

**Wednesday, September 11**

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**Isaiah 8:1 - 9:21**

**8** **1** Then the LORD said to me, “Make a large signboard and clearly write this name on it: Maher-shalal-hash-baz.” **2** I asked Uriah the priest and Zechariah son of Jeberekiah, both known as honest men, to witness my doing this. **3** Then I slept with my wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. And the LORD said, “Call him Maher-shalal-hash-baz. **4** For before this child is old enough to say ‘Papa’ or ‘Mama,’ the king of Assyria will carry away both the abundance of Damascus and the riches of Samaria.” **5** Then the LORD spoke to me again and said, **6** “My care for the people of Judah is like the gently flowing waters of Shiloah, but they have rejected it. They are rejoicing over what will happen to King Rezin and King Pekah. **7** Therefore, the Lord will overwhelm them with a mighty flood from the Euphrates River—the king of Assyria and all his glory. This flood will overflow all its channels **8** and sweep into Judah until it is chin deep. It will spread its wings, submerging your land from one end to the other, O Immanuel. **9** “Huddle together, you nations, and be terrified. Listen, all you distant lands. Prepare for battle, but you will be crushed! Yes, prepare for battle, but you will be crushed! **10** Call your councils of war, but they will be worthless. Develop your strategies, but they will not succeed. For God is with us!” **11** The LORD has given me a strong warning not to think like everyone else does. He said, **12** “Don’t call everything a conspiracy, like they do, and don’t live in dread of what frightens them. **13** Make the LORD of Heaven’s Armies holy in your life. He is the one you should fear. He is the one who should make you tremble. **14** He will keep you safe. But to Israel and Judah he will be a stone that makes people stumble, a rock that makes them fall. And for the people of Jerusalem he will be a trap and a snare. **15** Many will stumble and fall, never to rise again. They will be snared and captured.” **16** Preserve the teaching of God; entrust his instructions to those who follow me. **17** I will wait for the LORD, who has turned away from the descendants of Jacob. I will put my hope in him. **18** I and the children the LORD has given me serve as signs and warnings to Israel from the LORD of Heaven’s Armies who dwells in his Temple on Mount Zion. **19** Someone may say to you, “Let’s ask the mediums and those who consult the spirits of the dead. With their whisperings and mutterings, they will tell us what to do.” But shouldn’t people ask God for guidance? Should the living seek guidance from the dead? **20** Look to God’s instructions and teachings! People who contradict his word are completely in the dark. **21** They will go from one place to another, weary and hungry. And because they are hungry, they will rage and curse their king and their God. They

will look up to heaven **22** and down at the earth, but wherever they look, there will be trouble and anguish and dark despair. They will be thrown out into the darkness.

**9 1** Nevertheless, that time of darkness and despair will not go on forever. The land of Zebulun and Naphtali will be humbled, but there will be a time in the future when Galilee of the Gentiles, which lies along the road that runs between the Jordan and the sea, will be filled with glory. **2** The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine. **3** You will enlarge the nation of Israel, and its people will rejoice. They will rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest and like warriors dividing the plunder. **4** For you will break the yoke of their slavery and lift the heavy burden from their shoulders. You will break the oppressor's rod, just as you did when you destroyed the army of Midian. **5** The boots of the warrior and the uniforms bloodstained by war will all be burned. They will be fuel for the fire. **6** For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. **7** His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity. The passionate commitment of the LORD of Heaven's Armies will make this happen! **8** The Lord has spoken out against Jacob; his judgment has fallen upon Israel. **9** And the people of Israel and Samaria, who spoke with such pride and arrogance, will soon know it. **10** They said, "We will replace the broken bricks of our ruins with finished stone, and replant the felled sycamore-fig trees with cedars." **11** But the LORD will bring Rezin's enemies against Israel and stir up all their foes. **12** The Syrians from the east and the Philistines from the west will bare their fangs and devour Israel. But even then the LORD's anger will not be satisfied. His fist is still poised to strike. **13** For after all this punishment, the people will still not repent. They will not seek the LORD of Heaven's Armies. **14** Therefore, in a single day the LORD will destroy both the head and the tail, the noble palm branch and the lowly reed. **15** The leaders of Israel are the head, and the lying prophets are the tail. **16** For the leaders of the people have misled them. They have led them down the path of destruction. **17** That is why the Lord takes no pleasure in the young men and shows no mercy even to the widows and orphans. For they are all wicked hypocrites, and they all speak foolishness. But even then the LORD's anger will not be satisfied. His fist is still poised to strike. **18** This wickedness is like a brushfire. It burns not only briars and thorns but also sets the forests ablaze. Its burning sends up clouds of smoke. **19** The land will be blackened by the fury of the LORD of Heaven's Armies. The people will be fuel for the fire, and no one will spare even his own brother. **20** They will attack their neighbor on the right but will still be hungry. They will devour their neighbor on the left but will not be satisfied. In the end they will even eat their own children. **21** Manasseh will feed on Ephraim, Ephraim will feed on Manasseh, and both will

