

THE SCANDAL OF FAITH

Isaiah 8:1-22; selected passages from Matthew 8-9

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 8

- A. There are three births mentioned in Isaiah 7-9:
 - 1. Isaiah 7: Child born of the Virgin named Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14; see Isaiah 8:8,10)
 - 2. Isaiah 8: Child born to Isaiah's wife: Maher-shalal-hash-baz. (means: "Swift is the booty, speedy is the prey") (Isaiah 8:1-4).
 - 3. Isaiah 9: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6-7).
- B. Childbirth is very important in the Bible because it was through the birth of children that Satan and the dominion of sin and death would be overcome (Genesis 3:15; cf. Revelation 12).
- C. The background of Isaiah 8 was the decision Ahaz, descendant of King David, faced: rebellion against Assyria or turn to Assyria for protection/salvation from King Rezin of Aram and Pekah the king of Israel (Isa.7:1; cf. 2 Kings 16:5-18; 2 Chron.28:16-21). Isaiah told Ahaz to do neither but to trust in God's salvation, but Ahaz did not "stand by faith" (Isaiah 7:9; 8:19-20; see especially 2 Kings 16:3-4,5-10; 2 Chronicles 28:1-4,22-26).
- D. The importance of Isaiah 8 and its relationship to Matthew's Gospel:
 - 1. Matthew's Gospel teaches us that Jesus is Immanuel – God with us (Matthew 1:22-23).
 - 2. With the coming of Jesus came the Kingdom of God (Isaiah 9:6-7 with Matthew 4:23-24; 9:35).
 - 3. Just as God was doing a different and great work in Isaiah's day, the same was true in the time of Jesus. Who would have ever imagined that the Jews would stumble over the Messiah and crucify the Lord of glory? (see Isaiah 8:13-15; Matthew 21:42-46; Romans 9:33)
 - 4. If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all (Isaiah 7:9). When we are up against trying times in our life, our family, our work – will we put our faith in God and His Word or will we take matters into our own hands? (cf. Matthew 7:24-27)

I. THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM WAS SCANDALOUS

- A. The Gospel of the Kingdom was so scandalous that:
 - 1. Jesus was called demon possessed (Matthew 9:34; 12:24).
 - 2. Jesus had a reputation for being a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners (Matthew 11:19).
 - 3. The message of the Kingdom was so scandalous that the Jews were provoked to say, "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15; cf. Genesis 49:10).
 - 4. The Gospel of the Kingdom was so scandalous that the Lord of Glory was crucified (1 Corinthians 1:23; 2:8).

scandal (*skandalon*) – something that gives offense or causes revulsion, that which arouses opposition; the cause of ruin or destruction (Isaiah 8:14; Romans 9:33; 1 Peter 2:8).

- B. The Pharisees despised God's grace, mercy, and compassion shown toward sinners through Jesus Christ (Matthew 9:12-13).

SALVATION: The removal of our sins AND the removal of unrepentant sinners from the earth. Salvation is the judgment of our sins (cross) and the judgment of sinners, which happens at the end of the age when Jesus returns.

- C. The Pharisees thought that what was holding God's blessing back from the nation was the lawlessness of the kinds of people Jesus came to save (Deuteronomy 28:1,12,13).
 - 1. Israel was not lending to many nations, but Rome was exacting tribute and taxes from her (Deut.28:12).
 - 2. Israel was the tail and not the head (Deut.28:13).
 - 3. Israel was on the bottom and not on the top (Deut.28:13).

II. HOW IS IT THAT THE PHARISEES WERE WAITING FOR THE COMING OF MESSIAH AND MISSED HIM, WHILE THE TAX COLLECTORS AND SINNERS WERE NOT WAITING FOR THE MESSIAH AND YET WERE FOUND BY HIM? HOW IS IT THAT THE PHARISEES PURSUED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND DID NOT ATTAIN IT, AND YET THE SINNERS WHO DID NOT PURSUE RIGHTEOUSNESS ATTAINED IT?

- A. Matthew 8-9 is about men and women, Jews and Gentiles who don't have perfect "statistics." And it is about their faith in Jesus and how only through faith in Christ can we be made whole.
- B. Our best is not good enough for God, and until we realize that, we can never be saved. But once we realize that our best is not good enough for God, then we can cry out to Jesus to save us.

"People say Gandhi lives a more virtuous life than most Christians. Why should he be sent to hell just because he wasn't a follower of Jesus?"...Ravi Zacharias answers this question by saying, "Now, think about this: the Bible says anyone spending eternity with God in heaven is there because of the grace and provision of Jesus Christ, which the person has trusted and received. If the person has rejected that grace, then was he a good man or a bad man? That's an interesting question, because Scripture tells us nobody is really good until he or she is first redeemed" (Strobel quoting Ravi Zacharias, *Case for Faith* p.157).

