

Isaiah's Commission
You Will Have a Great Ministry, Oh, and No One Will Listen to You
Isaiah 6:8–13
Not Even King Ahaz
Isaiah 7:1–4

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Last time we were together we found Isaiah going from being involved in worship at the Temple in Jerusalem, to be involved in worship at the true Temple where the throne of the universe is.

He has been confronted that in his life, there is unconfessed sin standing between him and a Holy God. Sin which Isaiah, who was already being used by God, was forgiven as shown by the coal being applied to his lips. We talked about that last week.

Isaiah's confession also showed his agreement with God. "The word confess means "to say the same thing" that God says about it. We need to call it "sin." (Davis 2002, 12)

Forgiven of his sin, Isaiah can now hear YAHWEH and react to what He wants.

In verse 8 a general question is asked. The same question that the Lord asks each one of us, who are believers.

For us, as we consider what it is Jesus did on the cross and how He purchased our salvation and cleansed us, we should react in the same way as Isaiah did. After all, his heart is full as a result of his iniquity being forgiven just as our hearts would be. The key, he could not hear until his sin was forgiven.

1 John 1:9 is there for a reason. The question?

Isaiah 6:8

Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I. Send me!" (NASB95)

Isaiah's response is clear. He tells the Lord and the Divine Council "*Here am I. Send me!*"

Isaiah has responded to the call of the Lord. He has no clue what he is in for nor does he care, he has been forgiven and he owes everything to the one who has done this for him. Just as we do also. We owe Jesus everything. Our response should mirror his. No debate, no questions, simply "I am always available, send me!"

Whereas the accounts of Moses' and Jeremiah's commissioning stress their hesitation, Isaiah (like Ezekiel) is at the other extreme. He volunteers. A prophet is a human person who is admitted to Yahweh's cabinet and thus becomes another means of executing heaven's decisions on earth and a transmitter of messages between earth and heaven. This works both ways, for the prophet intercedes in the cabinet, speaking on earth's behalf there, as well as bringing announcements of heaven's decisions to earth. (Goldingay 2012, 60)

The word used for go is the Hebrew word לָךְ (yelek) – meaning “to go, to walk, to go along.” (Gesenius and Tregelles 2003, 224)

Isaiah 6:9

He said, “Go, and tell this people: ‘Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.’” (NASB95)

Wow, I want that ministry. Let’s go start a church. The church of no one will listen and no one will understand a word you are saying. I want a piece of that action.

Did you notice the first thing the Lord says here? He tells Isaiah to “go and tell.” Got it.

Here the word go – לָךְ (lek) is in the imperative

...it does manifest the notion of the prophet’s mission and legitimation and characterizes him as a messenger. The job of a messenger is to set out with a message. This accounts for the frequent use of the messenger commission to introduce prophetic oracles, with the imperative לֵךְ/לֵךְהָ (or the inf. abs. הָלֹךְ), often being used as a stereotyped hortatory particle (“Up!”). The imperative לֵךְ takes its theological import from its context and becomes a divine “imperative of sending.” (Helmeyer 1978, 401)

This is followed up with the imperative tell – אָמַרְתָּ (amarta) - say, the simple rendering of speech. (Holladay and Kohler 2000, 21)

’amar is used to denote communication between two personal entities (or entities regarded as personal). The goal of ’amar is that another person (or persons) might hear and understand, and might reply, in the broadest sense of the word (reaction). (Wagner 1977, 331)

Ok so that much is clear, Isaiah is being commanded by Adonai to go, that is his mission to be about going, he is specifically sent; and he is to engage with those he personally talks with in such a way as they should understand what is being said.

But there is a problem with the people, with those who he is tasked by God to go and speak to. God does not call them His people. He refers to them as “this people.”

“This people” points back to the people of unclean lips, among whom Isaiah had complained of dwelling, and whom the Lord would not call “my people.” It was to go to this people and preach to them, and therefore to be the prophet of this people, that he was called. (Keil and Delitzsch 1996, 129)

The Lord accepts Isaiah’s offer and commissions him to preach a message to the covenant community, called here “this people,” a designation that suggests a degree of alienation between God and his people. (Chisholm Jr. 2002, 25-26)

Ok, so Isaiah is in. He now knows that the Lord is commissioning him to go to the people of unclean lips, those who are incapable of worship because they are not looking for anything the Lord has or what His message would be.

