



First Baptist Church Selmer

SONGS OF THE SEASON • THE PROPHECY • ISAIAH 7:1-14 • 12/10/2023

MAIN POINT

Many years and generations after the promise of the Messiah, Isaiah would prophesy specifically to the house and lineage of King David that the days were drawing near to the fulfillment of that promise.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What is the most frightening news you ever received? How did you react to the bad news?

What is the happiest news you have ever received? How do you react to good news?

Many of us have moments in life that we remember vividly. Some can remember exactly where they were when the space shuttle Challenger exploded, or where they were when they first heard of the attack on 9/11. More personally, they can remember what they were doing during a tragedy for a loved one. Good news can mark us in the same way. We remember hearing about people getting jobs, getting engaged, or having children, and it has a lasting impact on us.

In today's study, we will zoom into the nation of Israel. We have on one hand a nation that is well informed on the promised Messiah and his eventual coming, yet on the other hand, a nation that was completely wrapped up in political turmoil distracting them from the truth.

King Ahaz, King of Judah is going to receive some terrible news and some good news. Both are life-changing pieces of news, and whether or not Ahaz reacts in faith is of tremendous

importance. We, like Ahaz, will receive all sorts of news in our lives. How we react, whether by faith or unbelief, will determine many things about the course of our lives.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ISAIAH 7:1-2.

1 "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. 2 When the house of David was told, 'Syria, is in league with Ephraim,' the heart of Ahaz and heart of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake before the wind." (ESV)

Why do you think the Lord let these two kings threaten Jerusalem like this?

Why didn't God just strike down armies that came against His people?

What does it reveal about King Ahaz that his heart "trembled like trees of a forest shaking in the wind"?

God allowed troubles and threats to come against His people in the days of King Ahaz for the same reason He allows them to come against us in our day. When trouble presents itself, it tests our faith and gives us the opportunity to exercise our faith in the Lord. We may not face a threatening army at our gates, but we will face trials that will force us to choose: we can either lean on the Lord or live in constant fear.

King Ahaz and his people demonstrated a lack of faith in the Lord by being afraid of the attack. Certainly, it would be completely normal to be afraid in such a situation, but we do not see the king sending for the prophet or going to the Lord Himself. Ahaz should have known to seek the Lord during such a national crisis, but he didn't.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ISAIAH 7:3-9.

3 "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. 4 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. 5 Because Syria, with Ephraim and the son of Remaliah, has devised evil against you, saying, 6 '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.' 7 Thus says the Lord God: 'It shall not stand, and it shall not come to pass. 8 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. 9 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.'" (ESV)

What do you think of the Lord telling Ahaz to “calm down and be quiet”? Can you think of anywhere else in Scripture where people had to be told something similar?

What is comforting about the Lord’s message to Ahaz?

Ahaz is not a great example of faith, but he is not the only character who needs encouragement. The Lord told Joshua, “Be strong and courageous, for you will distribute the land I swore to their fathers to give them as an inheritance. Above all, be strong and very courageous” (Joshua 1:6-7). Paul also reminded Timothy, “God has not given us a spirit of fearfulness, but one of power, love, and sound judgment. So don’t be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, or of me His prisoner. Instead, share in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God” (2 Timothy 1:6-8).

Even the most godly among us need encouragement not to give into fear and despair from time to time. Paul himself requested that the church “pray that I might be bold enough in Him to speak as I should” (Ephesians 6:20). Even Paul was worried that his courage might fail him. In times of distress, we ought to remember that the Lord will take care of us, just as He watched over Israel. Our problems that seem overwhelming now will seem insignificant compared to the fellowship we will enjoy with Christ in eternity.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ISAIAH 7:10-14.

10 "Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz: 11 'Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.' 12 But Ahaz said, 'I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test.' 13 And he said, 'Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? 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.'" (ESV)

What is the ultimate hope for Ahaz and for Israel? Why do you think that Ahaz refused to ask for a sign?

Where else has God promised a special child to the House of David?

The ultimate hope for Ahaz, Israel, and the world comes through the birth of Jesus Christ. Ahaz may have asked for a sign out of false piety, but God chose to give him a sign anyway. A virgin will be pregnant! Some say that this should be translated as “young woman,” but what sort of sign, or miracle, is it that a young woman gets pregnant? Certainly, conception and birth is a gift from God, but it happens every day. It is a true miracle for a virgin to be pregnant!

