

2 Nephi 18 — Isaiah 8 — Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, the Sanctuary and the Stone of Stumbling

The prophetic-named son, the waters of Shiloah, the Lord as sanctuary and stone of stumbling, the law and the testimony, c. 733 BC.

Two load-bearing doctrines anchor this chapter. The Lord is *a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offense* (v. 14) — Paul, Peter, Christ Himself cite this verse. *Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples* (v. 16) — foundational canon-doctrine for the Restoration's Standard Works. *And to the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them* (v. 20) — the canon as the test of every doctrinal claim.

Ten Insights

- 1. Great roll, man's pen (v. 1).** Prophecy recorded in ordinary materials — regular tablet, man's stylus. The Brass Plates and the BoM honor the same materiality.
- 2. Maher-shalal-hash-baz (v. 1).** Longest personal name in the OT. *Swift-the-spoil, hasten-the-prey* — the prophecy compressed into a name; every time the boy is called, the prophecy is re-spoken.
- 3. The prophetess (v. 3).** Isaiah's wife as *neviah* — prophetess in her own right. Prophetic ministry is married, embodied, conjugal.
- 4. Waters of Shiloah that go softly (v. 6).** The Lord's gentle covenant-provision, refused by Judah. The disciple often prefers spectacular interventions to the quiet daily soft waters.
- 5. Waters of the river (vv. 7–8).** The Euphrates — Assyria's flood. What is refused in the soft mode comes in the violent mode.
- 6. Reach even to the neck (v. 8).** Judah will be inundated up to the chin — drowning but not drowned. Severity but not annihilation. Fulfilled at Sennacherib's 701 BC siege.
- 7. For God is with us (v. 10).** *Ki Immanu El* — same exact name as 7:14. Take counsel; it shall come to naught. Whatever organizes against the covenant cannot stand because Immanuel is with us.
- 8. Sanctify the Lord; let him be your fear (v. 13).** Fear-reorientation. What you fear, you sanctify; what you sanctify becomes your master. Make the Lord your fear; crowds out lesser fears.
- 9. Sanctuary and stone of stumbling (v. 14).** One Lord, two relations. Refuge to the trusting; stumbling-stone to the refusing. Cited at Rom. 9:32–33; 1 Pet. 2:6–8; Lk. 2:34.
- 10. To the law and to the testimony (v. 20).** *L'torah u-l'te'udah* — the canon is the test. If any teaching does not align, there is no light in it. Foundational scripture-doctrine.

Cross-References

Gen. 4:7; Ex. 17:6 (rock from which water came); Lev. 19:31 (familiar spirits); Deut. 18:9–14 (no necromancy); Deut. 32:4 (Rock); 1 Sam. 28 (witch of Endor); 1 Kgs. 19:12 (still small voice); Ps. 18:2; Ps. 27:5; Ps. 91 (dwelling place); Ps. 118:22 (stone the builders rejected); Prov. 1:7; Prov. 3:5–6; Prov. 29:25; Isa. 6:8; Isa. 7:14; Isa. 9:2; Isa. 28:16; Isa. 30:15; Isa. 53; Jer. 6:16; Jer. 17:5–8 (cursed and blessed); Lam. 3:25; Ezek. 14:14; Mic. 3:7; Hab. 2:14; Zeph. 3:5; Mal. 4:5–6; Matt. 4:7 (tempt not the Lord); Matt. 16:18 (upon this rock); Matt. 21:42 (stone rejected); Lk. 2:34 (set for fall and rising — direct citation); Lk. 20:17–18; Jn. 9 (pool of Siloam); Acts 4:11; Rom. 9:32–33 (stumbling stone — direct citation); 1 Cor. 10:4 (Rock was Christ); Eph. 2:20 (chief cornerstone); 1 Pet. 2:6–8 (direct citation); 2 Pet. 1:19; 1 Jn. 4:1 (try the spirits); 1 Ne. 22; 2 Ne. 9:41 (gate-keeper); 2 Ne. 11; 2 Ne. 17 (Immanuel); 2 Ne. 19 (great light); 2 Ne. 27 (sealed book — direct enactment of v. 16); Jacob 4:14–17; Mosiah 3:5; Hel. 5:12 (rock of our Redeemer); 3 Ne. 11:39–40 (rock of doctrine); 3 Ne. 14:24–27; Eth. 4:5 (sealed two-thirds); D&C 11:24; D&C 18:4–6 (rock of revelation); D&C 50:43–46; D&C 88:118 (seek by study and faith); D&C 89 (Word of Wisdom); JS—H 1:11–20 (measuring claims by the law and the testimony).