The assessment of the first 5 chapters is dead on and there is no disagreement coming from the throne room on any of it. So here is your ministry Isaiah, tell the people this ‘Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.’ (Isaiah 6:9b, NASB95)

In other words, they will listen with great interest in what you have to say, but not understand a single word of what you say. They will see what you have prophesied actually come true. But they will not put two and two together. In other words, go preach to folks who will never understand what you say.

The message Isaiah is to clearly present “assumes that they will not be basically receptive. So, let them keep listening, but not perceive. By insisting on their sinful way, they are not really receptive to turn to God’s way, so they will not be able to perceive in the effective way. And let them keep on looking, but not understand, for the same reason. (Rosscup 2008, 1089)

Moses talked about this as well in one of his sermons back in Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy 29:2–4

Moses proclaimed to all Israel as follows: “You have seen all that the LORD did in the land of Egypt to Pharaoh, all his servants, and his land. Your eyes have seen the great judgments, those signs and mighty wonders. But to this very day the LORD has not given you an understanding mind, perceptive eyes, or discerning ears!” (NET)

Wow, imagine that ministry. No matter what you say or do, no one will get it. And there is more.

Isaiah 6:10

“Render the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes dim, Otherwise they might see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed.” (NASB95)

The Lord, who commanded Isaiah to clearly state the message back in verse 9, adds that no matter how much work Isaiah puts into his messages, no matter how much he prays over them prior to presenting, his preaching will only encourage the people to harden their hearts further. Is that right?

Remember what we have already reviewed in chapters 1 – 5.

The people are already there. It may not look like it on the outside, but the Jerusalem Post surveys are all pointing at a serious decline in faith among those who say they are faithful. They have already left the faith they say they follow. Not much different than what we see today.

In digital Babylon, on the other hand, the Bible is one of many voices that interpret human experience; it is no longer viewed as the central authority over people and society. Today, if someone unironically drops “the Bible says” in a media interview, they sound as if they have just disembarked from a time machine. (Kinnaman and Matlock 2019, 21)

What did we see the conditions were in the first five chapters?

The nation, as it pertains to being faithful followers of YAHWEH as required by the law, were not. They were not salt and light. They were not pointing the gentiles to YAHWEH.

They were involved, or rather, would be very soon, involved in child sacrifice. The ruling elites had corrupted themselves. The poor were being abused. Land was being acquired by a small group in violation of the law and not returned to the original owners as required.

Everyone was busy following the latest eastern religion or thought and they made a show of following YAHWEH, but their hearts were not in it.

They were totally reliant upon their military industry and prowess on the battlefield. The economy was booming, and everyone was proud of how well they were doing.

The women were more interested in looking good and having the latest fashions rather than making a home for their families.

In the public square, there were those who twisted the truth and lied so frequently that their lies and reversals of the law were being raved about as being modern. They didn't need the law, it was old and dusty, and kept them from enjoying life and the new style of worship at the Baals.

In other words, they lived in the 21st century on planet earth. No not really, but the issues have not really changed that much. One more reason why the study of this book is so important to us in this pre-rapture time period and to the generation of the tribulation, currently growing up today.

Yes, the time is indeed short.

Here in the second half of verse 10, the Lord turns towards sarcasm. Yes, Isaiah is going to do his level best to present the message and point to the need of repentance. He will have some mind-boggling prophecies that even gentiles will take note of.

