

II.III THE NECESSITY OF THE SCRIPTURES: Isaiah 8:19-20 - Shepherd School

I. OPENING RAYER: All.

III. SERMON:

THE NECESSITY OF THE SCRIPTURES: Isaiah 8:19-20

INTRODUCTION

God communicates in Isaiah 8:19-20 two different ways people treat His Scriptures. Ultimately there are two different responses to God's revelation in His written Word; one leads to eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord, and the other leads to eternal death in hell. One treats the Scriptures as necessary, in faith, and the other treats them as unnecessary, in faithlessness.

A heart attack is less serious than this text that is before our eyes.

CONTEXT: In Isaiah's day, 8th century BC, many of the people of Israel had fallen into apostasy. They had rejected God and gone after idols. But God always preserves His true people.

At the beginning of **Isaiah 8** the LORD tells the Prophet that the Assyrians are coming into Northern Israel. This would leave those in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, where Isaiah and his family lived in Jerusalem, trembling with fear. READ ISAIAH 8:19-20.

DOCTRINE. The Scriptures are necessary for salvation, therefore those who heed them will be saved, and those who neglect them will be damned.

OUTLINE. There are at least five main inferences, or implied truths, to be drawn from these two verses.

I. YOU WILL BE TEMPTED BY THE FAITHLESS TO NEGLECT THE SCRIPTURES (Is. 8:19a).

Isaiah 8:19a "And when they say to you,"

- **By faithless I do not mean atheists. The faithless in Isaiah's day were not people outside of the church, but those within.** Those who professed to be believers were "saying" to God's people something like,

"Neglect the Scriptures...the Bible does not work...The Law does not apply...The Testimony cannot help..."

- **RQ. Is this not, in some sense, what Paul promises Timothy?**
 - **2 Timothy 4:3-4** "3 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths."
 - **Ultimately, the faithless who tempt others to neglect the Scriptures do the work of the devil!** Though they may not question whether or not God actually said what He said, they speak so as to draw God's people away from paying diligent attention to the words of life. They do the devil's bidding.

USE THIS TRUTH TO SOBER YOURSELVES

You will be tempted by the faithless to neglect the Scriptures!

- **MEN**, God says to Isaiah, not "if" but "when." "*WHEN they say to you...*"

TRANSITION: But when you are tempted to neglect the written Word of God, you need to know there is more going on. Isaiah and his audience will not merely be tempted to neglect the Bible; rather, they will be tempted to neglect the Scriptures *BY LOOKING OUTSIDE OF IT FOR SAVING TRUTH.*

CLARIFICATION. By "*saving truth*," understand that what I mean is truth that leads to justification and/or sanctification; truth that gives peace from God and joy in the Holy Spirit; truth that makes happy and holy; truth that convicts, confronts, comforts, and preserves us all the way to glorification.

II. YOU WILL BE TEMPTED TO LOOK OUTSIDE OF THE SCRIPTURES FOR SAVING TRUTH (Is. 8:19b).

Isaiah 8:19b "*Inquire of the mediums and the necromancers who chirp and mutter,*"

EXPLANATION

- **God is warning Isaiah and his audience (as well as us!) not to listen to the faithless ones who say,** "You must look somewhere outside of God's word for saving truth; these are perilous times!"

CROSS-REFERENCE

- **Leviticus 19:31** "*Do not turn to mediums or necromancers; do not seek them out, and so make yourselves unclean by them: I am the Lord your God.*"
 - **Leviticus 20:6-8** "**6** *If a person turns to mediums and necromancers, whoring after them, I will set my face against that person and will cut him off from among his people.* **7** *Consecrate*

yourselves, therefore, and be holy, for I am the Lord your God. **8** Keep my statutes and do them; I am the Lord who sanctifies you."

IMPLICATION

– **Q. Can you hear the modern day equivalent of these faithless ones?**

I) "Inquire of nature and the created order."

II) "Consult the social-justice warriors and the activists."

III) "Seek advice from the clinical psychologists and the counselors."

IV) "Inquire of the self-help experts and the motivational speakers."

V) "Seek advice from the fitness and nutrition gurus."

VI) "Consult the politicians and philosophers."

VII) "Follow your heart."

INSTRUCTION

Though many in our day may speak in such ways, the truth is that:

I) Experiences and Feelings cannot reveal to you the truth that saves! (Jeremiah 17:9)

– **Jeremiah 17:9** "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick; who can understand it?"

