



Isaiah 8:16-22

Trust in the Hidden God ~ Darkness or the Light of Dawn

What are we tempted to do when the Lord seems to be hiding from us. Some refer to this time as, “the dark night of the soul.” It comes from a poem written by the 16th-century Spanish mystic and poet, St. John of the Cross. St. John wrote: "In this first verse, the soul tells the mode and manner in which it departs, as to its affection, from itself and from all things, dying through a true mortification to all of them and to itself, to arrive at a sweet and delicious life with God.” What he is describing is a process of us dying to ourselves in order that we find God.

Throughout this section of Isaiah 8, the encouragement is to place our hope in God alone (v. 17). What we learn from the text is that our humanity consistently reaches out to any other source but God. This causes most Christ followers to wonder about the journey these people are on, “Why is it so difficult to trust God and not look for other things to put our hope in?” As perplexing as this dilemma is, God never stops pursuing, He never stops loving us and encouraging us to press on.

The tribe of Judah is about to be taken into a 70-year dark night of the soul. God has no intention of abandoning them, instead He will use this time to prepare a remnant to return, stronger and more devoted to Him than ever.

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Notes	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p>Isaiah 8:16 Bind up the testimony; seal the teaching among my disciples. ¹⁷ I will wait for the LORD, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob, and I will hope in him. ¹⁸ Behold, I and the children whom the LORD has given me are signs and portents in Israel from the LORD of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion. ¹⁹ And when they say to you, “Inquire of the mediums and the necromancers who chirp and mutter,” should not a people inquire of their God? Should they inquire of the dead on behalf of the living?</p>	<p>t 8:17 See Isa. 45:14.</p> <p>u 8:18 Or “symbols.” Isaiah’s family was a living prophecy to all who discerned it.</p> <p>v 8:18 This verse has a dual meaning. Historically, it refers to Isaiah and his sons: Shear-Jashub, “a remnant will return,” and Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, “Quickly—to the Plunder! Hurry—to the Loot.” But there is another meaning to all this. In this verse, Isaiah becomes a type or picture of Christ, who would come to the earth (Immanuel). Hebrews 2:13 quotes this verse about the Lord Jesus Christ and his children. Christ and his disciples (children) will be for signs and wonders (miracles). <u>The Zion-realm is more than just a place. It is the realm where God and his people walk together in fellowship.</u> God wants to dwell in Zion with his consecrated ones.”</p> <p>w 8:19 Or “from God.</p>	<p>Isaiah 8:16 Now, tie up the scroll and preserve it as legal evidence. Seal my instructions for the future for my disciples. ¹⁷ I will wait for the Lord Yahweh, who hides his face t from the family of Jacob. And I will place all my hope in him!</p> <p>¹⁸ Behold—here I stand, and the children whom the Lord Yahweh has given me are for signs and wonders u in Israel, sent from the Lord Almighty, Commander of Angel Armies, who is enthroned on Mount Zion!v</p> <p>¹⁹ Now, suppose someone says, “Consult mediums and spiritists who moan and mutter their incantations in their ritual pits; after all, isn’t it right for people to seek oracles from their gods w by asking the dead about the destiny of the living?”</p>

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Translation (TPT)	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p>²⁰ To the teaching and to the testimony! If they will not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn. ²¹ They will pass through the land, greatly distressed and hungry. And when they are hungry, they will be enraged and will speak contemptuously against their king and their God, and turn their faces upward. ²² And they will look to the earth, but behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish. And they will be thrust into thick darkness.</p>	<p>x 8:20 Or “dayspring.” The implication for the believer is that we will have a “dawn.” The light of dawn is the hope of Jesus Christ that grows inside of us. The path of the righteous is like the light of a sunrise shining in the eastern sky. From dark to dim to bright, it increases (Prov. 4:18). In times of calamity, make sure you quiet your heart and seal up the Word of God in your soul. The dawning of Christ’s glory is coming. For us, the early rays of morning light are already shining.</p> <p>y 8:21 Or “gods.”</p> <p>z 8:22 Or “with no dawn.” The exact meaning of the Hebrew phrase is uncertain.</p>	<p>²⁰ You are to answer them: “Listen to the teaching and instruction of the Lord! If their speech does not line up with his word, they will have no light of dawn! x ²¹ They will wander here and there, distressed and hungry. And when they are famished, they will be enraged and begin to curse their king and their God. y If they look to the heavens ²² or to the earth, they will find only despair and darkness “and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into obscure darkness!” z</p>