But here is the reality, the hearts of the people is already insensitive, their ears are already dull, their eyes are not turned onto the things of God at all and they have become insensitive to the things of God. On the surface it seems to indicate that Isaiah's hardening ministry would prevent genuine repentance. But, as the surrounding chapters clearly reveal, the people were hardly ready or willing to repent. Therefore, Isaiah's preaching was not needed to prevent repentance. Verse 10b reflects the people's attitude and might be paraphrased accordingly: "Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their mind, repent, and be restored, and they certainly wouldn't want that, would they?!" (Chisholm Jr. 2002, 26)

For us today, it is not much unlike the time of Isaiah. "One reason is that we live in a time and a place characterized by rampant skepticism about Christianity and the Bible. Hyperrationalism and pop-culture atheism undercut belief. A majority of non-Christian youth and young adults are jaded to the appeal of following Jesus. They reject organized religion altogether, especially claims of an exclusive faith like Christianity. Many view the Bible as a book of oppression that is harmful to the minds of its devoted readers. In some influential places, young Christians encounter condescension or downright hostility from their peers, their instructors, and social elites." (Kinnaman and Matlock 2019, 27)

What does the world of today look like in the lens of Isaiah, would we pass the smell test of chapters 1 to 5? I am not talking about those who do not name the name of Jesus, but how about those who, per the Barna Group, are ones who are habitual churchgoers. Folks who make it to church at least monthly.

How about those who attend at least monthly, engage in what is going on at church and believe in the authority of the word.

We have the same problem today that Isaiah had.

Isaiah's preaching, which focused on the Lord's covenantal demands and impending judgment upon covenantal rebellion, forced the people to confront their sin and then continued to desensitize them as they responded negatively to the message. (Chisholm Jr. 2002, 26)

Many churches today continue to prepare those who attend for a world that ceased existing back in the 80's.

Oh, and one other problem, too many churches today are Laodicean and no longer teach the Bible at all. There are many small faithful churches that will struggle mightily through the COVID-19 period. The jury is out on how many will reopen.

Conversely, there are many Laodicean churches that will do very well through all of this.

The thing that the Lord is letting Isaiah know about in advance is that the teaching of the word, to those who are in the process of hardening their hearts, unless there is an intervention by the Holy Spirit, will

only get harder and harder. The writer of Hebrews pointed this out regarding those who made a confession of Christ but never had truly surrendered.

Hebrews 6:4–6

“For it is impossible in the case of those who have once been enlightened, tasted the heavenly gift, become partakers of the Holy Spirit, tasted the good word of God and the miracles of the coming age, and then have committed apostasy, to renew them again to repentance, since they are crucifying the Son of God for themselves all over again and holding him up to contempt.” (NET)

The human eye cannot see this ‘point of no return’ in advance—nor necessarily recognize it when it is past, but the all-sovereign God both knows it and indeed appoints it as he presides, with perfect righteousness and justice, over the human psychological processes which he created. It was at just such a time that Isaiah was called to the prophetic-preaching office and understood what his terms of commission meant: he was to bring God’s word with fresh, even unparalleled clarity—for only the truth could win and change them; but in their negative response his hearers would pass the point of no return. The opportunity which could spell their salvation would spell their judgment. (Motyer 1999, 84)

Jesus dramatically altered His ministry after He was rejected by the ruling elites of Jerusalem. In Matthew 12:24, after witnessing irrefutable proof that Jesus is the Messiah, He is indeed the one promised by Isaiah and others; they attributed that work to Satan.

In chapter 13, Jesus began teaching publicly in parables. The disciples noticed this change and it bugged them. They knew who they were following. They did not have a clue to His entire mission, but they thought they did, and they detected the change.

Matthew 13:10–15

Then the disciples came to him and said, “Why do you speak to them in parables?” He replied, “You have been given the opportunity to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but they have not. For whoever has will be given more, and will have an abundance. But whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. For this reason I speak to them in parables: Although they see they do not see, and although they hear they do not hear nor do they understand. And concerning them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: ‘You will listen carefully yet will never understand, you will look closely yet will never comprehend. For the heart of this people has become dull; they are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes, so that they would not see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.’” (NET)

Jesus is making a direct comparison to the people that Isaiah is going to be ministering to. Isaiah will not be speaking in parables; he will be speaking very directly. The message is urgent and the instructions he has received has clearly stated speak clearly to be understood. Because of that, they will be saying “speak to the hand” as they walk away.

Isaiah, after hearing this about the nature of his budding ministry is still hoping that somewhere along the line, the people will get it and he will see them return to the Lord.

