

Isaiah Lesson 07

Isaiah Chapter 7

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Introduction: Last week in the sixth chapter of Isaiah, we found records of the transforming vision by which God commissioned Isaiah. The glory of the Lord and the holiness of God were in view and continually ascribed before His throne.

In chapter 7, the prophecy of this chapter is closer in time as it relates to Judah. The political ground that existed between Judah, the Syrians, and the northern kingdom are utilized to articulate one of the greatest prophecies in the Old Testament. From that setting springs forth the prophecy of the virgin birth of the Messiah. The prophecy then shifts back to the future invasion of Judah by the Assyrians.

I. Isaiah is Sent to King Ahaz

Isa 7:1 And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it.

Isa 7:2 And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.

Ahaz was currently the king of Judah and was one of the most ungodly of all the kings of that ruled over the small nation. II Chronicles 28:5-6 indicates that it was at the hand of God that Syria and Israel, the northern kingdom, came against Judah to chasten it. Though they attacked Jerusalem, they could not conquer it. Noteworthy are the kings involved.

- (1) Ahaz was king of Judah.
- (2) Pekah, the son of Remaliah, was king of the northern kingdom.
- (3) Rezin was the king of Syria.

Word reached Ahaz of the house of David that the Syrians had allied themselves with Israel (Ephraim) against Judah. Both Ahaz and his people were shaken at the news. Judah was apparently overwhelmed by the alliance.

Isa 7:3 Then said the LORD unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shearjashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field;

Isa 7:4 And say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah.

Isaiah was directed by the Lord to get his son Shearjashub and meet Ahaz the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field. Shearjashub means 'a remnant shall return.' Implied in the very name of the prophet's son was the impending captivity of Judah and Israel and that only a remnant would someday return.

Isaiah and his son were to go and meet Ahaz outside Jerusalem where there was a pool where laundry was done. Isaiah in effect told Ahaz to not be frightened by the two kings attacking him (Rezin, king of Syria and Pekah, son of Remaliah, of the northern kingdom). These two were just smoldering sticks which would be soon burned out.

Isa 7:5 Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying,

Isa 7:6 Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal:

Isaiah notes the threats of these 2 hostile kings. These kings allied themselves together to defeat Judah and conquer them. Once they successfully conquered Judah, they planned to install their own puppet king named Tabeal.

Isa 7:7 Thus saith the Lord GOD, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass.

Isa 7:8 For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people.

Isa 7:9 And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.

GOD sent word to Ahaz through the prophet that these kings of Syria and Israel were sincere concerning their threat. However, their invasion would neither stand nor prevail. Of interest is that the word translated as GOD {hwhy} is what otherwise is rendered Jehovah. Isaiah noted that the king of Syria was Rezin. However, within 65 years, the kingdom of the house of Israel would cease to exist.

The start of the sixty-five years is commonly reckoned by the Jewish writers from the prophecy of Amos, who prophesied two years before the earthquake in Uzziah's time, concerning the captivity both of Syria and Israel. See Amos 1:1,5 and Amos 7:11,17.

Amo 1:1 The words of Amos, who was among the herdmen of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

...

Amo 1:5 I will break also the bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitant from the plain of Aven, and him that holdeth the sceptre from the house of Eden: and the people of Syria shall go into captivity unto Kir, saith the LORD.

Amo 7:11 For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land.

...

Amo 7:17 Therefore thus saith the LORD; Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou shalt die in a polluted land: and Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of his land.

The prophet further reminded Ahaz that the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son. "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established." Isaiah simply told Ahaz that the king in the northern kingdom (Samaria) was Pekah, Remaliah's son. However, the day was soon coming that the northern kingdom would no longer exist.

He also noted that if Ahaz would not believe, he would not remain established as king. The word of the prophet to Ahaz was not to be afraid of his enemies. Rather, trust God to take care of them. Though Ahaz was by no means a godly king, the time for God's judgment against Judah was not imminent so God would deliver them.

II. The Sign of Immanuel

Isa 7:10 Moreover the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying,

Isa 7:11 Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above.

Isa 7:12 But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD.

God sent further word to Ahaz. Implied is that if he did not believe what Isaiah had foretold him, to ask for a miraculous sign from God. He could ask from the depths beneath or from the sky above. Ahaz suddenly became pious and refused to impose upon or test God by asking from Him a sign. This was despite the fact he had been directed to do so by the prophet of God.

Isa 7:13 And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?

Isa 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

In that immediate context, the prophet angrily replied to Ahaz. And he said, “Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?” It is significant that Isaiah broadened the scope of his reply to more than just Ahaz. His response now was to the entire house of David—the entire royal dynasty of David after having turned their back upon their God. The prophet reproved them. Though they had already wearied men with their faithlessness and unfaithfulness, would they now so impose the same against God?

