

Pentwater Bible Church

Isaiah Message 18
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The Calling of Isaiah by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo cir. 1729–29

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Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Isaiah

Message Eighteen

FEAR AND LOVE THE LORD—AVOID WICKED PEOPLE

April 28, 2019

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Isaiah 8:11–22

¹¹For Jehovah spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me not to walk in the way of this people, saying, ¹²Say ye not, A conspiracy, concerning all whereof this people shall say, A conspiracy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be in dread thereof. ¹³Jehovah of hosts, him shall ye sanctify; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. ¹⁴And 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. ¹⁵And many shall stumble thereon, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.

¹⁶Bind thou up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. ¹⁷And I will wait for Jehovah, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him. ¹⁸Behold, I and the children whom Jehovah hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from Jehovah of hosts, who dwelleth in mount Zion.

¹⁹And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits and unto the wizards, that chirp and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? on behalf of the living should they seek unto the dead? ²⁰To the law and to the testimony! if they speak not according to this word, surely there is no morning for them. ²¹And they shall pass through it, sore distressed and hungry; and it shall come to pass that, when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse by their king and by their God, and turn their faces upward: ²²and they shall look unto the earth, and behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish; and into thick darkness they shall be driven away (ASV, 1901).

TRUST AND OBEY GOD

Isaiah 8:11–13

¹¹For Jehovah spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me not to walk in the way of this people, saying, ¹²Say ye not, A conspiracy, concerning all whereof this people shall say, A conspiracy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be in dread thereof. ¹³Jehovah of hosts, him shall ye sanctify; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread (ASV, 1901).

Isaiah states what the Lord has instructed him to do relative to the apostates. It is important to see the intensity of the manner in which this message is conveyed. The Hebrew text for a strong hand is *cehchzkat haiyad*. It connotes the intense strength, force, and urgency in which the Lord is

imparting in a prophetically inspired command for Isaiah to stay away from the apostates. God is revealing awesome visions to Isaiah instructing him not to even be influenced by those rebellious individuals at the time of this prophecy. In Isaiah's day it was King Ahaz who did not trust God and sought military help from Assyria. He was fearful of the threat of the conspiracy of the Northern Israel and Syrian military alliance. Isaiah was told not to allow the fear of Ahaz to influence him. Fear is contagious and God wanted Isaiah to continue to trust in Him alone and not any earthly rebellious unbeliever. When God says *neither fear ye* in verse twelve (Hebrew *yārē*), He challenges Isaiah and his followers to focus on fearing God and treating Him alone as holy in the next verse, thirteen. When we treat God as holy we do not ignore his words, dishonor his name, or fail to trust in him. We give Him due reverence, and in faith obey what He says. We do not honor God when we do not trust His promises and commands, but instead allow ourselves to be influenced by the fears of unbelievers regardless of the way we are treated. Believers must follow God and do things differently than others within society. Today we call these people apostates and the apostle Peter severely condemns them and warns us to avoid them.

II Peter 2:1–22

¹But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. ²And many shall follow their lascivious doings; by reason of whom the way of the truth shall be evil spoken of. ³And in covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose sentence now from of old lingereth not, and their destruction slumbereth not. ⁴For if God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; ⁵and spared not the ancient world, but preserved Noah with seven others, a preacher of righteousness, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; ⁶and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, having made them an example unto those that should live ungodly; ⁷and delivered righteous Lot, sore distressed by the lascivious life of the wicked ⁸(for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their lawless deeds): ⁹the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment unto the day of judgment; ¹⁰but chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of defilement, and despise dominion. Daring, self-willed, they tremble not to rail at dignities: ¹¹whereas angels, though greater in might and power, bring not a railing judgment against them before the Lord. ¹²But these, as creatures without reason, born mere animals to be taken and destroyed, railing in matters whereof they are ignorant, shall in their destroying surely be destroyed, ¹³suffering wrong as the hire of wrong-doing; men that count it pleasure to revel in the day-time, spots and blemishes, revelling in their deceivings while they feast with you; ¹⁴having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; enticing unstedfast souls; having a heart exercised in covetousness; children of cursing; ¹⁵forsaking the right way, they went astray, having followed the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the hire of wrong-doing; ¹⁶but he was rebuked for his own transgression: a dumb ass spake with man's voice and stayed the madness of the prophet. ¹⁷These are springs without water, and mists driven by a storm; for whom the blackness of darkness hath