He knows both the negative and the positive sides of what he has already prophesied but he does not know time frames.

He is disturbed, so he asks a question.

Isaiah 6:11–12

Then I said, “Lord, how long?” And He answered, “Until cities are devastated and without inhabitant, Houses are without people And the land is utterly desolate, The LORD has removed men far away, And the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.” (NASB95)

How long Lord. We also ask the same question but many times with a very different emphasis, we ask “How long Lord till you come?” Isaiah’s question was not that one. He wanted to know how long he would be doing this with a negative response from most of the people. How long will they have hard hearts?

In one other place Jesus made reference to this section of Isaiah, and we He did so, He is showing us that the answer which Isaiah is about to receive has the potential of being fulfilled more than once.

John 12:37–43

“But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him. This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke: ‘LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT? AND TO WHOM HAS THE ARM OF THE LORD BEEN REVEALED?’ For this reason they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, ‘HE HAS BLINDED THEIR EYES AND HE HARDENED THEIR HEART, SO THAT THEY WOULD NOT SEE WITH THEIR EYES AND PERCEIVE WITH THEIR HEART, AND BE CONVERTED AND I HEAL THEM.’ These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him. Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.” (NASB95)

The same problem in existence at the time of Isaiah was also in existence at the time that Jesus was ministering. The opinion of man was much more important than obedience to the Lord.

The land is going to be devastated, and it will happen more than once. No timeline or timeframe is provided by the Lord.

All of the cities that are currently filled with Jews, both the north and the south, will be emptied out. This is not something new, this was discussed with Moses and communicated to the people as part of the Torah.

...the invasion of Pekah and Rezin would be repaired only to be followed by that of Sennacherib; the captivity of Manasseh would succeed the peaceful reign of Hezekiah; Josiah would restore the kingdom only to be laid waste by the Egyptian and the Assyrian; the Roman would come after the Greek, and even Hadrian after Titus. (Exell n.d., 195)

Leviticus 26:27–34

“If in spite of this you do not obey me but walk in hostility against me, I will walk in hostile rage against you and I myself will also discipline you seven times on account of your sins. You will eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters. I will destroy your high places and cut down your incense altars, and I will stack your dead bodies on top of the lifeless bodies of your idols. I will abhor you. I will lay your cities waste and make your sanctuaries desolate, and I will refuse to smell your soothing aromas. I myself will make the land desolate and your enemies who live in it will be appalled. I will scatter you among the nations and unsheathe the sword after you, so your land will become desolate and your cities will become a waste. Then the land will make up for its Sabbaths all the days it lies desolate while you are in the land of your enemies; then the land will rest and make up its Sabbaths.” (NET)

The Lord is telling Isaiah that he is to continue with the message even as he begins to see the devastation caused by Israel and Syria during the reign of Ahaz. He is to continue with the message even as the Assyrian army takes the northern kingdom away into exile and then proceeds to run amok Judah laying waste to the countryside. All coming events but no where near what verse 11 hints at. We are talking destroyed cities, empty houses and a land that is desolate. That is bad enough, but then verse 12.

Isaiah 6:12

“The LORD has removed men far away, And the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.” (NASB95)

Not only is the entirety of Judah and Israel to be destroyed and homes laid waste, not only is the countryside to be devastated and uncared for, but there will also be an exile. The Lord is telling Isaiah that another verse in Deuteronomy is about to be fulfilled.

Deuteronomy 28:64

“Moreover, the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth; and there you shall serve other gods, wood and stone, which you or your fathers have not known.” (NASB95)

So again Isaiah, thanks for asking. To make sure it is clear...” That is, until ... termination! The message resulting from this vision of God’s majesty is an Israelite future of nullification, a ceasing to be in the world. The burden of the oracle is that God has given up on this beloved people and will no more protect them, but will actively intervene to undo them.” (Brueggemann 1998, 61-62)

Isaiah 6:13

“Yet there will be a tenth portion in it, And it will again be subject to burning, Like a terebinth or an oak Whose stump remains when it is felled. The holy seed is its stump.” (NASB95)

Amid promised devastation...grace. A stump will remain that can grow again. This is imagery that will show up again later in Isaiah. The idea of a believing remnant carries on into the new testament. Paul refers to it in Romans 11:5.

