

Series: Isaiah

Lesson # 15

Title: He Shall Be For A Sanctuary

Scripture: Isaiah 8: 11-18

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Place: Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Princeton, New Jersey

Isaiah 8: 11: For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, 12: Say ye not, A confederacy, to all *them* to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. 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; 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.

Isaiah 8: 11: For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand...

We need no hand but our own to turn from the LORD to ourselves, but no other hand but the LORD of hosts can turn us from ourselves to him.

As sinful as I am, how thankful I am that the LORD of heaven and earth would condescend to speak to me, but I am even more thankful that he not only speaks to me, but that he instructs me with a strong hand.

Isaiah 8: 11: For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, 12: Say ye not, A confederacy, to all *them* to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.

King Ahaz along with the majority in Judah, were terrified by two enemy kings who had come up to war against them. As a result of this awful fear they made an alliance with the king of Assyria. The LORD instructed Isaiah, and his elect remnant in Judah, to make no such agreements with those whom the unbelievers made a confederacy. The LORD says, neither fear their fear, nor be afraid.

What did they fear?

- They feared what man would do to them.
- They feared that man would take the things they valued most.
- They feared man would kill them.

So they thought long and hard on what would be the best plan to protect themselves against sinful men. And the best they could come up with was to trust a sinful man. Their king put the idea in their minds and because it seemed the way all their neighbors were going, one-by-one this people became resolved that this was the best possible solution.

Have you ever become afraid when you consider your sin?

- You fear what you have done to yourself because of your sin.
- You tremble as you realize that you yourself are the reason you are robbed of spiritual possessions
- You are fearful of death because of your sin--your thoughts, your words, your deeds.

So in your fear you think long and hard on how to save yourself. And the best you have come up with so far is to trust the one who got you in the shape you are in. Your king put that idea into your heart. And because the rest of the world puts there trust in man you think that is the way.

It is my prayer that the KING of heaven and earth would speak to you this morning with a strong hand. That he would enter into your heart through his gospel and by his Spirit take dominion and instruct you with these words, "Say ye not, a confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid."

Isaiah 8: 13: Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.

The words "fear and dread" means reverence and confidence. When we fear man, look to man, whether ourselves or others, we exalt man to be the governor and lord over the earth.

The chief reason that we look anywhere but to the LORD of hosts is because we fail to behold him as he is. To "sanctify" the LORD is to recognize, to be resolved to the fact, and to remember that the LORD is the ALMIGHTY God over all--he is indeed the LORD of hosts--in all things all glory belongs to him.

Let me read Revelation 15: 4 to you slowly and think on this for a moment: **Revelation 15:4: Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy:**

The LORD is essentially holy, he is God. The LORD is the fountain of all holiness to his people because he is the only Mediator between God and men.

- God is holy. In his very essence, his ways and all his works he is perfect.
- His holiness is the luster, the glory, and the harmony of every work he performs.
- His holy angels cover their faces before him, their song is "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD God of hosts."
- The Psalmists wrote: **Psalm 86:8: Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto thy works. 9: All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name. 10: For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone.**

Think on this for a moment: That which is unholy is imperfect. All sin--every unholy angel and every unholy man--became unholy the same way--by turning away from the thrice holy God.

The first murder was committed in the garden when our first representative Adam spiritually and physically killed the whole human race by simply turning from God to himself.

Romans 5:17:...by one man's offence death reigned by one...19: For as by one man's disobedience many (all whom he represented) were made sinners,

Therefore the first physical murder ever committed was by Cain killing his own brother. And for what reason? Because Cain hated that Abel ascribed all glory to God and confessed man's total inability by approaching God in the blood of a substitute lamb which died in his place.

Man receives the credit for every unholy thought and deed--ever committed throughout all time. Why then would we exalt ourselves by fearing man? Why then do we exalt man by fearing what man can do to us?

But that is exactly what we do when we attempt to save ourselves by our own doing. In our depraved minds we think it wisdom, we think it glorifying to God to ascribe a part of salvation to man. The reality is, by doing so, we manifest our own spiritual ignorance of who God is and what God requires of those he receives to himself.

Isaiah 40: 21: Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? 22: *It is* he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof *are* as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in: 23: That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. 24: Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble. 25: To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. 26: Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these *things*, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that *he is* strong in power; not one faileth. 27: Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God? 28: Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, *that* the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? *there is* no searching of his understanding. 29: He giveth power to the faint; and to *them that have* no might he increaseth strength. 30: Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: 31: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; *and* they shall walk, and not faint.

