

# THE SON WHO WOULD BE A SIGN Isaiah 7

Intro: The kings of Judah during Isaiah's day did not figure largely into Isaiah's prophecy. The four are mentioned in 1:1. Ch. 6 mentions the tragic death of Uzziah. Ch. 7 is the only chapter which deals with the life of Ahaz. Jotham is passed over in complete silence. More space is given to Hezekiah than to any of the others: Isa. 36-39.

Concerning Uzziah, Jotham, and Hezekiah, it is recorded that they did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. Concerning Ahaz--that he did NOT do what was right in the eyes of the Lord.

It is Ahaz that we are dealing with this evening.

The importance of this chapter is emphasized by one writer in the following words:

"In that very hour, in which Isaiah was standing before Ahaz, the fate of Jerusalem was decided for more than two thousand years" (Delitzsch, I, 215).

Little did Ahaz realize what a momentous decision this was!

Let us look, then, at . . . .

## I. THE PROBLEM (Isa. 7:1, 2).

Actually there were two: one, external; the other, internal.

And externally there were two that had combined into one:

- 1) Syria.
- 2) Israel (or, Ephraim as Israel is called in v. 2).

They had invaded Judah, and had claimed victories. Now it is Jerusalem that is being threatened.

Internally, "his heart," i.e., Ahaz's, "was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the forest are moved with the wind" (v. 2).

Note that Ahaz is placed first. How useless he was to his people! The passage turns us back to what Lev. 26 and Deut. 28 where Moses warned the children of Israel of the troubles that would come upon them. Among the things he said were these:

"And upon them who are left alive of you I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies, and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth. And they shall fall one upon another, as it were before a sword, when none pur-

sueth; and ye shall have no power to stand before your enemies" (Lev. 26:36, 37).

Even before the nation went into exile, they were feeling the results of turning away from the Lord!

This is often the reason for our lack of peace. There is something wrong in our relationship with the Lord, some way in which we are displeasing to Him.

## II. WHAT THE LORD DID (Isa. 7:3-9).

This is the amazing part of this chapter. You would not think that the Lord would have to do anything. Ahaz had the writings of Moses. He knew what the Lord wanted. But his heart was not open to the Word of God.

But even more amazing is this: You would not think that the Lord would do anything! Why should he?

As is so often the case, we find that the Lord adds promise to promise, He raises up prophets to tell His people things that they already knew. In short, He does everything possible to turn us back to Himself. And where would we be today if the Lord were not like that?

THE LORD SENT ISAIAH AND HIS SON, SHEARJASHUB, TO TALK TO THE KING.

Several things are important here:

- 1) The names of Isaiah and Shearjashub: Jehovah is salvation, and a remnant shall return--both indicating nothing BUT HOPE for Judah.
- 2) Where they met: at the water supply just west of the city where the fullers, cleaners and thickeners of woolen fabrics (a vital business for Jerusalem), were carrying on their occupation.
- 3) The nature of what Isaiah had to say: encouraging promises.  
Note how Isaiah is told to contrast what Pekah and Rezin were saying with promises that the Lord was making to them.
- 4) The condition that was attached to the promises: "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established" (v. 9b).

## <sup>I</sup>II. WHAT THE LORD WANTED AHAZ TO DO (Isa. 7:10, 11).

Here we have again, as we see so often in the Word of God, one of the main reasons for our trials. The Lord is not only seeking to keep us from making more mistakes, but He is also

seeking to draw us to Himself, to teach us to pray, to get us to cast our care upon Him. HE WANTED TO GIVE AHAZ CONFIRMATION IN ADDITION TO HIS PROMISES THAT HE WOULD DO AS HE PROMISED. What a condescension for God to have to prove to His people that His Word is true!

AND, AS FAR AS WE KNOW, NO SUCH PROMISE OF SUCH GREAT MAGNITUDE WAS EVER GIVEN TO ANOTHER MAN (although some might come close to it). The Lord was offering to do anything in the grave, anything on earth, even anything in heaven--the Lord would do anything that Ahaz desired in order to confirm the the promises which He had just made!

#### IV. AHAZ'S RESPONSE (Isa. 7:12).

How unlike Samuel was Ahaz! Cf. 1 Sam. 12:21-25 when Israel had sinned against the Lord in asking for a king:

"And turn ye not aside; for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they are vain. For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake, because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people. Moreover, as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way. Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things he hath done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king."

Ahaz refused to pray. Why? Because he had other ideas. Read 2 Kings 16:7-9. His hope was in Assyria, not in the Lord.

The Lord knew the heart of this wicked King. What would He do? Man would be merciless. He would over-react. What about the Lord? Here again we see the grace of God.

#### V. THE PROMISES OF THE LORD (Isa. 7:13-25).

They fall into two categories:

- 1) Promises of blessing.
- 2) Promises of judgment--far beyond the time of Ahaz, ~~and~~ for hundreds of years. Ahaz's dates: 732-716 B.C.

We come here to Isaiah's second Messianic prophecy. Cf. Isa. 4:2, where we have His nature. In 7:14, the uniqueness of His birth. In 9:6, 7, His royalty. In 11:1 ff., His reign.

How amazing to find the prophecy of the virgin birth of Christ in a context like this! It can only exalt the grace of God!

This is a difficult passage in view of the statement which is made in v. 16. The answer seems to point to Isa. 8:1-4. There was an immediate and a future fulfillment to the prophecy: Immanuel was to be the Messiah's name; Mahershalal-hashbaz, the spoil hastens, was a sign to Judah of the coming judgment of God upon Syria and Israel. Thus, the immediate hope was a prospect of future hope.

But there was to be a difference.

The Lord would confound the hope of Ahaz in Assyria by making Assyria an enemy, not a friend.

And this would lead in Josiah's time (v. 18) to conflicts between Egypt and Assyria in Israel. So the results were disastrous and far-reaching into the years to come.

Vv. 19-25 present a dark, dark picture.

Concl: What are we to conclude <sup>from</sup> ~~in~~ a chapter like this?

Several things:

- 1) How much the Lord's people need Him. We are weak and fearful and defeated apart from Him.
- 2) How much the Lord wants us, wants us to believe His Word, wants us to trust Him.
- 3) The importance of prayer.
- 4) The Lord's great desire to give us blessings.
- 5) The dreadful consequences of disobedience.