

Note: The first few verses of chapter 8 are filled with symbolic images. God ordered Isaiah's second son to be named *Mahe-shalal-hash-baz*, which means approximately "quickly to the plunder." The naming was given as a prophecy of Judah's impending overthrow and plundering by Assyria. To help spread word of this prophecy, it appears that the Lord told Isaiah to write *Mahe-shalal-hash-baz* in big letters on a large scroll and hang the scroll in some public place. (Isaiah 8:1) The Lord also used the naming of Isaiah's first son *Shear-jashub* as a form of prophecy. The name *Shear-jashub* means "the holiness of God" (Isaiah 7:3). Isaiah took his son with him to confront King Ahaz. The son *Shear-jashub* was a sign of God's power being present, and meant that Ahaz should trust the Lord as he went into battle.

1. Isaiah used several different images to describe the coming invasion by the Assyrians. Name some of these images and symbols. (Is 8:7-8)
2. How does Isaiah describe the uselessness of the defense that Israel and Judah will put up against the Assyrians? (Is 8:9-10)
3. Describe the warning God gives to Isaiah. List the "ways of this people" he is not to follow. (Is 8:11-13)
4. What did Isaiah say would happen to the people of Israel because of their refusal to trust the Lord's warning/advice? (Is 8:12-15)
5. How can we tell from the prophecy in Isaiah 8:12-15 that the Lord is speaking to all Jews, those in both the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom? (Is 8:14)
6. *Challenge:* How can the Lord be both a holy place as well as a rock that causes people to stumble and fall? (Is 8:14) Or a snare and a trap? (Is 8:14)
7. Many scholars believe that Isaiah did not act alone, but had the support of a prophetic school of students who continued to add materials to the scrolls left in their keeping. What instructions does Isaiah receive from the Lord to preserve what the Lord tells him to do? (Is 8:16)
8. *Challenge:* In Isaiah's time, many people consulted mediums and fortunetellers. (Is 8:19-20)
 - a. How does Isaiah confront and refute those who consult with mediums and fortunetellers?
 - b. Why are astrology readings, fortune tellers, and psychics so attractive to millions of people, even today?
 - c. How would you explain to someone the difference between a prophet and a fortuneteller?
9. What will become the behavior and attitude of those who do not follow God's instructions? (Is 8:20-22)
10. The people of Judah curse their king and their God. (Is 8:21-22)
 - a. What is the situation of the people in Judah that they curse their king and their God?
 - b. Under what conditions today are individuals and groups likely to curse their leaders and God?