been reserved. ¹⁸For, uttering great swelling words of vanity, they entice in the lusts of the flesh, by lasciviousness, those who are just escaping from them that live in error; ¹⁹promising them liberty, while they themselves are bondservants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he also brought into bondage. ²⁰For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the last state is become worse with them than the first. ²¹For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered unto them. ²²It has happened unto them according to the true proverb, THE DOG TURNING TO HIS OWN VOMIT AGAIN, AND THE SOW THAT HAD WASHED TO WALLOWING IN THE MIRE (ASV, 1901)"

Reading through this passage, Peter displays no love or tolerance toward the apostates. The Bible and particularly the Lord Jesus do not display any toleration toward apostasy and both castigate it very severely, as these verses clearly show. Peter also tells us what the *mark of an apostate* is. What they teach are called destructive denials. The teachings of the apostates are indeed *destructive heresies*. The content entails *denying even the Master that bought them*. In other words, the content of apostate teaching involves the denial of the Person (*the Master*) and work (*bought them*) of the Lord Jesus. The Bible tells us to separate out from them in *no* uncertain terms.

We must separate from them because the Lord has commanded it.

1. Separation is not an optional part of Christianity; it is a commandment (Romans 16:17-18; 2 Corinthians 6:14-17; 1 Timothy 6:5; 2 Timothy 2:16-18; 3:5; Titus 3:10; 2 John 7-11; Revelation 18:4).
2. Separation is not mean or unloving; it is obedience to God.
 - a. "Mark them . . . avoid them" (Romans 16:17)
 - b. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with" (2 Corinthians 6:14)
 - c. "Have no fellowship with" (2 Corinthians 6:14)
 - d. "Come out from among" (2 Corinthians 6:17)
 - e. "Withdraw thyself" (1 Timothy 6:5)
 - f. "Shun" (2 Timothy 2:16)
 - g. "Purge oneself from" (2 Timothy 2:21)
 - h. "From such turn away" (2 Timothy 3:5)
 - i. "Reject" (Titus 3:10)
 - j. "Receive them not into your house neither bid them Godspeed" (2 John. 10)
3. We are to separate even from brethren who are walking in disobedience (2 Thessalonians 3:6).
4. Separation is a wall of protection against spiritual danger. Failure to separate from error leaves one open to the influence of error (1 Corinthians 15:33). The reason a shepherd separates the sheep from wolves is to protect them. Likewise, a faithful and godly Bible teacher will seek to separate his flock from spiritual dangers that are even more destructive than wolves. The Doctor of souls will do all he can to keep heresies out of the church. They are to the Church of Jesus Christ what disease is to a Medical Doctor that cares for human

bodies in time and space. Both legitimate Doctors will do all they can to prevent or stop heresies/diseases in their respective bodies. Unfortunately, there are more quacks in the spiritual realm than in the physical temporal one. This is because the prize for pure spiritual truth is eternal life. It is the greatest prize on earth to receive. Nothing has greater value. As evidence of this we see many false prophets, corrupt denominations and seminary teachings. As a result, few find eternal salvation. Then Satan has accomplished one of his goals; the eternal destruction of human souls.

The origin or reason enforcing this duty of exercising our faith is: *He is faithful that hath promised.* God has made great and precious promises to believers, and he is a faithful God, true to his word; there is no falseness or wavering with Him, and there should be none with us. His faithfulness should excite and encourage us to be faithful, and we must depend more upon His promises to us than upon our promises to Him. So, take the grace He has promised because His grace is sufficient.

