

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_expositor-series-1.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php)

between them and the unbaptized husband would bar all argument from one to the other. That St. Paul did not find it necessary to say, "Your unbaptized children," suggests, perhaps, that baptism in infancy was not then very usual. But on this argument no great stress can fairly be laid. Whether or not the children were baptized, and whether they were infants or adults, they had an indisputable claim to the care of their Christian parents. Therefore, to render them such care could in no case defile the parent. Consequently, the matter of baptism had no bearing whatever upon the case. And this is a sufficient reason for the absence of all mention of the rite, even though it had been administered to some of the children. Similarly, as not affecting the argument, no mention is made of those "children" who had accepted Christianity. Yet it would be unfair to infer from this that none of the children of the believers at Corinth were themselves believers. It is, therefore, unsafe to draw from this Verse any inference about Infant Baptism.

JOSEPH AGAR BEET.

---

*IMMANUEL.*

ISAIAH VII. 14.

GOD was with Isaiah in an even deeper sense than with any other of the Hebrew prophets. Isaiah was, indeed, the St. John of that "goodly fellowship"—the prophet whom Jehovah loved. As we read his scriptures, we cannot but feel that he was admitted to a closer, a more inward and spiritual, fellowship with God than any of his brethren, knew more of his mind,

had more of his spirit, rose to a larger prevision of "the grace and the truth" which "came by Jesus Christ." That, indeed, is what we mean when we call him "the Evangelical prophet," and speak of his writings as "the Evangel of the Old Testament." He had seen God face to face; it was the vision of "the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up," which made him a prophet.<sup>1</sup> What he had seen, others might see. It was the ruling task and endeavour of his life to make them see it.

1. The burden of his prophecy to the nation, and to the world, was, *God is with us*: not far from us, though we have wandered far from Him; not alienated from us, though we have alienated ourselves from the life that is in Him; not adverse to us, though by our disobedience we have set ourselves against Him: but with us and for us—with us, to cleanse us from all our sins, now by the judgments which punish sin and now by the love that forgives it; with us that, having cleansed us from every taint of sin, He may establish us in righteousness. In effect He said to the sinful and affrighted people: "You need not climb to heaven in order to find God, nor cross the troubled sea, nor plunge into the dark shadows of Hades: He is with you, and within you, and proves Himself to be with you by the response which my words awaken in your hearts. Would you find Him, look within. You have only to look and listen to discover that He is already, and always, with you."

Now this is the evangelical tone; this is the good news which Christ has brought to all the world, which He illustrated in his life and demonstrated by his

<sup>1</sup> Isa. vi. 1-8.

death. And hence we very rightly name Isaiah "the Evangelical prophet," and find in his words the clearest and fullest anticipations of the Gospel.

2. Isaiah summed up his gospel, summed up, that is, the burden of his teaching as well as of his personal experience, in the name he gave to one of his sons. Beyond a doubt Isaiah's little son was a figure of Him that was to come, of Him who, being Himself both God and man, was most emphatically "God with us." But of this supreme and divine Immanuel it is not our present purpose to speak. For the present let us fix our thoughts on the first and inferior Immanuel, on the child who embodied Isaiah's great message to the men of Judah.

His *great* message, but not his *only* message. The conditions of the time were, indeed, too complex, and its moral condition too depraved, to admit of only one prophetic message. It was necessary that the Prophet should bring more messages from God than one—messages of warning as well as messages of comfort—to a people that had wellnigh lost God. Isaiah had to admonish them of the due reward, the natural consequences, of their iniquity, as well as to assure them that, despite their iniquity, God would never leave nor forsake them. The time was terribly out of joint, and there were few who even strove to set it right. And hence the people of Judah were threatened with nothing short of extinction. All their choice and trained warriors—"sons of might"—had fallen in a single day before the confederated armies of Israel and Syria. These armies, flushed with victory, were advancing to the siege and assault of Jerusalem itself. And, though Isaiah foresaw that the assault would fail, that the

hostile Confederation would be broken up, he also fore-saw that a State so corrupt and godless as Judah had become had doomed itself to destruction ; that it must fall before the first vigorous, resolute, and steadfast onset. God would be "with them" for the present indeed, and so with them as to deliver them from their immediate danger. And God would also be with them in the hour of apparent annihilation, watching over them in their captivity, and bringing back "a righteous remnant" to repeople their wasted land. But they must not hope to escape the natural results of their own weakness and division and corruption. The years were fast approaching in which the fierce and hasty Assyrians would "speed to the spoil and hasten to the booty," ravaging and depopulating both the holy land and the holy city.

