isaiah says in verse 8 that Assyria will fill the breadth of your land O Immanuel!

- This, by the way, is exactly what happened as we find under the reign of Hezekiah when only Jerusalem is left.
 - We will get to that in Isaiah 37...
- This will be the time of testing for Isaiah and His disciples!
 - Will they hang on to the word of God in that day?
 - Will they believe that even though Assyria has swept this far, that it is still Immanuel's land?
 - that God is still with them?
 - Will they believe what Isaiah says in verses 9-10?
 - That these foreign nations will gird themselves but then be broken in pieces?
 - That even though they take counsel and make many plans,
 - their counsel will come to nothing?
 - And why will it be so?
 - Because Immanuel!
 - Because, as it says at the end of verse 10, "God is with us!"
 - God's people cannot be destroyed because Immanuel is there...

TRANS> That is the struggle to which Isaiah refers in verse 17...

- The disciples must believe that God is still with them when they are surrounded and helpless before their enemies.
 - This is what is going to happen and they will need to have God's word sealed and bound so that they will continue in it!
 - God must keep them holding on to Immanuel as He is revealed in the Word through the dark times...
- b. And Isaiah anticipates that the Lord will most certainly do this!
 - He will most certainly keep them holding to His Word and so to Immanuel...
 - This hope is given in verse 18 where Isaiah says:
 - Isa 8:18: Here am I and the children whom the LORD has given me! We are for signs and wonders in Israel From the LORD of hosts, Who dwells in Mount Zion.
 - Isaiah sees himself and his disciples hanging on to God's word—hanging on to the promise of Immanuel—God with us...

- He and his disciples are signs and wonders from the LORD of Hosts.
 - You see, even in the darkest times, the LORD always keeps a people who cling to Christ—to Immanuel... who hold to His word.
 - And these people are a testimony to the reality of Immanuel...
 - They know Him and they are conquerors through Him.
 - Let everything collapse around them and still they are firm and constant in the Lord through faith.
 - They show the onlooking world that Jehovah yet lives!
 - The more they are scorned and persecuted and ridiculed,
 - the more they shine forth as signs and wonders of God's grace who are kept by the power of God through faith.
 - Their testimony, though gentle and meek, is like a loud trumpet blast to their enemies!
2. Now my brothers and sisters, you are wise—you see how this applies to us!
- a. God has given us His word—
 - and we have an anointing with the Holy Spirit so that we believe.
 - The LORD has bound up His testimony and sealed His law among us...
 - His testimony that Christ is Saviour and Lord of all...
 - And His law that we are to love one another and to keep all His commandments...
 - God, through the gospel, has joined us to Immanuel—Christ—God with us...
 - and we are living by His grace and power in this world against all opposition.
 - b. The world is trying to shake us loose...
 - they are trying everything they can to draw us away from the Lord...
 - If they cannot entice us away, they will try to draw us away...
 - but they cannot do it.
 - c. The LORD keeps us and holds us so that even when there are lies and deception all around us,
 - and when many are falling on the right hand and on the left...
 - even many in the church so that the land of Immanuel is nearly swallowed up...

- we go on as signs and wonders among the nations, bearing witness to Jesus Christ as He is revealed in the word.
- We go on trusting when everything is taken away from us because we know that God is with us...
 - We have Immanuel and God has joined us to Him by joining His Word to us.
 - We go forth testifying of His grace to all and though we are slain, we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.
 - Jesus prays for us and God keeps us and no one can snatch us out of His hand.
- My brothers and sisters, this is what enables you to stand in the evil day...

TRANS> Yes, there will be hard times, but the Lord has graciously bound His testimony and sealed His law among us...

- Therefore, it is for you to abide in His precious word...to hold on to Immanuel...
- That brings us to the third thing...

III. Third, see how the LORD warns you about departing from His word...

A. Because the struggle is great, the warning is needed...

1. Don't ever despise God's warnings—they are often found in Scripture...
 - They are frequent because they are necessary...
 - God uses them to preserve His elect...
 - That is the difference, in fact, between the elect and the reprobate in the church...
 - The elect hear and heed God's warnings...
 - But the reprobate disregard the warnings to their own destruction.
2. Warnings let you know that trouble is ahead of you so that you can prepare yourself—
 - a. The Lord Jesus warned His disciples on the night he was betrayed that they needed to watch and pray
 - but they did not heed the warning—
 - instead they slept and when the hour came, they were not prepared to face the enemy.
 - They thought it would be easy to stand, but instead they found that they all fell!

- b. My brothers and sisters, temptations are going to come to you!
 - 1) There will be temptations to despair because of the strength and success of the enemy in the world...
 - 2) And there will be temptations to receive counsel that is not rooted in God's word because it will sound reasonable...

TRANS> Here in Isaiah 8, you are warned against both of these...

B. First, you are warned against despair and doubt of the LORD...

1. This is brought out in verse 11-12...
 - Here Isaiah is told not to walk as they walk—nor to fear as they fear
 - They are anxious because of the enemy and they decide that trusting God is of no use—that it just doesn't work...
 - It doesn't look like He is winning, so they will rely on something else.
 - Our society simply does not consider the LORD.
 - We don't bother to consider what is pleasing to Him, or to look to Him for help.
 - It is done less and less and that makes it easy for us to blend in, acting as if the LORD is impotent and irrelevant...
 - as if what He says makes no difference.
2. But you see what it says in verse 13 and 14!
 - You are to reverence the LORD.
 - You are to see that He is the One who is still running the universe even when His people seem to be falling apart!
 - You are to regard Him as holy and invincible so that you fear Him alone.
 - Look at how it is expressed in verse 13-14:
 - Isa 8:13-14: The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow; Let Him be your fear, And let Him be your dread. He will be as a sanctuary...
 - You see that the focus is on Him as the holy Judge of all with whom we have to do!
 - He is the LORD of Hosts—Jehovah Sabbaoth, which speaks of Him as over all the armies of earth and heaven...
 - the one who uses them all for His purposes until He is finished with them.
 - He raises up one and puts down another, and none can do a thing apart from His decree...