devour Judah. But even then the LORD 's anger will not be satisfied. His fist is still poised to strike.

## **2 Corinthians 12:1 - 10**

**12** **1** This boasting will do no good, but I must go on. I will reluctantly tell about visions and revelations from the Lord. **2** I was caught up to the third heaven fourteen years ago. Whether I was in my body or out of my body, I don't know—only God knows. **3** Yes, only God knows whether I was in my body or outside my body. But I do know **4** that I was caught up to paradise and heard things so astounding that they cannot be expressed in words, things no human is allowed to tell. **5** That experience is worth boasting about, but I'm not going to do it. I will boast only about my weaknesses. **6** If I wanted to boast, I would be no fool in doing so, because I would be telling the truth. But I won't do it, because I don't want anyone to give me credit beyond what they can see in my life or hear in my message, **7** even though I have received such wonderful revelations from God. So to keep me from becoming proud, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from becoming proud. **8** Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. **9** Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. **10** That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

## **Psalms 55:1 - 23**

**55** **1** Listen to my prayer, O God. Do not ignore my cry for help! **2** Please listen and answer me, for I am overwhelmed by my troubles. **3** My enemies shout at me, making loud and wicked threats. They bring trouble on me and angrily hunt me down. **4** My heart pounds in my chest. The terror of death assaults me. **5** Fear and trembling overwhelm me, and I can't stop shaking. **6** Oh, that I had wings like a dove; then I would fly away and rest! **7** I would fly far away to the quiet of the wilderness. Interlude **8** How quickly I would escape— far from this wild storm of hatred. **9** Confuse them, Lord, and frustrate their plans, for I see violence and conflict in the city. **10** Its walls are patrolled day and night against invaders, but the real danger is wickedness within the city. **11** Everything is falling apart; threats and cheating are rampant in the streets. **12** It is not an enemy who taunts me— I could bear that. It is not my foes who so

arrogantly insult me— I could have hidden from them. **13** Instead, it is you—my equal, my companion and close friend. **14** What good fellowship we once enjoyed as we walked together to the house of God. **15** Let death stalk my enemies; let the grave swallow them alive, for evil makes its home within them. **16** But I will call on God, and the LORD will rescue me. **17** Morning, noon, and night I cry out in my distress, and the LORD hears my voice. **18** He ransoms me and keeps me safe from the battle waged against me, though many still oppose me. **19** God, who has ruled forever, will hear me and humble them. Interlude For my enemies refuse to change their ways; they do not fear God. **20** As for my companion, he betrayed his friends; he broke his promises. **21** His words are as smooth as butter, but in his heart is war. His words are as soothing as lotion, but underneath are daggers! **22** Give your burdens to the LORD, and he will take care of you. He will not permit the godly to slip and fall. **23** But you, O God, will send the wicked down to the pit of destruction. Murderers and liars will die young, but I am trusting you to save me.

#### **Proverbs 23:4 - 5**

**23 4** Don't wear yourself out trying to get rich. Be wise enough to know when to quit. **5** In the blink of an eye wealth disappears, for it will sprout wings and fly away like an eagle.