

Isaiah 7 Commentary

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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.:

- **the days** : 2Ki 16:1 2Ch 28:1-6)
- **Rezin** : Isa 8:6 2Ki 15:37 Ps 83:3-5
- **but could**: Isa 7:4-9 8:9,10
- [Isaiah 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

To help keep this chapter in context observe the preceding table and the following outline adapted from Talk Thru the Bible which summarizes the first section of Isaiah dealing primarily with prophecies concerning the Kingdom of Judah...

Prophecies against Judah

Isaiah 1:1-12:6

- A The Judgment of Judah Isa 1:1–31
- B The Day of the Lord Isa 2:1–4:6
- C The Parable of the Vineyard Isa 5:1–30
- D The Commission of Isaiah Isa 6:1–13
- E The Destruction of Israel by Assyria Isa 7:1–10:4
 - 1 Sign of Immanuel Isa 7:1–25
 - 2 Sign of Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz Isa 8:1–22
 - 3 Prophecy of the Messiah's Birth Isa 9:1–7
 - 4 Judgment on Ephraim Isa 9:8–10:4
- F The Destruction of Assyria by God Isa 10:5–12:6
 - 1 Destruction of Assyria Isa 10:5–19
 - 2 Remnant of Israel Isa 10:20–34
 - 3 Restoration of the Messiah's Kingdom Isa 11:1–16
 - 4 Thanksgiving in the Messiah's Kingdom Isa 12:1–6

ISAIAH 7 NATIONAL CRISIS PERSONAL UNBELIEF PROFOUND PROPHECY

Irving Jensen reminds us that "Of all the writing prophets, Isaiah is justly accounted the greatest. His prophecy is one of the longest, is quoted more frequently than any other in the New Testament, and he more often than any other prophet tells of the coming Messiah. Isaiah prophesied for about fifty years during very critical times of both kingdoms, Israel and Judah. He was greatly responsible for the sweeping reforms introduced by Hezekiah, who was one of Judah's righteous kings. Merrill Unger says this of Isaiah: "Isaiah ... is the great messianic prophet and prince of OT seers. For splendor of diction, brilliance of imagery, versatility and beauty of style, profundity and breadth of prophetic vision, he is without peer."...Isaiah, like most of the prophets, preached a twofold message: warning of judgment for sin, and comfort of salvation for righteousness. John Phillips writes, "One moment his book is black with the thunder and the darkness of the storm. The next, the rainbow shines through, and he sweeps his readers on to the Golden Age that still lies ahead for the world." Isaiah spoke mainly to the chosen people of God, but his message was also directed to foreign nations, prophesying judgment but also proclaiming the evangel (Gospel) to them (read Isa 11:10; 42:6; 45:22). ([Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament - Irving L. Jensen Books](#) - recommended resource)

Joseph A Alexander sets the context and summarizes Isaiah 7 writing that...

Here begins a series of connected prophecies (Isaiah 7-12), belonging to the reign of Ahaz, and relating in general to the same great subjects, the deliverance of Judah (southern 2 tribes) from Syria and Israel (northern 10 tribes), its subsequent subjection to Assyria and other foreign powers, the final destruction of its

enemies, the advent of the Messiah, and the nature of His kingdom. The series admits of different divisions, but it is commonly agreed that one distinct portion is contained in the seventh chapter....

The common division (of Isaiah 7) is more natural, which supposes Isa 7:1-16 to contain a promise of deliverance from Syria (Aram) and Israel (Ephraim), and Isa 7:17-25 a threatening of worse evils to be brought upon Judah by the Assyrians whom they trusted. The chapter begins with a brief historical statement of the invasion of Judah by Rezin and Pekah and of the fear which it excited, to relieve which Isaiah is commissioned to meet Ahaz in a public place, and to assure him that there is nothing more to fear from the invading powers, that their evil design cannot be accomplished, that one of them is soon to perish, and that in the meantime both are to remain without enlargement (Isaiah 7:1-9).

Seeing the king to be incredulous, the prophet invites him to assure himself by choosing any sign or pledge of the event, which he refuses to do, under the pretext of confidence in God, but is charged with unbelief by the prophet, who nevertheless renews the promise of deliverance in a symbolical form, and in connection with a prophecy of the miraculous conception and nativity of Christ, both as a pledge of the event, and as a measure of the time in which it is to take place (Isaiah 7:10-16)

To this assurance of immediate deliverance, he adds a threatening of ulterior evils, to arise from the Assyrian protection which the king preferred to that of God, to wit, the loss of independence, the successive domination of foreign powers, the harassing and predatory occupation of the land by strangers, the removal of its people, the neglect of tillage, and the transformation of its choicest vineyards, fields, and gardens, into wastes or pastures (Isaiah 7:17-25). ([The Prophecies of Isaiah](#) - one of the best older commentaries on Isaiah)

W E Vine introduces this chapter noting that...After the death of Uzziah (Isa 6:1-note) and during the reign of Jotham, Isaiah was given no written prophecy to record. Jotham, probably exercised by his father's death, sought to be conformed to God's Law. Evil went on in the nation (2Chr. 27:2), and Ahaz broke out into open defiance of God. And now a new series of prophecies is committed to His messenger. (BORROW [isaiah prophecies promises warning](#))

Ahaz...Jotham...Uzziah...Pekah- See **Resource: [Kings of Israel and Judah Timeline](#)** - Well done chart of the kings of the Northern (Israel) and Southern (Judah) Kingdoms with **dates** (**Note:** When you compare various sources you will find considerable differences in the dates of the reigns of the kings, so it is best to avoid being too dogmatic) and with an assessment of the **quality of the rule** of the king (bad, good, etc).

Ahaz king of Judah reigned (circa) 735-715 BC**

Pekah king of Ephraim (Israel) reigned (circa) 740-732 BC

Rezin king of Syria reigned 740-732 BC

**There is little agreement on chronology of this section of the OT so you will find wide variations for the rule of Ahaz!

Jotham - Jotham was the son of good king Uzziah (also called Azariah, reigned ~792-740BC) Jotham was the 12th King of the southern kingdom of Judah and was a "good" king. During King Jotham's reign the northern kingdom (10 tribes) of Israel associated itself with Syria (Aram) and they together began to manifest hostility toward the southern kingdom of Judah. For 4 years before Jotham's death, **Pekah** occupied the throne of Samaria.

It came about - Events do not just happen by chance. God is sovereign and is in control of history ("His" story) even while allowing men their free will. This is a mystery we cannot now explain. What we must continually remember is that since God is in total control, nothing just "comes about" but is ordained and orchestrated by an Omnipotent, Omniscient, Sovereign God.

The days of Ahaz - **Ahaz** means "he has grasped" and was the eleventh king of the southern kingdom Judah and was the son of Jotham (2Chr 27:9, 2Chr 27:6 = good summation of character and life of Ahaz's father). God punished Ahaz severely for his evil ways (eg, 2Chr 28:5, 6, 7, 8). The character and conduct of Ahaz are summarized by the chronicler...

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. 2 But he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel (the northern 10 tribes - every king was evil); he also made molten images for the **Baals**. 3 Moreover, he burned incense in the valley of **Ben-Hinnom** and burned his sons in fire (**Read that phrase again! Worship of Moloch** was associated particularly with child sacrifice.), according to the **abominations** of the nations whom the Lord had driven out before the sons of Israel. 4 He sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills and under every green tree. (2Chr 28:1-4, cp 2Ki 16:1, 2, 3, 4)

Could not conquer it (See 2Kings 16:5) - Why did this alliance between the Syrians and the Northern Kingdom not conquer

Jerusalem? Clearly it is because God did not allow them to conquer it, something that was totally undeserved by the wicked King Ahaz.

Second Kings gives additional background which helps interpret the events in Isaiah 7...

Then (This "term of succession" [see **expressions of time**] follows a summation of the evil deeds of Ahaz [see that summary in the preceding section under "days of Ahaz"] and suggests that Ahaz was reaping the evil fruit of the evil seeds he had sown! cp Gal 6:7-note, Gal 6:8-note - **This is an immutable principle beloved - If you have some "secret" sins, you would be most wise to confess and forsake them immediately** [Pr 28:13-note], **lest you reap the righteous response of God to your evil deeds**) Rezin king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah, king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem to wage war; and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him (Isa 7:1, 2). 6 At that time Rezin king of Aram (Syria) recovered **Elath** for Aram, and cleared the Judeans out of Elath entirely; and the Arameans (Syrians) came to Elath, and have lived there to this day. 7 So (**term of conclusion**) Ahaz sent messengers to **Tiglath-pileser** king of **Assyria (Asshur)**, saying,

"I am your servant and your son; come up and deliver me from the hand of the king of Aram, and from the hand of the king of Israel, who are rising up against me." (**Comment:** Contrast Ahaz's **reliance** on the "arm of flesh" with his **rejection** of the strong arm of the LORD - see especially Isa 7:8, 9, 10, 11, 12 - note God's clear warning against unbelief in Isa 7:9)

8 And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king's house, and sent a present to the king of Assyria. 9 So the king of Assyria listened to him; and the king of Assyria went up against Damascus and captured it, and carried the people of it away into exile to Kir, and put Rezin to death (**Comment:** Ahaz undoubtedly thought his human plan had worked and had even trumped God's promise of protection, but God had clearly stated that he would not last and God's Word always comes to pass! We are all a bit like Ahaz - we devise a plan without praying about it, instead consulting other "wise" men, and at first our plan seems to work but in time it proves to be unsuccessful. May God's Spirit make us all quick to remember the foolish unbelief of Ahaz [cp 1Co 10:6, 11] and continually seek to put into practice the wisdom of Pr 3:5, 6, 7, 8. The world says "Look before you leap!" The Bible says "Pray before you leap!"). (2Ki 16:5-9, cp **fate of Pekah** = 2Ki 15:27, 28, 29)

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: A Timeline of Isaiah

- 790 - **Uzziah** (790-739BC) becomes king of Judah, reigns 52 years
- 759 - **Jotham** becomes king of Judah assuming reign when Uzziah becomes leprous
- 742 - **Micah** begins his prophetic ministry (cp ministry to Hezekiah Jer 26:18, 19, Mic 3:12)
- 739 - **Isaiah begins prophetic ministry in year King Uzziah died** (Isa 6:1f)
- 731 - **Ahaz** becomes king of Judah (2Ki 15:38, 16:1, 2Chr 28:1)
- 726 - **Hezekiah** becomes 12th king of Judah (2Ki 16:20, 18:1,2) and one of 3 best (2Ki 18:5)
- 722 - **Shalmaneser** (2Ki 17:3, 18:9) dies while besieging Samaria, Sargon seizes crown
- 722 - **Sargon of Assyria (Sargon)** (Is 20:1) conquers Samaria (2Ki 17:6, 18:9, 10, 11, 12)
- 701 - **Sennacherib** (son of Sargon) of Assyria lays siege to Jerusalem
- 695 - **Manasseh** becomes king of Judah (2Ki 21:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12)
- 627 - **Jeremiah** begins prophetic ministry
- 586 - **Nebuchadnezzar** of Babylon conquers Judah

(Source: [The Ryrie Study Bible: New American Standard Translation: 1995. Moody Publishers](#)) Note that most of these dates are approximations and not indisputable facts. They are listed to help give the reader have a general idea of the relationship of historical events in Isaiah's time.

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.:

- **house** : Isa 7:13 6:13 37:35 2Sa 7:16 1Ki 11:32 12:16 13:2 Jer 21:12
- **camped in**: Isa 7:17 11:13 2Ch 25:10 28:12 Eze 37:16-19 Ho 12:1
- **His heart**: Isa 8:12 37:27 Lev 26:36,37 Nu 14:1, 2, 3 Dt 28:65,66 2Ki 7:6,7 Ps 11:1 27:1,2 112:7,8 Pr 28:1 Mt 2:3
- [Isaiah 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

The house of David - In this context this phrase refers to King Ahaz (in the line of David). Some see in this phrase a clear allusion to Jehovah's unbreakable, immutable, unconditional, eternal covenant with David in which He promised to give to His servant an eternal seed, throne, and kingdom (2Sa 7:14, 15, 16; Ps 89:19-37).

Ron Teed offers an interesting thought on why the phrase **house of David** is used in place of the name Ahaz...

The **house of David** in Isa 7:2 reminds us of the significance of Satan's attempt to destroy the Davidic dynasty or line from which would come the Savior, Jesus Christ. If Ahaz had been overthrown, it would have made it **impossible** for God's promise of a Savior to come through the **line of David**. But we know that God controls all history and He would not allow anyone to cause His **promise** to be broken (**Ed**: The **promise** of the Messiah from the house of David - see **Jehovah**, the covenant keeping God's, **immutable**, unconditional promise in His "**Davidic Covenant**" - 2Sa 7:12, 13, 16; cp **Covenant - Solemn & Binding**) to be broken. ([Isaiah 7 Teed Commentaries](#))

The Arameans have camped in Ephraim - The **KJV** has "Syria is confederate with Ephraim". In the prophetic books **Ephraim** and **Israel** are the collective names of the ten northern tribes, who were initially led by Jeroboam, were later called **Samaria** (1Ki 21:1) and finally were sent into permanent exile (2Ki 17:1-6) in 722BC. **Ephraim** was the paramount tribe of Israel.

His (Ahaz's) **heart...shook** - King Ahaz's reaction at this news would not be surprising in view of the fact that Aram (Syria) and Israel (King Pekah) had previously defeated King Ahaz...

Wherefore (because of 2Chr 28:1,2, 3, 4), the LORD his God delivered him (Ahaz) into the hand of the **king of Aram** (Syria); 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, (Why?) because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers (Sin never pays!). (2 Ch 28:5, 6).

Heart...hearts...shook - Clearly descriptive of their overwhelming fear and dread at what seemed to be their demise. Notice how God's Word through His prophet is sent to counter the fear. Remember that faith or trust comes from hearing God's Word (cp Ro 10:17).

THOUGHT - This raises the question of how do I handle adverse circumstances? Do I trust in my own wisdom and ability (as Ahaz did by making a treaty with Assyria -- see following section)? Or do I search God's Word that my faith in God might be buoyed and I might be strengthened to endure the trial?

Isaiah 7:3 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,:

- **Go out**: Ex 7:15 Jer 19:2,3 22:1
- **Shear-jashub** = The remnant shall return: Isa 6:13 10:21 55:7 Ro 9:27
- **end** : Isa 36:2 2Ki 18:17 20:20

**A REMNANT
SHALL RETURN:
THREAT and/or PROMISE?**

Then the LORD said - Note that Jehovah comes into the picture when Judah is in great fear.

**Beloved, when we are in great fear,
Remember that the Lord is near.**

You and your son [Shear-jashub](#) - Isaiah was to take his son whose name functions as a walking "sermon" or walking "object lesson" for his name means "a remnant shall return." (See Isaiah 10:21 - where clearly the remnant there is a believing remnant).

Leupold makes an interesting observation that the name [Shear-jashub](#)...

is either a **threat** to the effect that only a remnant shall return or survive; or it can imply that a remnant shall return, and so it involves a **promise**. Ahaz must have known the child's name, otherwise this procedure would have to be stamped as meaningless. But by the side of **Shear-jashub** stood **Isaiah**, with a name equally meaningful: "the salvation of the Lord", or "the Lord is salvation". The entire cue to the course to be taken plus an indication of the outcome was mapped out in this significant name. **This encounter was suggesting to Ahaz to let the Lord be his salvation and then at least a remnant would survive.** (Borrow [Exposition of Isaiah](#))

Vine notes that [Shear-jashub](#)... forms a continuation of the message given in Isa 6:13, marking the unity of the distinct prophecies. The name was designed to be to Ahaz both an inducement to him to turn to God himself, and a warning that, if he refused to do so, he would have no part in the restoration of that part of the nation described as the remnant.

Guzik asks... Why did Isaiah bring his son Shear-Jashub? Because his name meant "A Remnant Shall Return", and God wanted Ahaz to know that because of the kind of ungodly trust he put in the king of Assyria (see Isa 7:12), Judah would eventually be taken into captivity, and only a remnant would return.

