

# Isaiah

Ahaz's Choice  
Isaiah 7

1



## Introduction

This morning we are going to look at Isaiah 7. In this chapter we will read some of the more famous and controversial verses in the book.

We understand these verses speak of Jesus' miraculous entrance into the world.

However, let's study these verses in their context.

2


 Isaiah

# Isaiah 7:10-14

Moreover the Lord spoke again to Ahaz, saying, <sup>11</sup> “Ask a sign for yourself from the Lord your God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above.”

<sup>12</sup> But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, nor will I test the Lord!”

<sup>13</sup> Then he said, “Hear now, O house of David! *Is it* a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup> Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

3


 Isaiah

Isaiah 7:1

Now it came to pass **in the days of Ahaz** the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, *that* Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to *make* war against it, but could not prevail against it.

This event took place **in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham. Ahaz** was a wicked king of Judah, worshipping other gods and even sacrificing his son to Molech (2 Kings 16:1-4). The only good thing Ahaz seemed to do was father Hezekiah, who became a good king of Judah.

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**Rezin king of Syria and Pekah king of Israel** made an alliance and mounted an unsuccessful attack on Jerusalem is described in 2 Kings 16. Though the attack was unsuccessful, the war took a great toll against Judah. 2 Chronicles 28:5-6 documents that Pekah killed one hundred and twenty thousand valiant men in Judah in one day, all valiant men, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. Syria captured a great multitude and Israel captured 200,000.

5



Isaiah 7:1

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They could not prevail against Jerusalem because Ahaz entered into an ungodly alliance with Assyria. Ahaz gave Assyria silver and gold taken from the Temple as a present to win his favor and protection (2 Kings 16:7-9). The riches of Judah will bring Assyria back during the reign of Hezekiah.

6



Isaiah 7:2

And it was told to the house of David, saying, “Syria’s forces are deployed in Ephraim.” So his heart and the heart of his people were moved as the trees of the woods are moved with the wind.

It is important to understand that the events of this chapter happened *before* Ahaz made his final decision to put his trust in Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria. Though we are told the end result of the attack in Isaiah 7:2 (**could not prevail against it**), Isaiah is telling us the end result *before* he describes his prophecy to Ahaz. This disregard for chronological order may be frustrating to us but is completely natural to the ancient Hebrew mind.

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Isaiah 7:2

And it was told to the house of David, saying, “Syria’s forces are deployed in Ephraim.” So his heart and the heart of his people were moved as the trees of the woods are moved with the wind.

**Syria’s forces are deployed in Ephraim.** Ephraim is another title for the northern nation of Israel. King Ahaz heard that Syria and Israel had joined together to make war against Judah.

**So his heart and the heart of his people were moved as the trees of the woods are moved with the wind.** King Ahaz and his people react with fear instead of with trust in God. They are shaken and unstable in their hearts.

8



Isaiah 7:2

And it was told to the house of David, saying, “Syria’s forces are deployed in Ephraim.” So his heart and the heart of his people were moved as the trees of the woods are moved with the wind.

The people of Judah really are the people of *Ahaz* (**his people**), not the people of the LORD. God was not shaken or unsettled by this threat. If the king of Judah and the people of Judah had put their trust in the LORD, they would have had the peace of God in this conflict.

9



Isaiah 7:3

Then the Lord said to Isaiah, “Go out now to meet Ahaz, you and Shear-Jashub your son, at the end of the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller’s Field.

Isaiah was told to take his son, named **Shear-Jashub**, and bring a word from the LORD to Ahaz. He brought his son as a walking object lesson because the name **Shear-Jashub** means, “A Remnant Shall Return.”

10



Isaiah 7:4

and say to him: 'Take heed, and be quiet; do not fear or be fainthearted for these two stubs of smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria, and the son of Remaliah.

Seemingly, Ahaz needed to pay attention (**take heed**) and stop his talking about the problem (**be quiet**).

He needed to trust God and take courage in the LORD (**do not fear or be fainthearted**).

11



Isaiah 7:4

and say to him: 'Take heed, and be quiet; do not fear or be fainthearted for these two stubs of smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria, and the son of Remaliah.

Ahaz was a wicked king who put his trust in false Gods. His trust was misplaced. The armies had already devastated much of Judea and now they were headed towards Jerusalem. Isaiah told Ahaz not to fear or be fainthearted. From Ahaz's perspective and may have appeared hopeless, but not to God. God had made a promise to the House of David and God always keeps His word.

12



Isaiah 7:4

and say to him: 'Take heed, and be quiet; do not fear or be fainthearted for these two stubs of smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria, and the son of Remaliah.

Ahaz looked at Israel and Syria and saw a terrible threat. God looked at Israel and Syria and saw **two stubs of smoking firebrands**. To the LORD, they were all smoke and no fire!