God is not done with Israel.

And with that we end the pivot point of this book.

Uzziah has died and his son, Jotham, who had served as regent after Uzziah contracted leprosy continued to serve as King of Judah for 16years. He was another good King for Judah.

2 Chronicles 27:2–7

“He did what was upright before the Lord according to everything that Uzziah, his father, did; but he did not enter into the temple of the Lord. And still the people kept being corrupt. He built the high gate of the house of the Lord and built much on his wall, that is, Ophel. He built cities in the region of Judah and both buildings and towers in the woods. He fought against the king of the sons of Ammon and prevailed against him. And each year they would give to him one hundred talents of silver and ten thousand koron of wheat and ten thousand of barley. Each year the king of Ammon would bring these to him in the first year and the second and the third. Jotham became strong, because he prepared his ways before the Lord, his God. The remainder of the annals of Jotham and the war and his activities, look, they are written in the document of the kings of Judah and Israel.” (Lexham Press 2020, 2 Chron 27:2-7)

He was a good and Godly King like his father, but because of what had happened to dad when he entered the Temple, Jotham never went in at all. He worshipped from afar, fearful of what had happened. It is possible that was what sent Ahaz in an entirely different direction.

When Jotham died at around 41 years of age, his son, Ahaz became King at the age of 20. He did not follow dad or his granddad in their following of YAHWEH.

Just prior to Jotham’s death, the King of Israel and the King of Syria made a preemptive try at taking Judah and failed. “In those days the LORD began to send Rezin king of Aram and Pekah the son of Remaliah against Judah.” (2 Kings 15:37, NASB95) But shortly after that attack, Jotham died. Ahaz, his son, was a much weaker king.

No Fear, Not Know Fear Isaiah 7:1–4

2 Chronicles 28:1–4

“Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; and he did not do right in the sight of the LORD as David his father had done. But he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel; he also made molten images for the Baals. Moreover, he burned incense in the valley of Ben-hinnom and burned his sons in fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had driven out before the sons of Israel. He sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills and under every green tree.” (NASB95)

Ahaz took only 16 years to totally undo the previous 60 plus years. That helps us to see that the people's hearts were already adrift.

2 Chronicles 28:5–8

“Wherefore, the LORD his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Aram; and they defeated him and carried away from him a great number of captives and brought them to Damascus. And he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who inflicted him with heavy casualties. For Pekah the son of Remaliah slew in Judah 120,000 in one day, all valiant men, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. And Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, slew Maaseiah the king's son and Azrikam the ruler of the house and Elkanah the second to the king. The sons of Israel carried away captive of their brethren 200,000 women, sons and daughters; and they took also a great deal of spoil from them, and brought the spoil to Samaria.” (NASB95)

This was not a defeat of the city of Jerusalem, but one of Judah and the countryside of Judah. This defeat ended the professional army that was so relied upon the past 60 years. Their leader was wholly inadequate to the task. Under Jotham, the incursion was pushed back. A few years later, the incursion caused the destruction of much of the army of Judah and huge numbers of captives being taken north to Israel. If not for the prophet Oded, in 2 Chronicles 28:9, reminding Israel of their sin and ultimately the captives were returned back to Judah via Jericho. The two armies moved on Jerusalem but were unable to take it.

2 Kings 16:5–6

“At that time King Rezin of Syria and King Pekah son of Remaliah of Israel attacked Jerusalem. They besieged Ahaz, but were unable to conquer him. (At that time King Rezin of Syria recovered Elat for Syria; he drove the Judahites from there. Syrians arrived in Elat and live there to this very day.)” (NET)

That did not stop those forces from ravaging the Judean countryside. Jerusalem was not conquered, but we learn from 2 Chronicles 28:5-6 what took place just prior to Jerusalem being attacked.

Not only was the army of Judah decimated, but because of that, those local powers who had been in subjugation to Judah, they rebelled.

Edom attacked and took captives as did the Philistines.

