

Series: Isaiah

Lesson # 18

Title: The Light of Christ

Scripture: Isaiah 8:18

Date: 12-28-08

Place: Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Princeton, New Jersey

Isaiah 8: 19: And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? 20: To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is because there is no light in them.*

Believers are made to truly rejoice in Christ because when he sends forth his messenger with his gospel, through the Holy Spirit Christ rehearses in our hearts what he has done in making us accepted with God. That is what Isaiah said when he began this message.

Isaiah 8: 11: For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me. The word is, the LORD spake thus to me in POWER. The LORD instructs--teaches--his children in power always effectually increasing them in knowledge of the truth. By his *irresistible* power he makes us willing to submit to and believe his testimony of grace in our hearts. Either he has instructed you in POWER or he has not instructed you at all.

Turn to **2 Corinthians 2: 14: Now thanks *be* unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.** (God always causes his messengers to preach his word in truth. It is God in Christ who continually manifests the sweet savor of his truth in his messengers. Therefore the gospel of Christ which his messengers preach comes up to God as a sweet savor. God is triumphant in revealing Christ in his servants and he makes his servants triumphant in declaring Christ. Therefore, UNTO GOD, wherever he sends his messengers, their gospel is a sweet savor UNTO HIM, in those who believe and even in those who do not believe.) **15: For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: 16: To the one *we are* the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who *is* sufficient for these things? 17: For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.** (God is so triumphant in effectually teaching his children the truth, that Paul says their gospel is sent forth AS OF GOD.) **3: 1: Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some *others*, epistles of commendation to you, or *letters* of commendation from you? 2: Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:** (Now listen to how God effectually teaches those who hear his messengers) **3: *Forasmuch as ye are* manifestly declared to be THE EPISTLE OF CHRIST ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.** (The Lord Jesus Christ through the Spirit of the living God has written his word of grace in the heart of you who believe him. The new born babe in Christ may not be able

to dissect the truth of God and label the various branches of the doctrine of Christ as the scriptures do, but by the power of God when the Light of Christ enters in, even the babe knows fully—that all spiritual blessing are FREELY GIVEN to us of God through the blood of Christ. And as believers hear the gospel preached, they read it in God’s word, Christ continues to testify in their hearts, and they bow to him and believe him. This is what gives God’s messengers the faith to simply set forth the truth of Christ. That is what Paul says next:)

4 : And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: 5: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; 6: Who also (by this power of divine revelation in the heart) **hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. 12: Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech:** (When Christ ministers this grace to his messengers in the heart, he effectually, irresistibly, gives his messengers the boldness to proclaim the truth so that there is no mistaking the truth they declare) **13: And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:** (Christ is the end of the law, but the unbelieving children of Israel, not having the Spirit abiding in them, could not see Christ) **14: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. 15: But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. 16: Nevertheless when it** (or when the Holy Spirit) **shall turn (them) to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.** (Is there a remote possibility that they will waver between two opinions? Will they partly hold that salvation is of the Lord Jesus and partly hold that salvation is by the works of man’s righteousness? Paul says, Not the slightest possibility. Why?) **17: Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.** (Those who are born of the Spirit, taught by the Lord Jesus Christ in the heart have the vail removed, and they behold Christ throughout the scriptures. Listen) **18: But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.** (Next, Paul says it is by this ministering from the Lord Jesus Christ, in the hearts of his messengers that his messengers are not swayed by opposition but *continue* to teach with great plainness of speech.) **4: 1: Therefore seeing we have this ministry,** (from Christ, ministered to their heart) **as we have received mercy, we faint not; 2: But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.** (What about those who do not believe? Why do some yet craft the word of God and handle the word deceitfully? Read on:)

3: But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the Light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (But for those who *have* the LIGHT of Christ, this is their gospel) **5: For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. 6: For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 7: But we**

have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

Now back to our text in Isaiah 8. When the LORD instructed Isaiah in the heart the effectual result was, Isaiah went forth declaring with unmistakable clarity what the LORD had instructed him. He says in our text:

Isaiah 8: 19: And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God?...20: To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because *there is no light in them.*

Who are “they”?

Notice the phrase “**When they shall say unto you.**” These are "instructors" who will attempt to teach you. Their motive sounds honorable. They say, “**Should not a people seek unto their God.**”

But where do they say you should seek? They tell you to seek God in two places.

One, they shall say, “**Seek unto them that have familiar spirits.**” The word means, seek unto the dead.

Also, they shall say, “**And unto wizards that peep, and that mutter.**” A necromancer is one who claims he can talk to the dead. We think of palm readers, tarot card readers, and such.