- C. Righteousness in Romans (**Romans 9:30-33**; cf. Romans 1:16-17; 3:21-22; 10:1-4)
1. Gentiles were renowned for their paganism (Romans 1:18-32).
 2. Through faith in Christ, Gentiles attained a righteousness they did not pursue!

Matthew 21:28-32 (NIV)

28 "What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.'

29 "'I will not,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.

30 "Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go.

31 "Which of the two did what his father wanted?" "The first," they answered. Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you.

32 For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

QUESTIONS FOR SABBATH DISCUSSION & MEDITATION:

Take what you have learned this morning and make it into a prayer. Pray that your heart would not be hardened to the Word of God and that the Spirit of God would challenge you to grow and dig deeper in the Scriptures.

What were the names of the three children in Isaiah 7,8,9?

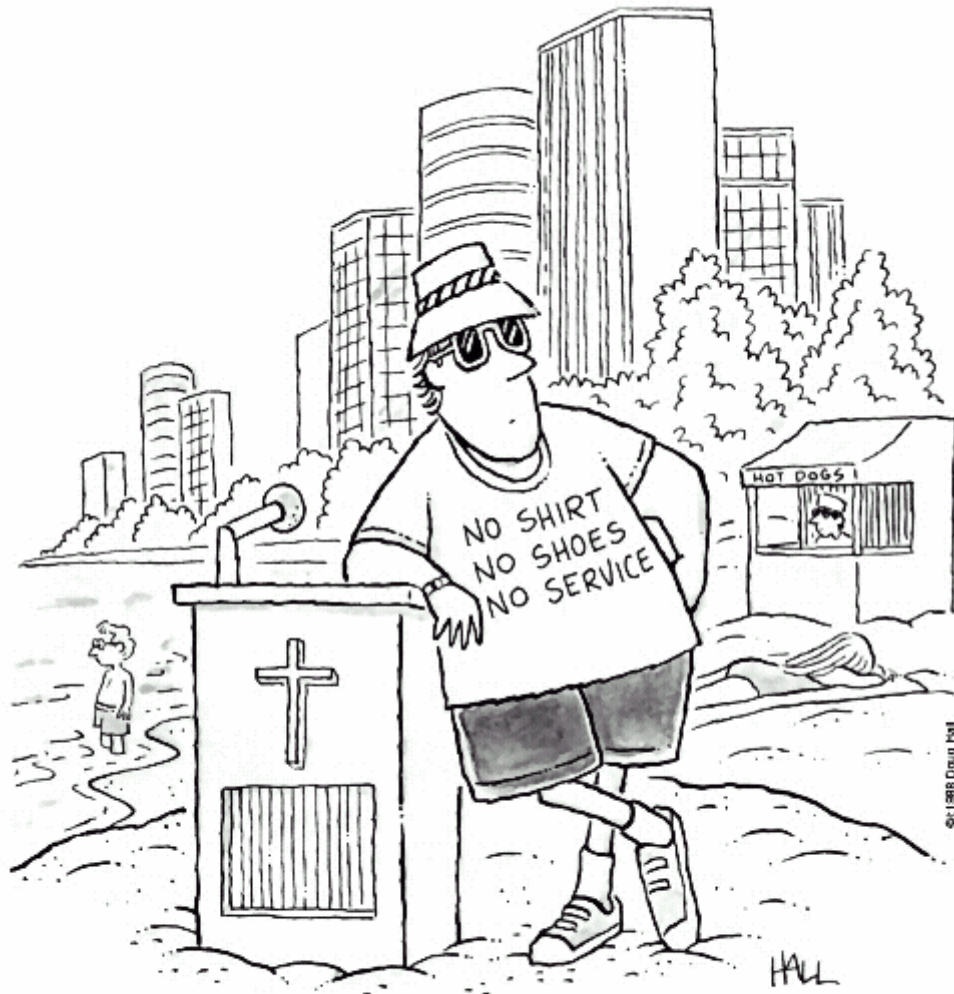
Fill in the blank, "If you do not stand firm in your _____, you will not _____ at all (Isaiah 7:9).

What is the meaning of "scandal"?

Why did the Pharisees want judgment for sinners, tax collectors, prostitutes, and Romans?

How is it that the Pharisees pursued righteousness and did not attain it, and yet the sinners who did not pursue righteousness attained it?

Should we try and become better people before we come to Jesus for salvation?



Eventually, Hank realized he was too rigid
for beach ministry.