



# ShalomAZ Ministries

*In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption*

**"When It Doesn't Feel Like God Is With Us... He Still Is"**

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## **Devotion and Discussion Questions**

**Key Texts:** **Isaiah 8:1-8**; *Isa 7:14-25*; *2 Ki 16:7-10*; *Is. 30:15*; *John 1:14*; *Matt 1:22-23*

Isaiah's call was not an easy one. God told him from the beginning: *"You'll speak, but they won't listen. You'll declare My word, but their hearts will not perceive."* And yet God still sends His prophet, because His first plan is always mercy—an invitation to trust before judgment comes.

In Isaiah 7, we saw King Ahaz trembling as Israel and Aram plotted against him. God graciously invited him to trust, even offering him a sign. But instead of leaning on the Lord, Ahaz leaned on Assyria. He rejected the softly flowing waters of God's provision in favor of the mighty river of worldly power. The result was disaster. Now in chapter 8, God continues the message through Isaiah. It's both a sign of judgment and a sign of hope. Even when it looks like the floodwaters will overwhelm, even when it feels like God is absent, the reminder is this: *Immanuel—God is with us.*

### **1. THE WORD WRITTEN, THE WORD MADE FLESH (8:1-4)**

God told Isaiah to take a large placard and write four shocking words: *"Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz"*—"Speed, plunder, haste, prey." Like a billboard in giant letters, this message was meant to provoke questions. It pointed to the certainty of coming judgment, an enemy so confident in victory that they were already rushing to the spoils.

Then God told Isaiah that the word on the billboard would take on flesh in his own son. The child born to Isaiah and his wife would carry this name of judgment. Before that boy could even say "Abba" or "Ima," the nations Ahaz feared—Aram and Israel—would be swept away by Assyria. The written word became a living sign that God's word never fails. God still works this way. His word isn't abstract—it becomes flesh, it takes form, it becomes visible in our lives. And just as Isaiah's son was a sign, so Yeshua is the greater Word made flesh, Immanuel—God with us.

### **2. THE CHOICE BETWEEN STREAMS AND RIVERS (8:5-7)**

God used a beautiful contrast: the softly flowing waters of Shiloach, a gentle spring that quietly nourished Jerusalem, versus the mighty, raging waters of the Euphrates River. The people rejected the gentle stream as too small, too weak, too unimpressive. They wanted the power of Assyria's river.

But what we choose to trust in will either refresh us or overwhelm us. The mighty river that looked so strong would become a flood, spilling over its banks and sweeping everything away. Trusting the nations led to destruction; trusting the Lord would have led to peace.

We face the same choice. Do we rest in the quiet, steady flow of God's Spirit, His ways, His promises? Or do we chase the grand rivers of human strength, worldly systems, and visible power? One gives life. The other sweeps us away.

### **3. EVEN IN JUDGMENT, IMMANUEL (8:8)**

God says the floodwaters of Assyria will rise high—even up to Judah’s neck. It would feel overwhelming, like there’s no escape. And yet, in the same breath, Isaiah declares: “*Immanuel. God is with us.*”

This is the paradox of faith. The circumstances scream defeat, but God’s word declares His presence. The enemy may cover the land, but it is still “*your land, O Immanuel.*” The Lord never abandons His people. Even in judgment, even in exile, even in suffering, He remains the God who is with us. For us today, this is the anchor of hope: when it doesn’t feel like God is with us, He still is. When the waters rise, He is Immanuel. His presence is not proven by the absence of struggle but by His faithfulness in the midst of it.

### **CONCLUSION**

Isaiah’s message to Ahaz—and to us—is clear: Don’t despise the softly flowing streams of God’s provision. Don’t trade His presence for the flood of worldly power. Because when the waters rise, only Immanuel—God with us—remains our hope. The word written on Isaiah’s placard became flesh in his son, but ultimately pointed forward to the greater Word made flesh—Yeshua, the true Immanuel. He is with us, in judgment and in mercy, in suffering and in salvation.

Maybe you feel like you’re up to your neck in floodwaters. Maybe it feels like God has left you. Hear the word of the Lord today: He is still Immanuel. He has not left you. He has not forsaken you. The choice before you is the same as it was for Ahaz: will you trust the softly flowing stream of God’s Spirit, or the raging rivers of this world? Today, turn your heart to Him. Receive the assurance that even when it doesn’t feel like He’s with you—He still is. Trust Him afresh.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Why do you think Ahaz and the people found Assyria’s river more attractive than God’s stream?
2. What are some modern “rivers” we are tempted to trust instead of God’s provision?
3. How does the imagery of Isaiah’s billboard name show us the certainty of God’s word?
4. Why is it significant that Isaiah’s son’s name pointed to judgment while the promised child’s name is Immanuel?
5. How can we hold on to the truth of *Immanuel* when our circumstances feel overwhelming?

### **CLOSING PRAYER:**

Abba, thank You that You are Immanuel—God with us. Forgive us for the times we’ve trusted in worldly power instead of Your steady, gentle stream. When the floodwaters rise, remind us that You are still present, still faithful, still our hope. Help us to trust You, to rest in You, and to walk in Your ways even when it doesn’t feel like You are near. We cling to Your word and to Yeshua, the living Word made flesh.

In the name of Yeshua our Messiah, Amen.