- He is to be hallowed, feared, and dreaded,
 - which means that we are to regard Him as the only one we don't want to offend!
 - He is the most important one! The only one that matters!
 - Better to offend all the kings of the earth than to offend Him...
 - better to offend your mother and your father and all your friends and relations...
 - better to offend the courts and your employer and the whole world than to offend Him.
 - Even as it calls Him a sanctuary, it is not referring so much as a resting place such as a bird sanctuary...
 - but it is the word that speaks of Him as a holy place—a place where all that is not holy is destroyed by His consuming fire...
 - He is all of this, yet He is the one who covenants to be Immanuel, God with us...
 - In Christ, we come to Him trusting in His promise to be our God and to pardon our sins,
 - but never forgetting who He is as the holy judge of all the earth.
3. You see the warning that is given to those of His people who forget who He is!
- a. To those who are uncomfortable with Him as a holy God who is to be hallowed and feared and dreaded...
 - to those who think He is insignificant and irrelevant...
 - and that something besides pleasing Him is more important...
 - b. To them, we are told that He will be a stone of stumbling and rock of offense.
 - That is what it says in verse 14—
 - Isa 8:14: But a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, As a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
 - They will see not only Immanuel's land, but Immanuel Himself overrun by His enemies...
 - And they will stumble and deny that He is the LORD of hosts who is to be hallowed and feared and dreaded...
 - They will come to believe that He can be pushed around and manipulated and avoided...

- This is what happens when His people are overrun as they were in Isaiah's day...
 - And this is what happened when Jesus was crucified.
 - People stumbled because of it.
- The outcome is terrifying...
 - Look at verse 15:
 - Isa 8:15: And many among them shall stumble; They shall fall and be broken, Be snared and taken."
 - Tremper Longman comments on this verse:
 - "It is impossible in English to convey the terrifying force of the seven Hebrew words that constitute verse 15. All five verbs end with the same long vowel, and four of these open with the same letter and follow one another in unbroken sequence. We may attempt something like the following: 'They will stumble, many of them, they will fall, be smashed, snared, seized.' This conveys a little of the sentence's form but does scant justice to its extreme terseness or to its auditory power."
- c. This, my brothers and sisters, is what happens to those who see Christ in His weakness as crucified,
 - and instead of reverencing God all the more as the One who required this to atone for our sins—
 - instead see Him as weak and pliable.
 - This verse is quoted repeatedly in the New Testament to speak of those covenant people who misunderstood the weakness of Christ and stumbled because of it.
 - They will be smashed to pieces by Him—
 - and so will you if you miss the point of the cross!

TRANS> That is the first warning...

- Don't ever suppose that your mighty Lord is weak and impotent just because he allowed Himself to suffer for your sins!
 - just because He also allows His people to suffer in the world...

C. The second warning is given in verse 19-22...

- It is a warning against those who look for counsel from somewhere other than God's Word...
 1. It is a warning that pressure will be put on you to do so...

- Look at verse 19...
 - Isa 8:19: And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter," should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living?
 - This is not at all uncommon...
 - In times when God seems to be far away, people start to look in other places to find help and direction...
 - This is what is happening around us today...
 - God has withdrawn His light from us and people are looking to mediums (those who consult the dead) and wizards (those who claim to have inside knowledge)...
 - It was not that long ago that in preaching from a verse like this in our society, you would have to speak of counsel from experts such as psychiatrists or professors or church growth experts or grandma—
 - but now there are so many turning to the occult that we have this right before us.
 - The more God withdraws the light of His presence, the more people will do this
 - Isaiah makes fun of how foolish it is to seek the dead in behalf of the living, for the dead know less than the living!
 - Besides, we have our God to seek and He has given us His Word.
 - We do not need to seek mediums and wizards!
2. You see the standard that you are given in verse 20:
- Isa 8:20 To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.
 - Everything must be tested by God's word and rejected if it does not conform...
 - Consultation with Mediums and Wizards is expressly forbidden in Scripture...
 - And when it comes to other counsellors be they Christian ministers or psychiatrists,
 - everything they say is to be brought against God's word and reject if it is not in agreement.
 - Test everything by the Word—
 - I am so pleased when I see you do that.

3. And now I want you to see that this is no trivial piece of advice—
- If you resort to counsel that is not according to God's word,
 - Isaiah tells you where it will lead you:
 - Isa 8:21-22: They will pass through it hard pressed and hungry; and it shall happen, when they are hungry, that they will be enraged and curse their king and their God, and look upward. Then they will look to the earth, and see trouble and darkness, gloom of anguish; and they will be driven into darkness.
 - Because you have not looked to God but have looked in all these others places,
 - the time will come when you will look upward and find no help and then to the earth and see nothing but darkness, gloom and anguish...
 - If you abandon God's counsel, you will at last be brought to the place of complete darkness...
 - You will be driven to the place of outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth...
 - That is where our society is headed my brothers and sisters!
 - That is where many in the church are also headed...because they are casting off God's Word
 - But you must not join them.

Conclusion

- God has given you His precious Word.
 - It is for you, dear child of God, to receive His Word that attaches you to Immanuel.
 - If you will, you will find at last that He is indeed Immanuel.