These were the various messages, or various parts of one complex message, which Isaiah was commissioned to deliver. And it is very striking to observe how, not content with mere words, he embodied them in his own family life, in the very names he gave to his children and the children of the virgin-prophetess whom he took for his second bride.<sup>1</sup> The Hebrews, like most Eastern races, were very quick to see the *omen* in the *nomen*, the sign or portent in the name. Isaiah's own name meant "*the salvation of Jehovah*," and therefore expressed the ruling tone and purport of his mission. And of set purpose and design he so named his three boys as that they too might bear witness among the people for God, and remind them both of the admonitory and the consolatory aspects

<sup>1</sup> This is not the only interpretation of which the narrative imbedded in the earlier Chapters of Isaiah is susceptible: but probably it is the best, the most widely accepted by modern scholars.—EDITOR.

of his great message. Thus he named one of them Maher-shalal-hash-baz,<sup>1</sup> which means, "*Speed-spoil Hasten-booty*," in order to fix and perpetuate his warning that the fierce and terrible Assyrians would ere long sweep through the land, despoiling it of its wealth and making its inhabitants their prey. He named another son "Shear-jashub," which means, "*A-remnant-shall-return*," to remind them that, even when that terrible judgment fell upon them, and they were carried away captive to a strange land, God would not suffer them to be wholly consumed, but would preserve a sacred seed, a righteous remnant, from which a new and purer national life might spring.<sup>2</sup> And now he calls a third son,<sup>3</sup> the first by his new bride, *Immanuel*, to remind them that, whether in adversity or in prosperity, in freedom or in bondage, God would always be with them and for them—not absent, not alienated, not adverse.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Isa. viii. 1-4.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. vii. 3; x. 20-23.

<sup>3</sup> The true rendering in Isaiah vii. 14, is probably, "And *thou* shalt call his name Immanuel."

<sup>4</sup> A curious and, so far as I know, unnoticed parallel to the significant names of Isaiah's three children may be found in the names which the prophet Hosea gave to his three children by the immediate direction of Jehovah. Hosea was commissioned to warn the house of Israel that a day of retribution was at hand, on which God would reject them as not his people, and refuse to have mercy upon them; and to promise that this day of storm and cloud should be followed by a still ampler day of brightness and compassion, on which He would once more acknowledge them as his own and would have mercy upon them. This complex message, like that of Isaiah, was embodied in the names of the Prophet's children. Of his firstborn the Lord said (Hosea i. 4) unto him: "Call his name *Jezreel*; for yet a little while and *I will avenge the blood of Jezreel*"—*i.e.*, the blood shed on the fertile plain of Jezreel by Ahab and Jezebel—"upon the house of Jehu, and will put an end to the monarchy of the house of Israel." Of his second son the Lord said (Chap. i. 9): "Call his name *Lo-ammi* (*i.e.*, "*Not-my-people*")"; for *ye are not my people*, and I will be none of yours." And of his daughter it is said (Chap. i. 6): "Call her name *Lo-ruhamah* (*i.e.*, "*Not-pitied*")"; for *I will no more have pity* upon the house of Israel." So far we hear only notes of warning and menace; but in Chapter ii. Verse 23, they pass into a gracious and hopeful music. For here the prophetic significance of these names is played upon and