II) Worldly wisdom cannot reveal to you the truth that saves! (1 Corinthians 1:20-21)

– **1 Corinthians 1:20-21** "20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21b . . .the world did not know God through wisdom. . ."

III) Creation cannot reveal to you the truth that saves! (Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:19-20)

– **Psalm 19:1** "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork."

– **Romans 1:19-20** "19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse."

In the end, when it comes to how sinners are saved and saints sanctified, everything outside of God speaking to us is just chirping and muttering.

– **A bird's tweeting is helpless in advising you on the way of war;** the chirping of men is helpless in advising you on the way of salvation.

The growling of a madman is useless when you need directions home; the growling of men is useless when you need directions to heaven.

- **YOU WILL be tempted to look for saving truth outside of the Scriptures!**

TRANSITION: Now we come to the main principle of this text, and the truth is taught in the form of a rhetorical question: look at the third part of verse 19.

III. YOU HAVE TO LOOK TO GOD HIMSELF FOR SAVING TRUTH (Is. 8:19c).

Isaiah 8:19c "should not a people inquire of their God? Should they inquire of the dead on behalf of the living?"

EXPLANATION AND ILLUSTRATION

- **Q.** This is a rhetorical question, is it not?
- **Should not a people inquire of the Creator and Sustainer?** He is the One who breathed the cosmos into existence; who brought man from the dust of the earth and breathed life into his nostrils; who fashioned women from the rib of man and blessed them both. **Should they not inquire of Him?**
- **Should not a people seek the Redeemer?** He is the One who brought them out of the land of slavery with signs and wonders; who struck the land of Egypt with plagues; who passed over them in judgement according to the blood of the lamb; who parted the Red Sea for their passage and closed it for Pharaoh's punishment; who fed and protected them in the wilderness by His mercy all the way to the promised land; who defeated their enemies and gave them the inheritance. **Should they not seek Him?**
- **Should not a people consult the Holy One?** He is the One who gave them His commands and promises; who shook Mount Sinai as he trumpeted His Law; who is so pure that no man can look on His face and live; who is so holy that He made Moses' face glow just by seeing his back; who is so merciful that he promised compassion to those who trust in Him. **Should they not consult Him?**
- **Should not a people inquire of the Sovereign?** He is the One who changes times and seasons; He removes kings and sets up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; He reveals deep and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him" (Daniel 2:21-22). **I ask again, should not a people inquire of the**

Sovereign? He is the One whose voice flashes forth flames of fire and shakes the wilderness; His voice makes the deer give birth, strips the forests bare, and in his temple all cry, "Glory!" (Psalm 29:7-9). **Should they not inquire of Him?**

APPLICATION

- **Q. What about you? Do you inquire of God?**
- Think of the greater revelation that God has given His people in ages such as ours—far greater than these people had in 700 BC.
 - **They knew Passover and the Exodus;** we know the Cross and Resurrection!
 - **They saw the Law and the Gospel in shadows;** we see the resurrected Christ holding the Law in His right hand!
 - **They had the promise of the Messiah to come;** we have seen His glory, and we have the promise of Him to come again!
- **Q. Where do you look for saving truth?** Of whom do you inquire for comfort? Where do you turn for happiness? Whom do you seek for strength and perseverance? "Should not a people inquire of their God?"

EXHORTATION

- **You must look to God Himself for saving truth!**

TRANSITION: But how can we be sure we are hearing from God? It is as simple as can be: the Scriptures. **Look at verse 20!**

IV. YOU HAVE TO LOOK TO THE SCRIPTURES TO HEAR FROM GOD (Is. 8:20a).

Isaiah 8:20a "To the teaching and to the testimony!"

EXPLANATION

- **The LORD instructs Isaiah, along with the other faithful believers who had not turned their backs on the LORD,** to trust in Him, fear Him alone, and keep their eyes FIXED on the Word of God alone as their guide and hope.

CROSS REFERENCE

- **Isaiah 40:6-8** "All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. **7** The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the Lord blows on it; surely the people are grass. **8** The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever."

