

Immanuel: God Is with Us
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Text: Isaiah 7:1-16

NASB Paragraph Topic: Sign of Immanuel

Central Idea of Message: Immanuel would serve as a sign of God's intervention in history, preservation of his people, and keeping of his promise to Abraham and David.

Introduction: Read Matt. 1:18-25. I got an idea one day in 2014 that an explanation of the story behind the Christmas narrative might be in order. I am certain that the power of the Christmas message will be greatly enhanced by the "story behind the story."

Have you ever been so down that you thought God either did not see or did not care about you? Wouldn't it be inspiring to get a sign from God that he does see and he does care and that he is going to intervene and make all things better? That is how many people in Jerusalem felt at the time the prophet Isaiah wrote this passage.

I. The Dark Days of Judah (vv. 1-9)

- A. Ahaz was king (v. 1)
 - 1. Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah
 - 2. Impending war: show slide of map of Assyria
 - a) With Rezin, the King of Aram (Syria)
 - b) With Pekah, son of Remaliah, King of Israel
 - 3. They laid siege to Jerusalem, the capital city of the kingdom of Judah, but could not conquer it
- B. The report of the Arameans settling in the land of Ephraim shook King Ahaz to the core (v. 2)
 - 1. This was about the year 735 B.C.
 - 2. Ephraim was the largest tribe in Israel
 - 3. Ephraim is synonymous with Israel when describing the Northern Kingdom
- C. Isaiah the prophet is sent by the Lord to Ahaz (v. 3)
 - 1. Isaiah's son, Shear-jashub ("a remnant will return") went too
 - 2. A meeting place was established where Isaiah could confront Ahaz as he was out inspecting the city's water system

- D. The word of the Lord to Ahaz through Isaiah was, "Take care, be calm, have no fear, do not be faint-hearted" (v. 4)
1. **The only way we can find calm in a storm and quell fear is to believe God and trust him**
 2. The two hateful kingdoms, Aram and Ephraim [Northern Kingdom of Israel], were illustrated as smoldering stubs of firewood
 3. **Smoldering firewood is eventually consumed and turns into powdery ash to be blown by the wind, which was the fate God promised for Aram and Ephraim**
- E. Aram and Ephraim [Israel] were planning evil against Judah (vv. 5-7)
1. Planning to assault Jerusalem, the capital of the Southern Kingdom, again
 2. To terrorize it
 3. To break through its walls
 4. To set up a new king there, not a descendant of David but a puppet who would join their alliance against Assyria
- F. God promised that their intentions would neither stand nor come to pass and that both the kingdoms of Aram and Israel would evaporate (vv. 8-9)
1. **Aram (Syria) > Damascus (key city) > King Rezin**
 2. **Ephraim (Israel) > Samaria (key city) > King Remaliah**
 3. God was going to cut off these heads and the bodies would die
- G. **The situation was dark and hopeless, but that is when God had decided to intervene!**
- II. **The Sign of God's Presence and Preservation (vv. 10-16)**
- A. The Lord spoke to King Ahaz through Isaiah (v. 10)
- B. **Isaiah told King Ahaz to ask for a sign, an impossible sign, pledging the security and longevity of the Southern Kingdom and the Covenant God had made years earlier with David (v. 11)!**
1. Ahaz could have requested any sign and God would have given it! Any sign!
 2. **A sign is an attesting miracle which would confirm God's word**
 3. **The sign would represent God's intervention in history, his preservation of his people, and the**

keeping of his promise to David of a descendant on the throne in Jerusalem (cf. 1 Chron. 17:1-15)

- C. But Ahaz refused to test God (v. 12)
 - 1. A very wise reluctance? Not really!
 - 2. It seems that the reluctance of Ahaz was twofold (2 Kings 16:7-10)
 - a) He did not want to obey God and stop the idolatry in his kingdom
 - b) He wanted to enter into an alliance with Tiglath-pileser III, King of Assyria, and trust in his armies for the future against Aram and Israel rather than trust in almighty God
- D. Isaiah warned Ahaz not to try God's patience by refusing to name the sign (v. 13)
 - 1. **Refusing to obey God's instructions tries God's patience today!**
 - 2. Be reminded of who you are Ahaz!
 - a) You are the "house" of David!
 - b) God promised that a king from the lineage of David would reign forever!
- E. God himself promised to give a sign of his intervention in history and preservation of his people (vv. 14-16)
 - 1. A virgin will get pregnant: stress virgin
 - 2. The child will be a boy: the birth of a baby insures the continuance of a family, especially the birth of a son
 - 3. The boy will be a descendant of David, since Isaiah's statement is made to Ahaz representing "the house of David," that is to say the Davidic dynasty (v. 13)
 - 4. **The boy's name will be called Immanuel, meaning "God is with us"**
 - 5. **The sign of Immanuel would represent God's intervention in history, his preservation of his people, and the keeping of his promise to David of a descendant on the throne (cf. 1 Chron. 17:1-15)**
 - 6. His preferred foods are identified as curds and honey (v. 15)
 - a) Symbols of natural plenty
 - b) Not the food of the rich, but of the poor
 - 7. An exceptionally righteous young man: choosing good once reaching the stage of accountability
 - 8. Before the boy reaches the stage of accountability, approximately age twelve, the land

of the two kings, Aram and Israel, will be forsaken (v. 16)

- a) Rezin was the last king of Aram: Aram was snuffed out around 732 B.C. (cf. Kidner 638)
 - b) Pekah was the next to last King of Israel: Israel lost its territory in 734 B.C. and completely lost its national existence in 722 B.C. (cf. Kidner 638)
 - c) **In other words, both kings were dead within two years of this prophecy (cf. Martin 1:1048)**
9. God was determined that he would act in human history, and he did!
- F. The Apostle Matthew, the former tax collector also known as Levi, applied this passage from Isaiah to Jesus (Matt. 1:18-25)
- 1. The time was about 3 B.C.
 - 2. These times, too, like the time of Ahaz some 700 years earlier, were very dark days in history and in the region of Judea where the cities of Bethlehem and Jerusalem were located
 - 3. Interpretation of the Isaiah passage
 - a) A virgin will get pregnant (vv. 18-20)
 - b) The child will be a boy (v. 21)
 - c) **The son's name will be called Jesus, meaning "Jehovah saves"**
 - d) He is a direct descendant of David
 - e) All this took place to fulfill the words of Isaiah spoken over 700 years earlier (vv. 22-23)!
 - f) **Immanuel means "God with us," and, therefore, indicates the incarnation [enfleshing] of God the Son in human flesh**
 - g) Jesus is the Christ: Christmas - Xmas
 - h) Joseph did as the angel of the Lord commanded (vv. 24-25)
 - (1) Took Mary as his wife, now convinced that she had not been unfaithful to him and that she was the mother of the miracle baby
 - (2) Did not have sexual relations with her until after the birth of Jesus
- G. Luke 2:1-20: Christmas is the celebration of the birth of a child rather than the abortion of a child!

Conclusion: Kings and kingdoms have come and gone, but one King has come the first time, born of a virgin, and announced his coming kingdom.

Just as certainly as he came as foretold the first time, he will return the second and final time, and he will establish his kingdom on earth, a kingdom which will last forever. Immanuel, God is with us!

This is the real Christmas story!