And that this was, as has been said, Isaiah's great and ruling message, that his mission was one of comfort mainly, and not mainly one of judgment and warning, becomes evident to us—not only as we catch the tone and spirit of his writings, but—as soon as we consider the household names which led him to exclaim:<sup>1</sup> “Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are *for signs* and *for portents* in Israel!” For, if one of these names implied judgment, three of them implied mercy. The omen in the name “Speed-spoil Hasten-booty” was doubtless full of terror; for the Assyrians were the most fierce and cruel race of ancient times, and would sweep through the land like a destructive storm; but, if this one name was so terribly ominous and suggestive, all the others speak of an untiring and inalienable compassion: “Shear-jashub” predicted that God would bring back a faithful remnant even from the cruel bondage of Assyria; “Immanuel” assured them that God would be with them in all their perils and reverses; while the name of Isaiah himself pointed to the end of all Jehovah's dealings with them—“salvation” from all evil.

3. But now, after this brief glance at the whole of this strange prophetic household, let us confine our attention to the little son whom Isaiah named Immanuel; or, rather, since we know nothing of *him*, let

brought out in a promise bright with the hope of renewed life and restored favour to the sinful nation; and even the appellative meaning of the firstborn's name, not touched before, is woven into the promise. The meaning of the word *Jezreel* is “*God sows*,” and the Verse, crowded with an immense significance, runs thus: “And I will *sow* her (*i.e.*, the nation) for myself in the land; and *I will have pity* upon *Not-pitied* (Lo-ruhamah); and I will say to *Not-my-people* (Lo-ammi), *Thou art my people*, and she shall say to me, My God.”—EDITOR.

<sup>1</sup> Isa. viii. 18.

us confine our thoughts to the meaning of his name and the reasons for which it was given him.

“Immanuel” means, we say, “God with us.” And that is true, but true in a way which robs the name of half its force. We have but to pronounce the word deliberately, *Immānu-el*, to see that the Sacred Name *El* is the final syllable of it; and that, to be quite exact, we ought to translate it not, “*God with us*,” but “*With us God*.” Now “God with us” conveys much; but turn it round and say, “*With us God*,” *i.e.*, place the emphasis rightly, and surely the word conveys much more both to the intellect and the heart. For then we see that God is not simply with us as He is with all his creatures and works, but with *us* in some emphatic and pre-eminent sense. With *us* as He cannot be with the non-intelligent creatures around us, who can make no moral response to a Presence of which they are not conscious. Nay, more; *with us*—so the emphasis seems to imply, and so the history of the Name assures us—though we have too much reason to fear that He may have abandoned us; our Friend and Saviour, although we may deem Him our Adversary; *with us*, although we are not consciously with Him; *for us*, although we have been against Him; *with us* in the hour of judgment no less than in the days of his bounty: *with us and for us* when He smites us for our sins, no less than when He forgives our sins, since He does but smite that, being smitten, we may turn and repent, and suffer Him to be once more gracious unto us.

And to those who have any real and deep sense of their personal iniquity, to whom the confession of sin and the prayer for absolution are not mere words but

sacred and impressive realities ; to those to whom the defiling taints and depraving processes of sin bring an agony beyond all others ; to as many as make it the supreme endeavour of life to escape from the bondage of evil and to rise into their right relation with God and man, the message of this Word, the assurance that, despite their alienations and transgressions, God is *with* them and *for* them, *with* them in all the agony of their self-abasement, and *for* them in all their futile-seeming endeavours after righteousness—this is of all messages the most welcome they can hear. It melts and deepens their sorrow into a cleansing and saving penitence ; it lends new life and vigour and steadfastness to their endeavours and their hopes. And this was the message borne to his generation by Isaiah's little son ; this is the message which every servant of God is sent to bear to his weak and sinful fellow-servants. The light of God's love does not cease to shine because for a while it is intercepted by the clouds which it has drawn up from our transgressions, or from our indifference, or from our too constant traffic and undue devotion to the things that are seen and temporal : it shines on a steadfast and eternal light, ripening every seed of good within us, however slow and obstructed the growth may be, and for ever testifying to us that, even though there be as yet no visible sign of harvest, in due time we shall reap if we faint not.