Apocryphal Correlations

Wisdom of Solomon 5:14–23. *The hope of the ungodly is like dust... they shall stumble at the rock of offense* — direct stone-of-stumbling Wisdom parallel.

4 Ezra 14:21–48. *Bind up the testimony and seal the books* — direct sealed-testimony parallel; Ezra commissioned to seal the hidden books for the disciples.

1 Enoch 105:1–2. *In those days the books shall be given to the righteous and the wise* — sealed-testimony tradition.

Sirach 39:1–11. *He that giveth his mind to the law of the most High* — direct *limmudim*-as-Torah-disciples parallel to v. 16.

Damascus Document (CD) 1:13–15. Qumran community as bound-up-testimony-carriers; the Teacher of Righteousness preserving the sealed law.

4Q Florilegium (Qumran). Direct citation of Isa. 8:14 read messianically — *the stone of stumbling* identified as *the rejected Messiah* in pre-Christian Jewish reading.

Psalms of Solomon 17:21–46. Davidic Messiah purges Jerusalem; *blessed are they that fear the Lord in those days* — parallel to v. 13.

2 Baruch 51:7. *They shall behold the world which is now invisible* — sealed-revelation tradition; parallel to v. 16.

1QS (Qumran Community Rule). Community as *those who walk in the way of the Lord*; explicit refusal to *walk in the way of this people* (v. 11) enacted in Qumran's withdrawal.

Hebrew Word Studies

Maher-shalal-hash-baz (מַהֵר שָׁלַל חָשַׁבַּז, **swift-the-spoil, hasten-the-prey**) — vv. 1, 3. The longest personal name in the OT. The prophecy compressed into a name; each utterance re-speaks the prophecy.

mei ha-Shiloah ha-holkhim l'at (מֵי הַשִּׁלּוֹחַ הַחֹלְקִים לַאֲתָר, **the waters of Shiloah that go softly**) — v. 6. The Lord's gentle covenant-provision — slow, dependable, ordinary. The pool of Siloam in Jn. 9 is the same water.

tzur l'mikdash / l'even negef / l'tzur michshol (צֹרֶן לְמִקְדָּשׁ / לְעֵבֶן נֶגֶף / לְצֹר מִחֲשׁוֹל, **sanctuary / stone of striking / rock of stumbling**) — v. 14. Christological binary: one Lord, two relations. NT cites extensively — Rom. 9:32–33; 1 Pet. 2:6–8; Lk. 2:34.

te'udah / torah / limmudim (תְּעוּדָה / תּוֹרָה / לִמּוּדִים, **testimony / instruction / disciples**) — v. 16. The covenanted-witness, the covenanted-instruction, sealed in the disciples. Foundational canon-doctrine.

l'torah u-l'te'udah (לְתוֹרָה וּלְתְּעוּדָה, **to the law and to the testimony**) — v. 20. The canon as the test of every doctrinal claim. If not aligned, no light in it.

Personal Application

Three practices. First, attend to the soft waters of Shiloah. Most days, the Lord's provision is soft, slow, ordinary. The temptation is to refuse the soft for the spectacular. Name the soft water in your life today — the quiet prayer, the small impression, the ordinary friend's kindness. Second, let the Lord be your fear. Fear is finite; reallocate. When fear comes — political, financial, relational, existential — sanctify the Lord; let Him be your fear. The fear of the Lord crowds out lesser fears. Third, measure every claim by the law and the testimony. When something presents itself as authoritative — an idea, a teaching, a feeling — ask: does this align with the law and the testimony? If not, there is no light in it. The Standard Works are your measuring rod.