

Isaiah 7 Notes

Last week we studied Isaiah 6 where we saw Isaiah's powerful vision of God's holiness and his call to ministry. In his vision, he sees the Lord exalted on His throne surrounded by seraphim. At seeing such a sight, Isaiah is immediately overwhelmed by his sinfulness. A seraph takes a live coal from the altar and touches it to Isaiah's lips, symbolizing cleansing and forgiveness. When the Lord asks, "Whom shall I send?" Isaiah responds, "Here am I, send me!" The Lord proceeds to commission Isaiah to deliver a message to His people that would harden their hearts until judgment comes. He does, however, promise that a "holy seed" will remain. In chapter 7 we will see God's faithfulness in protecting His people, but how unbelief and misplaced trust can lead to disaster.

Verse 1

We studied this story last year when we went through II Kings 16.

We are looking at three different kings here:

- Ahaz - King of Judah (Southern Kingdom)
- Rezin - King of Aram (Syria)
- Pekah - King of Israel (Ephraim/Northern Kingdom)

At this time, Tiglath-Pileser III was the king of Assyria. Assyria was rapidly expanding and was threatening all the smaller nations in the region.

What were Rezin and Pekah doing? _____

We are told that they could not overpower it.

Verse 2

Ephraim was often used to refer to the nation of Israel after the split. It was one of the 12 tribes of Israel and it became the most influential and prominent tribe in the northern kingdom.

So we see that Israel (or Ephraim) aligned itself with Aram.

How did Ahaz and the people of Judah feel about this? _____

This shows their weak faith.

Verse 3

What does the Lord tell Isaiah to do? _____

He gives a particular location - the aqueduct of the Upper Pool - on the road to the Launderer's Field.

The Launderer's Field was located near Jerusalem, along the road that led to the aqueduct of the upper pool. This was most likely a place where clothes were washed. The location of the field in proximity to a water source would have made it an ideal place for laundering.

This same location was where the king of Assyria sent his commander with a large army to try to intimidate King Hezekiah to surrender in II Kings 18.

This place seems to highlight a place of divine intervention. The encounters at this location are a reminder of God's sovereignty and His ability to rescue His people from their enemies.

Who does the Lord tell Isaiah to take with him? _____

His son's name means "a remnant shall return", and seems to be serving as a symbolic message of hope and promise from the Lord.

Verses 4-6

The Lord tells Isaiah what to say to Ahaz:

- Be careful
- Keep calm
- Don't be afraid
- Do not lose heart

What does the Lord call the two kings coming against him? _____

They are plotting Judah's ruin:

- Invade
- Tear it apart
- Divide it between them
- Make the son of Tabeel king over it

The son of Tabeel is thought to likely be someone from Aram or Israel that they would set up as a puppet king. They are ultimately trying to create a coalition of power in the region that would be strong enough to withstand Assyria. They are planning to force Judah to join them either voluntarily or by replacing King Ahaz with this puppet king who would. Either way they are trying to ensure Judah's loyalty against Assyria.

Verse 7-9

What does the Lord say in verse 7? _____

If the Lord says it won't happen, it's not going to happen!

Proverbs 19:21 says, "*Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.*"

The next two verses are showing the limited power of both Aram and Israel. Damascus was the capital and most important city in Aram, and Rezin being king of Aram ruled over it. It was the same for Israel and Samaria with King Pekah. These verses are implying that their power was limited to their capital city and the surrounding territory, and that neither king would be victorious in conquering Judah.

The end of verse eight further shows that not only will Israel not conquer Judah, but within 65 years it will be destroyed.

Notice that at the end of verse 9, the Lord gives Ahaz a warning:

"if you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all." This statement can be translated to say "if you do not make firm (believe), you cannot be firm." In other words, if you lack faith in God, and His word and guidance you won't be able to withstand the trials and challenges of life.

In this case, if Ahaz doesn't put his faith in God and what He has said through the prophet Isaiah, then he will give in to fear and try to find his own solution to the problem. However, if he

will firmly believe in God, then he can stand firm in confidence no matter how dire the circumstances surrounding him.

Verses 10-11

What does God tell Ahaz to do? _____

At this time, a “sign” validated a prophetic message. God offers Ahaz the chance to choose any sign. This emphasizes God’s power. I think it also shows God’s compassion on a man with weak faith. He is willing to offer any sign that Ahaz chooses to show him that what He said is true. It’s as if God is saying, “ You can trust me. I’ll even prove it to you by giving you a sign.” Hopefully, by giving visible assurance that His promise was real this would also strengthen Ahaz’s faith.

Notice in verse 11 how it says, “*ask the Lord your God*”. Even though Ahaz has been anything but faithful to the Lord, God is still offering to be his God.

Verse 12

What is Ahaz’s response? _____

He refuses under the guise of piety - “*I will not put the Lord to the test.*” He is referring to what God said in Deuteronomy 6:16: “*Do not put the LORD your God to the test as you did at Massah.*”

This verse in Deuteronomy is referring to the Israelites behavior when they questioned God’s provision and presence with them by demanding a miraculous sign of His power. In essence, they were putting God’s faithfulness on trial.

For Ahaz, he is not testing God, but rather is refusing to trust Him. It is not testing God, when He tells you to ask for a sign. His refusal shows his lack of faith. The reality is that he would rather rely on a political alliance with Assyria instead of trusting in God to intervene.

Verse 13

We see Isaiah’s frustration with Ahaz in this verse as he rebukes him. Notice the shift in verse 11 with “the Lord *your* God”, to “Will you try the patience of *my* God also” just two verses later. This switch seems to show how Ahaz’s unwillingness to trust God has distanced him from a relationship with the Lord.