When Adam and Eve sinned, God promised a child that would crush the head of Satan (Gen. 3:15). God promised Abraham that he would have a child through whom all nations would be blessed (Gen. 22:18). God promised that this child would come through the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10). God promised David, of the tribe of Judah, that this Savior would come from his own house (2 Sam. 7:12-13). Ahaz was from the house of David, so the Lord’s promise should have come as welcomed news indeed!

Ahaz thought that his main problem was an approaching army, but his real enemy was his lack of faith. Ahaz, like us, needed to trust in the Lord and His promised Messiah. Our problems will come and go, but our faith in Christ enables us to survive in the midst of every trial.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How can our small group be an encouragement for those who are struggling with difficult times or anxiety?

Has anyone ever helped you during a particularly difficult time? How did that time help your faith?

How could we be encouraged today that God always fulfills His promises?

PRAYER

Ask the Father to make us bold people. Pray that no matter what trial comes our way, we will persevere with joy and faith in the gospel. Ask the Father to give boldness and courage to those of us who are struggling, and pray that we will have the humility needed to help them carry their burdens.

COMMENTARY

| ISAIAH 7

7:1-2 The political situation was tense in Jerusalem. In the early 730s B.C. the aggressive Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III was busy on his northern frontier. During this time, Rezin, the king of Aram with its capital in Damascus, and Pekah, the king of Israel (also known as Ephraim), joined forces to withstand the almost certain Assyrian attack that would follow Tiglath-pileser's victory in the north. Rezin and Pekah wanted Judah to support them, but Ahaz wanted nothing to do with the alliance. By this time he might already have paid (or at least was contemplating paying) the Assyrians to rescue him from these kings (2Ki 16:6-9). He probably feared Tiglath-pileser, but he apparently realized the Syro-Ephraimite coalition was a more immediate threat. Isaiah confronted the king with a question: What was the source of his trust: Yahweh or the Assyrians?

7:3 The name of Isaiah's son, Shear-jashub, means "a remnant will return," a theme that has already played a significant role in the first six chapters of the book (1:9,26; 4:2-6; 6:13).

7:6 Though no other certain references to Tabeel exist in the Bible or outside of it, the political intentions of Rezin and Pekah were clear. They wanted to remove Ahaz from the throne because of his unwillingness to join their coalition and they intended to install a puppet king who would be more easily manipulated.

7:8 The reference to 65 years is puzzling. If this oracle is dated to 735 b.c. or thereabouts, then it would point to approximately 670 b.c., but the northern kingdom was soundly defeated by Assyria in 722 b.c. Of course, that is "within 65 years," but perhaps the reference is to some unknown event among the survivors of the northern kingdom around 670 B.C. It is also possible that the deportations of Israelites and the importation of foreigners into their former region happened around that time.

7:9 The challenge that the oracle presented to Ahaz was that he should trust God and not Assyria as he faced the threat from Rezin and Pekah.

7:11 The purpose of a sign was to give Ahaz even more reason to have confidence in God rather than Assyria to rescue him from Rezin and Pekah. Sheol refers to the underworld.

7:12 From Isaiah's reaction, the reader can discern that Ahaz's reply, which on the surface seems pious, was actually impious. The king seemed to cite scriptural precedent (Dt 6:16), but the law prohibited the type of rebellious testing that took place at Massah (Ex 17:1-7), not a test offered by a true prophet of the Lord. It may be that Ahaz had already decided to call on Assyria for help.

7:14 The context indicates that the preliminary fulfillment of this sign must have taken place within a few years of its utterance—the time between a child's conception and his knowing right from wrong (vv. 15-16), traditionally at age 12. The Hebrew word translated virgin means "young woman of marriageable age" and often has the implication of virginity. Thus many scholars feel that the referent is a woman whom Isaiah would marry and, if so, then the birth is mentioned in 8:1-4. This may be the immediate fulfillment of this sign. But its ultimate and more exalted fulfillment is noted in Mt 1:23 as it cites the more specific Greek word found in the Septuagint, parthenos, which means "virgin." Immanuel means "God is with us."