

contains were evidently revealed to the prophet not more than a year or two later. The wicked scheme of Ahaz to seek deliverance of his land from the two nations to the north by means of an alliance with the powerful heathen Assyrian power was probably no longer a secret, since Isaiah refers to it in more definite terms than before. In chapter 7 God had said that, if a child were to be conceived and born in the very near future, before that child would be able to make simple choices the king of Samaria and the king of Damascus would have disappeared from the scene of history. In 8:1-4 He gave a similar sign though referring to a shorter period. He said that the prophet would have a son, and that before this child would be able to say "papa," and "mama" the "riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria" would "be taken away before the king of Assyria."

Some have suggested that the child here described is the same child as the "Immanuel" of chapter 7. This is clearly impossible. The son of the prophet Isaiah could not possibly be worthy of the glorious Messianic prediction of chapter 7. Moreover, his name has a meaning utterly different in character. The name, "Immanuel," declares God's presence with His people, but the name "Maher-shalal-hash-baz" means "hasten the booty, hurry the spoil," and is a picture of coming war and plunder. Also, the interval between the birth of the first child and the destruction of the hostile kingdoms is much shorter in the case of the prophet's son.

The promise of Isaiah 8:3-4, like those in chapter 7, has in it the element of comfort for the true people of God, and also that of rebuke for Ahaz and his wicked associates. They are to be given to understand that God is abundantly able to protect His city and does not need their evil schemes for this purpose, but that great disasters will result from the Assyrian alliance. Instead of the peace and happiness that could come from God's presence, there will be booty and despoliation.

The next verses (5-8) stress the actual results of their foolish plan. Since the people are not content to trust in God and in the still small voice through which He speaks, typified here by "the waters of Shiloah that go softly," the Lord is going to bring quite another river upon them, the tempestuous force of the mighty armies of the king of Assyria, who will come up over all its channels and go over all its banks,