King Ahaz has a problem, but he is so far from YAHWEH, that is not where he is going for a solution.

This brings us up to chapter 7 of Isaiah. This war took place around 734 – 732 BC. The countryside has been ravaged but Jerusalem has not been taken. Why is this taking place? The geopolitical situation was Judah had been asked to be part of a military coalition against Assyria by both Syria and Israel.

They refused. The two nations are preparing to move against Jerusalem after going through the countryside.

King Ahaz is inspecting the city waterworks, likely in anticipation of a siege on the city. It is clear that the king is not only worried about security, but in fact is deeply frightened and intimidated by this northern threat. Indeed, he is so frightened that he is about to make a major policy decision to appeal for help to Assyria, the great and awesome empire to the north of Israel and Syria. (Brueggemann 1998, 64)

Isaiah 7:1

“Now it came about in the days of Ahaz, the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Aram and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to wage war against it, but could not conquer it.” (NASB95)

Here are the players for what is also known as the Syro-Ephraimitic War, also called a Civil War

- Ahaz – King of Judah, the southern kingdom, bad king
- Rezin – King of Aram, also known as Syria, capital is Damascus, gentiles
- Pekah – King of Israel, the northern kingdom, really bad Jewish king

Isaiah 7:2

“When it was reported to the house of David, saying, “The Arameans have camped in Ephraim,” his heart and the hearts of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake with the wind.” (NASB95)

Syrian forces haven't even moved towards Judah yet, they are simply camping and preparing along with the troops of Israel. That alone is enough to cause panic in the heart of Ahaz as well as the people of Judah who are still unaffected in Jerusalem.

Ahaz is terrified. Terror and fear can mold decision making one makes from wise to pragmatic. Fear driven decisions, when one is not looking to the Lord for wisdom, results in strange decisions.

For example, because of what YAHWEH did for the nation of Israel with the Red Sea crossing and the destruction of the largest military force in the world at the time, the people of Canaan were scared, downright fearful. YAHWEH told them that was going to be the case as military actions to take the land started.

Deuteronomy 2:25

“This very day I will begin to fill all the people of the earth with dread and to terrify them when they hear about you. They will shiver and shake in anticipation of your approach.” (NET)

Joshua 2:10–11

“For we heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you left Egypt and how you annihilated the two Amorite kings, Sihon and Og, on the other side of the Jordan. When we heard the news we lost our courage and no one could even breathe for fear of you. For the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on earth below!” (NET)

So the people of Jericho hid out, due to fear, in the town while the entire army of Israel performed a daily parade around the town, till the seventh day they went around seven times and...the walls fell and they all, but Rahab and her household, died.

The people of Gibeon made the decision to lie and deceive the nation due to their fear. They extracted a peace treaty and mutual aid treaty all before the nation found out they had been lied to. When told they would be slaves serving the nation, they were okay with that as they would be alive. (Joshua 9)

The best contrast between man's fear, and the attitude of the believer when confronted with that same source of fear, is in 2 Kings 6:14-20.

The army of Syria had been stymied time and time again due to Elisha and his prophecies. YAHWEH had provided real time intel to Elisha who shared it with Israel resulting in problems for Syria. So they moved on Elisha.

2 Kings 6:15–20

The prophet's attendant got up early in the morning. When he went outside there was an army surrounding the city, along with horses and chariots. He said to Elisha, "Oh no, my master! What will we do?" He replied, "Don't be afraid, for our side outnumbers them." Then Elisha prayed, "O LORD, open his eyes so he can see." The LORD opened the servant's eyes and he saw that the hill was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. As they approached him, Elisha prayed to the LORD, "Strike these people with blindness." The LORD struck them with blindness as Elisha requested. Then Elisha said to them, "This is not the right road or city. Follow me, and I will lead you to the man you're looking for." He led them to Samaria. When they had entered Samaria, Elisha said, "O LORD, open their eyes, so they can see." The LORD opened their eyes and they saw that they were in the middle of Samaria." (NET)

Rather than destroy them, at Elisha's insistence, they fed the Syrian army and sent them home. That ended the problem.

