

# Maher-shal-al-hash-baz

By

Sir Knight William McClean

**I**nevitably, one or two Sir Knights will share the information that this is the longest name in the *Bible*. A nice bit of trivia that, but I knew there has to be more significance to this phrase in order to put such emphasis on it among Templars. Sir Knight Glen Chandler brought it to the attention of readers of "The True Word" that this phrase translates to "make haste to the prey, fall upon the spoil." That is very interesting. How does it relate to the precepts of a valiant and magnanimous order that is renowned for its deeds of charity and beneficence? Perhaps there are some obscure and long forgotten definitions of the words "prey, fall, and spoil" that would make this phrase more in keeping with what Templars aspire to. Upon consulting my dictionaries, I found only negative connotations associated with them, nothing that men of good moral character would laud or should emulate. Rather it sounds more like a phrase that should be said while greedily rubbing one's hands together followed with a sinister laugh and a little bit of drooling. "Go quickly to the prey and fall upon the spoil."

It is in fact a phrase heard by victims shouted by approaching enemy troops used to encourage their companions as they closed in for an attack. So what's going on here? As it turns out, Maher-shal-al-hash-baz is part of a prophecy.

Upon entering the Prelate's apartment, sharp eyes could detect that the *Holy Bible* is opened to the book of Isaiah, Chapter 8 where we could read,

"Moreover the Lord said unto me, 'Take thee a great roll and write in it with a man's pen concerning Ma-her-shal-al-hash-baz,' and I took unto me faithful witnesses of record, Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah, and I went unto the prophetess, and she conceived and bare a son. Then said the Lord to me, 'Call his name Ma-her-shal-al-hash-baz for before the child shall have knowledge to cry, 'My father, and my mother,' the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria.'

The Lord spake unto me again saying. 'Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son, now therefore behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria and all his glory, and he shall come up over all his channels and go all over his banks, and he shall pass through Judah. He shall overflow and go over. He shall reach even to the neck, and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.

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. Take counsel together, and it shall come to naught. Speak the word and it shall not stand, for God is with us.'

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, to

all them to whom this people shall say, a Confederacy, neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.

Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread, 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.”

As you see, there are many folds in this passage.

### Prophecy

Maher-shal-al-hash-baz, make haste to the prey and fall upon the spoil.

That phrase of encouragement among looters would raise alarm and strike fear in the minds of their soon to be victims. It is as if the Lord told Isaiah to make a large banner and to write upon it in large bold letters that everyone could read “The pirates are coming, the pirates are coming,” and he wasn’t talking about Disney pirates. He also told Isaiah to get two witnesses to this. The witnesses he chose were specific and not the friends of Isaiah, but instead those chosen were unfriendly and rivals who would be happy to truly testify to actions taken by Isaiah where he would degrade himself. He then told Isaiah to name his second son Maher-shal-al-hash-baz. Doing so would start the clock ticking on fulfillment of the prophecy. Within two years, nine months gestation plus a year and a few months of development, “For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, ‘my father and my mother,’ the riches of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria.”

### Geography

What today comprises the modern state of Israel was divided into two states. The kingdom of Judah was to the south with Ahaz on the throne in Jerusalem. To the north lay Ephraim, with its capital at Samaria. You may recall the *Bible* story of the Good Samaritan. King Pekin ruled there. Further to the north was Syria with King Rezin ruling from Damascus, the oldest continually occupied city in the world. The big dog of the region, however, was the Assyrian Empire further to the north and east, astride the rivers Tigris and Euphrates.

NATION	CAPITAL	KING
Judah (Zion)	Jerusalem	Ahaz
Israel (Ephraim)	Samaria	Pekah the son of Re-miah
Syria (Aram)	Damascus	Rezin
Assyria(Asshur)	Ninevah	Sennacherib

### Alignments

King Ahaz of Judah was a man of shaky faith, and fearing an alliance between Ephraim, the northern state of Israel, and Syria against Judah, he sought and paid for assistance from Assyria against the alliance rather than turning to the Lord, the Almighty who is ever a tower of strength to all who put their faith in him. Ahaz bribed the king of Assyria to attack Ephraim and Syria. “The riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be taken away before the king of Assyria, for the Lord instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying ‘say ye not a confederacy, neither fear ye their

fear nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread, and he shall be for a sanctuary, but for a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”

### **Waters**

The little stream of Shiloh springs from Mount Zion on the southwesterly side of Jerusalem. It flows softly without a murmur, constantly providing for the needs of Israel and its people. Jerusalem’s existence depended upon its waters. The Assyrian empire sat astride the two great rivers Tigris and Euphrates which swell and rage out of their banks, flooding the surrounding lands. God is making a point comparing the small, humble, yet adequate waters of Israel with the mighty, yet uncontrolled rivers of Assyria. It is as if God is saying, “You don’t like what I have given you? You persist in rejecting what I give you? Then I will give you something else, but you won’t like it either, and good luck getting rid of it. Assyria will conquer the northern nation of Israel, the ten northern tribes will cease to be a nation. He will reach up to the neck but not over the head. Judah will survive but suffer much destruction.” The gold from the doors of the Temple in Jerusalem was stripped and given to the king of Assyria in an attempt to appease him. Ahaz even ordered the priest Uriah, one of the two witnesses, to convert the temple to the worship of the Assyrian gods.

By naming his son Maher-shal-hash-baz, Isaiah established a day to day living reminder, a lifetime of reminder of the prophecy and the accuracy of

Isaiah’s predictions. The eldest son of Isaiah was named Shear-Jashub (Isaiah 7:3) meaning “a remnant shall return.” This all foretold the destruction and exile that were coming, yet a remnant of the faithful would return and be preserved, leading to hope for the future. As these predictions came to pass in the short term, lifelong and centuries long, they established Isaiah’s credibility, his “street cred” in modern parlance.

Isaiah 8:18 reads “Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of Hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.” All of these prophecies paved the way for his most famous prophecy found in Isaiah 7:14 “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel.”

Isaiah 8:6 “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called ‘Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.’”

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