Skinner adds the thought that instead of meaning a "return from exile," (which I favor) [Shear-jashub](#) means to "turn to Jehovah" citing **Isaiah 10:22** as support for his interpretation. (See study of the doctrine of the remnant). It is very possible that this name has more than one prophetic fulfillment to Judah who would be taken into captivity to Babylon for 70 years after which a remnant would return to the land. This historical fulfillment could be a picture of the future, final fulfillment, when a remnant of believing Israel (Jews) will repent and return to Jehovah their Redeemer in the last half of Daniel's Seventieth Week, the horrible time that Jesus referred to as the Great Tribulation (the time of Jacob's distress - Jer 30:7, cp "a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation" = Da 12:1-note) (See Zechariah's prophecy declaring that 2/3's of the Jews will be cut off because of their unbelief and 1/3 will be brought through the Refiner's fire - Zech 13:8, 9, cp the spirit of grace and supplication that precedes the repentance and belief of this 1/3 - Zech 12:10) (See [The book of prophet Isaiah](#))

Remember that Isaiah had another son [Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz](#) (Isa 8:3) whose name means speedy is the prey and which speaks of the judgment of God.

At the end of the conduit of the upper pool (cp lower pool Isa 22:9) - The exact location of this reservoir is uncertain, but as an above ground aqueduct providing water to the city it's strategic nature is beyond question. Therefore as a source of water to the city, it is likely that Ahaz was attempting to prevent the invading forces from Syria and Israel from having access while at the same time retaining its use for Jerusalem. So it appears that instead of falling on his knees before God to seek His help against the Syriac-Israeli alliance, King Ahaz was inspecting the water supply, making human preparations for the potential coming siege.

THOUGHT - Aren't we all like Ahaz at times - we find ourselves suddenly confronted with a seemingly overwhelming problem and our first reaction is to call our lawyer, our accountant, our counselor, etc, rather than immediately calling out to our Father Who art in heaven? I hope you are as convicted as I am! God grant us grace to first seek Thy face! Amen

Skinner adds that...Ahaz was at this anxious moment devoting his personal attention to the water supply of his capital **Ed**: When he should have been devoting his attention to the One Who supplies everything necessary for life and godliness - 2Pe 1:3-note). Operations were apparently in progress either for filling the reservoirs and cisterns within the city or for stopping the sources that would be accessible to the enemy. In the historic sieges of Jerusalem the assailants always suffered more from scarcity of water than the defenders and it is not impossible that the precautions taken on this occasion were the reason why the allies "were not able to fight against it." (See [The book of prophet Isaiah](#))

Conduit (te'alah) describes a trench, a channel or an aqueduct constructed to carry water. An aqueduct would enable water to flow from one location to another (2Ki 18:17, 20:20) ([Click here](#) for description of ancient aqueducts - see entry #5 "Pools and Aqueducts")

The Fuller's Field - The location is uncertain. This field was a place where people washed clothes.

The upper pool is mentioned later in Isaiah as the very site [Sennacherib's](#) field commander [Rabshakeh](#) hurled insults at [King Hezekiah](#) (which served as a fulfillment of Isaiah's prediction of an Assyrian attack - see below Isa 7:17, 18ff) suggesting that

whatever was the specific location, it was certainly in "earshot" of the wall...

And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from [Lachish](#) to Jerusalem to King Hezekiah with a large army. And he stood by the conduit of **the upper pool** on the highway of the fuller's field. (Is 36:2, cp Isa 36:11, 2Ki 18:17, 26).

Isaiah 7:4 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.:

- **Take care:** Isa 30:7, 15 Ex 14:13, 14 2Ch 20:17 La 3:26
- **fear:** Isa 8:11-14 35:4 41:14 51:12, 13 Mt 10:28 24:6
- **Do not be fainthearted:** Heb. let not they heart be tender, Dt 20:3 1Sa 17:32
- **Two stubs:** Isa 7:8 8:4 2Ki 15:29, 30 Am 4:11)

Note that Jehovah's message to King Ahaz through His "mouthpiece" Isaiah continues from Isa 7:4 through Isa 7:9.

JEHOVAH COMMANDS AN ATTITUDINAL ADJUSTMENT

Take care and be calm (both are commands = **red**) - "Guard yourself and be quiet." "Be careful and cautious and do not act rashly or as if in panic." "Keep calm and don't lose your head." (Compare the charge to Joshua - Joshua 1:6, see also Isaiah 30:15) A similar message was issued by Moses to Israel just before they crossed the Jordan to confront the Canaanite enemies...

Be strong and courageous (both are commands), do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the Lord your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you. Then Moses called to Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, **"Be strong and courageous**, (why?) for you shall go with this people into the land which the Lord has sworn to their fathers to give them (**Note:** The divine promise had been given and was thus was certain. And yet faith and obedience were necessary in order for Joshua and Israel to "possess their possessions!" This is an immutable principle which undergirds the "victorious Christian life" - **Trust and obey** for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, then to trust and obey! **Where are you not obeying in your Christian life?** Be sure that your disobedience reflects your unbelief and together these inseparable "twins" will impede your progress in your journey of progressive Christlikeness!), and you shall give it to them as an inheritance. (Dt 31:6-7).

Take care ([08104](#)) (**samar**) means to watch (over or carefully), to be on guard, to exercise great care over (eg, Adam in the Garden Ge 2:15, a flock Ge 30:31). The Lxx uses **phulasso** (aorist imperative = Command to do this effectively with a sense of urgency) which means to be on guard, to watch, to keep in safe custody.

Be calm ([08252](#)) (**saqat**) means to be still, quiet or undisturbed. The Lxx uses **hesuchazo** (from **hesuchos** = quiet, still) (aorist imperative = Command to do this effectively with a sense of urgency) and means to keep still, refrain from labor, meddlesomeness or speech. To be at rest or maintain a state of silence.

Be tenderhearted ([07401](#)) (**rakak**) means to be tender (second Hebrew word = lebab = heart), and in the present context is used to discourage the faintheartedness as in a man who lacks resolve and needs to be strong in the face of danger (Dt 20:3, 8 Jer 51:46)

Because - Isaiah now explains why [King Ahaz](#) need not fear the [Rezin-Pekah](#) alliance that was arrayed against Judah and Jerusalem.

Two stubs of smoldering firebrands - [Rezin](#) and [Pekah](#) are **not flaming** (destructive) firebrands but *smoldering* (about to flame out) firebrands. The two stubs are **Aram** (Syria) and **Israel** (in context referred to as Ephraim) This is a very pithy metaphor picturing the power of [Rezin](#) and [Pekah](#) as ready to die out like a piece of smoking wood that has been removed from a bonfire. A piece of wood that is smoldering is already burning out and now characterized more by smoke than by fire which is a picture of braggadocio (empty boasting) without brawn (muscular strength) to back their verbal threats (See Isa 7:6)

John Calvin comments on the **two stubs**...

One would think that they are endued with so great power that they could burn and destroy the whole world. To put down the excess of terror, the Lord declares that what we imagined to be a burning, and a perpetual burning, is but a slight smoke and of short duration.

John Trapp adds...

Call them in contempt a couple of firebrands, such as would do mischief but cannot, because smoking and not burning, and but the tails of smoking firebrands neither, such as are smoking their last, and shall shortly be utterly extinct. In a word, they have more pride than power, being a mere flash.

Fierce anger - (Literally a burning nose) The burning (intense, hot) anger emanates from a "smoldering firebrand", a firebrand about to burn out! This is why King Ahaz is to take care and be calm. Ahaz's (Judah's) enemies may have a lot of bark but no bite according to Jehovah.

Ahaz's reaction to Syria and Israel reflected his human perspective on the problem. To Ahaz this was a big problem, for these two enemies allied together constituted a terrible threat! What Ahaz failed to do was to see them as God saw them, as two stubs of wood about to burn out, as all smoke and no fire!

THOUGHT - How often we are like Ahaz and choose to keep our focus on our problem rather than looking at the One Who can solve our problems! What problem has you paralyzed with fear? Who are you choosing to look at to solve this problem, yourself, the arm of flesh or Jehovah, the Almighty God?

Son of Remaliah - Skinner is probably correct when he writes that "Pekah was a usurper, a *novus homo*, and Isaiah never condescends to utter his name. Cp Isa 7:5, 9) (See [The book of prophet Isaiah](#))

Isaiah 7:5 'Because Aram, with Ephraim and the son of Remaliah, has planned evil against you, saying;

- **Aram [Syria]:** Ps 2:2 83:3,4 Na 1:11 Zech 1:15
- [Isaiah 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Aram with Ephraim - Syria and Israel.

Son of Remaliah - [Pekah](#), King of Israel. Some see this way of referring to Pekah as a title of contempt for his usurping the crown rather than having descended from the royal line.

Isaiah explains the nature of the fierce anger as pre-medicated evil against King Ahaz and His Kingdom of Judah.

Isaiah 7:6 "Let us go up against Judah and terrorize it, and make for ourselves a breach in its walls and set up the son of Tabeel as king in the midst of it,":

- [Isaiah 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Now Isaiah tells Ahaz the three specific objectives of the **planned evil**. (1) Campaign of terror calculated to fill Judah with fear, anxiety, apprehension, which from Isa 7:3 was already having its intended impact on the King and the nation of Judah. (2) Split the defensive walls of the city of Jerusalem wide open! (3) Set up a puppet king - **Tabeel** about whom nothing specific is known. **Tabeel** in some resources is said to mean "God is good" but there are a few sources (Leupold; The Exhaustive Dictionary of Bible Names) that say the meaning of the slightly altered form of the name is "Good for nothing" which might be an intended pun.

Terrorize ([06973](#)) (**qus**) can mean to loathe or be disgusted but as used here in the causative sense it means to vex (bring trouble, distress, agitation, to make one cower)

Make a breach ([01234](#))(**baqa'**) means to rend, rip, open.

Leupold says **baqa'**...

involves the idea of cleaving an object apart, and then that which remains is to be partitioned between the two assailants (Borrow [Exposition of Isaiah](#))

Isaiah 7:7 thus says the LORD GOD, "It shall not stand nor shall it come to pass:

- Isa 8:10 10:6-12 37:29 46:10,11 Ps 2:4-6 33:11 76:10 Pr 21:30 La 3:37 Da 4:35 Ac 4:25-28

- [Isaiah 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

JEHOVAH'S PROMISE

It shall not stand nor shall it come to pass - God's double (not stand nor...come to pass) prophetic promise to Ahaz. Jehovah's promises still need to be believed and as we see, Ahaz's subsequent refusal to ask for a sign suggests he does not believe God's promise.

Recall that Ahaz was a wicked King in Judah but nevertheless, God in His longsuffering was showing Ahaz mercy in spite of his iniquity. And before we are too hard on Ahaz, we need to recall the times in our life when we have been rebellious and disobeyed the Lord's clear Word and yet He has been longsuffering with us! Amazing grace. Amazing God. Who saved and continues to save a wretch like me!

Ahaz (and Judah) now were faced with the question, "Do we take God at His Word?" **Beloved, God's promises must be believed to be received and realized experientially.**

FAITH "ENDORSES" GOD'S CHECKBOOK OF PROMISES

Spurgeon discusses the vital link between **God's promises** and **man's trust** in his wonderful (recommended) devotional **Faith's Checkbook (Pt 1 Pt 2 Pt 3 Pt 4)**...

A **PROMISE** from God may very instructively be compared to a check payable to order. It is given to the **believer** with the view of bestowing upon him some good thing. It is not meant that he should read it over comfortably, and then have done with it. No, he is to treat the **promise** as a reality, as a man treats a check.

He is to take the **promise**, and endorse it with his own name by **personally receiving it as true**. He is **by faith** to accept it as his own. He sets to his seal that God is true and true as to this particular word of promise. He goes further, and **believes** that he has the blessing in having the sure **promise** of it, and therefore he puts his name to it to testify to the receipt of the blessing.

This done, he must **believingly** present the **promise** to the Lord, as a man presents a check at the counter of the bank. He must plead it by prayer, expecting to have it fulfilled. If he has come to heaven's bank at the right date, he will receive the promised amount at once. If the date should happen to be further on, he must patiently wait till its arrival; but meanwhile he may count the promise as money, for the bank is sure to pay when the due time arrives.

Some fail to place the **endorsement of faith** upon the **check (of promise)**, and so they get nothing; and others are slack in presenting it, and these also receive nothing. This is not the fault of the promise, but of those who do not act with it in a common-sense, business-like manner.

God has given no pledge which He will not redeem, and encouraged no hope which He will not fulfill. To help my brethren to believe this, I have prepared this little volume. The sight of the **promises** themselves is good for the eyes of **faith**: the more we study the words of grace, the more grace shall we derive from the words. To the cheering Scriptures, I have added testimonies of my own, the fruit of trial and experience. I believe all the promises of God, but many of them I have personally tried and proved. I have seen that they are true, for they have been fulfilled to me. This, I trust, may be cheering to the young and not without solace to the older sort. One man's experience may be of the utmost use to another; and this is why the man of God of old wrote, "I sought the Lord, and he heard me"; and again, "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him."

All the promises of God are "Yea and Amen" in Christ Jesus; and as He is ours, every promise is ours **if** we will but lie down upon it in restful faith.

The firmest things in the universe are the promises and purposes of the unchanging God, and these are the safeguard of the obedient believer.

There is a **promise** prepared for your present emergencies; and if you will **believe** and plead it at the mercy-seat through Jesus Christ, you shall see the hand of the Lord stretched out to help you.

**Everything else will fail,
but His word never will.**

He has been to me so faithful in countless instances that I must encourage you to trust Him. I should be ungrateful to God and unkind to you if I did not do so.

Seeing that it is the word of a God so true, so immutable, so powerful, so wise, I will and must **believe** the **promise**." If we thus meditate upon the promises, and consider the Promiser, we shall experience their sweetness, and obtain their fulfilment.

A man prevails only as he believes (cp 1Jn 5:4). The Holy Spirit is the Author of faith, and strengthens it, so that we pray **believing** God's **promise**.

Isaiah 7:8 "For the head of Aram is Damascus and the head of Damascus is Rezin (now within another 65 years Ephraim will be shattered, so that it is no longer a people),:

- 2Sa 8:6
- [Isaiah 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

JEHOVAH'S VERDICT

For - This is a **term of explanation**. Whenever you encounter a **"for"** at the beginning of a sentence you need to stop and **interrogate with the 5W/H'S** questions. This discipline will slow you down, help you begin to **meditate** on the text and allow your Teacher, the Holy Spirit time to illuminate the text. In the present context, Jehovah God is explaining (in Isa 7:7, 8) why the enemies' evil plan will not come to pass.

Now within another 65 years Ephraim will be shattered - The specific statement of timing of this event is enigmatic because we know that the events in this chapter took place during Ahaz's reign, so somewhere around 735BC by some estimates. History teaches us that Ephraim (Israel) was taken into captivity by Assyria in 722BC which would be only 12 years later.

Leupold explains the prediction this way...

Sixty-five years would bring us down to 670, when [Esarhaddon](#) was the Assyrian king. Of him, however, it is said that he brought colonists to Samaria to replace the last group that had been removed; and this step was really the one that spelled the total end of the national existence of Ephraim (cf. 2Ki 17:24ff.; Ezra 4:2, 10). So the statement—Isa 7:8c—is both correct in itself and very much in place at this point. (BORROW [Exposition of Isaiah](#))

Constable adds that...

The Northern Kingdom suffered defeat in 722BC, only about 13 years from then. However in 671BC, about 62 years after this prophecy, King [Esarhaddon](#) began importing foreign settlers into the former Northern Kingdom that made return and resettlement there impossible (cf. 2Ki 17:24; 2Chr 33:11; Ezra 4:2, 10).

The point is that by around 671BC, as the Isaiah had prophesied, Israel's (Ephraim's) population (the Northern Kingdom) had been effaced from history.