Romans 5:17: For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)...19: For as by one man's disobedience many (all represented by him) were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many (all represented by Christ) be made righteous. 20: Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: 21: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

The gospel which came to Ahaz by Isaiah was, believe the LORD of hosts, trust in the covenant which God has made in Immanuel--through whom grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. Instead, the confederacy which king Ahaz and the children in Judah made was with death because it was a covenant made with man over whom sin hath reigned unto death.

Isaiah 30: 1: Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin: 2: That walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth; to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt! 3: Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt *your* confusion....15: For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not. 16: But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift. 17: One thousand *shall flee* at the rebuke of one; at the rebuke of five shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill.

Therefore, the LORD of hosts must speak with a strong hand, in the heart of his children, saying, **12: Say ye not, A confederacy, to all *them* to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. 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;**

Do you know what a sanctuary is? A sanctuary is a refuge. When the Lord delivered the children of Israel into Canaan, he appointed cities of refuge, saying, **Numbers 35: 15: These six cities shall be a refuge, *both* for the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them: that every one that killeth any person unawares may flee thither...24: Then the congregation shall judge between the slayer and the revenger of blood according to these judgments: 25: And the congregation shall deliver the slayer out of the hand of the revenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to the city of his refuge, whither he was fled: and he shall abide in it unto the death of the high priest, which was anointed with the holy oil. 26: But if the slayer shall at any time come without the border of the city of his refuge, whither he was fled; 27: And the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill the slayer; he shall not be guilty of blood: 28: Because he should have remained in**

the city of his refuge until the death of the high priest: but after the death of the high priest the slayer shall return into the land of his possession.

Ahaz was a religious man, but he was an idolater. He worshipped the god which he thought was the true and living God. But his god was the creation of his own mind. His god was one who accepted Ahaz based on a reformation of character performed by Ahaz. This is the sum of all forms of idolatry; it is the worship of man.

By his worship of a false god, Ahaz was guilty of murdering God in his heart and because he led the children of Judah into idolatry he was guilty of murdering his neighbor as well.

The LORD of hosts is the revenger of blood--vengeance is mine, he says, I will repay. He brought the enemy kings upon Ahaz making known to Ahaz his guilt before the law of God. The LORD sent forth Isaiah with the gospel to declare to Ahaz that the only city of refuge--the only Sanctuary--for Ahaz and the children of Judah is in Immanuel, the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, Ahaz would not flee to the city of refuge. Therefore the Revenger of blood justly pronounced death upon Ahaz the slayer.

Yet, the LORD of hosts spoke with a strong hand to Isaiah and to his chosen children, saying, **Isaiah 8: 12: Say ye not, A confederacy, to all *them* to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. 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--a city of Refuge.**

You to whom he has spoken with a strong hand behold that you are the slayer of the Man, Christ Jesus. But beholding him by grace through faith, you behold him high and lifted up and like Isaiah you sanctify him in your hearts. You reverence him as being your only hope. You flee to him, to Immanuel, to Christ the city of Refuge. And he promises you Sanctuary.

All who remain in Christ our City of Refuge remain there because we are persuaded that our High Priest has made atonement--reconciled us to God--by his death. We behold that he hath bore the judgment which was our due and by the sacrifice of him self has freed us so that, even now, we have liberty to return to the land of our possession.

Isaiah 54: 14: In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee. 15: Behold, they shall surely gather together, *but* not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake. 16: Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy. 17: No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue *that* shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This *is* the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness *is* of me, saith the LORD.

Isaiah 51:12: I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; 13: And forgettest the LORD thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?

Proverb 18:10: The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.

A Sanctuary is also a place set apart by God where those who trust him worship him. Throughout the whole world during the days of Israel there was but one such place. It was the sanctuary made according to the pattern commanded by the LORD God, it typifies Christ in whom we worship God.

There was no form nor comeliness to behold from the outside, but inside was pure gold and fine tapestries. In that place was the Ark overlaid in gold in which rested the law of God. Over it was the Mercy Seat where propitiation was made for the sin of God's people. The foundation which held strong through the waste howling wilderness was the foundation made by the Shekel of the Sanctuary, the price of redemption. Christ is the Ark in whom we are justified from God's broken law. God set him forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood. He is our Redeemer.

That physical sanctuary remains no more, neither is a holy place to be found anywhere on this earth. But we do have an Altar, a Holy Place, a Holy Habitation, a Sanctuary wherein we worship God.

Exodus 15: 11: Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? 12: Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them. 13: Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation. 14: The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. 15: Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away. 16: Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, which thou hast purchased. 17: Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established. 18: The LORD shall reign for ever and ever.

Psalms 78:54: And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary, even to this mountain, which his right hand had purchased.