Because Ahaz ignored God’s offer for a sign, the prophet announced, “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” The great prophecy of the virgin birth of the Messiah was pronounced.

Some have sought to allege that the word translated as virgin (hmlē almah) simply refers to a young woman and not necessarily a virgin. Though birth is a miracle from God, it happens every day. There is no great sign in a young woman conceiving and having a son. However, for a virgin to conceive and give birth certainly could and would denote a sign.

Notice that the prophecy was directed to the house of David and not just Ahaz. The one born of the virgin mother would be called Immanuel meaning 'God with us.' This prophecy was clearly fulfilled in Matthew 1:18-25.

Mat 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

Mat 1:19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

Mat 1:20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

Mat 1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

Mat 1:22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

Mat 1:23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

Mat 1:24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

Mat 1:25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

Isa 7:15 Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.

Isa 7:16 For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

Isaiah added further details of this prophecy. Butter (i.e., curds) and honey would be the diet of the Christ child. Implicit is a life of humble origins. He would have the discernment to reject evil and choose that which was good. Indeed, our Lord lived a sinless life.

The prophecy now by way of application returns to Ahaz. Before the time it took for the child born to reach the age of discernment (knowing to refuse evil and choose good), the kings attacking Judah would be gone. Some have advanced

the view that the child mentioned here was the son of Isaiah (Shear-jashub) and the time his small son reached an age of discernment. However, this thought does not seem to fit the immediate context.

The greater thought is that it would not be long before the region which Ahaz despised (Israel and Syria, both to the north) would no longer have Rezin or Pekah as kings. That is precisely what happened several years later when the Assyrians invaded and captured Syria and Pekah died in Samaria.

Isa 7:17 The LORD shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah; even the king of Assyria.

Isa 7:18 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria.

Isa 7:19 And they shall come, and shall rest all of them in the desolate valleys, and in the holes of the rocks, and upon all thorns, and upon all bushes.

Notwithstanding the fact that Judah would be delivered from the threats of the northern kingdom and Syria, they soon would face a far greater threat. The following text will make it clear that this invasion would be God's chastisement. From the time that the northern kingdom had separated from Judah, a time of trouble like they had never experienced was about to descend upon Judah. The Assyrians would invade Judah.

With simple analogy in verse 18, the prophet foretold how that God was about to chasten Judah. The days were coming when God would hiss for both the Egyptians and the Assyrians to come and attack Israel. The Assyrians would come first. The Egyptians would later attack Josiah. The word translated as hiss (qrv sharaq) also has the sense to call for 'whistle' which is likely the idea here.

III. Prophecy of Assyrian Attack

Isa 7:20 In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired, namely, by them beyond the river, by the king of Assyria, the head, and the hair of the feet: and it shall also consume the beard.

Isa 7:21 And it shall come to pass in that day, that a man shall nourish a young cow, and two sheep;

Isa 7:22 And it shall come to pass, for the abundance of milk that they shall give he shall eat butter: for butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the land.

As Judah continued to ignore the warnings of the prophet, the judgment of God was inevitable. As a barber might shave one's head, God was about to have Judah shaved from head to toe. The chastening barber would be the Assyrians, from beyond the Euphrates River. They would utterly humiliate Judah though not destroying nor deporting them.

Descriptions of the poverty which would ensue from the Assyrian incursion against Judah are noted beginning in verse 21. A man having only a young cow and two sheep speaks of poverty. Moreover, all he and his family would have to eat would be the butter (curds) of this meager flock and honey that they might find. When the Assyrians were finally removed from the land, there would be little left for the inhabitants to eat.

Isa 7:23 And it shall come to pass in that day, that every place shall be, where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings, it shall even be for briers and thorns.

Isa 7:24 With arrows and with bows shall men come thither; because all the land shall become briers and thorns.

Isa 7:25 And on all hills that shall be digged with the mattock, there shall not come thither the fear of briers and thorns: but it shall be for the sending forth of oxen, and for the treading of lesser cattle.

As a result of the Assyrian invasion, where there had been thousands of vines in Judah producing many thousands of shekels of silver for income, the day was soon coming when all that would be left would be briers and thorns. The husbandmen of the orchards would no longer come and tend their vineyards. Rather they would come with bows and arrows to try and hunt wild animals for food in order to survive.

Everything that was established and flourished was destroyed. All that would be left after the Assyrian incursion would be briers and thorns. What was once blessed and protected by God would become a barren wilderness. Economic disaster was further foretold. Whereas the hillsides of Judah had once grown lovely vineyards and olive groves, animals of various sorts and sizes would trample the ground, grazing for anything to eat.

The Assyrian invasion would be severe chastisement upon Judah without destroying or deporting them. Judah would pay dearly for their rebellion and

ignoring of God's Word. The Assyrians were removed. Though desolate, God's people would still have a place to call home and they had the opportunity to repent and return to God.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.