Note that in fairness, it must be mentioned that the interpretation of "65 years" is not definitive and the interested reader is referred to the NET Bible technical note appended to verse 8 ([NET Bible Note on Isaiah 7](#))

While it is somewhat problematic to explain the phrase **"within another 65 years"**, this prediction does serve as another reminder of the truth of Daniel 2 that...

It is He (the Sovereign God) Who changes the times and the epochs. He removes kings and establishes kings. He gives wisdom to wise men, and knowledge to men of understanding. (Daniel 2:21-note)

Isaiah 7:9 and the head of Ephraim is Samaria and the head of Samaria is the son of Remaliah. If you will not believe, you surely shall not last.":

- **Head** : 1Ki 16:24-29 2Ki 15:27

- **If you will not believe:** 2Ch 20:20 Ac 27:11,25 Ro 11:20 Heb 11:6 1Jn 5:10
- [Isaiah 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE DANGER OF DISBELIEF

NIV = If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.

NLT = Unless your faith is firm, I cannot make you stand firm.

YLT = If ye do not give credence, Surely ye are not stedfast.

NET = If your faith does not remain firm, then you will not remain secure.

Stedman...

That is a play on words in the Hebrew. We could capture it in English if we put it this way:

**If there is no belief,
you will find no relief.**

The head of Ephraim is [Samaria](#) - Samaria was the capital (head) city of the nation of Israel (Ephraim).

The head of Samaria is the son of Remaliah - [Pekah](#), King of the northern kingdom of Israel.

If you will not believe (See also [discussion of men's faith and God's promises](#)) - The "If" introduces a conditional call to King Ahaz to trust Jehovah, this call being in the form of a "negative" promise - no belief, no stability or more literally...

**If you will not be sure,
You cannot be secure.**

Beloved, can you see the clear application in each of our lives? Circumstances arise that give birth to fear in our heart. God's promises (His living and active Word of Truth) remind us of His constant companionship and watchcare even (especially) during the storm, the trial, the adverse circumstances, truths about Him which are calculated to counter the fear and cause us to stand firm in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And yet we must each make a volitional choice to trust His trustworthy Word of promise, something Ahaz refused to do to his great loss!

The **writer of Hebrews** reiterates this vital, timeless spiritual principle...

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, (Why?) for (term of explanation) he who comes to God **must** (**dei** = an obligation out of intrinsic necessity; present tense = this is an unchanging "obligation/need/necessity") believe (pisteuo) that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. (Heb 11:6-note)

And what are we saying to (and about) God when we refuse to believe His trustworthy Word about His Son? John addresses the danger of a deficient faith regarding Jesus Christ explaining that...

The one who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; the one who does not believe God **has made Him a liar**, because he has not believed in the witness that God has borne concerning His Son. (1Jn 5:10, cp 1Jn 1:10)

If you will not believe, you surely shall not last (KJV = "be established") - **Vine** paraphrases this warning...

**"If ye are not firm in faith,
ye shall not be made firm in fact."**

-- BORROW [isaiah prophecies promises warning](#)

This is a clear warning to Ahaz to trust in God's promises, not in the arm of men (making alliance with Assyria). It is notable that Ahaz's failure to believe is not said to affect the outcome of the attack against Jerusalem. God had already decreed that the Syriac-Israeli alliance would not succeed. However, Ahaz's unbelief would affect the course of his life and reign as king.

It should be noted that the Hebrew verb **believe** and shall not last are both in the **plural** (as is the corresponding Greek verb pisteuo) which indicates that God is not just calling for King Ahaz to **believe** but for the people of Judah (certainly all who heard Isaiah's prophecy, which would likely include other government leaders. **NET note** says "the Lord here addresses the entire Davidic family and court") to **believe**. In support of this premise is that in Isaiah 7:2 it was not only the King who feared but also the people of

Judah.

Ray Ortlund comments that God is saying...

In other words, "You'll live by faith, or you won't live at all. But if you do want my support, all you have to do is lean on me." God is attracted to weakness and need and honesty. He is repelled by our self-assured pride.

Vine comments on the vital role of faith in laying hold of God's promises...

This warning serves to remind us, positively, of the power of faith.

**Faith is encouraged
and strengthened
by difficulties.**

Faith faces what to the natural mind are impossibilities, and, resting on the promises of God, relies upon Him to fulfill His counsel concerning them and to turn the obstacles to account for His glory. (BORROW [isaiah prophecies promises warning](#))

Skinner remarks on the singular importance of this passage... The words mark an epoch (a memorable event or date) in the history of revelation; never before probably had the distinctively religious principle of **faith** been so plainly exhibited as the touchstone of character and of destiny (cf. Ge 15:6; Hab 2:4). Here as throughout Scripture **faith** means trust in the positive revelation of God, the faith required of Ahaz being whole-hearted acceptance of God's word through Isaiah. The doctrine is one of the foundation truths of this prophet's ministry (cf. Isaiah 28:16, 30:15). (See [The book of prophet Isaiah](#))

Believe (0539) (**aman - word study**) means to confirm, support, uphold and at the heart of the meaning of the root is the idea of certainty. Faith in this present passage represents a basic trust that leans wholly on the Lord and His Word of promise that Judah's enemies will not succeed with their evil plans. This is similar to the definition of **faith** in Hebrews 11:1-note. The basic root idea is firmness or certainty. The derivatives reflect the concept of certainty and dependability. In short, belief or faith is not a blind leap into the dark but a confident commitment to the One about Whom abundant evidence bears ample testimony of His eternal, immutable trustworthiness. In the NT the corresponding verb **pisteuo** signifies an intellectual apprehension of the truth, a surrender the truth and a behavior consistent with that surrender.

Aman is the verb by which Abram lays hold of the promise of God and by which he is given righteousness (Ge 15:6). Compare similar usages in Isaiah 28:16

**Trust God > Be Established
Trust His Word > Succeed**

We see this trust principle reiterated by good King [Jehoshaphat](#) ("Jehovah Judges") to the people of Judah...

And they rose early in the morning and went out to the wilderness of [Tekoa](#) (means "trumpet blast") and when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Listen to me, O Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, **put your trust (aman)** in the LORD your God, and **you will be established**. **Put your trust (aman)** in His prophets and **succeed**. (2Chr 20:20)

Comment: Jehoshaphat gives us the key to a stable, successful Christian life in his OT charge to the people of Judah. Apply this truths in your life and reap the bountiful fruit thereof. You can stake your life on these promises, because they are backed by the promise keeping God, the God Who never breaks His covenant! When all else in your life is in disarray and discord, you can always **trust** His divine declarations.

Isaiah 7:10 Then the LORD spoke again to Ahaz, saying

- **Then:** Isa 1:5, 13 8:5 10:20 Hos 13:2
- [Isaiah 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**THE SIGN:
IMMANUEL
Isaiah 7:10-17**

Then...again (Literally = "the Lord added to speak", ESV = "Again", KJV = "Moreover") - In **inductive Bible study** the word "**then**" is

often an "**expression of time**" and as such it marks **sequence** (defining an order of succession) and can provide important insights, especially in the context of prophetic passages. Expressions of time generally answer the [5W/H](#) question "**When?**"

The LORD spoke - Remember that in context the prophet Isaiah is speaking to Ahaz. This statement (**the LORD spoke**) emphasizes that the prophet was not speaking of his own accord but was God's mouthpiece transmitting Jehovah's Words...

ISAIAH SPEAKS JEHOVAH SPEAKS

Beloved this pattern ought to be the constant goal of every modern day prophet (used in the sense of '**speaking forth**' NOT foretelling [The canon is closed at Revelation 22:21!]) every time he steps into the pulpit or teaches the saints in any capacity. When he speaks, he should speak for Jehovah, which emphasizes why it is so critical that the modern "prophet" is diligent to rightly divide the Word of Truth (2Ti 2:15) without adding to it or taking away from it (Pr 30:6)!

Oswalt has an excellent comment on the dynamic of God speaking **through** His prophet Isaiah explaining...

that the Transcendent (God) can relate to the finite (Isaiah) in such a way that neither the Transcendent is contained nor the finite violated (**Ed**: In other words, Isaiah was not a "puppet" with no will of his own). Neither God nor Isaiah has become other than himself in the process, yet there has been such a community of thought and desire between the two personalities that Isaiah's words are God's words (**Ed: O Father, that this same degree of covenant oneness and communion might be wrought in this writer's and each reader's heart in Christ. Amen!**). If Isaiah was deluded in his astonishing claim, why study his book at all? If he was correct, then the world dare not dismiss as easily as it is wont to Isaiah's and Israel's religion as merely one more of humanity's quests for the Divine. Isaiah did not claim to speak **about** God, he claimed to speak **for** God. ([The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1–39](#))

Paul emphasizes the importance of this pattern of preaching explaining...

We do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.
(2Cor 4:5-note)

Saying - The context is still God's prophet Isaiah challenging Ahaz to believe God regarding the certainty of the failure of the Syrian-Israeli threats against Judah.

Isaiah 7:11 "**Ask** a sign for yourself from the LORD your God; make it deep as Sheol or high as heaven."

- **Sign**: Isa 37:30 Isa 38:7,8,22 Jdg 6:36-40 2Ki 20:8-11 Jer 19:1,10 Jer 51:63,64 Mt 12:38-40, 16:1-4
- [Isaiah 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

AHAZ PUT TO THE TEST

Ask ([07592](#))(**shaal**) means to inquire and is in the imperative mood. Jehovah is not making a suggestion but giving a command to Ahaz! The Lxx translates with **aiteo** means to ask for with a claim on receipt of an answer and is in the **aorist imperative** which is a command calling for immediate response! While we should never place our faith in signs, Ahaz is being given another opportunity to prove and believe that God's Word is trustworthy. Contrary to popular opinion, God does not call for us to make a "leap of faith" but a leap into the light of His Word of Truth.

The irony is that while Ahaz thinks (or at least wants Isaiah to think) he is putting God to the test, it is actually Ahaz himself who is being tested! The test to Ahaz (and the leaders and people of Judah) is will he (they) receive (by faith) or reject (by unbelief) God's prophetic promise in Is 7:8, 9?

Sign ([0226](#))(**'oth**) means a signal, a mark a miracle and is used to describe amazing events such as God bringing Israel out of Egypt (Ex 4:8, 9, Nu 14:22) or a sign serving to authenticate the message as from God (1Sa 2:34, 10:7, 9) in contrast to the signs from false prophets (Dt 13:1, 2). King Hezekiah received a **sign** from Jehovah that He would add fifteen years to his life (Isa 38:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8; Gideon - Jdg 6:17-note) As an aside, while the Bible does record individuals asking for signs of divine approval or affirmation, this process is not to be the norm. In other words, it is usually not best to test God by asking Him for signs! Perhaps better is the prayer of the sick boy's father in Mark (Mk 9:24)!

R Alden - This is the general word for "sign," and it covers the entire range of the English term and the Greek word *sēmeion*. On the

pedestrian end of the scale it includes what amounts to a "signboard" or "standard" (Numbers 2:2). It also includes such important concepts as the rainbow "sign" to Noah (Genesis 9:12-13, 17).

1. 'ôṭ first occurs in Genesis 1:14, where it refers to the luminaries serving as "signs" to distinguish the seasons. In Jeremiah 10:2 it has a similar meaning.
2. According to Genesis 4:15, the Lord set a "mark" on Cain. The meaning of this word is uncertain.
3. A third use of the word is illustrated by Genesis 9:12-13, 17, according to which the rainbow is a "sign" of the covenant. Circumcision is the "sign" in Genesis 17:11. Also, the Sabbath is to be a "sign," according to Exodus 31:13, 17 and Ezekiel 20:12. It is this use of "sign" that is meant when Christians refer to the ordinances as outward "signs" of inward grace.
4. Most of the eighty occurrences of 'ôṭ refer to "miraculous signs." All the plagues on the Egyptians are called "signs." In these contexts the complementary word *môpēs* (q.v.) meaning "wonders" often occurs (Exodus 7:3; Deut. 4:34; Deut. 6:22; Deut. 7:19; Deut. 26:8; Neh. 9:10; Isaiah 20:3; et al.). This word 'ôṭ is used in Isaiah's famous prophecy to Ahaz (Isaiah 7:11, 14). The shadow's advance on the palace steps was a "sign" for the ailing king Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:9, Isaiah 38:7). Likewise God showed Gideon a "sign" by igniting the offered food (Judges 6:17).
5. The word 'ôṭ sometimes means "token." For example, Aaron's rod was to be a "warning to the rebellious" (Numbers 17:25 NAB and Heb, Numbers 17:10 in other English versions). In the same category are the stones in the Jordan (Joshua 4:6), the hammered plates on the altar (Numbers 16:38 [H 17:3]), and the witness pillar in Egypt (Isaiah 19:20).
6. A dreamer or a prophet, true or false, could produce "signs" according to Deut. 13:1ff. The fulfillment of Jeremiah's threat of punishment was a true "sign" (Jeremiah 44:29), while Isaiah speaks of "signs" of liars (Isaiah 44:25).

Naturally, these categories are artificial and overlap. The simple fact that one Hebrew word covers them all is proof of that. The word "sign" either signifies the unusual event itself or in some way points to that unusual event. Or it may point backward to a historical event such as the stones in the Jordan (Joshua 4:6), or even forward to such a promise as a thornless future world (Isaiah 55:13). (See the [Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament](#))

Skinner comments that **sign** ('oth)...plays a very large part in OT religion and with considerable latitude of meaning. The most important cases are those in which a divine revelation is attested by some striking event within the range of immediate perception through the senses. Such a **sign** may be a supernatural occurrence conveying an irresistible persuasion of the divine agency (Isa 38:7, 22; Ex 7:8ff.; Jdg 6:17, 36ff.; 1Ki 13:1 ff.). But it may also be an ordinary event, which acquires significance through its having been foretold, or asked for (Ge 24:14; 1Sa 10:2ff.; 14:10; Luke 2:12). Thus of two predicted events the nearer may be made a "**sign**" of the more remote (1Sa 2:34; Jer 44:29f.). Or, in a still more general sense, the "**sign**" may be merely an incident of the fulfilled prediction, which carries the mind back to the time of the prophecy, when the **sign** was appointed (Ex 3:12; Is 37:30). That for which a sign is here offered to Ahaz is the certainty of divine help or (what is the same thing) the truth that God speaks to him through the prophet. (See [The book of prophet Isaiah](#))

Delitzsch says that "signs authenticate divine causality retrospectively or divine certainty prospectively."

Oth - 77v in the OT - Gen 1:14; 4:15; 9:12f, 17; 17:11; Ex 3:12; 4:8f, 17, 28, 30; 7:3; 8:23; 10:1f; 12:13; 13:9, 16; 31:13, 17; Num 2:2; 14:11, 22; 16:38; 17:10; Deut 4:34; 6:8, 22; 7:19; 11:3, 18; 13:1f; 26:8; 28:46; 29:3; 34:11; Josh 2:12; 4:6; 24:17; Judg 6:17; 1Sa 2:34; 10:7, 9; 14:10; 2 Kgs 19:29; 20:8f; Neh 9:10; Job 21:29; Ps 65:8; 74:4, 9; 78:43; 86:17; 105:27; 135:9; Isa 7:11, 14; 8:18; 19:20; 20:3; 37:30; 38:7, 22; 44:25; 55:13; 66:19; Jer 10:2; 32:20f; 44:29; Ezek 4:3; 14:8; 20:12, 20 - The NET Bible notes that...

Elsewhere in Isaiah the word '**oth** usually refers to a natural occurrence or an object/person vested with special significance (see Isa 8:18; 19:20; 20:3; 37:30; 55:13; 66:19). Only in Isa 38:7, 8, 22 does '**oth** refer to a miraculous deed that involves suspending or overriding natural laws.