GOD IS THE ROCK OF STUMBLING FOR THE APOSTATES

Isaiah 8:14–15

*¹⁴And 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.
¹⁵And many shall stumble thereon, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken (ASV, 1901).*

The holiness of the LORD can save or destroy. For those who fear the LORD and honor his holiness, the LORD will be as a place of refuge or a “sanctuary.” A sanctuary is a holy place *set apart* as a place of safe refuge (1 Kings. 1:50–53; Psalm 27:5), for blessings, peace, and joy in the fellowship of the LORD (Psalm 65:4); it is the “place” expected for comfort by all who believe in Him (Psalms 27:4; 43:4; 84:2). But on the contrary, for those who are apostate or unfaithful toward the holiness of the LORD, He will become a “rock of stumbling” or a “snare,” causing them to stumble, fall, be caught, and brought into exile. For God is a jealous God (Hebrew *el qanna*; cf. Deuteronomy 6:15). In Isaiah’s day it was the impending exile of the Northern Tribes of Israel and the future to that day of the Babylonian exile of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. They had their own history and the Mosaic Law to rest on God’s promises to them. The apostle Paul characterizes this as a blessing on the Rock, who is Jesus.

1 Corinthians 10:1-4

¹ Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; ² and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; ³ and did all eat the same spiritual meat; ⁴ and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ (KJV).

SEAL THE LAW TO THE APOSTATES

Isaiah 8:16–18

¹⁶Bind thou up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. ¹⁷And I will wait for Jehovah, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him. ¹⁸Behold, I and the children whom Jehovah hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from Jehovah of hosts, who dwelleth in mount Zion.

This is a command give to Isaiah by God, to inscribe this in the hearts of Isaiah's disciples. Which are other believers. He is commanded to tie up a roll or scroll, and to seal it, which essentially closes it. After it was completed by the prophet, it was to be given for safe keeping to his disciples, or to some others to preserve it securely. After Isaiah had completed the sealing of the prophecy he said, "*I will wait for Jehovah, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.*" He declares that I will obey God and wait on Him to see what He will do according to His prophecies and promises. *That hideth his face from the house of Jacob* is a reference to how God will distance Himself to the apostates and unrepentant. The light of God's face is to the spiritual realization what that of the sun is to the material world. All life, health, joy, happiness, come from it. That light was now to be withdrawn for a time on account of the people's sins. But Isaiah would wait for its reappearance. Isaiah's children's names were given to him by God for prophetic signs. Shear-Jashub meant "A remnant shall return" and thus held out two hopes; one that a remnant of Israel would return to God and become his true servants, another that a remnant would return from the captivity that had been prophesied (Isaiah 5:13). Maher-shalal-hashbaz means Plunder speeds, spoil hastens. His name was a sign of a different kind. Primarily, his name referred to the spoiling of Damascus and Samaria and indicated a time of general disturbance, plunder, and ravage which was coming on the nation Israel due to apostasy and sin.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE APOSTATES

Isaiah 8:19–22

¹⁹And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits and unto the wizards, that chirp and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? on behalf of the living should they seek unto the dead? ²⁰To the law and to the testimony! if they speak not according to this word, surely there is no morning for them. ²¹And they shall pass through it, sore distressed and hungry; and it shall come to pass that, when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse by their king and by their God, and turn their faces upward: ²²and they shall look unto the earth, and behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish; and into thick darkness they shall be driven away (ASV, 1901).

Continuing with God instruction to Isaiah regarding avoiding the apostates He begins to tell him how they will approach him to draw him into their wicked occultic practices. In a time of panic and severe distress, due to the wrath of God, unsaved people begin to turn to mediums and wizards for answers to questions related to their circumstances. But as God says to them, *should not a people seek unto their God? on behalf of the living should they seek unto the dead?*

The practice of consulting mediums and wizards was always a temptation for the people in Israel, even though it was prohibited by the law (Deuteronomy 18:11; Leviticus 19:31; 20:6–7). It is clear that God is very much opposed to all forms of spiritism, such as was practiced by Saul at Endor (I Samuel 28:3–11; Isaiah 8:20). He says to them that they are seeking to idols, to the necromancers, and to the dead. God is where you should place your trust and communication. God is a living God. It is to Him we should seek not communication *to the dead*. The necromancers pretended to have intercourse with the spirits of the dead. The Lord strongly exposes the absurdity of this. What could the *dead* know of this? How could they declare the future events respecting the living? Where was this authorized? Men should seek God who is alive and not pretend to hold seances with the dead. The place to look was in the Law of God which contained everything the nation needed to know about their future. A person's failure to heed God's Word means he has no spiritual light (John 3:19–20). Spiritists and mediums and those who consult them will eventually be judged by God (Isaiah 8:21–22). In their distress they will look up to God and curse Him and look to the earth where they will face distress and then be thrust into ... darkness (II Peter 2:17). Ironically those who seek to consult the dead will be forced to join them. Today's visible church has many manifestations of these forbidden practices.