So these are the two places these instructors will tell you to seek: 1) to the dead, 2) And to those who claim they can communicate with the dead.

Question

Would you consider it wise instruction if a man told you to seek God in the graveyard? That would be outlandish! But would you consider it wise instruction if a man told you to seek God by looking to yourself, to your flesh? What is the difference in going to the graveyard and in going to the flesh?

Second question, would you consider it wise instruction if a man told you to seek Christ by going to a palm reader or a physic? Then would you consider it wise if a man told you to seek Christ by going to a man who calls himself a priest, or once you've been pressured and the music has worked up your emotions then you are told to go to a group of men standing by in the back who will council you and help you “pray through,” or to go to a preacher who can help you walk the Roman road? The LORD says that those who say such things are Necromancers. They speak to the dead and only the dead hear them.

Wizards "Mutter and Peep." God's messengers use "great plainness of speech".

These false instructors are compared to those who deal in witchcraft and superstition but they are far more subtle than that. The statements they make will most likely all be true. After all, "**should not a people seek unto their God?**" But Paul said they "**handle the word of God deceitfully.**" Both their teaching style and their doctrine uses "**flattering words**"--their style of speaking and their doctrine flatters the flesh. We are warned brethren that they are ever so subtle. Therefore the Lord Jesus Christ warned his apostles saying,

- **Mark 13: 22: For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, [and deceive] if *it were* possible, even the elect. 23: But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.**
- **2 Corinthians 11:3: But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.**

Illustration: Horoscopes are worded so that every one reading them can look at themselves and say it is true. Such language is the opposite of "plainness of speech", it is muttering and peeping. That is how wizards speak from a pulpit. They "mutter and peep." Preach smooth things.

Paul said,

- **2 Corinthians 11:6: But though *I be* rude in speech, yet not in knowledge**
- **2 Corinthians 2: 4: And my speech and my preaching *was* not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: 5: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. 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:**

God's true messenger may make a statement that, taken out of context, could be misunderstood, but if you take the whole sermon the doctrine of Christ is set forth clearly and the whole of salvation--the simplicity or singleness--is Christ. The reason unbelievers do not like such preaching is they are forced to either believe or reject Christ.

Here is the point: God has provided us messengers who through the power of Christ through the Holy Spirit faithfully instruct us in righteousness, who preach the gospel in truth, so that you and I do not have to wonder what they mean. So why endanger our souls with fellows that leave us with doubt as to what they really mean?

The Lord said to his disciples: **Matthew 15:14: Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.**

SO WHAT IS "THIS WORD?" What word do God's true messengers preach?

Isaiah 8: 19: And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? (now listen to the LORD's word) **for the living to the dead?**

A rhetorical question has the answer in the question.

The LORD says, "**Should a people seek the living Redeemer among the dead?**" Some tried that once and what were they told?

Luke 24: 1: Now upon the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain *others* with them. **2:** And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. **3:** And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. **4:** And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: **5:** And as they were afraid, and bowed down *their* faces to the earth, they said unto them, **Why seek ye the living among the dead?** **6:** He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, **7:** Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. **8:** And they remembered his words, **9:** And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

The Word Which All God's Messengers Declare Is Repent From Your Flesh, Repent From Men Who Deceive and Look To Christ Who Is Living--Above!

I'll give you two examples: **Apostle Paul:** Now, when wizards began telling the brethren in Galatia to seek life in their dead flesh, they did so by teaching that in addition to Christ the Mediator, the believer could only be justified and could only be sanctified by going back to the law, and unless the believer did this he could not be perfected. Paul said, "**Who hath bewitched you?**" (That is what wizards do.) Paul declared with great plainness of speech that justification is by the faithful work of Christ FOR his children and that sanctification is by the faithful work of Christ performed IN his children, and not by our works of the law.

First, Paul begins where he ends up--declaring *how he* had this Light: Gal 1: 11: **But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. 12: For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ...2: 8:** (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)

Then, Paul states with great plainness of speech that justification is by the faithfulness of Christ Jesus our Mediator himself and not by anything done by man. **Galatians 2: 16** **Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.** This is the law and testimony of which the LORD of hosts himself speaks in our text back in Isaiah.

Moving on, Paul states that the believer's sanctification is also by the faithfulness of Christ Jesus who separates us from the evil of our flesh and unbelief through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. **Galatians 2: 19: For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. 20: I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.** This is the law and testimony of which the LORD of hosts himself speaks in our text back in Isaiah.