BOB UTLEY'S [SPECIAL TOPIC: SIGN](#)

1. The Semitic root, BDB 16, KB 26
 1. The NOUN "sign" is used
 1. as a marker of time, Gen. 1:14

2. as a marker of person, Gen. 4:15
3. as a marker of covenant, Gen. 9:12,13,17; 17:11
4. as a marker of a faith promise, Exod. 3:12
5. as a miracle to affirm God's representative (i.e., Moses), Exod. 4:8 (twice), 9, 17, 28, 30; 7:3; 8:23, etc.
6. tribal standard, Num. 2:2; Ps. 74:4
7. as a warning, Num. 16:38; 17:10

2. There are several "signs" (BDB 16) in the OT

1. a sign (or mark) for Cain's protection – Gen. 4:15
2. a rainbow for no more floods – Gen. 9:12-17
3. the blood on the door – Exod. 12:13
4. the Sabbath – Exod. 31:12-17; Ezek. 20:12,20
5. plate made from the censers of Korah – Num. 16:36-40
6. phylacteries and frontlets – Deut. 6:8; 11:18
7. the stones taken from the midst of the Jordan – Josh. 4:6
8. certain words spoken by Philistines to Jonathan – 1 Sam. 14:10
9. agricultural crops over three seasons – 2 Kgs. 19:29-34; Isa. 37:30
10. movement of shadow on the stairs – 2 Kgs. 20:8-11; Isa. 38:5-8
11. birth of a son to Ahaz – Isa. 7:11,14
12. an altar in Egypt – Isa. 19:19-22
13. YHWH made known to the nations – Isa. 66:18-19 (cf. Isa. 11:10,11-16; 19:22)
14. mark on forehead of faithful followers in Jerusalem – Ezek. 9:4 (cf. Rev. 7:3; 14:1)

See NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 1224-1228, "Sign and Symbol: Theology of."

3. It is used often in Isaiah.

1. special birth, Isa. 7:14
2. Isaiah's children, Isa. 8:18
3. altar and pillar in Egypt, Isa. 19:19-20
4. Isaiah's dress, Isa. 20:3
5. harvest, Isa. 37:30
6. sparing Jerusalem from Assyria, Isa. 38:7
7. Hezekiah's healing, Isa. 38:22
8. false signs, Isa. 44:25
9. agricultural blessings, Isa. 55:13
10. missionaries to the nations, Isa. 66:1

2. OT –

The terms "wonder," "sign," "portent" (BDB 68, KB 559) are synonymous (cf. Deut. 4:34; 7:19; 29:2) with "sign," "mark" (BDB 16, KB 26). It is used often in Exodus and Deuteronomy, but only twice in Isaiah (i.e., Isa. 8:18 and 20:3).

3. BDB has two main usages.

1. a special demonstration of God's power (i.e., the plagues of the Exodus)
2. a token of future events or symbolic acts denoting future events (cf. Isa. 20:3; Ezek. 12:6-11; 24:24; Zech. 3:8)

These usages show God's knowledge of the future and His ability to set its course. He reveals things to His people so they will trust and follow Him!

4. Signs in the NT

1. For the shepherds at Jesus' birth – Luke 2:12
2. Prophecy of Simeon about Jesus – Luke 2:34
3. Jesus performed signs and wonders to confirm His new message.
 1. John 20:30; 21:25
 2. Acts 2:22
4. The Jewish leaders demand Jesus to do a sign before they would believe.
 1. Matt. 12:38-39; 10:1-4
 2. Mark 8:11-12
 3. Luke 11:16,29,30 (sign of Jonah)
 4. John 4:48; 6:30
 5. 1 Cor. 1:22

5. The Disciples' questions about the end (see [SPECIAL TOPIC: THE DISCIPLES' QUESTIONS](#))

1. Matt. 24:3
2. Mark 13:4

3. Luke 21:7,11,25
 6. Satan and false teachers do signs to trick and confuse.
 1. Matt. 24:24
 2. Mark 13:22
 3. 2 Thess. 2:9
 7. Apostles do signs and wonders to confirm their message about Jesus
 1. Acts 2:43; 4:30; 5:12; 8:13; 14:3
 2. Romans 15:19
 3. 2 Cor. 12:12
 4. Heb. 2:4
 8. tongues as a sign to believers (see [SPECIAL TOPIC: TONGUES](#)) – 1 Cor. 14:22
Signs and predictive prophecy help humans trust God and His word. They are faith gifts to believers. But, they are not given to unbelievers, stubborn in their unbelief!
-

Your God - This might imply that Ahaz genuinely knows Him personally. Some commentators however are less sure of whether Ahaz was a genuine believer in Messiah. Some conclusions will have to wait until heaven!

Make it deep...or high - While this could point to the call for a miraculous sign, it could just as easily point to the fact that there is no limit on what sign Ahaz could ask of God.

NET Bible note...These words suggest that Ahaz can feel free to go beyond the bounds of ordinary human experience. [NET Bible Note on Isaiah 7](#)

Stedman comments...

notice, first of all, the wide scope from which Ahaz was invited to choose a sign. God said to him, "Ask of me and I will give you a sign (that what I say is going to happen), and you can choose from as deep as Sheol (hell itself) or as high as heaven." In other words, this sign was intended to be of world-shaking importance, something that all the peoples of the earth for all time would know about, a sign that would strengthen the faith of millions.

H C Leupold comments that Jehovah's...

demand on Ahaz was virtually exorbitant. Considering the weakness of Ahaz' faith, none recognized that more clearly than Yahweh himself. Therefore, not to ask more than Ahaz could bear, the Lord **very graciously** allows the king to ask for a sign to provide for himself some ground on which to build. This sign should be asked from Yahweh himself. By calling him "**your God**" it is admitted that the king still stands in some sort of special relation to God. Ahaz had not as yet openly or virtually denied the God of his father David.

The **sign** to be asked for could appear in one of two areas: either down on earth or up in the skies. The king is even granted the liberty of penetrating as deeply as he wished in either of these two areas. Down on earth he may, if he so desires, penetrate into the area of Sheol, the underworld, or the hereafter. Under this head one might think of the sign granted to King Saul when Samuel reappeared from the realm of the dead (1Sa 28:11ff.). On the other hand a striking sign way up in the skies would be allowed. In that area there might be signs in the sun, moon, or stars, eclipses, and the like. We have sought especially to catch the wide latitude given by the divine permission by translating: "Go as low as you please; go as high as you please." (BORROW [Exposition of Isaiah](#))

Isaiah 7:12 But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, nor will I test the LORD!"

- **I will not ask:** 2Ki 16:15 2Ch 28:22
- **neither:** Eze 33:31
- **test :** Dt 6:16 Mal 3:15 Ac 5:9 1Co 10:9
- [Isaiah 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**PRETENTIOUS
PIETY PORTRAYED**

But - This word always marks a **contrast** and calls for the reader to stop and ask questions such as what is being contrasted? It is also worth noting the reactions of two men to the same LORD - Isaiah sees the LORD and his heart is broken by his sinfulness (Isa 6:1, 2, 3, 4, 5-note) whereas Ahaz hears the LORD (cp Isa 7:10) and hardens his heart reflecting his pride!

I will not ask nor will I test Jehovah - Ahaz's **pseudo piety** and **pretended humility** (which were really just a "covert" expression of Ahaz's **pride**!) are shown by his rejection of God's gracious, merciful (remember Ahaz was an evil king!) offer to give him **asign**. Ahaz is willfully disobeying a clear command from Jehovah (**Ask a sign...**)! Presumably Ahaz is basing his "pious" rejection on a misinterpretation of Deuteronomy 6 in which Moses warns Israel...

You shall not put the LORD your God to the **test**, as you tested Him at [Massah](#). (Dt 6:16, cp Ex 17:7)

Comment: Yes, it is true, we are not to "test" the Lord (Acts 5:9, 10, 1Co 10:9, 10), except when He clearly directs us to do so - see Malachi 3:10. It is true that asking for a sign is often evidence of lack of faith (Mt 12:38, 39, 40, 41, 42), but in the present context, Ahaz's failure to ask for a sign demonstrates his lack of faith!

NET Bible note...

Ahaz uses the verb נָסָה (nasah, "test") in its negative sense of "challenge, provoke." However, this is false piety, a smokescreen designed to cover up his lack of faith in the Lord. ([NET Bible Note on Isaiah 7](#))

King Ahaz pretended to be very spiritual by refusing to ask a sign, but his rejection of the sign was actually a rejection of the Lord and His messenger.

**God's Word goes to work
when we believe it and act on it!**

King Ahaz only talked about it! Contrast the great faith of the widow of [Zarephath](#) who had no bread for Elijah and yet who by faith laid hold of God's promise of provision = 1Ki 17:10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15! (C H Spurgeon has a great sermon on this text which is worth taking a moment to ingest and digest - [The Inexhaustible Barrel](#))

Ortlund comments that...

Ahaz proves here that faith can be refused by the will, no matter how strong the evidences. If we don't want God, we can find a way to make our unbelief sound plausible, even **pious**.

Oswalt...Evidence cannot create faith; it can only confirm it. Where there is not faith, evidence is merely unwelcome, something which needs to be explained away. But why should Ahaz hand himself over to the tender mercies of his ultimate enemy, a far worse threat than Syria or Ephraim? Once abandon a heartfelt conviction that God does truly care for us and is intimately involved with us, once abandon his perspective for our own, then suddenly decisions which are utterly foolish viewed from his perspective become intelligent and wise. When we cannot trust God, it suddenly makes good sense to trust our worst enemy. So John Wesley said, "**If a man will not believe God, he will believe anything.** Why he may believe a man could put himself into a quart bottle!" (Letters, VI:123). (BORROW [The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1–39](#))

Stedman - I have read passages of Scripture to people listing promises of God about what he would do if they would trust him, and they have responded, "*Oh, I cannot believe that God would do anything like that for me*" That may sound humble and pious, but actually it is a fearful utterance of **pride**. Isaiah answers the king rather bluntly, "*Look, isn't it enough that you make me tired without making God tired as well?*"

Isaiah 7:13 Then he said, "Listen now, O house of David! Is it too slight a thing for you to try the patience of men, that you will try the patience of my God as well?:

- **O house:** Isa 7:2 2Ch 21:7 Jer 21:12 Lk 1:69
- **Is it too slight:** Ge 30:15 Nu 16:9,13 Ezek 16:20,47 34:18
- **To try:** 2Ch 36:15,16 Jer 6:11
- **You will:** Isa 1:24 43:24 63:10 65:3-5 Am 3:13 Mal 2:17 Ac 7:51 Heb 3:10
- [Isaiah 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [The Virgin Birth in the Old Testament and Isaiah 7:14](#) - Charles Feinberg

**HOW TO
WEARY GOD!**

Then he said - The prophet Isaiah is speaking (cp "my God")

Listen now - Ahaz's refusal to ask a proof offered by Jehovah Himself is an insult to the divine majesty which as we see exhausts the patience of the Almighty! Woe to the one who wearies God's longsuffering!

House of David - The mention of the **house of David** is compatible with the Messianic interpretation of Isaiah 7:14, for the Messiah was repeatedly referred to as the "**son of David**" (Mt 1:1, 12:23, 15:22, 20:30, 31, 21:9, 15 Lk 18:38, 22:42 cp Lk 1:69, 2:4)

The **NET Bible note** adds that...

The address to the **house of David** is designed to remind Ahaz and his royal court of the protection promised to them through the Davidic covenant. The king's refusal to claim God's promise magnifies his lack of faith.
([Net Bible Note Isaiah 7](#))

You - This pronoun is plural, indicating that this prophecy is not just to King Ahaz, but to the entire Jewish nation. In the following prophecy in Isaiah 7:14, God is giving the people of Israel a **sign** by which they would be able to recognize their longed for Deliverer, the **Masyiach** (Messiah) **ben** (son of) **David**. Sadly most of Israel refused to receive Messiah as the Son of David who was born of a virgin in fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14 (Jn 1:11, 12, 13).

Try the patience of men - Referring to the patience of the prophet Isaiah.

Try...patience ([03811](#)) (**la'ah**) means to be tired or weary. The basic idea is to be worn out. To exhaust oneself. In the hiphil stem (expresses "causative" action) as in the present passage, la'ah means to weary someone (Job 16:7, Ezek 24:12, Micah 6:3). The Septuagint (Lxx) translates la'ah with two Greek words - (1) the Greek noun **agon** means a struggle against opposition (2) the Greek verb **parecho** has the basic meaning of "to hold beside" or "to hold near". These two Greek words literally mean to keep holding near a struggle and in short to contend with someone, in this case with both men and God.

Try the patience of my God - Although it is not the same Hebrew verb for "test" (try) that was used in Isaiah 7:12, it does suggest the pun Ahaz's failure to believe ("test") God in response to God's request is in fact "testing" or trying the patience of the Lord!

My God - Wicked King Ahaz has now voiced his overt unbelief and thus Isaiah no longer says to Ahaz that Jehovah is "Your God" (Isa 7:11) by "my God"!

Isaiah 7:14 "Therefore the LORD Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.:"

- **Behold:** Ge 3:15 Jer 31:22 Mt 1:23 Lk 1:35
- **Will call:** Ge 4:1,2,25 16:11 29:32 30:6,8 1Sa 1:20 4:21
- **Immanuel :** Isa 8:8 9:6 Jn 1:1,2,14 Ro 9:5 1Ti 3:16)
- [Isaiah 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [See Related Devotionals](#) at bottom of page
- [Immanuel-Emmanuel](#) - 35 pages of notes, devotional,, quotes - Bruce Hurt

A DIFFICULT TEXT A DEFINITIVE TEXT!

Isaiah 7:14-16 is one of the most difficult texts in the Bible to interpret! One reason Isaiah 7:14 is so controversial is that some who deny the **Virgin Birth of Jesus** go to great lengths (vain attempts in my opinion) to argue that the Hebrew (and Greek Septuagint) language of this passage does not predict Jesus' virgin birth! **These notes will not attempt to review these sundry, often confusing opinions.** For more detailed analysis, the reader will need to consult other sources. Note that in the [references listed above](#), there are a number of scholarly articles on this passage (**Note:** The \$ signifies that the host site charges a fee [\$50] to view the entire article but this fee gives one a full year's subscription with access to literally thousands of articles in conservative, highly respected theological journals -- **PS** - I receive no royalty but if you can afford it, this is potentially a "gold mine" of sound teaching on the Word of God!)

I love **Spurgeon's** comment that Isaiah 7:14 is...

One of the most difficult in all the Word of God. It may be so; I certainly did not think it was until I saw what the commentators had to say about it, and I rose up from reading them perfectly confused.

Ray Stedman ([Isaiah 7, 9 O Come, Immanuel!](#))...

Charles Wesley had a great gift for incorporating in brief form some of the greatest truths of our faith. He wrote,

**Late in time behold Him come,
Offspring of a Virgin's womb;
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail th' incarnate Deity.**

In Chapter 7 of Isaiah we have the prophetic announcement of that virgin birth. One commentator has written:

Of measureless importance to the universe, to this world, to every individual of the human family is the prophecy to which we have now come. On the fulfillment of this prophecy all Christianity rests, as a building on its foundation.

Therefore - This is a term of conclusion which always begs the question of the reader "*What is it there for?*" Because of Ahaz's act of unbelief and failure to ask for a sign, God Himself will instead give the sign.

Behold ([02009](#)) (**hinneh**) is an **interjection** (= a word in speaking or writing, thrown in between words connected in construction, to express some emotion or passion) often seeks to grab the reader's attention and says something like - Look! Pay attention! Don't miss this next point! **Hinneh** draws attention to an important fact or action that follows and in a sense demands our attention. It follows that the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14 demands every reader's very careful attention. Unfortunately this great passage has been scrutinized and criticized to the point that the reader might miss the Lord's clear intent (remembering that He is not a God of confusion!) That said there are some legitimate difficulties in the translation and interpretation of this famous passage.

Young adds that "hinneh or '**behold!**' is employed in the Scriptures to announce a birth of unusual importance and significance." ([The Book of Isaiah 3 Vol. Edward J. Young](#)) ([Young](#))

Spurgeon reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, behold is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

Hinneh is translated in the Septuagint with the interjection *idou* (strictly speaking a command in the second person aorist imperative, middle voice) a demonstrative particle (used 1377 times in the Septuagint and NT) which is found especially in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke "and giving a peculiar vivacity to the style by bidding the reader or hearer to attend to what is said: "**Behold! See! Lo!**" (Thayer) The command is calling for urgent attention. Do this now! Don't delay! It could be loosely paraphrased "Pay attention!" or "Listen up!" to arouse attention and introduce a new and extraordinary fact of considerable importance.