For us as believers, our reaction to situations that overwhelm us and bring us to the doorstep of fear is simple. We need to trust entirely on our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

John 14:25–27

"These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful." (NASB95)

In these days of anxiety and fear, and there is a lot of it right now, we need to remember the instructions that were given to Joshua as he was about to engage an enemy much larger and more experienced in combat than he or any of his troops were.

Joshua 1:8–9

"This law scroll must not leave your lips! You must memorize it day and night so you can carefully obey all that is written in it. Then you will prosper and be successful. I repeat, be strong and brave! Don't be afraid and don't panic, for I, the LORD your God, am with you in all you do." (NET)

Proverbs 3:5–8

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding. Acknowledge him in all your ways, and he will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own estimation; fear the LORD and turn away from evil. This will bring healing to your body, and refreshment to your inner self." (NET)

Here is the intel on Ahaz at this point:

- He has turned from YAHWEH and worships false gods
- He has already sacrificed one of his children to Molech
- He is a weak leader, easily scared
- He makes poor decision
- He has been defeated in the field by the combined armies of Israel and Syria
- He has lost a large portion of his army as well as population
- His nation is economically challenged
- His army, what's left of it, and the people of Judah are totally demoralized
- He has had the Edomites and the Philistines rebel against him
- He is terrified, and because of that terror, he is about to align with Assyria against Israel

4 Kingdoms 16:7–9

Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, saying, "I am your servant and your son. Come up, save me from the hand of the king of Aram and from the hand of the king of Israel, who are rising up against me." Ahaz took silver and gold that was found in the treasuries of the house of the Lord and of the house of the king. He sent gifts to the king. The king of Assyria heard him. The king of Assyria went up to Damascus and captured it. He exiled it and killed Rezin." (Lexham Press 2020, 4 Kingdoms 16:7-9)

YAHWEH knows that this is the direction Ahaz is moving in. As Isaiah meets with him, that has not yet happened.

Isaiah 7:3-4

“Then the LORD said to Isaiah, “Go out now to meet Ahaz, you and your son Shear-jashub, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, on the highway to the fuller’s field, and say to him, ‘Take care and be calm, have no fear and do not be fainthearted because of these two stubs of smoldering firebrands, on account of the fierce anger of Rezin and Aram and the son of Remaliah.’” (NASB95)

Isaiah is receiving instructions to go meet with the King outside of the walls of the city. “This relates to the Gihon spring which supplies Jerusalem with water during sieges. This spring was also used in the coronation of the kings of Judah. Ahaz was checking the preparations for a siege. He was checking his resources!” (Utley 2001, 103)

Gihon Spring



(Bolen 2012, Used with Permission)

Later under Hezekiah, a tunnel is constructed but at this time, it was a spring that ran out into an upper and lower pool.

The message that the Lord has for Ahaz is...

Take care – הַשָּׂמֶר (hisamer) - to keep, watch over...be on your guard against...watcher, guardian (as the designation of an office-holder, an official duty: the guardian of a city...to take care of, preserve, protect. (Koehler, et al. 1994-2000, 1582)

In plain English...stop panicking and watch over yourself. Be on guard against take care of yourself and don't do something stupid (which he will)

Be calm – הַשְׁקֵט (hasqet) - to be at rest...peaceful and undisturbed...to be peaceful, be quiet...to maintain a quiet attitude. (Koehler, et al. 1994-2000, 1641)

Have no fear – תִּירָא (tira) - to fear...to fear God (Koehler, et al. 1994-2000, 433)

Ahaz, stop panicking and watch over yourself. Be on guard against take care of yourself and don't do something stupid. Be at rest have no fear fear God.

Do not be fainthearted – יָרַךְ (Ye-rak) - be tender, weak, soft (Brown, Driver and Briggs 1977, 939)

Stop being a baby about this.

YAHWEH is in control, not Rezin and Pekah. All they do is blow smoke and a lot of it. God is in control, stop being fearful over things you do not have control over but which God, as the creator of the universe, is in control of, in fact has never not been in control.

Romans 8:28–31

“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?” (NASB95)

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