IMPLICATION

- **Q.** What does this teaching and testimony ultimately reveal?
- **In John 5:39 Jesus says,** “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me.”
- **A.** The Scriptures ultimately reveal the Lord Jesus Christ, our Redeemer!
- **Think with me. We do not even have to leave “the teaching and the testimony” of Isaiah** to behold Christ clothed in His gospel!
- **In Isaiah 7, Christ is preached as the sinless babe, born of a virgin, untainted by original sin, both God and man!** “And the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and you shall call His name Emmanuel.”
- **In Isaiah 9, Christ is proclaimed as both the light that dawns and the eternal King that will rule the nations in peace!** “Those who walk in darkness have seen a great light . . . For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end.”
- **In Isaiah 25, Christ is the great death swallower and tear wiper, who will take away the reproach of His people!** “He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken.”
- **In Isaiah 53, Christ is heralded as the great sin bearer, whom the Lord crushes for our pardon!** “Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. . . It pleased the LORD to crush him.”
- **In Isaiah 55, Christ is the evangelist, who through His church, cries out,** “Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”
- **Q.** Have you come to drink the waters of Christ, repenting of your sin and trusting in Him alone to take away your sin and count you righteous before God? What will God say to you on that last day? If not, do it now! If so, give thanks to the Lord!

INSTRUCTION

I) If you want to be saved in Christ, or if you want others to be

saved, you must run "to the teaching and to the testimony!"

- **Paul tells Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:15**, "from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."
- **Paul tells the Romans in Romans 10:14**, "So faith comes through hearing and hearing through the Word of Christ."
- **Peter tells the elect exiles in 1 Peter 1:23**, "you have been born again... through the living and abiding word of God."

II) If you want to be sanctified in Christ, or if you want others to be sanctified, you must tie yourself "to the teaching and to the testimony!"

- **Christ prays to His Father in John 17**, "Sanctify them in the truth, your word is truth."

III) If you want to be equipped to help others, especially those in your home, group, and Church, you must return time and time again "to the teaching and to the testimony!"

EXHORTATION

Isaiah 8:20 is a battle cry! "To the teaching and to the testimony!"

And this truly must be the battle cry of every man, every house, every Church!

Make it your battle cry, men!

EXAMINATION

- **Q.** Is this your personal battle cry? Your house? Your small group? Your Church? If not, why not? Resolve to make the change today; whatever you must do to make this the battle cry of your life, home, group, and church, DO IT.

TRANSITION: Now see the horrific tragedy that will befall you, or anyone else, if you will not attend to and speak according to the teaching and the testimony. **Look at the second half of verse 20!**

V. IF YOU WILL NOT SPEAK ACCORDING TO THE SAVING TRUTH REVEALED IN THE SCRIPTURES ALONE, IT IS BECAUSE YOU ARE GOING TO HELL (Is. 8:20b).

Isaiah 8:20b "If they will not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn."

Henry:

no light to them. Those that shut their eyes against the light of God's word will justly be abandoned to darkness, and left to wander endlessly, and the sparks of their own kindling will do them no kindness.

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ILLUSTRATION

- **The devil will welcome you into damnation through a dusty Bible, or a disobeyed Bible; and it does not matter to him which it is.** If he can get you to the flames, he does not care which specific road you took to get to the burning. If he can devour you, it does not much matter to him which path led you to his jaws.

EXAMINATION

- **Q1. Is there dust on your Bible?**
A. "No," you say. Very well.
- **Q2. Is there willful disobedience to the Bible lodged in your heart and coming out in your thoughts and actions?**
A. See the end of verse 20 and be warned so that you wake up and flee to Christ Jesus to sanctify you by the Holy Spirit.

CONCLUSION

The written Word is the primary way God the Holy Spirit feasts us on the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ.

- **MEN,** Every day you overlook the Word, you deprive yourself.
HUSBANDS, Every day you set the Scriptures aside, you starve your wife or kids.
PASTORS AND LEADERS, Every day you neglect the Bible, you beg God to bring severe discipline on His people.
ALL OF YOU, Every day you forsake the Word, you have nothing to offer a dying world. **ON THE OTHER HAND...**
- **MEN,** Every day you run to the Teaching, God will feed you.
HUSBANDS, Every day you fly to the Testimony, you set a feast before your wife or kids.
PASTORS AND LEADERS, Every day you sprint to the Scriptures, you ask God to bring about holy sanctification in His people.
ALL OF YOU, Every day you diligently study the Word, you are equipped with the only hope that can save a lost world.

Therefore, the Scriptures are more necessary for the soul than food

and water are for the body!