W E Vine says that it is notable that when **behold** (**hinneh**) is used in Isaiah, it always introduces something relating to future circumstances. (BORROW [isaiah prophecies promises warning](#))

Uses of hinneh in Isaiah - Isa 3:1; 5:7, 26, 30; 6:7f; 7:14; 8:7, 18, 22; 10:33; 12:2; 13:9, 17; 17:1, 14; 19:1; 20:6; 21:9; 22:17; 24:1; 25:9; 26:21; 28:2, 16; 29:8, 14; 30:27; 34:5; 35:4; 36:6; 37:7, 11, 36; 38:5, 8, 17; 39:6; 40:9f; 41:15, 27; 42:9; 43:19; 47:14; 48:7, 10; 49:12, 22; 51:22; 52:6, 13; 54:11; 58:9; 59:9; 60:2; 62:11; 65:1, 6, 13f, 17f; 66:12, 15

The LORD Himself will give you a sign - In some ways I am glad Ahaz refused to ask for a sign. Ahaz's unbelief and refusal opens the way for Jehovah Himself to give us one of the greatest signs in all of the Bible! Unfortunately it has also become one of the most controversial!

As **Grogan** says "The **sign** of the child...constitutes an indication that the all-sovereign and all-knowing God has the situation completely in hand, and it rebukes the king's lack of faith in Him. ([Expositor's Bible Commentary Zondervan Publishing](#))

Virgin ([05959](#)) (**'almah**) has several meanings depending on the context - young woman of marriageable age (Ge 24:43), maiden (Pr 30:19), girl (Ex 2:8), virgin. While some argue that **'almah** is by no means an unambiguous Hebrew term for a virgin, it is notable that a passage such as Genesis 24:43 describes not only a young woman of marriageable age but one who undoubtedly is a virgin. Thus the use of **'almah** by no means excludes the possibility that the intended meaning in Isaiah 7:14 is a literal **virgin**. **'Almah** is never employed of a married woman.

'Almah - 7x in OT - Gen 24:43; Ex 2:8; Ps 68:25; Pr 30:19; Song 1:3; 6:8; Isa 7:14

Related Resources:

- Word study on - Virgin (maiden) ([01330](#)) bethulah
- Word study on - Virgin parthenos
- [Virgin - Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible](#)
- [Virgin; Virginité - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- [Virgin virginité - Hastings' Dictionary of the New Testament](#)

Without going into the various interpretations and arguments concerning the meaning of the Hebrew word **almah**, the Greek word **parthenos** chosen by the Hebrew translators of the **Septuagint (Lxx)** lends support to the interpretation of **'almah** in Isaiah 7:14 as a **virgin**. **BDAG** says that **parthenos** is used "*generally of a young woman of marriageable age, with or without focus on virginity*" (See Mt 25:1, 11, 1Co 7:25, 28, 34).

As an interesting aside, because the Jews' own Greek translation of the OT (**Lxx** was translated by Jewish scholars circa 150BC) negated their claims that **'almah** did not mean **virgin**, Isaiah 7:14 is one of the reasons Jewish synagogues ceased using the Septuagint Scriptures and returned to the Hebrew Scriptures! When individuals are not willing to believe God's Word of Truth (whether in Hebrew or Greek!), it is amazing (and sad) the lengths to which they will go in order to try to cover up or refute the Truth!

W A Criswell adds that "The **Septuagint (Lxx)** also uses **parthenos** to translate another Hebrew word meaning "virgin" (**betulah**), again underscoring the fact that **parthenos** meant "**virgin**" in the **Lxx** and for Matthew (**Ed**: See Mt 1:23 below). It is clear that both Matthew and the **Lxx** translators understood that Isaiah was speaking of a **virgin** when he used **'almah**. And this is precisely the purity which both Matthew and Luke ascribe to Mary (cf. Mt 1:18-25; Lk 1:26-35).

Matthew quotes from Isaiah 7:14 and uses the Greek noun **parthenos**...

BEHOLD, THE **VIRGIN (parthenos)** SHALL BE WITH CHILD, AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US. (Mt 1:23+)

Luke also uses **parthenos** in his description of Jesus' mother **Mary**...

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, to a **virgin (parthenos)** engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the **virgin's (parthenos)** name was Mary. (Lk 1:26, 27-note)

In the **conclusion** of a well referenced study (72 references cited) of the meaning of **'almah** in Isaiah 7:14 **Niessen** concludes that

The evidence supports both the traditional translation of "**virgin**" and the modern translation of "**young woman**," but each must be qualified. The English term "virgin" does not suggest age limitations while the English phrase "young woman" does not suggest virginity. The word **עַלְמָה ('almah)** demands both, and so a more accurate translation would be "**young virgin**." ([The Virginité of the עַלְמָה in Isaiah 7:14 - Bibliotheca Sacra 137:546, April, 1980](#))

See also - [The Immanuel Prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 and its use in Matthew 1:23 - R Bruce Compton](#)

The Net Bible Note comments on **virgin**...

The Hebrew article has been rendered as a demonstrative pronoun ("this") in the translation to bring out its force. It is very likely that Isaiah pointed to a woman who was present at the scene of the prophet's interview with Ahaz. Isaiah's address to the "house of David" and his use of second plural forms suggests other people were present, and his use of the second feminine singular verb form ("you will name") later in the verse is best explained if addressed to a woman who is present.

Because Isaiah 7:14 is quoted in Mt 1:23 in connection with Jesus' birth, the Isaiah passage has been regarded since the earliest Christian times as a prophecy of Christ's virgin birth.

Much debate has taken place over the best way to translate this Hebrew term, although ultimately one's view of the doctrine of the virgin birth of Christ is unaffected. Though the Hebrew word used here (**עַלְמָה, 'almah**) can sometimes refer to a woman who is a virgin (Ge 24:43), it does not carry this meaning inherently. The word is simply the feminine form of the corresponding masculine noun **עֶלֶם ('elem**, "young man"; cf. 1Sa 17:56; 20:22). The Aramaic and Ugaritic cognate terms are both used of women who are not virgins. The word seems to pertain to age, not sexual experience, and would normally be translated "young woman."

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translators who later translated the Book of Isaiah into Greek sometime between the

second and first century BC, however, rendered the Hebrew term by the **more specific Greek** word **parthenos**, which does mean "**virgin**" in a **technical sense**. This is the Greek term that also appears in the citation of Isa 7:14 in Mt 1:23.

Therefore, regardless of the meaning of the term in the OT context, in the NT Matthew's usage of the Greek term parthenos clearly indicates that from his perspective a virgin birth has taken place. ([Net Bible Note Isaiah 7](#))

Constable notes that the "Hebrew has a word for virgin, **bethula**, so why did not Isaiah use this word if he meant the mother of the child was a virgin? Probably Isaiah used '**alma** rather than **bethula** because he did not want to stress the virginity of the mother, but this word does not rule virginity out either. God evidently led Isaiah to use '**alma** so the predicted mother could be simply a **young unmarried woman** or a **virgin**."

Gene Brooks adds that...

The Rabbis, in an effort to deflect the obvious problem that Isaiah 7:14 creates for them in Yeshua (Jesus) being the Messiah, say that **bethulah** should have been used if the text meant virgin.

Comment: While **bethulah** does appear to signify a virgin in the context of a some OT passages (see Ge 24:16-[see Net Bible note on this verse](#)), it can also signify a young woman, maid or maiden (a young marriageable maiden) without definitively labeling her as a virgin. Thus this term is actually no more specific for virgin than is the Hebrew word 'almah. The well respected **TWOT** makes the point that "a strong case can be presented that **betulah** is not a technical term for **virgo intacta** ("maiden intact") in the OT." -- See [TWOT](#) Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament)

Betulah - 50x in OT - Ge 24:16; Ex 22:16, 17; Lev 21:3, 14; Dt 22:19, 23, 28; 32:25; Jdg 19:24; 21:12; 2Sa 13:2, 18; 1Kgs 1:2; 2Kgs 19:21; 2Chr 36:17; Esther 2:2f, 17, 19; Job 31:1; Ps 45:14; 78:63; 148:12; Isa 23:4, 12; 37:22; 47:1; 62:5; Jer 2:32; 14:17; 18:13; 31:4, 13, 21; 46:11; 51:22; Lam 1:4, 15, 18; 2:10, 13, 21; 5:11; Ezek 9:6; 44:22; Joel 1:8; Amos 5:2; 8:13; Zech 9:17

A virgin will be with child and bear a son - Although some commentators, even conservative commentators (e.g., [Feinberg](#)), feel that the **sign** of a virgin bearing a son was only fulfilled in the virgin birth of Christ, it would be difficult to explain how such a far future **sign** (over 700 years later) would function as an actual **sign** to King Ahaz and the house of David. Therefore, most conservative commentators view **Isaiah 7:14** like a number of OT prophecies which have **anear and future fulfillment** or so-called **double fulfillment**. The near fulfillment of the sign occurred in the days of Ahaz and the later, complete, final fulfillment occurred at the first coming of Christ when He was born of the virgin Mary.

DOUBLE FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECY ISAIAH 7:14	
NEAR FULFILLMENT	FUTURE FULFILLMENT
Maher-shalal-hashbaz** Isaiah 8:3,4, 18	Immanuel Mt 1:23
** As discussed below not everyone agrees that Maher-shalal-hashbaz is the sign to Ahaz (See W A Criswell's note below).	

Ray Stedman comments that

It is not wrong to translate "**a virgin**" as "**a young woman**." The Hebrew allows for that. The word can mean a young married as well as a young unmarried woman. But to be a "**sign**" it would have to be a young unmarried woman who had never known a man -- a virgin, in other words. Young women have sons all the time, but it would only be a **sign** if a woman who never knew a man conceived and bore a son. That is what the prophet said would happen. It was a **sign** to the whole **House of David**.

In the New Testament we are told that an angel appeared to **Joseph** because he was of the **line of David** and said to him,

"Fear not to take this woman to be your wife because that which is born of her is of the Holy Spirit," Mt 1:20).

Thus the virgin birth was, indeed, a sign to the **House of David**, 750 years later, that God would carry out his promise. A baby would be born of a virgin and his name would be "**God with us**." ...Surely anyone reading

these two Scriptures together can fail to see the tie between them. ([Isaiah 7, 9 O Come, Immanuel!](#))

W A Criswell comments that

The sign of a child was fulfilled not only immediately in the birth of either

(1) Isaiah's son Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz (cf. Isa 8:3, 4), or

(2) the royal child Hezekiah (715-686 B.C.), whose righteous deeds (2Ki 18:4, 5, 6, cp 2Ki 23:25) were honored by a period of the revealed presence of God; but messianically as Immanuel, "God with us," Jesus, the virgin maiden's Son, Who fulfilled the oracle in its truest sense. ("**Double fulfillment**" of prophecy)

Comment: It is important to note that all of the specific interpretations have problems to some degree. For example, one reason not everyone agrees that Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz was the sign to Ahaz is because Isaiah already had one son by his wife which makes it difficult to understand how she would fulfill the meaning of 'alma as a "virgin". And so Criswell offers the birth of Hezekiah as the fulfillment of the sign. Some feel that the prophecy Isaiah 7:14 had no fulfillment in Ahaz's day, but then why even give Ahaz a sign (which he would have been able to recognize)?

The important point to remember is that while the interpretation of the near fulfillment is disputed, there is no controversy (at least among conservative commentators who accept predictive prophecy) on the interpretation of the future and final fulfillment in the birth of Jesus, Immanuel, to the virgin Mary (Mt 1:23, Lk 1:26, 27)

IMMANUEL GOD WITH US HALLELUJAH!

Immanuel - God with us. Despite the difficulties in the detailed interpretation of Isaiah 7:14 (eg, who is the near fulfillment?), the name **Immanuel** is clearly a prediction which was fulfilled in the virgin birth of the Messiah. How can we be so dogmatic? Scripture is the best commentary on Scripture (Compare Scripture with Scripture) and Matthew's quotation of Isaiah 7:14 in Mt 1:23 leaves absolutely no doubt that the Holy Spirit intended Isaiah 7:14 to be a prophetic sign of the birth of Jesus to the virgin Mary.

Mattoon - No one else could meet the qualifications of this statement, "God with us." Jesus Christ was God's love, holiness, and heart wrapped in human flesh. He was God walking in sandals upon this earth.

■ See study of this great name - Immanuel-Emmanuel

Brooks writes that **Immanu-El** is an "unusual order of the words (which) indicates an emphatic **"WITH US** is God!" Thus this name captures the awe and wonder of the Incarnation, and the unimaginable fact that the God of the universe entered the world through a virgin's womb to become like us and become one with us. ([Isaiah 7:14 - The Virgin Shall Conceive](#))

Wolf adds that "The name **Immanuel** was a rebuke to Ahaz. If **'God is with us,'** then why should he have feared the enemy?"

Adam Clarke asks "In what sense then, is Christ **God with us**? Jesus is called **Immanuel**, or God with us, in His incarnation; God with us, by the influences of His Holy Spirit, in the holy sacrament, in the preaching of His word, in private prayer. And God with us, through every action of our life, that we begin, continue, and end in His name. He is God with us, to comfort, enlighten, protect, and defend us, in every time of temptation and trial, in the hour of death, in the day of judgment; and God with us and in us, and we with and in Him, to all eternity."

As an aside **Irving Jensen** reminds us that as we study Isaiah, we need to keep a proper prophetic perspective explaining that...

Isaiah, like many of the prophets, was given divine revelation concerning four prophetic points: (1) the prophet's own time, (2) coming captivity, (3) coming of Christ, (4) new heavens and new earth. How these are distributed throughout the book is summarized below.

1. The prophet's own time. Messages concerning this appear throughout the book. Forthtelling was Isaiah's major role.

2. Captivity. Isaiah foresaw Judah taken captive by the Babylonians. God alone knew when the captivity would come (586BC). The first mention of Babylon (Shinar) as the captor is in Isa 11:11. In the days of King Hezekiah the prophecy was made very clear (cf. Isa 39:6).

3. Coming of Christ. These prophecies abound in the "Book of Consolation" (chaps. 40–66). They concern both the first and second comings of Christ.

4. New heavens and new earth. Isaiah prophesies of end times, especially with reference to the Millennium, with Christ as the Prince of peace (Isa 9:6), and the elect nation of Israel gathered together after their worldwide dispersion (Isa 27:12, 13; 43:5, 6, 7; 65:8, 9, 10). On the most distant horizon he sees the new heavens and new earth (Isa 65:17).

