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“To the Law and to the testimony”
– Isaiah 8:20

homo unius libri – “a man of one book”
– John Wesley

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Isaiah 7-8

➤ Context

- King Ahaz and Jerusalem are being threatened by Israel and Aram – the people are terrified
- King Ahaz refuses to trust God’s promise given by Isaiah – the point of no return

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Isaiah 7-8

➤ Context

- The Lord gives an unusual, remarkable sign – the sign of “Immanuel” (7:14)
- The Lord gives a verifiable sign of the soon coming judgment – *Maher-shalal-hash-baz*

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Isaiah 8:11-22

¹¹ For thus the LORD spoke to me with a strong hand and instructed me not to walk in the way of this people, saying,
¹² “You are not to say, ‘A conspiracy!’
In regard to all that this people call a conspiracy,
And you are not to fear what they fear or be in dread of *it*.
¹³ “It is the LORD of hosts whom you should regard as holy.
And He shall be your fear, and He shall be your dread.
¹⁴ “Then He shall become a sanctuary;
But to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock
to stumble over, a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of
Jerusalem.
¹⁵ “Many will stumble over them, then they will fall and be

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Isaiah 8:11-22

¹⁶ Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples. ¹⁷ And I will wait for the LORD who is hiding His face from the house of Jacob; I will even look eagerly for Him. ¹⁸ Behold, I and the children whom the LORD has given me are for signs and wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion.
¹⁹ When they say to you, “Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter,” should not a people consult their God? *Should they consult* the dead on behalf of the living? ²⁰ To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn.

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Isaiah 8:11-22

²¹ They will pass through the land hard-pressed and famished, and it will turn out that when they are hungry, they will be enraged and curse their king and their God as they face upward. ²² Then they will look to the earth, and behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish; and *they will be* driven away into darkness.

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God's Distinct People

1. A Holy Fear

- God's people are to fear Him only, not human and political affairs ("conspiracies") (cf. Psalm 46)
- God's people make Him the most significant factor of their existence, demonstrating by attitudes and behavior that God is holy
- God is both a sanctuary and a snare – either an ultimate refuge or a stumbling stone that destroys

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⁶ For *this* is contained in Scripture:

"BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER *stone*, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED."

⁷ This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve,

"THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE VERY CORNER *stone*,"

⁸ and,

"A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this *doom* they were also appointed.

(1 Peter 2:6-8)

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¹⁴ But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED, ¹⁵ but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; ¹⁶ and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.

(1 Peter 3:14-16)

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God's Distinct People

2. A Trustworthy Word

- Isaiah is to safeguard and attest to the truthfulness of God's word among the faithful disciples
- In the midst of calamity, Isaiah resolved to wait on the Lord and the sure fulfillment of His word
- The pursuit of alternative sources of guidance leads only to a hopeless despair and darkness

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God's Distinct People

➤ "To the Law and to the Testimony!"

- God's written word is the only and all-sufficient source of truth and hope for His people
- it ultimately reveals and leads us to Christ – the true light shining in darkness (cf. John 1:5,9)

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