– ***“To the teaching and to the testimony!”***

III. SONG:

B r e a k (start back at 7:10pm)

IV. 1689 Confession: Ch 17. Par 1-3 (finish by 7:35pm)

V. DISCUSSION (finish by 8pm)

Reformed Systematic Theology (vol. 1) discussion

The Properties of the Written Word, Part 1: Authority and Clarity

by Joel Beeke (pg. 334-351)

Questions for Meditation and Discussion

- *1. What do we mean by the “authority” of the Bible?
2. What is the basis of the Bible’s authority?
- *3. Explain and critique the Roman Catholic Church’s claim regarding the authority of the pope.
- *4. How does God convince us that the Bible is the authentic Word of God? What role does the church play in this process?
5. Why is it not “unscientific” to rely on the testimony of written documents?
- *6. What response does the authority of God’s Word call for in us?
- *7. How does the Bible show us that it was intended to be read not just by scholars but by ordinary people with their children?
- *8. What is the “perspicuity” of Scripture? How is it taught in the Bible?
- *9. How should the doctrine of perspicuity produce anticipation in those who read

the Bible? How might it help you to approach your own reading of the Bible with greater anticipation?

10. What implications does scriptural perspicuity have for the translation of the Bible?

***11.** How can scriptural perspicuity guide us in the interpretation of the Bible?

Questions for Deeper Reflection

12. Augustine said, "I should not believe the gospel except as moved by the authority of the Catholic Church." What truth does this statement contain? How must we balance that truth with other truths, also affirmed by Augustine?

13. Someone says to you, "Your religion is so authoritarian. Preachers just quote the Bible and demand that everyone agree with them. That's oppressive. I believe that everyone has the freedom to make his own choices." How do you respond?

14. How might the doctrine of perspicuity be abused to justify neglecting the preaching and teaching ministry of the church? What is a balanced approach?

The Ten Commandments **discussion**

OBEDIENCE

Closing Prayer

SYLLABUS

📖 SHEPHERD SCHOOL - SEASON TWO (2026) - THE WORD, THE GOSPEL, & THE LAW 📖

WEEK	Scripture	Book I <i>(read before)</i>	Book II <i>(read before)</i>	1689 Confession	Certificate Essays	Certificate Exposition
1. 2/12	2 Timothy 2:1-7	INTRO	INTRO	INTRO	INTRO	INTRO
2. 2/19	1 Thessalonians 2:13	The Properties of the Written Word, Part 1: Authority and Clarity <i>Reformed Systematic Theology (vol. 1)</i> by Joel Beeke (pg. 334-351)	The Ten Commandments Obedience & Love by Thomas Watson	1689 Confession Ch. 1 Par. 1-3		
3. 2/26	Isaiah 8:19-20	The Properties of the Written Word, Part 2: Necessity, Unity, Efficacy <i>Reformed Systematic Theology (vol. 1)</i> by Joel Beeke (pg. 352-370)	The Ten Commandments The Preface to the Commandments (pg. 12-29) by Thomas Watson	1689 Confession Ch. 1 Par. 4-5		
4. 3/5	Psalms 19:7-11	The Properties of the Written Word, Part 3: Inerrant Veracity <i>Reformed Systematic Theology (vol. 1)</i> by Joel Beeke (pg. 371-382)	The Ten Commandments The Preface to the Commandments (pg. 29-43) by Thomas Watson	1689 Confession Ch. 1 Par. 6-8		First Draft Exposition Due *Certificate path will meet an extra night this week
5. 3/12	2 Timothy 3:15-17	The Properties of the Written Word, Part 5: Sufficiency <i>Reformed Systematic Theology (vol. 1)</i> by Joel Beeke (pg. 395-408)	The Ten Commandments The Right Understanding of the Law by Thomas Watson	1689 Confession Ch. 1 Par. 9-10		
6. 3/19	Matthew 19:17 + Romans 2:14-15	Introduction + The Essence of God's Law <i>God's Law Made Easy</i> by Kenneth Gentry (pg. 1-24)	The Ten Commandments The First Commandment by Thomas Watson	1689 Confession Ch. 19 Par. 1-2		
7. 3/26	Matthew 5:17-20	Christ and God's Law + The New Testament and God's Law <i>God's Law Made Easy</i> by Kenneth Gentry (pg. 25-46)	The Ten Commandments The Second Commandment by Thomas Watson	1689 Confession Ch. 19 Par. 3-5	Short Essay on the Sufficiency of the Scriptures *1,000-1,200 words	