Sermons on Isaiah 7:14

- [Isaiah 7 Commentary](#) - Brian Bell
- [Isaiah 7:14 Wondering at Immanuel, Isaiah 7:14; Mt 1:18-25](#)
- [The Virgin Birth and History](#) - James M Boice
- [Isaiah 7:14 - The Virgin Shall Conceive](#) - Gene Brooks
- [Isaiah 7:14 Signs of the Virgin](#) - W A Criswell
- [Isaiah 7:14-15 Butter & Honey](#) - Don Fortner
- [Isaiah 7:14-15 Immanuel](#) - Don Fortner
- [Isaiah 7:14-15 Our Virgin Born Savior](#) - Don Fortner
- [Isaiah 7:14-15 Surely, you don't believe in the virgin birth - Do you](#) - Don Fortner
- [Isaiah 7:1-25 It Shall Not Stand](#) - Don Fortner
- [Isaiah 7:9-13 If Ye Will Not Believe](#) - Don Fortner
- [Isaiah 7:14-15 Our Virgin Born Savior](#) - Don Fortner
- [Development of the Interpretation of Isaiah 7:14](#) - Edward Hindson
- [Context And Content In The Interpretation Of Isaiah 7:14](#) - Alex Motyer
- [Isaiah 7:14 Christmas B.C.](#) Terry Trivette
- [Isaiah 7:14 Jesus - The Promise Foretold](#) Steve Wagers
- [Isaiah 7:14 Christmas in its Christian Context](#) Donnie L. Martin
- [Isaiah 7:14 God with Us](#) - Wil Pounds
- [Isaiah 7:14 The Virgin Birth](#) Series Brian Bill
- [Isaiah 7:7-14 God With Us - Hope](#) Stephen Sheane
- [Isaiah 7:1-14 Do You Hear What I Hear?](#) Jeff Strite
- [Isaiah 7:1-16 A Son Is Given](#) Jeff Strite
- [Isaiah 7:14 Immanuel: The Right Choice](#) John Phillip R. Pesebre
- [Isaiah 7:14 God With Us: The Reality Of Emmanuel](#) Blake Inscore
- [Isaiah 7:14, 15 The Birth of Christ](#) - C H Spurgeon
- [Isaiah 7:14 Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel](#) - C H Spurgeon

Let us to-day go down to Bethlehem, and in company with wondering shepherds and adoring Magi, let us see him who was born King of the Jews, for we by faith can claim an interest in him, and can sing, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." Jesus is Jehovah incarnate, our Lord and our God, and yet our brother and friend; let us adore and admire. Let us notice at the very first glance his miraculous conception. It was a thing unheard of before, and unparalleled since, that a virgin should conceive and bear a Son. The first promise ran thus, "The seed of the woman," not the offspring of the man. Since venturous woman led the way in the sin which brought forth Paradise lost, she, and she alone, ushers in the Regainer of Paradise. Our Saviour, although truly man, was as to his human nature the Holy One of God. Let us reverently bow before the holy Child whose innocence restores to manhood its ancient glory; and let us pray that he may be formed in us, the hope of glory. Fail not to note his humble parentage. His mother has been described simply as "a virgin," not a princess, or prophetess, nor a matron of large estate. True the blood of kings ran in her veins; nor was her mind a weak and untaught one, for she could sing most sweetly a song of praise; but yet how humble her position, how poor the man to whom she stood affianced, and how miserable the accommodation afforded to the new-born King!

Immanuel, God with us in our nature, in our sorrow, in our lifework, in our punishment, in our grave, and now with us, or rather we with him, in resurrection, ascension, triumph, and Second Advent splendour.

- [Isaiah 7:14 What's In A Name](#) - John Walton

Below are Older Sermons on Isaiah 7:14

[A Double Tolerance in Isaiah's Prophecies](#)

[D. M. Sweets.](#)

Isaiah 7:14

[A New Thing in the Earth](#)

[Anon.](#)

Isaiah 7:14

A Prediction of the Miraculous Conception of Jesus Christ	J. A. Alexander.	Isaiah 7:14
A Prophecy of the Messiah	Canon Ainger.	Isaiah 7:14
Christ in Prophecy	H. L. Hastings.	Isaiah 7:14
Deliverance by a Lowly Agent	Prof. S. R. Driver, D. D.	Isaiah 7:14
God with Us	Gates of Imagery	Isaiah 7:14
God with Us, Though His Presence is not Always Realised	"Niger" in Expositor.	Isaiah 7:14
God's Sign to Ahaz	J. A. Alexander.	Isaiah 7:14
God's Sign to King Ahaz	D. M. Sweets.	Isaiah 7:14
Immanuel	Evan Lewis, B. A.	Isaiah 7:14
Immanuel	T. H. Barnett.	Isaiah 7:14
Immanuel	John Newton	Isaiah 7:14
Immanuel, a Stimulus to the Prophet Himself	"Niger" in Expositor.	Isaiah 7:14
Immanuel, the Messiah	F. Delitzsch.	Isaiah 7:14
Immanuel, the Sympathiser	Canon Ainger.	Isaiah 7:14
Life's Best Amulet	Christian Endeavor	Isaiah 7:14
Miracle of Miracles		Isaiah 7:14
Shear-Jashub; Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz; Immanuel	F. H. Woods, B. D.	Isaiah 7:14
The Birth of Christ		Isaiah 7:14
The Child Immanuel	"Niger" in Expositor.	Isaiah 7:14
The Figure of Immanuel an Ideal One	Prof. S. R. Driver, D. D.	Isaiah 7:14
The Immanuel-Child	R. Tuck	Isaiah 7:14
The Mercy of God	J. Donne.	Isaiah 7:14
The Mystery of the Sign	F. Delitzsch.	Isaiah 7:14
The Presence of God	W. Clarkson	Isaiah 7:14
The Responsibility of Revelation	E. T. Marshall, M. A.	Isaiah 7:14
The Virgin	Prof. A. F. Kirkpatrick., Speaker's Commentary., Prof. W. J. Beecher, D. D.	Isaiah 7:14
The Virgin Mother	F. H. Woods, B. D.	Isaiah 7:14
What Sign Could the Distant Birth of Christ be to Ahaz	F. T. Bassett, M. A.	Isaiah 7:14
Who was the Virgin and Who the Son	D. M. Sweets.	Isaiah 7:14
The Nature of the Messianic Prophecies	R. Tuck	Isaiah 7:14-16

Isaiah 7:15 He will eat curds and honey at the time He knows enough to refuse evil and choose good:

- **curds:** Isa 7:22 Mt 3:4
- **know:** Ps 51:5 Am 5:15 Lk 1:35 2:40,52 Ro 12:9 Php 1:9,10
- [Isaiah 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

He - Who is "**He**"? The interpretation is difficult and there is no absolute consensus. Some favor this as a reference to Isaiah's second son, Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, because in the next chapter Isaiah records...

Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given me are for **signs** and wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion. (Is 8:18).

Curds (cp Isa 7:21, 22) - Coagulated milk (like cottage cheese) reflects a diet of poverty as one would see in a land that had been overrun by enemy forces. The following passages describe the enemy occupation and devastation of Judah by the **fly** (Egyptian forces) and the **bee** (Assyrian forces) leaving only milk producing animals

Oswalt has a helpful comment...Some believe it refers to moral discrimination (as in Ge 2:17; 3:5; Dt. 1:39; 1Ki. 3:9; Isa 5:20) and, in that light, suggest an elapsed time of twelve to twenty years. Others point to Isa 8:4, where it is said that Isaiah's son will not be able to speak clearly before Damascus and Samaria are plundered, and argue that this is the correct interpretation of good and evil here: distinguishing between what is helpful and what is harmful....Either idea would fit here. Within three years Damascus had been destroyed and most of Samaria's holdings had been plundered. But it is also true that it was not until some twelve or thirteen years later that Samaria was destroyed and Israel ceased to exist. On balance, given the evident connection of the phrase with moral discernment at several points, and given a lack of clear evidence to the contrary, the best interpretation seems to be that by the time the child has reached an age of official accountability, both of the threatening powers will have ceased to exist.(BORROW [The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1–39](#))

Isaiah 7:16 For before the boy will know enough to refuse evil and choose good, the land whose two kings you dread will be forsaken.:

- **before** : Dt 1:39 Jon 4:11
- **the land**: Isa 8:4 9:11 17:1-3 2Ki 15:29,30 16:9)

IMMANUEL A TWO-EDGED SIGN

The boy will know enough to refuse good and evil - This description supports the view there was a literal boy born to the "virgin" and he served as a **sign** from Jehovah to King Ahaz. In simple terms, God was giving Ahaz a **sign** that within a few years, both Aram (Syria) and Ephraim (Israel) would be crushed. Thus in one sense Isaiah 7:14 was a **sign** of deliverance to Ahaz, a validation of Isaiah's prophecy that Judah would not be defeated by Aram and Ephraim. The negative aspect of this sign was the prediction of divine judgment on Judah following the judgment of her enemies (Isa 7:17)! In a divine twist, God will use the same instrument, Assyria, to defeat the Aram-Ephraim alliance and the kingdom of Judah!

"Whatever a man trusts in place of God (Ahaz trust in Assyria) will one day turn to devour him." (Oswalt - BORROW [The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1–39](#))

Teed has an interesting thought on this passage noting that...A Jewish boy became barmitzvahed, a "son of the commandment," at 12 or 13 years of age. At this time he was considered a moral adult, responsible enough for his own acts to reject wrong and choose right (**enough to refuse good and evil**). Thus the sign proving Isaiah's words about the salvation to be won by Immanuel would be the destruction of Israel and Syria by Assyria within a dozen years. And this is exactly what happened, for by 722 B.C., just thirteen years after Ahaz became king, the two lands he feared lay in waste. This sign was ultimately fulfilled 700 years later in Matthew 1:20-23 ([Isaiah 7 Teed Commentaries](#))

The land whose two kings you dread will be forsaken - This prophecy clearly refers to the downfall of Aram (Syria) and Israel (Ephraim).

Isaiah 7:17 The LORD will bring on you, on your people, and on your father's house such days as have never come since the day that Ephraim separated from Judah, the king of Assyria."

- **bring on**: Isa 8:7,8 10:5,6 36:1-37:38 2Ki 18:1-19:37 2Ch 28:19-21 32:1-33 2Ch 33:11 36:6-20 Ne 9:32
- **the day**: 1Ki 12:16-19 2Ch 10:16-19
- [Isaiah 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

DAYS OF DESTRUCTION DECREED

The LORD will bring on you (King Ahaz) - Assyria could not have come to Palestine apart from the Lord's permission! God is sovereign, righteous and just and so He must punish evil. In His sovereignty He uses the king of Assyria as His implement of punishment to King Ahaz and Judah.

Oswalt comments that...By depending on himself rather than God, Ahaz has unleashed a whirlwind (cp Hos 8:7) which will not be content to devour his troublesome northern neighbors. Led by the God he has disdained, it will come sweeping over him and his nation as well.(BORROW [The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1–39](#))

Comment: How important it is for a country to be governed by a righteous leader!

Jeremiah's description of the judgment of Jehovah is applicable to Judah's present plight...

Your own wickedness will correct you, and your apostasies will reprove you; Know therefore and see that it is evil and bitter for you to forsake the LORD your God, and the dread of Me is not in you," declares the Lord GOD of hosts. (Jeremiah 2:19)

Teed comments...

Not only did God use the Assyrians to judge the Northern kingdom of Israel (Ephraim - defeating them in 722BC), He also used them to invade Ahaz's domain in Judah. The desolation prophesied in this section began in the days of Ahaz and reached its climax when the Babylonians conquered Judah (586BC Jerusalem and the Temple destroyed). And its results will continue right up to the time Jesus will return to deliver Israel and establish His kingdom on earth (cp Time of Jacob's Distress or Trouble - Jer 30:7, 8, 9; **Great Tribulation**). ([Isaiah 7 Teed Commentaries](#))

Isaiah 7:18 In that day the LORD will whistle for the fly that is in the remotest part of the rivers of Egypt and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria.:

- **whistle:** Isa 5:26
- **fly:** Isa 30:1,2 31:1 Ex 8:21,24 Dt 1:44 7:20 Jos 24:12 Ps 118:12
- **bee:** Isa 7:17 2Ki 23:33,34
- [Isaiah 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

"IN THAT DAY" A DAY OF JUDGMENT

In that day - Whenever you observe an **expression of time**, pause and ask questions, such as when is that day, what transpires, why does it happen, who is involved, etc. In this case **that day** is clearly the day when God begins to judge Judah using the foreign powers of **Egypt** and **Assyria**.

The day of judgment of Judah is but a vague preview of the Lord's final day of judgment which (praise God) will be followed by a day of glorious, unspeakable peace and joy in the presence of our Redeemer and King. Since this will truly occur "one day" let us celebrate this future glorious day with this great Robin Mark song "[One Day \(click to play\)](#)"...

ONE DAY

To you O Lord will all the earth give glory.
No other name will share the glory due.
Though kingdoms rise and nations mock Your mercy.
One day they'll stand and worship only You!

Every knee will bow down, every tongue say out loud,

You are the Lord of earth and heaven.

Every hand will be raised in the thunder of praise,

You are the king of all creation, they'll say...**One day**....

Today we'll join with angels and archangels,

Who never cease by day and night to sing.

Yet we await the moment earth joins heaven,

Around Your throne to raise an offering.

This repetition of **day** also serves to explain (the explanation continuing from Isa 7:18-25) why the coming days will be unlike any since the time Israel became a divided kingdom. The prophesied desolation of Judah in Isaiah 7:18-25 began in the days of King Ahaz and unto the third and final Babylonian conquest of Judah and Jerusalem in 586BC.

John MacArthur comments that the desolations that began in the time of Ahaz will continue in Judah up to...

the time when the Messiah will return to deliver Israel and establish His kingdom on earth.

In that day - This phrase occurs 86x in 83v in the OT (**NAS**) - Lev 7:35; Nu 32:10; Dt 31:17, 18; 1Sa 3:12; 8:18; Jer 4:9; 48:41; 49:22, 26; 50:30 Hos 2:16, 18, 21; Joel 3:18; Amos 2:16; 8:3, 9, 13; 9:11; Mic 4:6; 5:10; Zeph 3:11, 16; Zech 2:11; 3:10; 9:16; 12:3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11; 13:1, 2, 4; 14:4, 6, 8, 9, 13, 20, 21.

Note the frequent use of **in that day** in Isaiah = **Isaiah 2:11, 17, 20; 3:18; 4:1, 4:2; 5:30; 7:18, 20, 21, 23; 10:20, 27; 11:10; 12:4; 17:4, 7, 9; 19:16, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24; 20:6; 22:8, 12, 20, 25; 23:15; 24:21; 25:9; 26:1; 27:1, 2, 12, 13; 28:5; 31:7; 52:6** - Note that while some uses refer to near judgment (as in the present passages in Isaiah 7:18, 20, 21, 23), some uses have specific eschatological (study of future things) meaning and are related to the future day of judgment of Israel (judgment followed by blessing), the time of Jacob's distress (Jer 30:7), the terrible last 3.5 year period of the **Great Tribulation** which will terminate with the **Second Coming** of Christ and the establishment of His **Millennial Kingdom** - Observe the "future focus" of "**in that day**" = Isa 4:2, Isa 10:2, 10:27, 11:10, 12:4, 17:7, 19:16, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24; 24:21, 25:9, 26:1, 27:1, 27:2, 12, 13, 28:5, 31:7, 52:6

The LORD will whistle - In Isa 5:26 Isaiah had described God as whistling for the distant nation to come and devastate his land. Now those nations are specified as Assyria from the north and Egypt from the south.

The fly - Egypt was full of flies.

The bee (cp Dt 1:44) - Assyria was known for bee keeping.

Oswalt quips that...Assyria and Egypt are insects trained to swarm at their master's command (**Ed**: Jehovah). Now that command is issued and they come. (BORROW [The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39](#))

Isaiah 7:19 They will all come and settle on the steep ravines, on the ledges of the cliffs, on all the thorn bushes and on all the watering places.:

- **ledges**: in the holes : Isa 2:19,21 2Ch 33:11 Jer 16:16 Mic 7:17
- [Isaiah 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

They will come and settle - Isaiah's point is the enemy invaders will be everywhere! It follows that there will no place to hide from the forces of Egypt and Assyria which will "swarm" like a plague of insects throughout the land of Judah.

Isaiah 7:20 In that day the LORD will shave with a razor, hired from regions beyond the Euphrates (that is, with the king of Assyria), the head and the hair of the legs; and it will also remove the beard.:

- **shave** : Isa 10:6 2Ki 16:7,8 2Ch 28:20,21 Jer 27:6,7 Eze 5:1-4 29:18,20
- **head** : Isa 1:5 9:14-17 24:2

In that day - The day of judgment of Judah. Isaiah now begins to concentrate on Assyria rather than Egypt.

The LORD will shave - Once again the text emphasizes Jehovah's active hand in the discipline He metes out to His chosen people. The hand of the LORD is pictured holding a "razor" (Assyria) which He would use to "shave" Judah! Note the irony -- the very "razor" Ahaz had trusted in, would now be turned upon this faithless, wicked King and his kingdom of Judah! Indeed, Ahaz was truly reaping what he had sown (Gal 6:7, Gal 6:8)

John Calvin writes...

