

Title: One Rock for Two Ends

Text: Is 8: 9-15

Date: May 2, 2024

Place: SGBC, NJ

Ephraim and Syria united in a confederacy to destroy Judah. Ephraim represents vainly religious, unregenerate men. Ephraim had once been together with Judah but they broke away and considered Judah the enemy. Syria represents irreligious, unregenerate men. Judah represents God's regenerated elect--his saints--his church.

Ephraim and Syria uniting to fight Judah is a picture of irreligious men uniting with vainly religious men in their common hatred of Christ and his saints, his church. Usually, vainly religious men and irreligious men appear to hate each other--but truth is they are no different from each other. They each have a common enmity against Christ and his church. And they will unite in that commonality against Christ and his church.

Galatians 4: 28: Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. 29: But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him *that was born* after the Spirit, even so *it is* now.

So Ahaz heard this news and scripture says he was "shaking like the leaves on the trees". So our Lord sent Isaiah preaching our Lord's word to king Ahaz, saying,

Isaiah 6: 4: Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted [due to these two enemies who have taken evil counsel against you]...7: Thus saith the Lord GOD, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass. [The sign the Lord gave to assure Ahaz that the Lord would save Judah is the one sign: Christ alone]...14: Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

The Lord would not permit Judah to be destroyed because Christ was coming through the tribe of Judah. Christ has come and justified all his elect. Christ comes to his lost sheep now through the gospel preached by his church. So for these two reasons Christ will not let anyone harm his saints.

But Ahaz rejected the gospel of Christ and made a confederacy with enemy nations to try to save themselves by their own wisdom and works. So the Lord declared he would chasten Judah by bringing a mightier nation against Judah, the Assyrians.

God was not reacting to Ahaz' rejection--God already purposed it all from eternity. God would scatter Judah by the Assyrian then gather his elect remnant. That is why he told Isaiah to take his son to meet Ahaz. If Ahaz said, "That's a fine-looking boy. What's his name?" Isaiah said, "Shearjashub--it means a remnant shall return." At that time, Isaiah's wife had a son. God said name him "Mahershalalhashbaz"--it means "speedy to the prey"--prophetic of God bringing the Assyrians upon Judah speedily like a lion upon the prey.

So our text is the Lord's word delivered through Isaiah to his elect remnant in Judah, as well as to the inhabitants of the nations offering to help Judah. This is the Lord's word to us concerning our salvation from every enemy.

Isaiah 8: 9: Associate yourselves [unite with men in attempt to save yourselves rather than trusting Christ alone], **O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves,** [attempt to be your own strength, attempt to cover yourselves with your own covering] **and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. 10: Take counsel together,** [attempt to be your own wisdom, look to men for counsel rather than Christ our Counsellor] **and it shall come to nought; speak the word** [make a confederacy with men, a covenant with men, rather than trusting Christ our Covenant], **and it shall not stand: for God is with us.** [Christ is Immanuel: God with us, God with his elect from among Jew and Gentile] **11: For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me** [Christ is the Power and Wisdom of God in the hearts of his people--he is the Strong Hand; he is Wisdom who instruct his saints--what does Christ teach us?] **that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, 12: Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. 13: Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself** [sanctify means, in your new heart through faith, behold Christ set apart, our salvation, our Prophet, Priest and King ruling, reigning triumphant over all our enemies]; **and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.** [fear Christ rather

than men] **14: And he shall be for a sanctuary; BUT for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 15: And MANY among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.**

Subject: One Rock for Two Ends

Yesterday, Walt and me had lunch together. We were talking about how the regenerate and the unregenerate use the same scripture, yet each finds something vastly different in the word of God.

Proposition: This passage declares that is exactly according to God's purpose; Christ is the Rock for these two ends

By God's grace, in the hearts of those to whom God gives spiritual discernment, Christ is our Rock of Sanctuary. But to the unregenerate who God leaves to themselves--they may become very zealous in religion or be irreligious--yet Christ is a Stone to stumble over, a Rock of offense, for a gin and a snare--so that many stumble, and fall, and are broken and snared and taken. As Brother Don used to say, "The same scriptures that reveal Christ to God's elect are a snare to the non-elect--and both ends are according to God's purpose."

WHAT DO YOU SEEK IN THE SCRIPTURES?

The Pharisee's were zealous for their religion but they were lost. Christ told them what they were seeking in the word of God.

John 5: 39: Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life:

Christ said they went to the scripture looking for works they must perform to earn eternal life.

John 5: 39:...and they are they which testify of me. 40: And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

Unregenerate man goes to the scripture seeking what he must do to earn eternal life: works to make himself righteous, works to make himself holy, works to make himself accepted of God.

Christ said that God's word testifies of him. The whole word of God is God's record concerning his Son--declaring that Christ is eternal Life. Christ is the Righteousness of his people. Christ is the Holiness of his people. God has made his people accepted in the Beloved.

