

Session 15: Background on the Prophets, Continued

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 15)

Now, with that background, let us move to Isaiah chapter 8 and look at the passage that Paul quotes in Romans 9.

Isaiah's Original Reference

Isaiah 8:14 *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.*

- Who will Christ be a sanctuary for? The believing remnant.
- Who will have Christ for a stumblingstone? Unbelieving Israel.
- Who will have Christ for a rock of offence? Unbelieving Israel.

Now look at verse 15.

Isaiah 8:15 *And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.*

What we have here in verse 15 is Israel's entire timeline: the stumbling, the fall, the brokenness, the snare, and the capture (taken).

We need to see the context in which Isaiah is saying these things. Therefore, we need to back up to chapter 7. In Isaiah 7, the prophet talks about a sign that will be given to the nation.

The Greatest Sign Given to Israel

This particular sign turns out to be the greatest sign ever given to the nation. Once again, it is an unmistakable sign.

Isaiah 7:14 *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign...*

The Jews require a sign, right? And, the Lord gives them one.

Isaiah 7:14 *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

What is the sign of Isaiah 7:14?

The sign has three parts to it:

1. A virgin shall conceive.

2. She will bear a son.
3. She will call his name Immanuel.

What does Immanuel mean? It means, ‘God with us.’

Isaiah 7:15** Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. ¹⁶For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, **the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

“Forsaken of both her kings” refers to “the land” of both houses of Israel being under Gentile dominion.

Isaiah 8:8** And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, **O Immanuel.

Isaiah 8:10** Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for **God is with us.

In what way is God going to be ‘with [them]?’ Answer: A virgin shall conceive and bear a son... So who is this person? It is God ... with us!

Space for personal reflection and notes

Session 16: The Rock of Offence

(Note: Mike refers to this under the old system as Establishment, Part 8, Session 16)

Why Romans 9-11 is important.

- These three chapters answer the question, ‘What has happened to Israel?’
- This is the question that is answered before we are taught what this dispensation of Gentile grace is all about.
- These three chapters do not explain the ‘whys’ behind this dispensation of Gentile grace; we are given that later on in some detail in 1 Corinthians but even more so from Ephesians to Colossians, but all of those things will be built upon this foundation in Romans 9-11.
- In Ephesians – Colossians we begin to understand the manifold wisdom of God (in what he has done by bringing in this dispensation of Gentile grace) which qualifies us to be mutual counselors together with God. *(1 Corinthians 2:16 ...For who hath known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.)*
- This foundation of Romans 9-11 gives us the proper understanding of what God has done with Israel so we can properly see ourselves as who we are in this dispensation of Gentile grace as members of the New Creation, the Body of Christ.
- In light of that truth, the major goals of Romans 9-11 are:
 - ♦ To convince us that we are not spiritual Israelites.
 - ♦ So we do not think we assume their promises and covenants.
 - ♦ That we do not go back into Israel’s program and spiritualize their scriptures so they can be misapplied to us.

Romans 9:33 *As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and **rock of offence**: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*

When Paul quotes Isaiah saying that Christ would be a “rock of offence,” it means that they were offended in him. Why are they ‘offended?’ Better yet, what does it mean – they were offended? It means – he did not meet their expectations of what their King and Messiah should be.

There are several reasons for them being offended in him.

1. They did not receive the law by faith.
2. They confused his two comings as though it was only one coming.

Let us examine the first reason now and we are going to leave the second reason until later in this study. What does it mean when it is said that they did not receive the law by faith? In a nutshell:

- Just like their ancestors, they thought they could produce their own justification and sanctification by keeping the law. But the law was never meant to be the means whereby men became righteous or holy. It was given to show men they could not do it on their own. If a man received the law by faith, he would have known that he was incapable of doing it on his own by keeping the law. He would realize and acknowledge he was sinful.
- That means that to receive the law by faith also means that they would see their need of a Redeemer.
- And that means that they would be looking at the Old Testament prophets who prophesied concerning Israel's Redeemer and they would be watching for their Messiah/Redeemer to show up. And when someone came along who matched all the prophetic criteria, they would believe on him. This is all part of what it means to receive the law by faith.