The emergence of experience as an equally valid communication with God is actually a connection to the occult. Many make experience a priority over the Scriptures. If the Bible contradicts the practice, then the practice is justified as characterized as a new move of the Spirit and, therefore, what the text of Scripture actually says can be contradicted by a new experience. This is a far more spiritual way of denying the truth of God and, therefore, far more deceptive. This, in turn, has led to many strange and diverse doctrines, causing many to be truly tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine thus resulting in total spiritual instability (James 1:6–7). The Bible must be the final and only authority on all matters of both what we believe and practice. Most people will defend a particular practice, not on the basis of Scripture, but on their own experience. The most common expression from them is that it makes them feel happy and joyful. Satan would not be a very good deceiver if he made one feel badly. He and his demons of the occult can give people joyful and happy experiences. People will choose this happy feel good experience rather than hear what they need to confront their sin and turn from it to God.

God gave Isaiah a warning not to go after counterfeit spirits and teachers *that chirp and that mutter*. In other words, Isaiah is warning people not to pursue supernatural things that cause them to make the strange sounds of chirping and muttering, for while these experiences might come from the supernatural, not all that comes out of the supernatural is of God. Verse nineteen clearly shows these are familiar (occultic) spirits. And the closing phrase of verse twenty should not be missed: *if they speak not according to this word, surely there is no morning for them*. Isaiah makes it quite clear: Regardless of the supernatural experiences the others may have, it does not align with the written Word of God that was already present in Isaiah's day, then it is not from God and will result if pursued with a Godless eternity. Some contemporary examples of these forbidden practices are:

1. Rome's prayers to Mary a dead person. This is nothing short of necromancy.
2. Rome's prayers to the saints. They claim that these prayers to the dead saints will intercede on our behalf. This is also necromancy.

3. Rodney Howard Brown and the Toronto Blessing. People engage in a practice called holy laughter where they laugh uncontrollably and writhe around on the floor supposedly being led by the Holy Spirit. There is no example of this fruit of the Spirit in the Scripture.
4. Repudiation of separation.
5. Replacing separation with dialoguing with the apostates to come negotiate and agreement.
6. By a love for positivism, by a repudiation of the more negative aspects (sin, Hell etc.) of biblical Christianity, by a judge-not philosophy, by a dislike of doctrinal controversy.
7. By exalting love and unity above doctrine.
8. By a pragmatic approach to the ministry utilizing marketing techniques and business practices.
9. By an attitude of anti-fundamentalism.
10. By the division of biblical truth into categories of important and not important.
11. By exalting social-political activity to the same level as the Great Commission.
12. By a mood of softness, a desire for a less strict Christianity.
13. By a dependence on secular psychology instead of Scripture for our guidance.

The new wave of the apostates appeals to the carnal nature of man. They avoid clear and accurate teaching of the Word of God. Usually their Bible teaching is characterized by an over emphasis on application. They avoid doctrine as too divisive.

Paul warned us that the end times would be characterized as a departure from sound doctrine and a departure from the truth. Their over emphasis on application and departure from doctrine is a pathway away from God to the Humanist's world betterment philosophy.

II Timothy 4:3-4

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away [their] ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables (KJV).

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT DOCTRINE:

1. We are saved by believing from the heart the right doctrine of the gospel (Romans 6:17). This shows why we cannot accept someone as a genuine Christian if they are committed to a false gospel, such as Rome's sacramental gospel.
2. We are to separate from those who teach false doctrine (Romans 16:17).
3. We must be careful of every wind of false doctrine (Ephesians 4:14).
4. No false doctrine is to be allowed (I Timothy 1:3).
5. The preacher is to take heed to the doctrine (1 Timothy 4:16).
6. The Bible is given for doctrine (II Timothy 3:16) and is to be preached with doctrine (II Timothy 4:2).
7. The Bible teacher must be able to use doctrine to edify and protect the church (Titus 1:9).
8. We abide in Christ by sound doctrine (I John 2:24-27).

Next message: THE LORD JESUS' MIRACULOUS BIRTH AND MILLENNIAL REIGN PROPHECIED
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