Hebrews 12: 22: But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, 23: To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24: And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than *that of Abel.* 25: See that ye refuse not him that speaketh.

Christ our Sanctuary is our Refuge, he is the Sanctuary in whom we worship God, and he also is the Sanctuary in whom we Dwell.

He has been our dwelling place since God the Father chose us in him before the foundation of the world.

Psalm 90: 1: <<A Prayer of Moses the man of God.>> Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. 2: Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou *art* God. 3: Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.

He has been our dwelling place through faith since we, as believers, were made a new creation. The believer and Christ are one. He dwells in us and we dwell in him.

1 John 4:13: Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

The Lord said, John 14: 20: At that day ye shall know that I *am* in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

Watch this now. Grab hold of this, believer, and you will behold a great blessing of comfort and assurance:

It appeared that Isaiah and the remnant with him dwelt in the flesh, but the flesh was not their life, not their dwelling place. Listen to **Romans 8:9: But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.**

To the natural eye it appeared that Isaiah dwelt in that physical Zion, but that is not the Zion in which they dwelled. To the natural eye, you who believe appear to dwell here amongst the Assyrians of this world, you may feel the pain in your flesh, but no, we dwell in Christ, in Spirit and because the Spirit of God dwells in you hear this scripture with the proper meaning: **Isaiah 10: 24: Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD of hosts, O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt. 25: For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction. 26: And the LORD of hosts shall stir up a scourge for him according to the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb: and *as* his rod *was* upon the sea, so shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt. 27: And it shall come to pass in that day, *that* his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.**

Believer, Christ is our Sanctuary, our place of worship and our dwelling. Our God is using the Assyrians of this world to destroy the Ahaz's, the Pekah's and the son's of Remaliah and then he shall destroy the Assyrians, but O thou that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid. **Sanctify the LORD of hosts, let him by thy fear and thy dread; and he shall be for a Sanctuary unto thee.**

Now hear this most solemn word of warning.

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.

1Peter 2: 6: Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 7: Unto you therefore which believe *he is* precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 8: And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, *even to them* which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

Why is Christ a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence? What is the word from God which men stumble at? What is this disobedience? Hold your place here and Paul tells us plainly why in **Romans 9: 30: What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. 31: But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. 32: Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; 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. 10: 1: Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. 2: For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 3: For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. 4: For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.**

I Corinthians 1: 22: For the Jews require a sign, (some power, some work, some evidence worked out in their flesh, remember, Immanuel was not sign enough to Ahaz) and the Greeks seek after wisdom: (peace through philosophy, self-help, worldly wisdom) 23: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; 24: But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

You who trust Christ apart from any works of righteousness which you have done, who made you to differ?

Back to I Peter 2: 9: **But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: 10: Which in time past *were* not a people, but *are* now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.**

Illustration: Last night I was in bed talking with Emma Grace about Christ.

I asked her which she was more comfortable with, listening to what her teachers in school taught her or listening to me, her father, teach her about the Lord. She was honest with me. She said that she was more comfortable with her teachers in school.

What would make a child more comfortable to be taught by a stranger in school than with her own father in her own bed at home? The same thing that makes sinners seek sanctuary in that refuge of lies called the flesh rather than in the Mighty Father, the Prince of Peace. The same thing that makes some under the sound of my voice to refuse the waters of Shiloah that go softly for the bitter bondage and warfare of this world.

Some of you here today are still attempting to make a confederacy like the world makes, seeking a sign in yourself and the wisdom this world has used to bewitch you. Yet, after your fits of religion all you have ever accomplished is a temporary soothing of your conscious temporarily. As much as you have tried to comfort yourself in your many wonderful works, you are still terrified at the thought of meeting God face-to-face. But you wouldn't stand for some imposter taking glory to himself which belonged to your Son alone.

Many of you, who believe, are suffering in the midst of heavy trials. Pulled this way and that; running here and there; and longing for the Lord to direct you.

Oh, that God would speak to each of us with a strong hand and instruct us in righteousness, that he would separate us from whatever it is that is keeping us from beholding that he is the only Sanctuary:

- The only Refuge of Eternal Safety
- The only Holy Place in whom sinners can worship the triune God in spirit and in truth
- He is the only Dwelling place of those in whom he dwells.

When he makes us to behold Him, the believer finds that we are comfortable no where else; then we are more at peace communing with our heavenly Father than we are with our closest loved ones in this world, no matter how dense the clouds of trial may be.

My most sincere desire for you, friends and brethren, for your children and mine, is that the LORD of hosts **make you to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God;** that you might delight in Rest and in Joy unspeakable; sanctify the LORD of hosts himself, fear him alone, and he shall be for a Sanctuary. May, **the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.**

