



<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Who ya' gonna call?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The people of this world have concocted a plethora of human-centered viewpoints about how to handle life &amp; where to look for answers to the questions we humans face</li> <li>• What Scripture says is that there is one God &amp; Scripture reveals His eternal character from the 1<sup>st</sup> page to the last</li> <li>• And Scripture gives us the right answers to those many "human questions"</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Which do you prefer: truth or Truth?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This world will offer us a variety of human-centered truth - truth with a lower case "t"</li> <li>• Some of it will even claim to be "Christian" or "biblical", making a claim to "truth"</li> <li>• But Scripture &amp; Jesus Christ are God's ultimate special revelations about Himself</li> <li>• God's specially revealed Truth is the final &amp; absolute test of all other claims to "truth"</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: right; color: blue;">Isaiah 8:19-20</p> <p>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? <b>20 To the law and to the testimony+</b>! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn.</p> <p style="color: blue;">+ <b>To the law and to the testimony</b> is a Hebrew poetic pattern; "the testimony" was an alternate term for "the law"; the "law" (Hebrew: <i>torah</i>) was used for the five books of Moses (Genesis through Deuteronomy); the rest of the Old Testament was far from complete at this time</p>
<p style="text-align: center; color: blue;">Psalms 19:7</p> <p>The <i>law of the Lord</i> is perfect, restoring the soul; The <i>testimony of the Lord</i> is sure, making wise the simple.</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: blue;">Psalms 78:5</p> <p>For He <i>established a testimony</i> in Jacob And <i>appointed a law</i> in Israel,</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: blue;">Isaiah 8:16</p> <p><i>Bind up the testimony,</i> <i>seal the law</i> among my disciples.</p>	<p style="text-align: center; color: blue;">Isaiah 8:19-20</p> <p>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? <b>20 To the law and to the testimony!</b> <b>If they do not speak according to this word+</b>, it is because they have no dawn.</p> <p style="color: blue;">+ <b>Isaiah makes clear that God's word is the "gold standard" for what is true &amp; right; Moses had given the two measures of a prophet:</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Moses' two measures of a prophet</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A prophet must point people to God in his <i>forthtelling</i> (prophecy as spiritual insight &amp; direction, speaking as God's appointed mouthpiece), &amp; not to other spiritual "alternatives"</li> <li>• This was given in Deuteronomy 13</li> <li>• And, a prophet's <i>foretelling</i> (prophecy as prediction) must come true, or that prophet is not to be viewed as speaking for God (Deuteronomy 18)</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>God's word: "the acid test"</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gold doesn't react to most acids like other metals, but it reacts to nitric acid</li> <li>• So in the gold rush days of the mid-1800s, to confirm that a find was really gold they did 'the acid test'</li> <li>• The broad, but valid application of the message in verses 20-21 is that all that we hear, see, read, experience, etc. is to be fully tested by God's word (see 1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 John 4:1; Jude 3)</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Nobody was an Old Testament biblical prophet just because...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• of education &amp; background (Amos 7:14-15)</li> <li>• of an ecstatic experience or bold spiritual expression (1 Samuel 19:20-24)</li> <li>• of their numbers or popularity (Jeremiah 23:13-15)</li> <li>• of claiming to speak for God (Ezekiel 13:6,7)</li> <li>• of claiming special revelations from God (Jeremiah 23:25-32)</li> <li>• <b>There is lots of "spirituality" about, but not all of it comes from God</b></li> </ul>	<hr/>



<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Isaiah 8:21-22</u></p> <p>21 They will pass through the land hard-pressed and famished, and it will turn out that when they are hungry, <u>they will be enraged and curse their king and their God as they face upward</u>+. 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.</p> <p>+ A great many in difficult circumstances will simply be angry at God, not recognizing &amp; even refusing to recognize the spiritual significance of what is happening to them: <i>Gentile, Jew or among the Church, all difficulty has purpose</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Many have “Jewish eyes”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many modern Christians look upon life with “Jewish eyes”</li> <li>• They see “God’s blessing” in life as <i>favorable outward circumstances on earth</i> (Deuteronomy 28:1-14 is to Jews)</li> <li>• Similarly, many modern Christians “spiritualize” this “Jewish view” by measuring the truth of something or whether a message or experience came from God by whether they “felt blessed”</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Biblical Faith is Founded in <u>Facts</u>:</b></p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <pre> graph TD     A[Feelings] --- B[Faith (Belief, Trust)]     B --- C[Spiritual Facts Revealed by God]     style C stroke:#f00,stroke-width:2px     </pre> </div>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Ephesians 1:3</u></p> <p>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who <u>has blessed us with every spiritual blessing</u> in the heavenly places in Christ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where are the blessings? In Whom?</li> <li>• Has God withheld any blessing at all?</li> <li>• How do I know if those blessings are real?</li> <li>• Can I do anything to enhance or improve upon or modify those blessings in any way?</li> <li>• Do good or bad feelings or good or bad circumstances have <i>any</i> impact on those blessings whatsoever?</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Isaiah 8:21-22</u></p> <p>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 <u>Then they will look to the earth</u>, + and behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish; and they will be driven away into darkness.</p> <p>+ When a person refuses to look to the Lord for answers, they have little choice but to look for life’s answers from an earthly viewpoint: within themselves &amp; other human beings, politicians, circumstances, man-made religion, experience...</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Isaiah 8:21-22</u></p> <p>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 <u>behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish; and they will be driven away into darkness</u>. +</p> <p>+ For those who turn from the Lord, &amp; find themselves suppressing the truth, the outlook is not good, but it just gets worse; after first distressfully gazing upon the darkness, &amp; the gloom of anguish – more darkness will follow!</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Isaiah 8:21-22</u></p> <p>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 <u>as they face upward</u>. 22 <u>Then they will look to the earth</u>+, and behold, distress and darkness, the gloom of anguish; and they will be driven away into darkness.</p> <p>+ As believers whom the Holy Spirit has placed into the Church, we do not just face upward, but have been placed upward, seated with Christ; it is from there, seated with Christ, that we are to look upon things here on the earth</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>1 Corinthians 12:13a</u></p> <p>“For by one Spirit we were all baptized [placed by immersion] into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free...” (Galatians 3:26-28 contains a similar message)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Ephesians 2:4-6</u></p> <p>“But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus...” (our eternal position)</p>	<hr/>