

## Adult Sunday Bible Study Lesson

### The Prophet Isaiah

### The Lord Gives a Sign

October 25, 2020

**Situational Context: Isaiah 7:1-6 (ESV)** <sup>1</sup> In the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, son of Uzziah, king of Judah, Rezin the king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah the king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to wage war against it, but could not yet mount an attack against it. <sup>2</sup> When the house of David was told, “Syria is in league with Ephraim,” the heart of Ahaz and the heart of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake before the wind. <sup>3</sup> And the LORD said to Isaiah, “Go out to meet Ahaz, you and Shear-jashub your son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the Washer’s Field. <sup>4</sup> And say to him, ‘Be careful, be quiet, do not fear, and do not let your heart be faint because of these two smoldering stumps of firebrands, at the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria and the son of Remaliah. <sup>5</sup> Because Syria, with Ephraim and the son of Remaliah, has devised evil against you, saying, <sup>6</sup> “Let us go up against Judah and terrify it, and let us conquer it for ourselves, and set up the son of Tabeel as king in the midst of it,”

Judah is being threatened by an alliance of Israel and Syria to overthrow Judah and the throne of David. This is a direct threat to the Messianic line. Isaiah is being sent to Ahaz the King of Judah to comfort him that the Lord has been watching and commits to protecting Judah from this alliance. The two kingdoms were about to be destroyed: Damascus in 732 B.C. by Tiglath-pileser III, and Samaria in 722 B.C. by Sargon II. Isaiah 7:4

**Lesson Theme:** God Promises to Protect David’s House and Judah. God’s interest in preserving Judah lies in preserving Israel’s ultimate hope, the advent of the Messiah. The Lord is going to signal Ahaz as to His intent to prevent the replacement of the House of David and Judah by the sign of a virgin conceiving and bearing a child. This child is to comfort Judah and Ahaz that at this point Judah is safe. The New testament interprets this promise to apply the Virgin Mary

and Her Son. The Virgin or the child is therefore Isaiah's son, Maher-shalal-hashbaz, the name signifies the rapid devastation of Syria, Israel, and Judah, but also the presence of God with the remnant and the impending fulfillment of God's word. This child's existence will be a living sign that God is with Judah, just as Immanuel, Christ is God's sign that He is with His people.

**Isaiah 7:14-15 (ESV)** <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.** <sup>15</sup> **He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good.**

**1. The Lord Decrees: Isaiah 7:7-9 (ESV)** <sup>7</sup> **thus says the Lord GOD: “It shall not stand, and it shall not come to pass.** <sup>8</sup> **For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin. And within sixty-five years Ephraim will be shattered from being a people.** <sup>9</sup> **And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is the son of Remaliah. If you are not firm in faith, you will not be firm at all.”**

**Interpretation:** The Lord decrees the failure of this alliance to fulfill its designs on Judah. This should assure Ahaz as his own safety. God warns Ahaz that if He does not accept and believe the Lord's promise, he as king will not survive.

### **Supporting Texts:**

**Psalms 2:1-2 (ESV)** <sup>1</sup> **Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?** <sup>2</sup> **The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying,**

**Isaiah 17:1-3 (ESV)** <sup>1</sup> **An oracle concerning Damascus. Behold, Damascus will cease to be a city and will become a heap of ruins.** <sup>2</sup> **The cities of Aroer are deserted; they will be for flocks, which will lie down, and none will make them afraid.** <sup>3</sup> **The fortress will disappear from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus; and the remnant of Syria will be like the glory of the children of Israel, declares the LORD of hosts.**

**2 Chronicles 20:20 (ESV)** <sup>20</sup> **And they rose early in the morning and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. And when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said,**

“Hear me, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! Believe in the LORD your God, and you will be established; believe his prophets, and you will succeed.”

**Matthew 16:18 (ESV)** <sup>18</sup> And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

### **Discussion Starters:**

**How does this prophecy challenge Ahaz.**

**In a New Covenant context, to whom does this lesson apply?**

**Do the stakes of the outcome change the outcome?**

**How do the stakes affect our courage and faith?**

**2. The Lord Offers Assurance: Isaiah 7:10-13 (ESV)** <sup>10</sup> Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, <sup>11</sup> “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” <sup>12</sup> But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” <sup>13</sup> And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also?”

**Interpretation:** Ahaz initially rejects God’s gracious offer to give the King and nation a sign of His assurance. Ahaz thinks that God is trying to trick him into sinning and thus bring judgment upon himself.

### **Supporting Texts:**

**Deuteronomy 6:16 (ESV)** <sup>16</sup> “You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah.

**Deuteronomy 13:1-2 (ESV)** <sup>1</sup> “If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, <sup>2</sup> and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, ‘Let us go after other gods,’ which you have not known, ‘and let us serve them,’

**Psalms 86:17 (ESV)** <sup>17</sup> Show me a sign of your favor, that those who hate me may see and be put to shame because you, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.

**Matthew 12:39 (ESV)** <sup>39</sup> But he answered them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

**Discussion Starters:**

**Was Ahaz’s refusal a lack of faith?**

**Why would God offer Ahaz a sign?**

**Why would Ahaz say verse 13?**

**3. The Lord Promises: Isaiah 7:14-15 (ESV)** <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. <sup>15</sup> He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good.

**Interpretation:** Matthew understood the woman mentioned here to be a type (a foreshadowing) of the Virgin Mary. Immanuel. The name “God is with us” was meant to convince Ahaz that God could rescue him from his enemies. The Hebrew for “Immanuel” is used again in 8:8, 10, and it may be another name for Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz. Jesus was the final fulfillment of this prophecy, for he was “God with us” in the fullest sense.

The Assyrian invasions (732–722 BC) would devastate the countryside and make farming impossible. Thus, “when” this boy is 12 or 13 (722/721 BC), he will be eating curds and honey instead of agricultural products—due to the devastation of Israel by Assyria. This happened in 732 BC, when the boy was about two years old.

**Supporting Texts:**

**Matthew 1:23 (ESV)** <sup>23</sup> “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).

**Psalm 46:7 (ESV)** <sup>7</sup> The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Selah

### **Discussion Starters:**

**What is the nature of this sign?**

**Why give a living sign?**

**Is Jesus a satisfactory sign for believers of our present age that God is with us?**

**4. The Lord Warns: Isaiah 7:16-17 (ESV)** <sup>16</sup> For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted. <sup>17</sup> The LORD will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father's house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria.”

**Interpretation:** “Before” the boy is 12 or 13 years old, Aram and Israel will be plundered. This happened in 732 BC, when the boy was about two years old. Not only did the Lord use the Assyrians to judge the northern kingdom, He also used them to invade Ahaz's domain of Judah. This coming of the Assyrian king was the beginning of the end for the nation and eventually led to her captivity in Babylon.

Ahaz had sought an alliance with Assyria as protection from the current threat. A far worse judgment is coming if they do not repent. The Assyrians were known for their savagery. The Lord is going to judge Israel by the very nation Ahaz sought protection.

### **Supporting Texts:**

**2 Chronicles 28:20 (ESV)** <sup>20</sup> So Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria came against him and afflicted him instead of strengthening him.

**Isaiah 10:5-6 (ESV)** <sup>5</sup> Ah, Assyria, the rod of my anger; the staff in their hands is my fury! <sup>6</sup> Against a godless nation I send him, and against the people of my wrath I command him, to take spoil and seize plunder, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.

**Discussion Starters:**

**Why would God use the Assyrians as His means of judgment?**

**How does this warning to Ahaz apply to the church today?**