You (Ahaz) might have remained at home and at ease, and might have received the assistance of God; but you chose rather to call in the Assyrians. You shall find them to be worse than your own enemies.

The head and the hair of the legs - Compare the prophecy in Isaiah 1:6-note.

It will also remove the beard - In the ancient Middle East, a man's **beard** was a badge of honor and respect and thus this passage predicts Judah's utter disgrace and humiliation at the hands of the Assyrian "barbers"! (cp Isa. 15:2; Jer. 47:5; 48:37; Ezek. 7:18; Amos 8:10; Micah 1:16; Also a sign of deep distress = Job 1:20)

Guzik...

To shave off the beard of an Oriental was an unbearable shame to him and was a sign of great sadness and mourning as well as despicable slavery. (Bultema) We see this principle illustrated by the actions of David in 2Sa 10:4, 5.

Isaiah 7:21 Now in that day a man may keep alive a heifer and a pair of sheep;

- **a man** : Isa 7:25 5:17 17:2 37:30 Jer 39:10
- [Isaiah 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

In that day - The devastation wrought by God's hand of judgment will be so severe that the normal produce of the land is no longer available to the populace. In mercy, God does leave a few cattle and sheep for His people.

Oswalt points out that...the main theme of this utterance along with the following is of the depopulation of the land so that it reverts from a crop-growing to a herding region in which there will be so few people that a minimum of animals will produce more than enough food. (BORROW [The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1–39](#))

Isaiah 7:22 and because of the abundance of the milk produced he will eat curds, for everyone that is left within the land will eat curds and honey.:

- **curds and honey** : Isa 7:15 2Sa 17:29 Mt 3:4
- [Isaiah 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

The abundance of the milk - The reason there is an abundance is undoubtedly because there are "fewer mouths to feed" as a result of the enemies' destruction of much of the population. While curds and honey are not wine and bread, nevertheless we see the compassion of Yahweh Who in the midst of His wrath remembers His mercy!

Jewish writers in the Targum have attempted to put a positive spin on these negative descriptions by adding "good things" for the Massoretic reading of "making milk" and "all the righteous who remain" in place of the correct reading "everyone that is left."

Everyone that is left (Hebrew = yatar = to be left over or remaining, cp use in Ezek 6:8-note) - This implies that some percentage of the population of Judah has been "removed" (? killed) by the invading armies, which again helps explain the **abundance of the milk** in a wartime context.

One wonders if the name of Isaiah's son has any relation to this description of what is in essence a **remnant** of Judah ([Shear-jashub](#) means "a remnant shall return.")

Isaiah 7:23 And it will come about in that day, that every place where there used to be a thousand vines, valued at a thousand shekels of silver, will become briars and thorns.:

- **a thousand vines** : Song 8:11,12 Mt 21:33
- **be for briars** : Isa 5:6 32:12-14 Jer 4:26 Heb 6:8
- [Isaiah 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

In that day - The Holy Spirit repeatedly uses this term to emphasize the specific judgments associated with **the day** which was

described in general terms in Isaiah 7:17 as a **day** unlike any other since the nation of Israel had divided into two kingdoms.

Vines...will become briars and thorns - Previously cultivated areas overgrown by uncultivated vegetation was a sign of desolation (cp Isa 5:6-note). The devastation of the source of produce is part of the "fruit" of God's judgment of Judah.

W E Vine applies Judah's physical desolation to our spiritual life noting that... Where a company of God's people departs from the right ways of the Lord, fruitless and noxious products are sure to develop, and there will be spiritual barrenness instead of fertility that glorifies God. Bows and arrows suggest strife, instead of "the whole armor of God" that wards off and defeats the spiritual foe. (BORROW [isaiah prophecies promises warning](#))

Isaiah 7:24 People will come there with bows and arrows because all the land will be briars and thorns:

- Ge 27:3
- [Isaiah 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

People will come there with bows and arrows - Since the previously cultivated land has been so devastated, now all one can use it for is hunting. **Bows and arrows** would also be necessary to defend one's self from the wild animals that had re-populated the land which had become a wilderness as a result of the Assyrian devastation!

Isaiah 7:25 As for all the hills which used to be cultivated with the hoe, you will not go there for fear of briars and thorns; but they will become a place for pasturing oxen and for sheep to trample:

- **but** : Isa 7:21,22 13:20-22 17:2 Zeph 2:6
- [Isaiah 7 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

The NET Bible Notes ([Isaiah 7](#)) - At this point one is able to summarize the content of the "sign" (Isa 7:14, 15) as follows: A young woman known to be present when Isaiah delivered this message to Ahaz (perhaps a member of the royal family or the prophetess mentioned in Isa 8:3) would soon give birth to a boy whom the mother would name Immanuel, "God is with us." Eventually Immanuel would be forced to eat sour milk and honey, which would enable him to make correct moral decisions. How would this situation come about and how would it constitute a sign? Before this situation developed, the Israelites and Syrians would be defeated. But then the Lord would usher in a period of time unlike any since the division of the kingdom almost 200 years before. The Assyrians would overrun the land, destroy the crops, and force the people to subsist on goats' milk and honey. At that time, as the people saw Immanuel eating his sour milk and honey, the Davidic family would be forced to acknowledge that God was indeed with them. He was present with them in the Syrian-Israelite crisis, fully capable of rescuing them; but he was also present with them in judgment, disciplining them for their lack of trust. The moral of the story is quite clear:

**Failure to appropriate God's promises by faith
can turn potential blessing into disciplinary judgment.**

Ron Teed contrasts the encounters of Isaiah and Ahaz with the Holy One of Israel...

We've now looked at two encounters with God, the Holy One: **Isaiah** (Isaiah 6) and **Ahaz** (Isaiah 7). But what happens when you encounter the Holy One? Oh, you don't think you do, simply because you haven't had a heavenly vision or a direct word from God? I have to say you are wrong. You are right now having an encounter with God the Holy One. He is giving you His direct Word through the Scripture and through this morning's message. What questions is He asking you: "Do I have your attention? Do I have your whole heart? Am I number one in your life? Can I count on you to serve Me in whatever way I ask? Will you seek My guidance every day by spending time in the Bible and praying?" Or perhaps His question to you is more personal and He is speaking it deep in your heart.

And what is your response to the holiness of God and to His question to you? Will you be like Isaiah and obey humbly? Or will you be like Ahaz and give a response of false humility and disobedience?

Remember this, no matter how bad your sin, if you turn to God, give Him your heart and your love, and follow Him obediently, then He will bless you.

There are only two possible responses to an encounter with the Holy God of heaven: falling on your knees and receiving Him or rejecting Him and walking away. Which one do you choose? ([Isaiah 7 Teed Commentaries](#))

[Play this beautiful song from](#) - Michael Card

[Immanuel, God is with us!](#)

A sign shall be given, A virgin will conceive
A human baby bearing undiminished Deity
The Glory of the nations, a Light for all to see
And Hope for all who will embrace His warm reality.

Refrain

IMMANUEL, OUR GOD IS WITH US

And if GOD IS WITH US, who could stand against us?

Our GOD IS WITH US, IMMANUEL.

For all those who live in the shadow of death
A Glorious Light has dawned
For all those who stumble in the darkness
Behold, your Light has come.

Refrain

So what will be your answer? Will you hear the call
Of Him Who did not spare His Son but gave Him for us all
On earth there is no power, there is no depth nor height
That could ever separate us from the love of God in Christ.

Refrain

DEVOTIONALS

Progressive Revelation of the Redeemer

- "Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel. Isaiah 7:14
- I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 2 Samuel 7:12-13
- "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,
- Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples Genesis 49:10
- But God said, "No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac ;I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. Genesis 17:19
- And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed." Genesis 12:3
- (Proto-Evangelium) And I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel." Genesis 3:15-commentary

Spurgeon - Morning and Evening - "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." —Isaiah 7:14

Let us to-day go down to Bethlehem, and in company with wondering shepherds and adoring Magi, let us see him who was born King of the Jews, for we by faith can claim an interest in him, and can sing, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." Jesus is Jehovah incarnate, our Lord and our God, and yet our brother and friend; let us adore and admire. Let us notice at the very first glance his miraculous conception. It was a thing unheard of before, and unparalleled since, that a virgin should conceive and bear a Son. The first promise ran thus, "**The seed of the woman,**" (**See Ge 3:15 - commentary**) **not the offspring of the man. Since venturous woman led the way in the sin which brought forth Paradise lost, she, and she alone, ushers in the Regainer of Paradise.** Our Saviour, although truly Man, was as to His Human nature the Holy One of God. Let us reverently bow before the holy Child whose innocence restores to manhood its ancient glory; and let us pray that He may be formed in us (Gal 4:19-note), the hope of glory (Col 1:27-note). Fail not to note His humble parentage. His mother has been described simply as "a virgin," (Luke 1:27-note) not a princess, or prophetess, nor a matron of large estate. True the blood of kings ran in her veins; nor was her mind a weak and

untaught one, for she could sing most sweetly a song of praise; but yet how humble her position, how poor the man to whom she stood affianced, and how miserable the accommodation afforded to the new-born King!

Immanuel, God with us in our nature, in our sorrow, in our lifework, in our punishment, in our grave, and now with us, or rather we with Him, in resurrection, ascension, triumph, and Second Advent splendor.

Henry Morris - The Virgin Birth

"Therefore the LORD himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14).

This has been a hotly disputed verse, as unbelievers for two thousand years have tried to undermine the vital doctrine of the unique sinlessness of Christ. Without the miraculous conception and virgin birth of Jesus, not only is His mother Mary made to be an impure woman, but also Jesus is deprived of His intrinsic deity, being born with the sin-nature inherited from Adam. He could not really be our sin-bearing Savior since He would thus be sinful also.

Because of this intrinsic importance of the virgin birth to the very essence of Christianity, liberals and other opponents of the truth have long argued that the Hebrew *almah* should be translated "young woman," instead of "virgin." This is utterly wrong, of course. There would be no "sign" in a "young woman conceiving," and it would be blasphemous to name an ordinary child Immanuel ("God with us"), clearly implying divine incarnation in man.

Even if *almah* could legitimately be thus translated, none of its seven occurrences in the Old Testament require any meaning other than "virgin." The issue is settled for all who believe the Bible by the fact that the Holy Spirit inspired Matthew to use *parthenos* (a Greek word which can only mean "virgin") when he translated and quoted Isaiah 7:14 (see Matt. 1:23, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child"). Actually, both Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:23 support the use of the definite article ("Behold, the virgin...") in this great prophecy. God has, indeed, "sent forth his Son, made of a woman" (Gal. 4:4), and only of a woman, fulfilling the primeval promise of "the seed of the woman" who would someday bring deliverance from Satan and sin and death (Gen. 3:15). (Days to Remember - Devotions)

MIRACLES - Vance Havner

In Isaac shall thy seed be called. Genesis 21:12.

Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son.... Isaiah 7:14.

Born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. John 1:13.

Every Jew is a miracle, descended from Isaac, who was born to Abraham and Sarah long past the age of parenthood. Jesus was a miracle baby born of a virgin. The true Church is made of people born again through faith in Christ. The Bible is a miracle book written by divine inspiration. No Christian has any business asking like Gideon, "Where be all the miracles?" We are part of the miracle business, the supernatural work of God.

GOD WITH US - Vance Havner

God with us. Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23.

One of the names of our Lord is Emmanuel, God With Us. We must get away from the notion that God is up there somewhere sending down a program for us to carry out. He is down here working for, in, and among His people. Our Lord did not die to placate an angry Deity. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. The Christian life is not something we try to live by God's help. Christ lives His life in all who can truly say, "To me to live is Christ." We do not do God's will by sheer determination and hard work. He works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. It is all God's work with our consent and cooperation.

Oswald Chambers - His birth and our new birth

Behold, a virgin shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Isaiah 7:14 (R.V.).

His Birth in History. "Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35-note). Jesus Christ was born into this world, not from it. He did not evolve out of history; He came into history from the outside. Jesus Christ is not the best human being, He is a Being Who cannot be accounted for by the human race at all. He is not man becoming God, but God Incarnate, God coming into human flesh, coming into it from outside. His life is the Highest and the Holiest, entering in at the lowliest door. Our Lord's birth was an advent.

His Birth in Me. "Of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you" (Gal. 4:19-note). Just as Our Lord came into human history from outside, so He must come into me from outside. Have I allowed my personal human life to become a 'Bethlehem' for the

Son of God? I cannot enter into the realm of the Kingdom of God unless I am born from above by a birth totally unlike natural birth. "Ye must be born again." This is not a command, it is a foundation fact. The characteristic of the new birth is that I yield myself so completely to God that Christ is formed in me. Immediately Christ is formed in me, His nature begins to work through me.

God manifest in the flesh—that is what is made profoundly possible for you and me by the Redemption. (From [Daily Devotionals: My Utmost for His Highest](#))

Always Right by Richard De Haan

A weatherman boasted, "I'm 90 percent right—10 percent of the time." That's a ridiculous statement, but some people resort to that type of doubletalk to cover up a poor record.

The Bible's prophetic record, though, truly is accurate. Let's look at a few examples.

The Lord Jesus was born in the city of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2) of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14) at the time specified (Daniel 9:25). Infants in Bethlehem were massacred as prophesied (Jeremiah 31:15). Jesus went down into Egypt and returned (Hosea 11:1). Isaiah foretold Christ's ministry in Galilee (Isaiah 9:1-2). Zechariah predicted His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on a colt (Zechariah 9:9) and His betrayal for 30 pieces of silver (11:12-13). David had never seen a Roman crucifixion, yet in Psalm 22, under divine inspiration, he penned a graphic portrayal of Jesus' death. Isaiah 53 gives a detailed picture of our Lord's rejection, mistreatment, death, and burial. These few prophecies (and there are many more) should impress us with the reliability of the Bible.

Since these predictions have all been fulfilled, let us also accept with confidence what the Bible says about the future. Remember, we have a book of prophecy that is right—all of the time! [Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

I'll trust in God's unchanging Word
Till soul and body sever;
For though all things shall pass away,
His Word shall stand forever! —Luther

You can trust the Bible—God always keeps His word.

He was like Us - Peter Kennedy

Joseph Damien went as a missionary to the Hawaiian Islands in 1864. In 1873, he volunteered to minister at the leper colony on the island of Molokai. In Molokai there was no doctor, nurse, clergy or even a gravedigger. The island was a place of quarantine for people with leprosy. Damien built a small chapel on the island but few came to worship. After twelve long years of unfruitful ministry Joseph Damien decided to leave Molokai in 1885.

Standing on the pier waiting for his ship to take him home to his native Belgium, Damien looked down at his hands and noticed white spots—he had contracted leprosy.

The news of the missionary's disease spread quickly and hundreds of lepers gathered outside of Joseph Damien's hut. The people could identify with his pain and despair. The following Sunday the little chapel was filled to overflowing because the people knew that Joseph Damien could now identify with their condition. In the next four years, before his death at age forty-nine, Joseph Damien shared Christ's love in a way he never could before his leprosy.

Jesus Christ humbled Himself to be a man. Though He did not sin, He took on the sins of the world. He became part of the human race so we could accept Him. Thank Christ today that He humbled Himself for you so you could be with Him.

"A sign shall be given. A virgin shall conceive. A human baby bearing undiminished deity. The glory of the nations, a light for all to see, and hope for all who will embrace this warm reality."—Michael Card

WHERE'S THE BABY?

Read: Isaiah 7:10-14

The virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. —Isaiah 7:14

Two women who were dressed in their finest were having lunch together in a very exclusive restaurant. A friend saw them and came over to their table to greet them. "What's the special occasion?" she asked. One of the women said, "We're having a birthday party for the baby in our family. He's 2 years old today." "But, where's the baby?" the friend asked. The child's mother answered, "Oh, I dropped him off at my mother's house. She's taking care of him until the party's over. It wouldn't have been any fun with him along."

