

# God Promises

Sept. 20, 2020

Isaiah 7:7-17

God's promises remind us that God is for us and not against us. The Bible is filled with stories and testimonies of God's sovereignty, His power, His goodness, and His faithfulness.

After Solomon's death (931 B.C.), the ten northern tribes divided from the southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin. The northern kingdom is known as Israel (also Ephraim) and the southern kingdom is known as Judah. During Isaiah's time (~740 B.C.), Assyria (modern day Iraq) was the dominant power in the region. Smaller kingdom's like Israel and Judah were vassal states of Assyria. An alliance between Aram (modern-day Syria) and Israel (here called Ephraim) was formed to fight Assyria but they needed Judah to join them.

Ahaz is king over Judah. What should he do? Join in with Aram and Ephraim and attack Assyria, or seek protection from Assyria from Aram and Ephraim? Isaiah relays God's promise that Judah would not be taken by Syria and Ephraim. God even offers Ahaz a sign to bolster his faith in God's promise. But like many of us in desperate times, Ahaz turns to human protection (from Assyria) instead of relying upon God. Ahaz never put his faith in the sovereignty and faithfulness of God.

God would indeed send the perfect sign of His sovereignty, faithfulness and provision for us. Verse 14 reminds us that God would send a Savior. Jesus is our Immanuel, God with us. Every day is worth living because the Lord is with us and His promises are sure. *[excerpts from Glenn Metts]*

## God Intervenes (Isaiah 7:7-9) [Background Isaiah 7:1-6]

- The people of Judah and king Ahaz were terrified by the impending invasion from the north.
- ***"It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass"***
  - Through Isaiah, God stated point blank that Ahaz had nothing to worry about.
- With a gathering army at their doorstep, Ahaz and Judah had difficulty believing God's promise.
- Verses 8-9 describes the specific enemies Judah Faced.
  - Damascus was the capital of Syria (Aram) and Rezin was the king.
  - Samaria was the capital of Israel (Ephraim) and Remaliah's son was the king.
- God stated that Ephraim would be broken and no longer a nation in 65 years.
  - This was fulfilled in 722 BC when Assyria destroyed Samaria.
    - With few survivors, they intermarried and became known as the Samaritans during the time of Jesus.
- Isaiah's prophecy came with an admonition that Ahaz and Judah must ***'believe'***. King Ahaz had to act on faith!
- If not by faith ***"ye shall not be established"***.
  - Judah would face destruction if they did not trust God to deliver them. Unfortunately, Ahaz did not trust God.

➤ **Have you ever had to stand firm in your faith?**

➤ **How did you deal with doubt?**



### God Expects (Isaiah 7:10-13)

- God knows we tend to put our trust in things we can control. So, God offers Ahaz a sign.
- ***“Ask thee a sign of the Lord”***
  - The sky was the limit – *“height or depth”*
  - It’s best to believe without signs, but if God offers one, why not accept it?
- If given a sign, king Ahaz would have no excuse not to believe, so his response was insidiously clever.
  - ***“Neither will I tempt the Lord”***
- While this sounds appropriate, it was a cover for what Ahaz had already decided to do.
  - Ahaz would not believe the Lord’s promise and act on faith; instead, he would decide.
- Have you ever heard someone avoid a decision or be non-committal by saying ‘we need to pray about it.’ This can be a cover for not wanting to commit to something.
- Isaiah saw right through Ahaz. ***“...you weary men, but will ye weary my God also?”***
  - Isaiah and God knew Ahaz’s pious excuse for refusing a sign was anything but pious.
- **Have you ever asked God for some sort of sign? Is that a good or bad thing for your faith?**

### God Announces (Isaiah 7:14-15)

- In response to Ahaz’s refusal to accept a sign to prove God’s sovereignty, ***“The LORD Himself shall give you a sign:”***
  - ***“a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son”***
    - The Hebrew word “almah” can mean virgin or young woman.
      - Clearly God fulfilled this promise (sign) in the birth of His son, Jesus Christ born by the virgin Mary.
    - To be a sign of Ahaz time, some scholars also postulate the sign being partially fulfilled by the birth of Isaiah’s son.
  - The God whose words we read here have layers of fulfillment over time. How cool is that!
  - In pointing to the amount of time passing for immediate fulfillment of the promise, verse 15 indicates the child will know ***“to refuse evil and choose the good.”*** Probably 2 to 4 years of age.
- **What does the promise (gift) from God made in verse 14 mean to you? (see Matt. 1: 18-25)**

### God Judges (Isaiah 7:16-17)

- God explained that before the promised child reached the stage of discerning good from evil, the nations Ahaz worried about (Aram and Ephraim) would cease to exist.
    - Aram was conquered by Assyria quickly and the northern kingdom fell in 722 B.C.
  - Ahaz refused to trust and believe God would rescue Judah. As a result, God allowed Assyria (the very nation Ahaz sought to protect Judah) to destroy her.
  - In essence, Ahaz invited a jaguar into his house to protect him from some wild dogs. Ahaz and Judah paid a huge price by rejecting God.
- **What are the consequences of rejecting God?**

### Biblical Truth:

***Since God is sovereign, His people can trust His promises.***

***But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven. Matthew 10:33***