- Bible Knowledge Commentary ~ John A. Martin

• The names that confirm God’s coming help (8:16-18)

- 8:16-18. Having been warned by God “not to follow the way of this people” (v. 11), Isaiah reaffirmed his dependence on God. By binding the testimony and sealing the Law (cf. v. 20), Isaiah was in effect inscribing it on the hearts of the [Vol. 1, p. 1052] Lord’s disciples. Because Hebrews 2:13 ascribes Isaiah 8:17c-18a to Christ, some interpreters feel that all of Isaiah 8:16-18 was spoken by the Messiah. Certainly the attitude conveyed in these verses was that of the Lord Jesus Christ. But in the context of Isaiah 7-9 these words should be ascribed to Isaiah (with the writer of Heb. applying them to Christ). This was the prophet’s attitude in spite of all the opposition he saw around him. Isaiah’s confidence is expressed twice in 8:17. I will wait for the LORD and I will put my trust in Him. The fact that the Lord was hiding His face (withholding His blessings) was no surprise to the people of faith. The Lord’s withdrawal was because most of the Judahites failed to follow Him. Even so, Isaiah still had confidence in the Lord, knowing that he and his children were signs and symbols of the Lord’s sovereign rule on Mount Zion (Jerusalem; cf. 2:3).

• In what way were they signs and symbols? Each one had a name that held significance for the nation’s future. Isaiah’s name, “Yahweh is salvation,” was a reminder that God will ultimately deliver His people. Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz’s name reminded the people that the Aram-Israel alliance would be broken by the Assyrians who would plunder those nations. The name Shear-Jashub kept before the people the truth that a believing remnant would return from captivity (cf. 10:21-22).

• The coming deliverance of Judah by God’s Word (8:19-22)

- 8:19-22. Isaiah again spoke of the people’s sinful bent. Most people want to know the future. Even people in Judah were pulled into the pagan practice of consulting mediums and spiritists, who specialized in trying, by whispering and muttering, to contact the dead (cf. comments on Deut. 18:10-12). Isaiah questioned the rationality of going to the dead to find out the future instead of inquiring of the living God. The place to look was in the Law and ... the

testimony (cf. Isa. 8:16), which contained everything the nation needed to know about her future. A person's failure to heed God's Word means he has no spiritual light (cf. John 3:19-20). Spiritists and mediums and those who consult them will eventually be judged by God (Isa. 8:21-22). In their distress they will look up to God and curse Him and look to the earth where they will face distress and then be thrust into ... darkness (cf. 2 Peter 2:17). Ironically those who seek to consult the dead will be forced to join them!

- Discussion Questions:

1. In verse 16, the Lord instructs Isaiah, "Seal my instructions for the future for my disciples." Why do you think God would want to hide something from His people? Has He ever hidden something from you? When is that last time you discovered a "hidden treasure" in God's word?
2. Even when Isaiah is rejected by the people he has come to help, his trust in the Lord remains strong. (v. 18) Where do you think his confidence is coming from? When you experience rejection from people, do you typically turn toward Jesus or away from Him? How is that working for you?
3. If the names, or the meanings of those names, of the people in Isaiah's story served as "signs and wonders," how would these manifestations of God's power impact the coming generations? Would you still consider it a sign and wonder even if it took some time to be seen? Can you think of something in your life that was a sign or wonder and later became an important part of your story?
4. How do you feel about the future? Is being a Christian and wanting to know the future a sin? Have you ever leaned upon what the book of Isaiah refers to as "mediums and spiritists" to help you figure out your future? What are some other more subtle things we might lean on to help us feel more comfortable with an uncertain future?
5. What does a relationship with God look like that has a strong component of trust at the center? How does that affect the way you do life?