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THE LATTER-DAY CONFEDERACY

(This study was given by V.T. Houteff September 30, 1939 and June 22, 1940.)

Through the prophecy of Isaiah 7 and 8 we plainly see that God's people are approaching a time that will demand of them great faith to believe implicitly in God's Word only.

Since the experiences which are recorded in the Bible were written for ensamples or object lessons for God's people today (1 Cor. 10:11), let us read a few verses from Isaiah 7 and then Isaiah 8, and glean the lesson there may be hidden there for us.

Isa. 7:1 -- "And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it."

This verse in conjunction with the verses which follow it reveal that God favored Judah (the two-tribe kingdom) even though at the same time Ephraim (the ten-tribe kingdom) were also His people. The reason He favored Judah in this instance was that their brethren (Ephraim) had joined heathen forces to fight against Judah. Therefore, God could not bless Ephraim's

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endeavor.

Through this experience we should gain the lesson as Christians that God will not bless the endeavors of any of His people when they join heathen forces in order to gain strength in their effort to overcome their brethren in Christ whom for some reason they wish to have put out of their way. Such an alliance cannot prosper.

Isa. 7:2 -- "And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind."

The people of Judah were afraid.

How would we feel if a like experience should befall us now? What would sustain us through it? -- The Lord again would be the only hope of His people.

Isa. 7:3-9 -- "Then said the Lord unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shearjashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field; and say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah. Because Syria,

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Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying, Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal: Thus saith the Lord God, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass. For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people. And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established."

God was here telling Judah that they should not fear this alliance because He was not sponsoring it. Israel and Syria were dependent on nothing greater than their kings and the capitals of their nations. Judah was instructed to depend on God's Word which declared that these allied powers would fail to overcome them. Moreover, Judah was told, "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established." In other words, Judah was told that if they did not believe what God was telling them they would lose out. Their survival, therefore, was wholly conditional on their complete belief in God's promise only that the alliance formed against them would fail.

The day is coming when you and I, too, must

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depend entirely on God's Word. But unless we know what God's Word is it is impossible for us to believe Him.

Isa. 8:9 -- "Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces."

God here is challenging a move toward a federation of nations.

With World War I we began to hear serious proposals for the associating of nations into a single league. Today the proposal is revived, and efforts are being made toward forming a strong and workable union of nations. Indeed, not only is the idea of international federation growing more and more prevalent, but in the minds of many great men, there is the positive conviction that the successful continuance of their nation's way of life is utterly dependent upon the closest association and cooperation of all those nations which share their way of life.

The warning given in this chapter to nations and peoples is not to associate and gird themselves or take counsel together, as it would only come to naught. There may be some significance in the repetitions of the warning. If so, it would indicate that either two or possibly three attempts would be made among nations

to associate and gird themselves, and it would only end in complete failure. If there should yet be another attempt and there be involved a war against Judah, then Judah, having no adequate means of defense among themselves, will have to let God be their means of deliverance.

Isa. 8:10 -- "Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word and it shall not stand: for God is with us."

God's people take a strong and independent attitude because they believe that God is with them. Most human beings are somewhat like Peter. We have great faith until we meet face to face a trial. When the trial here prophesied comes, though, God's people must know that God is with them, and they must firmly stand on His side. Through this verse we are made to understand the real reason for the certain failure of the nations in their attempt to obviate the fulfillment of their fears. God is not with them. It becomes distinctly apparent, therefore, that it is the pressing duty of every God-fearing country and individual sincerely to seek God's will and be with Him, if we are to survive and prosper.

Isa. 8:11, 12 -- "For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, Say ye not, A confederacy,

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to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid."

God's people are not only commanded not to participate in the confederacy, but they are to oppose it "to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy."

"Neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid." It is upon the root of some fear that the confederacy is formed. But that which constitutes their fear is not to constitute the fear of God's people.

Isa. 8:13 -- "Sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread."

God alone is to be revered; God alone is to be feared and dreaded. If there were no possibility for fear at the fulfillment of this chapter, there would be no need for this reassurance and instruction. It is indicative of the fact that God's People will see themselves absolutely helpless, and they will appear helpless to all others. Then they will receive deliverance from God, and all will behold it.

If God's people are approaching the time when they must either confederate or sacrifice their lives, they must be developing that faith which will cause them to believe that "in those

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days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them." Rev. 9:6.

Isa. 8:14 -- "And He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem."

A sanctuary is a place of refuge. Besides being a place of refuge to God's faithful ones, He is also to be a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel -- Judah and Israel -- and a gin and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the ruling city of Judah. From this it is plain that through this confederacy God is to be a gin and snare to antitypical Judah.

Isa. 8:15 -- "And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken."

This prophecy declares that the confederacy will be a snare -- a trap -- and that many will fall and be taken in it. It will be a fearful trap and will separate God's people. Thus is the Lord going to test all His people and let them reveal just how much faith each of them has. In the face of this warning, we must make the necessary preparation so that we will not fall into the snare. God has clearly forewarned His people so that they will not be taken by

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surprise.

In Isaiah 24 we are told that there would be a shaking as of an olive tree and but few men would be left.

The confederacy that we are studying this afternoon commences before the Loud Cry and before the slaughter of Ezekiel 9. It is not the Image of the Beast, for this association precedes the Image of the Beast, and the confederacy is formed when the nations are girding themselves for war. Put another way, the confederacy will commence after the sealing and perhaps just before the slaughter of Ezekiel 9. Moreover, it is in the time when the Christian nations are united that the woman "Babylon" will sit on the seven "heads" (Rev. 17:9), depicting also the union of the churches under Babylon.

All those who are not expecting the confederacy, but instead are expecting next the reassertion of Roman church supremacy or the battle of Armageddon or something else are going to fall into this snare, for it will appear to them harmless and perhaps even a good thing. But it will be their trap.

Isa. 8:16-18 -- "Bind up the testimony, seal the law among My disciples. And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth His face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for Him.

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Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in Mount Zion."

Someone will have faith. God does not mean by this that He is keeping His blessings away from Jacob, but it shows that though we cannot see His face, we can witness His power.

Isa. 8:19 -- "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?"

This shows that the world is going spiritualistic.

Isa. 8:20 -- "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them."

This does not mean that they are devils, but rather they are in darkness. When they learn the Truth, then they shall speak according to the law and the testimony of Jesus.



Isa. 8:21, 22 -- "And they shall pass through it, hardly bestead and hungry: and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward. And they

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shall look unto the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness."

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