Verses 14-17

Even though Ahaz doesn’t ask for a sign, the Lord gives one anyway. This shows us that God’s faithfulness doesn’t depend on human faithfulness.

The sign that God gives is:

“*The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.*”

It is thought that this verse has both an immediate historical context as well as a larger messianic fulfillment.

In its immediate context, the “sign” points to a child who would be born in Ahaz’s lifetime. This would be a visible sign to Judah that God was with His people despite their fear and unfaithfulness.

There are different thoughts on who this immediate child was:

- Some think it was a royal child, Hezekiah.
- Some think it was Isaiah's son Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz
- Some think it was a different child that is not identified who was born soon after and was given the name Immanuel as a prophetic symbol.

The Hebrew word for virgin is 'almah' and means "young woman of marriageable age", who may or may not be a virgin. Isaiah was basically saying that a young woman was soon going to have a child, and that child's very existence would be a sign that God is with them.

What does the Lord say will happen before this child knows enough to reject wrong and choose right?

How is the Lord going to bring this about? _____

The greater fulfillment goes beyond Ahaz's day. The name Immanuel carries with it messianic weight. It points to something much bigger than temporary reassurance. Matthew 1:22-23 quotes this prophecy and it declares that it was fulfilled with the birth of Jesus— *"All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel' (which means 'God with us')."*

The rest of the chapter shows the threat that Assyria will bring with the phrase "in that day" used repeatedly to show a new coming consequence for Judah, especially through Assyria, the very nation that Ahaz had turned to for help rather than trusting God to protect them.

Verses 18-19

What two things does it say that the Lord will whistle for? _____

This is referring to the nations of Assyria and Egypt. Evidently, the ancient people could control insects with whistles or hisses. The flies seem to be referring to Egypt, representing an annoying, dirty, uncontrolled swarm which fits their role in the region. The bees represent the organized, disciplined and dangerous Assyrian military. Their army was known for being very organized, fast and effective. Once stirred up, bees attack relentlessly, just like Assyria's ruthless campaigns at this time.

Verse 20

God would use Assyria like a razor to completely humiliate Israel. At that time, prisoners and slaves were shaved to show insult and disrespect.

Verses 21-22

Instead of having flocks and herds, the people would be lucky to have one young cow and a couple goats. This suggests reduced resources which will result in a state of poverty.

However, what will they have to eat? _____

With so few animals there will be a lack of milk and meat. They would resort to eating curds and honey rather than the variety of food they were used to. Even though food would be scarce, God would still provide for the people who survived the invasion.

Verses 23-25

What will be left in the place of vines? _____

We see the vineyards and farmland will be overrun with briars and thorns and would only be good for hunting and grazing as it turns into wilderness.

We see in verses 18-25 that:

- God calls invaders (v.18)
- They humiliate Judah (v.20)
- The land becomes empty (v.21-22)
- It ends in barrenness and fear (v.23-25)

Some key takeaways from this chapter:

- ❖ Crisis tests our faith (vs.1-2)
 - Times of crisis will truly reveal where our trust lies: in fear or faith.
- ❖ God sends a word of reassurance (vs.3-9)
 - God sends a message to Ahaz – “be careful, keep calm, don’t be afraid . . . it will not happen.”
 - Satan’s power is temporary – God is always in control.
 - God’s word gives us calm in the midst of chaos. True faith will listen to His promises and cling to them rather than the fear.
- ❖ Faith is the foundation for stability (vs.9)
 - “If you do not stand firm, you will not stand at all” – God calls us to trust Him rather than in human solutions.
 - Faith in God is the only firm foundation when everything around us is shaking in chaos.
- ❖ God graciously strengthens weak faith (vs.10-11)
 - God doesn’t get upset with honest doubt. He meets us with assurance of who He is, and asks that we trust in Him.
- ❖ Refusing to trust God is rebellion (vs.12-13)
 - False humility covers unbelief. Ahaz had already decided to rely on Assyria instead of the Lord.
 - Religious words mean nothing if our hearts refuse to trust the Lord. In this case, Ahaz’s pride was hiding behind piety.
- ❖ The sign of Immanuel (vs.14)
 - God’s ultimate answer to our fear is His presence (Immanuel - God with us).

- ❖ God's promises endure despite human failure (vs.15-25)

The central theme and lesson from this chapter is the question: *In what or whom are you trusting?*

Nothing will show the true answer to this question more than when we go through trials and struggles in our lives. Do we shake and tremble like a tree in the wind like Ahaz did, or do we have a strong stability and foundation of faith in Christ?

So, how do we figure out “in what or whom are we trusting?”

Heart check questions to help with this:

*When you are anxious, do you first seek God, or do you try to control the situation yourself?

Psalm 56:3 says, *“When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.”*

*Look at what you rely on for security. What makes you feel safe and confident? Ask yourself, “If this thing were taken away, would I still feel secure in God’s care?”

Psalm 20:7 says, *“Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.”*

*Do I obey God only when it's easy, or even when it costs me something?

*What am I most afraid of losing? What does that fear say about my trust?

Jeremiah 17:7 says, *“Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him.”*

*Who gets the credit in my heart for the good in my life – me others, or God?

How does Isaiah 7 challenge us to respond when we face fear or uncertainty?

How can we learn to be more stable in our faith in Christ?

Do you agree with the statement from verse 9, “If you do not stand firm in your faith, then you will not stand at all?”

How does fear influence our ability to trust God’s promises?