
Turn Back the Battle: Isaiah Speaks to Christians Today
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Chapter 3 A paradigm for threatened Christians Isaiah 8:5-17

Questions for discussion and reflection

1. Memorise God's paradigm for threatened believers (Isaiah 8:11-14a)

Don't *walk* the way the world walks (as if God were irrelevant) (v11).
Don't *think* as the world thinks (only politically and materially) (v12a).
Don't *fear* what the world fears (pain, poverty, persecution etc) (v12b).
Think differently (spiritually, honouring the Lord as holy) (v13a).
Fear differently (fear only the Lord) (v13b,c).
Walk differently (by faith not by sight) knowing the Lord is with you

2. Do you think knowing this paradigm -- which is essentially a guide to counter-cultural living in a hostile world -- will help you persevere in faith through testing times? Why?
3. Does knowing the Lord's promise -- that to those who trust him he will be a sanctuary/*miqdas* (8:14a) -- give you confidence that you will be able to endure persecution? Why?
4. How does our king, Jesus Christ the Lord, compare to the kings of this world? (Consider Psalm 145 and 1 Peter 3:22.)
5. In order to bring you into his marvelous kingdom, Jesus Christ the King of kings came down from heaven and in great humility redeemed you with his own precious blood. What is your response to his love?

Prayer: *Living for the King.*

My God and king,

I praise you as the King of kings and Lord of lords.

(1 Timothy 6:15-17; Revelation 19:16)

I marvel that you, on account of love, came down and ransomed me,
rescuing me from the power of sin and death.

Upon the cross of Calvary you shed your blood so that I might live as
your blessed subject, secure in your unshakable kingdom.

What king on earth ever loved like this?

Lord, forgive me for the times I sought to blend into the world,

as if I was ashamed of what I am:

a beloved heir of the awesome and majestic King of glory!

Forgive me for the times I denied you or kept silent

in order to shield myself from the hostility of the world, even

after you surrendered to the hostility of the world in order to redeem me.

Forgive me for the times I have, in pure carelessness and short-sightedness,
or even out of misplaced fear,

allowed myself to be swept up in or devoured by the world

when you have called me to be different.

Lord, you have been so faithful to me;

forgive me for the times I have not been faithful to you!

May your Holy Spirit work in me to instill courage and faith enabling me

to walk, think and fear differently from the world at all times,

especially in those times when my first inclination would be

to hide rather than stand out.

I commit to believing and embracing your glorious promise:

that when I, courageously and in faith,

walk, think and fear differently from the world,

then, despite being in the midst of trials,

I will know that I am in your midst,

for your dwelling place will be with me,

surrounding and sustaining me in the most remarkable and awesome way.

In this I believe and to this I will cling.

May the devil have no victory over me!

'I will extol you, my God and King,

and bless your name forever and ever.' (Psalm 145:1)

Amen.