Those who were offended in him did not receive the law by faith. Therefore, they rejected the notion that they were sinners by nature and needed a Redeemer; they rejected the idea that they could not save themselves by keeping the law. Hence when their Messiah showed up, they rejected him.

Nevertheless not everyone rejected him. Simeon is an example of someone receiving the law by faith and waiting for the Messiah.

***Luke 2:25** And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.*

Simeon received the law 'by faith' and therefore he waited for the consolation of Israel. Now let us move forward to when Jesus is eight days old and his parents bring him to be circumcised.

***Luke 2:34** And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; **and for a sign** which shall be spoken against;*

There is the "sign" issue spoken of in Isaiah.

***Luke 2:34** And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for **the fall** and rising again **of many in Israel**; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;*

Compare this to what we read in Isaiah 8:

Isaiah 8:15 *And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.*

Some will not fall as they recognize him for who he is. For some, (the little flock) he is their rock of refuge: their sanctuary.

Isaiah 8:14 *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.*

Let us talk about this “sanctuary” issue for a moment. What does the word “sanctuary” mean?

Oxford English Dictionary

sanctuary: a place of safety, refuge, protection, or shelter.

In Isaiah 8, the subject matter concerns two groups: those who fear the Lord and those who trust in their own counsels. The application of the verses begin with the warning of the Assyrians invasion which marks the 5th course of punishment for the northern kingdom of Israel, but it moves forward to talk about ‘the days of the Messiah.’

- Notice verse 14 says, “he shall be ...” That is a future issue.
- Notice also verse 16 and the reference to his “disciples.”
- Notice also verse 18, “I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs...”

These all have reference to the ‘days of the Messiah.’

Isaiah 8:14 *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.* ¹⁶ *Bind up the testimony, seal the law **among my disciples.*** ¹⁷ *And I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.* ¹⁸ *Behold, I and the **children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel** from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.*

For those who fear the Lord, he will be a sanctuary: a place of refuge. How does a Jew get the LORD to be a sanctuary for him in the days of the Messiah? By repenting and being baptized.

That is what John was doing at the river Jordan.

Matthew 3:1 *In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,* ² *And saying, **Repent ye:** for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* ³ *For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in*

*the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. ⁴ And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, ⁶ And were **baptized of him** in Jordan, confessing their sins.*

Matthew 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

When we get over to Romans 10, we will see the necessity of the baptism part of this 'prescription for cleansing.' For now, suffice it to say that the 'faith and baptism' prescription for cleansing has to do with being saved from two separate issues. The Lord treats them as two parts of a whole, but do not confuse them as being one in the same. Again, we will see the details of this in Romans 10.

Space for personal reflection and notes

Session 17: The Rock of Offence, Continued

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The inclusion of baptism is still part of the prescription for cleansing at the end of the gospels.

Matthew 28:19 *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰ Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

This is a commission to the Jews as they carry the message of salvation to the Gentile nations in the kingdom.

Mark 16:15 *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶ He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. ¹⁷ And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; ¹⁸ They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*

This is the commission to Israel as they preach to the nations of the world during Daniel's 70th week. Here too, baptism is meant to accompany faith (verse 16 "he that believeth...") as part of the prescription for cleansing. But notice in verse 16, the only thing you have to do to be condemned is 'not believe.' If you do not believe, then baptism is irrelevant.

But there are many who preach that salvation comes by 'faith and works' and this is one of the verses they use to back up their claim. These folk would say that belief alone is not enough, but you must be baptized to be saved. The problem with that is this: baptism is work; it is something that you do. And if you think that you can do anything at all to save yourself, then you have not trusted Jesus Christ as your all-sufficient Savior and you are still in your sins.

Hence the question is: what is it we do not understand when we read this passage? It obviously says 'whosoever believeth and is baptized shall be saved.' I do not dispute that at all. What I am saying is this: there is something we should already know before we ever get to the end of Mark's gospel that shows us there are two aspects to the prescription for cleansing; one has to do with faith and the other has to do with baptism. If we understood them properly, we would never think that baptism is what saves us from the debt and penalty of sin.

Matthew 3:11 *I indeed baptized you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. ¹² Whose fan is in his hand, and he*

will thoroughly purge his floor and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

1 Corinthians 12:12 *For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. ¹³ For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether he be Jew or Gentile, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. ¹⁴ For the body is not one member, but many.*

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