13



Isaiah 7:5-6

Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah have plotted evil against you, saying, <sup>6</sup>“Let us go up against Judah and trouble it, and let us make a gap in its wall for ourselves, and set a king over them, the son of Tabeal”.

Isaiah tells Ahaz Syria and Ephraim's evil plot. They wanted to attack Jerusalem, defeat the capital of Judah (**make a gap in its wall**), then depose Ahaz and set up their own king. But God was not worried about their plans. This was most likely Satan's attempt to crush the Line of David to cut off Messiah.

14



Isaiah 7:7-8

thus says the Lord God: "It shall not stand, Nor shall it come to pass. <sup>8</sup> For the head of Syria *is* Damascus, And the head of Damascus *is* Rezin. Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be broken, *So that it will not be a people.*

God gives His unconditional promise that this evil council will not stand or come to pass.

God declares that in 65 years Ephraim will be broken and will no longer be a people. This will be fulfilled when Assyria will take the northern 10 tribes captive.

15



Isaiah 7:9b

If you will not believe,  
Surely you shall not be established.

Here is the challenge to Ahaz. God has promised, now the king of Judah must believe. If he **will not believe**, it will not affect the outcome of the attack against Jerusalem. God has already decreed that their attack would not succeed. But it would affect the course of Ahaz's life and reign as king (**surely you shall not be established**).

16



Isaiah 7:10-11

Moreover the Lord spoke again to Ahaz, saying, <sup>11</sup> “Ask a sign for yourself from the Lord your God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above.”

Through the prophet Isaiah, God invites Ahaz to ask for a sign. God has just challenged Ahaz to believe and be blessed, and now God offers to give Ahaz a basis for belief – **a sign for yourself.**

17



Isaiah 7:12-13

But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, nor will I test the Lord!” <sup>13</sup> Then he said, “Hear now, O house of David! *Is it* a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also?”

This *sounds* very spiritual from Ahaz. However, Ahaz refused to ask for a sign, because when God fulfilled the sign, he would be “obligated” to believe.

It is never testing God to do as He says, and if the LORD invites us to test Him, we should. Isaiah rebukes Ahaz for his disrespect to God.

18



Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

This is one of the most famous prophecies regarding the birth of Jesus the Messiah in the Bible. It also illustrates a principle of prophecy, that prophecy may have both a near fulfillment and a far fulfillment.

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Isaiah 7:15-16

Curds and honey He shall eat, that He may know to refuse the evil and choose the good. <sup>16</sup> For before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you dread will be forsaken by both her kings.

The *near fulfillment* of this prophecy centered around Ahaz, Jerusalem, and the attack from Israel and Syria. For Ahaz, the sign centered on this time span. Simply put, God would give Ahaz a sign that within a few years, both Israel and Syria would be crushed. This was a sign of deliverance to Ahaz. The name “Immanuel” was a rebuke to Ahaz. If “God is with us,” then why should he have feared the enemy?

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Isaiah 7:15-16

Curds and honey He shall eat, that He may know to refuse the evil and choose the good. <sup>16</sup> For before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you dread will be forsaken by both her kings.

The *far* or *ultimate fulfillment* of this prophecy goes far beyond Ahaz, to announce the miraculous virgin birth of Jesus Christ.

We know this passage speaks of Jesus because the Holy Spirit says so through Matthew: *“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,”* which is translated, *“God with us.”* (Matthew 1:23)

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Isaiah 7:13

Then he said, “Hear now, O house of David! *Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also?*”

We know this passage speaks of Jesus because the prophecy is addressed not only to Ahaz, but also to David’s entire house (**O house of David!**). We know this passage speaks of Jesus because it says **the virgin shall conceive**, and that conception would be a **sign** to David’s entire house.

22



Isaiah 7:13

Then he said, “Hear now, O house of David! *Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also?*”

Those who deny the virgin birth of Jesus like to point out that the Hebrew word translated **virgin** (*almah*) can also be translated as “young woman.” While the *near fulfillment* may have reference to a young woman giving birth, the *far or ultimate fulfillment* clearly points to a woman miraculously conceiving and giving birth. This is especially clear because the Old Testament never uses the word in a context other than **virgin**. The Septuagint also translates it categorically **virgin** (*parthenos*).

23



Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

We know this passage speaks of Jesus because it says He will be known as **Immanuel**, meaning “God with Us.” This was true of Jesus *in fact*, not only as a title. **Immanuel** speaks both of the deity of Jesus (God with us) and His identification and nearness to man (God with us).

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## So What ...

**Ahaz made a choice to trust Assyria rather than trust in God. Things seemed to work out. Jerusalem was saved, but there are always long-term consequences. Assyria will return but this time they will be the aggressor.**

**Like Ahaz, you also have a choice with lasting consequences. Will you choose Jesus or the world?**