So how is the sinner brought into this grace of justification and sanctified from the iniquity of looking to his flesh? **Galatians 3: 2: This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?** Paul declares that the Spirit of Christ enters into those he bought, revealing in us that we are justified, perfected forever and therefore separated from the evil, not by our works of the law, but by the hearing of faith--the hearing of whose faith?--The hearing of the faithfulness of Christ, the gospel of Christ which declares the faithfulness of Christ.

Now the gospel of the wizards, which Paul says "is not another" but a perversion, proposed that *after* the sinner believes then he can make himself progressively more perfect by obeying the law given at Mt. Sinai--their law of choice was circumcision. But listen to this plainness of speech:

Galatians 2: 3: Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

Before conversion the Spirit teaches us that *all* sinners are *dead* in trespasses and in sins. *After* conversion the apostle Paul said in **Romans 7: 18: For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not...24: O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?** Why does he call it a body of death? **Romans 8: 10: If Christ be in you the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.** The Lord Jesus Christ said, **John 3:6: That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.**

In Isaiah 8, the LORD called this work "signs and wonders" of Christ. In Acts 14 the Lord called it "miracles" granted by Christ. Here in Galatians, Paul uses the same language. **Galatians 2: 5: He therefore (Christ the Lord) that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith? 6: Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.** The Lord alone sovereignly, irresistibly, effectually justifies his children by his work then he works this miracle of separating us from our flesh and keeping us stayed on him.

There is no double talk with Paul. Using great plainness of speech, trusting God to do what he will, Paul backs the Galatians into a corner so that they either have to say truth OR they have to say no, Christ is a failure. And if they say no then they are forced to admit they you not a true child of Abraham, a true believer, because Christ the Light is not in them. That's what he concludes in the next verse. **Galatians 2: 7: Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.**

This is the law and testimony of which the LORD of hosts himself speaks in our text back in Isaiah. **Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself, trust him alone and he shall be for a sanctuary.** But for those who don't trust him, he is a stumbling stone whereby they'll die.

Now back to Isaiah 6: 1 and we will see this same mighty work effected in an old testament saint and hear his message.

Isaiah: Isaiah 6: 1: In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. 2: Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. 3: And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

What was the effectual result?

Isaiah 6: 5: Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, (my word has been without light)...for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. 6: Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, *which* he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: 7: And he laid *it* upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. 8: Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here *am* I; send me.

Then what happened?

Isaiah 8: 11: Isaiah said, the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me: that I should not walk in the way of this people,...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;...(Isaiah saw him high and lifted up on a throne, Isaiah says seek him there) 16: **Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. (therefore this was Isaiah's gospel)**

Now, believer, put **verse 17** in the past tense and hear Christ Jesus your Mediator speak to you his word of assurance. The LORD says, **I [waited] upon the LORD, that [hid] his face from the house of Jacob, and I [looked] for him.** He declares that he shall be for a sanctuary to you who trust him, because he finished the work which the Father gave him to do.

Then in **verse 18** he commands us to look no place else for assurance. The word “are” is added by the translators. But if you read the verse, omitting that word, you will hear this verse as it meant to be heard. It is more than a statement of fact. This verse is the command from the LORD of hosts. It is his command for you and I who trust him, for us to look no where else, or to no one else for signs—for assurance—of God’s amazing “wonder” of grace but to him alone. You want a sign of assurance? **18: Behold I, and the children whom the LORD hath given me,...for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.**

When I begin to see my sin I wonder how I could ever be a child of God. I start looking for some assurance in something I’ve done.

- Do you want assurance that he has purged your sin completely?
- Do you want assurance that Christ Jesus has perfected you forever?
- Do you want to know that you have liberty to enter into the presence of God even now?

The sign of his grace can never be found in us. He says, "Behold me seated at God’s right hand." Do you see him in his resurrected glory seated there? Try to behold, the Father’s delight in him. And as you behold the Father delighting in him, he says, “Behold! The Father delighting in you. I and the children whom the LORD gave me—even you—are seated in glory!"

When Paul warned the Colossian brethren about these muttering wizards who insisted on will-worship, Paul’s instruction was the very same: **Colossian 3: 1: If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2: Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3: For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4: When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. 5: Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: 6: For which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: 7: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.** How do I mortify my members? Paul just told us--if ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is seated in glory at God's right hand. How did Paul say we are kept from the evil of running to the law?--through the continual hearing of Christ's faithfulness. If our affection is set on things above, they won't be set on things on the earth. It is called, being led of the Spirit, walking in the Spirit and not after the flesh. Christ receives the glory for instructing us.

And Isaiah declared, this is the LORD's warning to you: **Isaiah 8: 19: And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? 20: To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them.**

