

Fear The Lord!

Isaiah 8

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Following last week's study, God had a message for Isaiah regarding the unavoidable Assyrian invasion. This time, it wasn't a message to be given to King Ahaz but was for Isaiah, his disciples, and the remaining people of Judah. This message was and is abundantly clear:

Fearing God and believing His Word is the only way to salvation.

Fear is one of the most powerful emotions we can experience. Just think about the most fearful situation you have been in. Are your palms feeling a little sweaty? Fear can take over our minds in a fight-or-flight scenario, precipitating incredible feats of heroism or cowardice. But fear isn't always akin to terror, it also is a response of reverence, awe, and recognition of great authority. God's word makes it clear that the "fear of the Lord" is where we must start if we desire to live God-honoring lives.

God's Way of Salvation Is The Only Way. (vv. 1-10)

God used a picture of streams to illustrate this point. Instead of trusting in God (water of Shiloah), the people of the northern kingdom of Israel placed their faith in the schemes of their king, Pekah, and their alliance with Syria. As a punishment, God would bring the mighty waters (the Euphrates) down in judgment and destruction and even roll over Judah, though in Judah (as promised in 7:7), a remnant would be spared because of the grace of God.

When it comes to the judgment of God, the only way of salvation is the one he provides. This has been true since the fall of man in Genesis, seen clearly in Noah and the flood, the Exodus from Egypt, numerous examples in the wilderness generations, here in Isaiah, and continuing through Jesus and to us today. There is no shortage of "alternative" routes mankind has tried to come up with, but all of them fail without exception. This theme through the Old Testament is fulfilled and made clear for us in the words of Jesus himself... "I am the way, and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6. God desires that all mankind have faith in Him for their salvation, and the place that begins is a place of reverence and recognition of who God is, a place of fear.¹

Those Who Fear The Lord Find Refuge. (vv. 11-15)

God reminds Isaiah not to "walk in the way" of the idolatrous Israelites. Not to follow their schemes of salvation, not to fear or dread the nations and world powers they do. Rather, Isaiah must remember who is in control, both of salvation and judgment. It is the Lord of host (armies)! He alone brings fear, reverence, and even dread, for the Lord alone will ultimately enact His justice on the world. The fear of the Lord is a pervasive theme throughout the bible, yet our Western church tends to avoid it. We have attempted to soften God up by focusing on his mercy and grace, but we have done so to our demise!

¹ Other helpful verses on the Fear of the Lord: Job 28:28; Prov 1:7, 28:14; Ecc 12:13, Luke 12:4-5

For it is the white-hot justice and power of God that makes His mercy and grace so incredible. His absolute hatred of sin and commitment to punish it deepens our understanding of the death of Christ on our behalf! The more we understand God, the deeper our fear of/for Him grows. We see ever more how powerful, just, angry, kind, and merciful God is while at the same time seeing more clearly how wicked, lost, and worthy of judgment we are without Him!

If we are faithful to walk in the fear of the Lord, He will become a sanctuary for us, a place of refuge and asylum. It is a powerful irony that those who come to God in fear and awe and recognition of their insignificance are the ones who find God to be their shelter, their strength, and their greatest confidence. On the other hand, those who do not fear the Lord and trust in their strength, wisdom, and schemes of salvation will find the Lord to be the stone they stumble over and are broken upon. He will ultimately be their place of judgment and condemnation.

Ignore God's Word At Your Peril! (vv. 16-22)

In this final section, Isaiah instructed his disciples and/or the remnant of believing Jews in Judah about where they should go when they need wisdom and direction. First, they should remember the signs God had given them in the prophecies of Isaiah and the naming of his children. Second, they should consult the teaching and the testimony! The Words of God recorded for their instruction, particularly in the Law of Moses and the writings of prophets. If they ignore the various ways God has chosen to direct them, their lives will be miserable, they will be enraged at God, and they will follow the path of the world into deep, thick darkness and destruction. We don't have to look far to see this truth at work in our lives and in our world even now. I pray that we will take heed of this warning and develop a true and healthy fear of the Lord and commitment to His word.

Grace News and Needs

Home Groups: Looking for a way to get connected? Grab a flyer to get started!

Men's Ministry:

- **Cornhole Tournament Today at 12pm!**
- **Retreat, Sept 29-Oct 1. Sign up on the patio (spots are limited).**

Youth Ministry: Sign up for events @ gccramona.com/youth

- **River Trip, Oct 20-22.**

Moms In Prayer Group: Monday's, 6:30-7:30, Modular building. Join moms in prayer for our children, teachers, and schools every Monday. Starting Sept 11.

Crown Financial Management Class:

- **Sundays 8:30-10 am beginning Oct 8th. Sign up with Jeff on the patio.**

Awana starts Sept 13; sign up at ramonaawana.org

Helping Hands: We are here to serve the body! If you have a need, grab a form from the foyer and drop it in one of the grey boxes.

VOM Needs for September: Financial Donations

For more information on our events and ministries, visit www.gccramona.com