1 John 5: 12: He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Every man finds what he seeks in the word of God. The unregenerate seeks works he must do--that is all that he finds. Unregenerate men only understand this book in the letter. They only see what carnal understanding sees.

Those regenerated believe God that this book is the testimony of his Son--so we come to this book seeking Christ. This book declares Christ is the Savior of his elect people.

Matthew 1:21...thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

God declared through Daniel what Christ accomplished at Calvary. This is what Christ meant when he said it is finished. He did this for his people.

Daniel 9:24: Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy [he fulfilled the law and the prophets], and to anoint the most Holy. [Christ entered into the holy place having obtained eternal redemption for us.]

This book is God's record that God has given life and this life is in his Son.

Every man finds what he seeks in this book. Let a man get some hair-brained notion of something he already plans to do. He will go to this book seeking to justify himself. Left to himself he will find something he thinks justifies him. Let man be offended by another: he goes to this book seeking to justify himself and condemn the offender, he will find it. Those are totally wrong motives for searching this book. But every man finds what he seeks in this book. By God's grace, an elect remnant find Christ our Rock of Sanctuary. Many others *stumble over Christ the Rock, he is offended by Christ the Rock, stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.*

Romans 9: 30: What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. 31: But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. 32: Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone. 33: As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. 10: 1: Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. 2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. 4 For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

WHO MADE YOU TO DIFFER?

If you search the scriptures seeking Christ and believe on Christ and repent from self and follow Christ then who made you to differ?

Every child of Adam enters this world totally void of spiritual discernment--this book is a sealed book to the unregenerate--it is sealed to God's elect by our first birth--so who made the difference?

1 Corinthians 2: 6: Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: 7: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, *even the hidden wisdom*, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

The one reason that God's saints have spiritual discernment is because "*God ordained before the world*" for Christ to give us the glory to behold him and believe on him. "As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed."

John 17: 22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: 23: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that [they] may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

1 Corinthians 2: 8: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known *it*, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. [we usually misquote this next verse and miss the good news. We speak of heaven and quote verse] 9: But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. [but read the next verse] 10 But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. 11: For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

The one reason we have spiritual discernment is because the Spirit of God has revealed Christ to us, he has made you know the things that are freely given to us of God.

1 Corinthians 2: 13: Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

Christ's preachers speak "*the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom*" because God has revealed Christ to us by his Spirit. But we preach *not in the words man's wisdom teaches*.

God's saints discern the difference when we hear the world preach. Man-made religion points man to man. Christ's preacher point sinners to Christ. Because if the Spirit does not speak of himself but only of Christ then we can be certain he shall surely make his preacher not speak of man but only of Christ.

1 Corinthians 1: 14: But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

Brethren, be patient with unregenerate sinners. When they speak it is like a man blind from birth trying to tell you what a rainbow looks like. But don't be puffed up. Remember, there was a time you could not see.

1 Corinthians 1: 15: But he that is spiritual judgeth [discerneth] all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. 16: For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that [Christ] may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

The one reason we discern Christ in the scriptures is because at the ordained time, "Of God is Christ made unto us Wisdom" (1 Cor 1: 30). By the Holy Spirit, "we have the mind of Christ." Christ uses his preacher but it is Christ himself who instructs us through the Holy Spirit through the scriptures. "*For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that [Christ] may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.*"

This why God's saints do not boast in our flesh. This is why we glory only in the Lord. We know it is only due to God's grace that we believe God that this book is the testimony of his Son. It is by God's grace that we come to this book seeking Christ. It is by God's grace that we always find Christ whom we seek and always shall--it is the revelation of Christ by the Spirit of God in our hearts.

HEAR AND HEED THE LORD'S WORD TO US

To all who go to this book seeking life by your own hand, God says, **Isaiah 8: 9: Associate yourselves, O ye people, [unite with men like Israel and Syria united against Christ and his saints] and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: [this is so for everybody in this world] gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces [attempt to be your own Strength rather than submit to Christ our Strength, attempt to cover yourself with your own works rather than believe on Christ for Righteousness, ye shall be broken in pieces by Christ] 10: Take counsel together, [take counsel from men rather Christ our Counsellor; take counsel against Christ and his church] and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us.**

Only when the Spirit of Christ speaks into the heart will a sinner do what Isaiah did.

Isaiah 8: 11 For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, 12: Say ye not, A confederacy, to all *them* to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. 13: Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and *let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.* 14: And he shall be for a sanctuary;

This is the difference the grace and power of God alone makes in the heart: by Christ sanctifying us in heart, he makes us sanctify the LORD--by faith, we see him set apart, high, holy, all powerful, all our salvation at God's right hand--our All and in all. So we turn from self--we cease from man--we wait on Christ, knowing he is our Rock of Refuge

But for those who reject Christ for the counsel of men, for their own self-justifying, self-sanctifying works, this same Rock shall be:

Isaiah 8: 14: for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 15: And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.

May God speak to us with strong hand and make us trust Christ our Sanctuary alone.

Amen!