Yes, and shall reap, even if we do faint and lose hope for a time. Professor Tyndall has told us how, as he wandered through the higher Alpine pastures in the earlier months of the present summer, he was often surprised to find at evening lovely flowers in full bloom where in the morning he had seen only a wide

thin sheet of snow. Struck with the strange phenomenon, unable to believe that a few hours of even the most fervent sunshine had drawn these exquisite flowers to their full maturity, he carefully scraped away the snow from a few inches of pasture, and examined the plants that were growing beneath it. And, to his surprise and delight, he found that the powers of life had been with them even while they seemed wrapped in death; that the sun had reached them through the snow; that the snow itself had both held down the rising warmth of the earth upon them, and sheltered them from the cold biting winds which might else have destroyed them. There they stood, each full grown, every flower maturely developed, though the green calyx was carefully folded over the delicately coloured petals; and no sooner was the snow removed, no sooner did the rays of the sun touch the green enfolding calyx, than it opened and revealed the perfect beauty it had shrouded and preserved. And so, doubtless, we shall one day find that God, our Sun, has been with us even during the winter of our self-discontent, all through the hours of apparent failure and inertness, quickening in us a life of which we gave but little sign, maturing and making us perfect by the things we suffered; so that when the hindering veils are withdrawn, and the full light of his love shines upon us, at that gracious touch we too may disclose a beauty of which we had not dreamed, and of which for long we gave no promise.

. 4. If we ask *why* Isaiah gave this Name to his son, no doubt we must answer, as has already been said, that his main reason was that he meant the Name to convey his great message, the burden of all his pro-

phacies to the people to whom he had been sent ; to be an outward and visible sign of the inward and invisible presence of God, a constant sign of a constant Presence : he meant it to testify that God was with them, and would be with them, amid all the changes of the national life, and even in that great catastrophe which would seem to bring the national life to an end, but which, purging and renewing it, would only start it afresh on a new and larger career.

5. But he may have had other reasons than this. He may have meant the name to speak to *him* as well as to the nation. He may have desired to bring the message of the Name into his personal and family life. For, after all, a prophet is but a man of like passions with ourselves, subject to the same infirmities and fluctuations of spirit, "warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer." There were times, no doubt, when even Isaiah lost faith in his own function, in his own message, when the very man who had assured a sinful nation that God was with them could hardly believe that God was with *him*, or could even cry out, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man!" And in such moments as these, when, weary of the world and weary of himself, he lost courage and hope, he may have felt that it would be well for him to have that in his very household which would help to recall the truths he had recognized and taught in hours of clearer insight, help to restore the faith with which he had first sprung up to greet the Divine message. We may well believe that there were many darkened hours in his experience, hours of broken faith and defeated hope, when he would fall back on his earlier faith and brighter hopes ; when he would call his little

son to him, and, as he fondled him, would repeat his name, Immanuel, Immanuel—God-with-us, God-with-us—and find in that Name a charm potent to restore his waning trust in the gracious presence and gracious will of Jehovah.

6. And, finally, Isaiah may have felt, as we feel, that God is with a little child in quite another sense, in a more pathetic sense, than He is with grown men. To him, as to us, their innocence, their loveliness, and above all their love, may have been the most exquisite revelation of the purity and love of God. "Heaven lies about their infancy;" and in this heaven the Prophet may often have taken refuge from his cares, despondencies, and fears. Every child born into the world brings this message to us, reminds us that God is with us indeed and of a truth; for whence did this new, pure, tender life come if not from the central Fountain of life and purity and love?

And from this point of view Isaiah's "Immanuel" is but the ancient analogue of our Lord's tender words: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." NIGER.

---

## THE BOOK OF JOB.

### VII.—THE INTERVENTION OF ELIHU.

---

#### SECOND DISCOURSE (CHAPTER XXXIV.)

ELIHU has already addressed himself directly to the Friends (Chap. xxxii.), and to Job (Chap. xxxiii.); he had accused *them* of condemning a man whom they could not refute, and *him* of charging with silence and indifference the God who speaks to men in many ways. And now he turns and addresses himself to the by-