How ridiculous! A birthday celebration for a child who wasn't welcome at his own party? Yet, when you stop to think about it, that's no more foolish than going through the Christmas season, with all of its festivities, without remembering the One whose birth we are supposed to be honoring.

And that's the way many people celebrate Christmas. In all the busyness—the party-going, gift-shopping, and family gatherings—the One whose birthday they are commemorating is almost completely forgotten.

As you move into this holiday season, in all of your good times with family and friends, make sure you don't leave out the Lord Jesus. Give Him the honor He deserves. —R W De Haan [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

Among the tinsel, trees, and toys
Are many signs of Christmas joys,
But where's the Christ, whom God sent down,
Who laid aside His throne and crown?
—Hess

There is always the danger of keeping Christmas and losing Christ. —Ironsides

Matthew 1:16-25

The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. - Isaiah 7:14

TODAY IN THE WORD

Several ancient myths tell stories of a god impregnating a human woman. One of the most famous is “Leda and the Swan,” in which Zeus assumed the form of a swan in order to seduce the girl Leda. According to Greek mythology, Leda then bore Helen, the beautiful woman who ignited the Trojan War.

Some skeptics use these myths to discredit the account of the virgin birth of Jesus. Is this passage in Matthew just another ancient tale of the gods dabbling in the affairs of men? The answer is a resounding no.

As Matthew's genealogy concludes, a break in the formula occurs in verse 16. No “father of . . .” construction is used; Joseph is identified as the husband of Mary, and she alone is mentioned as the parent of Jesus. The verses that follow explain: Mary and Joseph were engaged but not yet married, and she became pregnant with Jesus by the Holy Spirit although she was a virgin. In obedience to God's directive, Joseph took his pregnant bride and fulfilled the fatherly obligation of naming this boy.

Matthew is concerned with the legal, not physical, genealogy of Jesus. Joseph was in the kingly line of David—but he was not the physical father of Jesus. But because Joseph adopted Jesus and fulfilled the Jewish requirement of naming Him, Jesus legally could claim the same genealogy, with full rights in the line of David.

Unlike the lurid tales of ancient mythology, there is no description of just how Mary became pregnant. Two points in particular differ from these myths: Mary's virginity and the role of the Holy Spirit. They are intertwined in their significance. First, the mention of the Holy Spirit recalls God's creative power (see Gen. 1:1-26). The coming of Jesus, the Messiah, is a work of the Spirit that signals the new creation of the people of God. Second, a virgin birth is a miracle, the sort of miracle associated with the work of the Holy Spirit. It was a fulfillment of Scripture and also evidence of God's continuing work through unexpected people and means to fulfill His promises.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY

The name Immanuel reveals the role of the Trinity—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The Father has sent the Holy Spirit to make possible “God with us” in the fully human and fully divine person of the Son. As we approach the celebration of Easter later this month, prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit to use this study of Matthew's Gospel to show you more about the person and work of Jesus. You might want to record your insights in a journal or the back page of this devotional.

The Spirit Of Giving By Dave Branon

Matthew 1:18-25

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. —Isaiah 7:14

Yes, there are people who believe in Santa Claus. According to a poll taken by KRC Research in 1996 and cited in U.S. News & World Report, nine percent of American adults say they really do believe in the jolly old North Pole resident.

Perhaps that's not surprising when we realize that at no other time of the year do we focus so much attention on a single theme as during the Christmas season. The fictional character of Santa Claus has become an integral part of the celebration in our culture because he symbolizes gift-giving, the centerpiece of most holiday gatherings. What many people believe in at Christmas is the

spirit of giving.

As admirable as that spirit may be, there is something more grand and life-changing to believe in. At Christmas we need to focus on truths like these:

The prophecies of Jesus' birth (Isa. 7:14; 9:1-7).

The miracle of Jesus' conception (Mt. 1:18).

The perfection of the holy Christ-child (Lk. 1:35).

The mission of that baby boy (Mt. 1:21).

The Creator of the world miraculously became man on that first Christmas morning so He could provide us with the gift of eternal life. Now, that's something to believe in at Christmas!

The greatest gift in history:

Almighty God becoming man;

He left His throne and slept on straw,

In keeping with salvation's plan.

—Sper

The best gift in the world was wrapped in a manger. [Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

JESUS, who passed the angels by,
Assumed our flesh to bleed and die;
And still he makes it his abode,
As man, he fills the throne of GOD.
Our next of kin, our Brother now,
Is he to whom the angels bow;
They join with us to praise his name,
But we the nearest interest claim.

John Newton - Our nearest kinsman

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

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING: Hebrews 2:5–18

The Messiah must not only be a man, but partaker of our very nature. It had been easy to divine power to have formed the second Adam as he did the first, out of the dust of the earth. But, though in this way he might have been a true and perfect man, he would have been no more related to us than an angel. Therefore when God sent forth his Son to be made under the law, he was made of a woman. Thus he became 'Goel' [Hebrew for kinsman], our near kinsman. But farther, had he derived his human nature wholly in the ordinary way, from sinful parents, we see not how he could have escaped that inherent defilement which the fall of Adam has entailed upon all his posterity. But his body, that holy thing conceived and born of a virgin, was the immediate production of God. Therefore he was pure and spotless, qualified to be such a High Priest as became us, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, who needed not, as the typical high priest of Israel, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. These difficulties were obviated by a virgin's conceiving and bearing a son. Let us now praise and admire the wisdom of God. Let us adore his power. Thus he created a new thing upon earth.

Ken Hemphill - GOD IS...

IMMANUEL

Isaiah 7:14 The Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel.

We have all experienced the power of "presence" when we were afraid. We have caressed the brow of our fevered child and watched as our presence brought a sense of peace. We have been in the hospital waiting room when no one knew exactly what to say, but the physical presence of family and friends was all that was required to bring comfort.

The name "Immanuel" assures us that God is always "with us."

During the time of King Ahaz, the house of David was beset with enemies, and the king was weak in faith. In contrast to the worldly

power on which Ahaz had put his hope, the prophet Isaiah spoke about the wondrous birth of a child whose very name signified a redemption only God could bring. The ultimate fulfillment of this promise would not occur for generations, but the promise was one that brought hope.

A few scholars have argued against the translation "virgin" for the Hebrew word *alma*, which means "young woman." But contrary to what some have argued, the use of the words "young woman" (rather than "wife") suggests a birth outside the normal pattern of childbirth. What we sometimes forget is that a young unmarried woman in Isaiah's day would have been expected to be a virgin. Together with other passages from Isaiah that use the term Immanuel and speak of a coming birth, it is clear that the promise of Isaiah 7:14 is preparing the way for a developing messianic theme.

A few years ago when I embarked on a study of several of the Old Testament names of God, I was intrigued to discover that the last of the names, occurring in Ezekiel 48:35, was Jehovah Shammah, which means "The Lord is there." Ezekiel was speaking of the rebuilding of the temple—the earthly reminder of God's presence. The promise of God's presence was not to be accomplished by an earthly temple, however, but by the birth of Jesus. Only our Savior, Jesus, allows us to experience "God with us."

H A Ironside from Continual Burnt Offering: Daily Meditations on the Word of God

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. Isaiah 7:14

The virgin birth of Jesus is a revealed truth, the importance of which no one can properly appraise. Upon this fact hangs the whole plan of redemption. It tells us that God entered into human conditions, became man without ceasing to be God, took our flesh and blood apart from sin, in order that He might by Himself effect the purging of sins by dying upon the cross. With the denial of the virgin birth goes the denial of the true vicarious atonement of Christ.

Had He been a member of Adam's fallen race He would have needed a Savior for Himself. As the virgin-born Son of the Father He came into the world as "that holy One" uncontaminated by sin in the flesh, though in its likeness, and so was able to qualify as our Kinsman-Redeemer.

Though in the very form of God,
With heavenly glory crowned,
Thou didst a servant's form assume,
Beset with sorrow round.

Thou wouldst like wretched man be made
In ev'ry thing but sin,
That we as like Thee might become
As we unlike had been.

—Stennett

Pause for Power - Warren Wiersbe

"The Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14).

A SURE SIGN

These were perilous days for the nation of Judah. Assyria was growing stronger and threatening the smaller nations whose security depended on a very delicate political balance. Syria and Ephraim (the Northern Kingdom) tried to pressure Judah into an alliance against Assyria, but Ahaz refused to join them. Why? Because he had secretly made a treaty with Assyria! (2 Kings 16:5-9)

If Ahaz had believed God's promise, he would have broken his alliance and called the nation to prayer and praise; but the king continued in his unbelief. Realizing the weakness of the king's faith, Isaiah offered to give a sign to encourage him. But knowing that he was secretly allied with Assyria, how could Ahaz honestly ask the Lord for a special sign? So, instead of speaking only to the king, Isaiah addressed the whole "house of David" and gave the prophecy concerning "Immanuel."

Of course, the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy is in our Lord Jesus Christ, who is "God with us." The virgin birth of Christ is a key doctrine; for if Jesus Christ is not God come in sinless human flesh, then we have no Savior. However, this "sign" had an immediate significance to Ahaz and the people of Judah. A woman who was then a virgin would get married, conceive, and bear a son whose name would be "Immanuel." This son would be a reminder that God was with His people and would care for them. It is likely that this virgin was Isaiah's second wife, his first wife having died after his first son was born; and that Isaiah's second son was named both "Immanuel" and "Maher-shalal-hash-baz."

Billy Graham - God in the Flesh

The Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel [which means "God with us"]. ISAIAH 7:14 NIV

Jesus Christ lived on Earth only thirty-three years, yet He transformed civilization. And after two thousand years, countless millions worship Him.

Where did Jesus come from? His birth in a stable in Bethlehem was not His origin; that was His incarnation—His coming in the flesh. The Bible teaches that Jesus is God in human flesh, God Incarnate. Jesus—the eternal Son of God—never had a beginning; He will never have an end. He always was, and He always will be.

When Jesus walked this Earth, He made the blind to see, the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak. He was the greatest teacher of all time, and He was also a man of compassion, love, and selflessness.

Yet consider the emphasis on His death. Three chapters in the book of Matthew, three in Mark, three in Luke, and six in John are devoted to the last twenty-four hours of Jesus' life. Why? Because Jesus was born to die as the final and perfect sacrifice for your sins and mine.

Praise Him this holy season!

Today in the Word Devotionals - Isaiah 7:14 - Charles Swindoll once said that if Dan Rather had given a news broadcast in 1809, it would have focused on Napoleon's sweep across Europe with no mention of the many remarkable babies born that year, all of whom would become quite famous. For example, the outstanding British political leader William Gladstone, the American writer Edgar Allan Poe, and President Abraham Lincoln were all born in 1809.

Similarly, no Roman newsperson was likely to have picked up from the news wires the story of a baby born to poor parents in a remote region of a troubled country. But heavenly "reporters" picked up this event and "broadcast" it to all who would hear (Luke 2:14). These glorious messengers knew that the most newsworthy event in the history of the world had occurred--the Savior had been born! All of history points to and centers around this one event.

Recall that Isaiah also lived in a troubled country. As the nation of Judah faced what seemed to be its destruction (Isa. 7:1–2), God used Isaiah to give a sign of His faithfulness to Judah: a virgin would give birth to a son who would be named Immanuel, which literally means "God with us." Scholars are not quite sure of the exact nature of this prophecy's fulfillment in Isaiah's time, but there can be little doubt of its later fulfillment in Jesus.

In fact, Matthew cited this verse as he wrote, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the birth narrative of Jesus (Matt. 1:23). The virginal conception of Jesus remains a unique event in all of history. This conception enabled Jesus to be both "Son of God" and "Son of Man"--titles we will look at beginning tomorrow.

Notice how concisely the two names given to our Lord at His birth summarize His unique nature: Jesus means "God is salvation," showing His deity, and Immanuel means "God is with us," showing His humanity.

Today in the Word Devotionals - Isaiah 7:14, Mt 1:23 - Let's do another one-question Bible quiz today, like the one we did on Tuesday (see the November 23 study). Which name or title of Jesus Christ was never again used in the Bible after its first mention? Once again, the answer is in today's verse.

In explaining the significance of Jesus' birth, Matthew said the people would call Jesus ""Immanuel,"" which the writer interprets for us. Matthew drew this name from Isaiah's prophecy, but it appears only once in the New Testament. If Jesus was ever called Immanuel, it is not recorded in Scripture.

But that doesn't lessen the power of this name. Matthew's purpose was not to give us an alternative name by which to call Jesus. The purpose of his quotation from Isaiah was to demonstrate that Jesus' virgin birth was the fulfillment of a prophecy made centuries before.

You may know that Matthew's use of Isaiah 7:14 has generated much controversy. The problem centers on how we should understand what Isaiah was saying. His prophecy had a meaning for his own day, which was clearly not a virgin birth, and a greater meaning that Matthew explained.

It can be argued that the Hebrew word Isaiah used does not have to mean ""virgin."" But the woman the prophet was speaking about in his day could have been his future wife, with whom Isaiah later had a son (Isa. 8:1-4). In that case, she may have been a

virgin at the time Isaiah 7:14 was written.

Isa 7:15, 16, 17 say this child was a ""sign"" to King Ahaz of Judah in that by the time the boy was old enough to know right and wrong, the kings of Israel and Syria, who were threatening Judah, would be driven away.

Whatever the specifics of Isaiah's prophecy, Matthew leaves no doubt about the virgin birth of Jesus. Quoting from the Greek translation of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint, Matthew used a word that can mean only virgin.

Jesus is ""God with us."" No one else can claim that title, which makes Him unique. As you prepare your heart and home to celebrate His birth, praise God for sending His Son to live among us--and die for us.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY -When we did the little quiz on Tuesday (the November 23 study), we mentioned a book that contains more than 300 names for Jesus.

You may want to pick up a copy of this book for devotional use this Christmas. It's called Names of Christ, by T. C. Horton and Charles E. Hurlburt. Reading some of these names together and talking about them as a family will give your family's Christmas devotions a new perspective. Check your local bookstore for this unique book

Today in the Word Devotionals - Isaiah 7:14 - The writings of C. S. Lewis form the basis for a popular statement regarding the choices people have about the claims of Jesus Christ. The statement says that Jesus was either a liar, a lunatic, or Lord of all in His claim to be the Son of God.

People are also faced with several choices concerning the birth of Jesus. His divine origin is validated by the Bible's teaching that He was born of a virgin. And people's eternal destiny may hinge on what they believe about this doctrine.

The prophecy of the Messiah's virgin birth is embedded in a passage that has immediate and far-reaching implications. The setting is the threat against the southern kingdom of Judah by an alliance between the kings of Aram (Syria) and Israel, the northern kingdom. God sent Isaiah to King Ahaz of Judah to assure him that the attack would never take place, because within several years God would bring down the kings of Aram and Israel.

Ahaz's refusal to ask for a confirming sign of this prophecy sounds very pious, but it was actually a way of rejecting God's message and His messenger Isaiah. This is why the prophet reacted the way he did.

Then came the message that God would sovereignly provide a sign. The virgin in the prophecy may have been the woman Isaiah called 'the prophetess' (Isa. 8:3), who could still have been a virgin when the prophecy was given.

This wife of Isaiah had a son, and by the time the boy was two or three, old enough to know right from wrong, the kings of Aram and Israel were no longer a threat to Judah. The boy's name, Immanuel, was a reminder of God's presence with Judah.

But the Holy Spirit clearly had something more in mind for this remarkable prophecy. Matthew said its ultimate fulfillment was in the birth of Jesus (Mt 1:22, 23) and the word Matthew used means a woman who is sexually pure.

That's why the Gospels are so careful to establish that Mary conceived Jesus before she had any relations with Joseph. Even in his genealogy, Matthew was careful to show that although Joseph was the husband of Mary, he was not the biological father of Jesus. The term 'of whom' (Matt. 1:16) is a feminine pronoun, pinpointing Mary alone as the parent of the Messiah.

TODAY ALONG THE WAY - The claims of Jesus rise and fall together. If He was not virgin born, then His death would have no power to do anything for us.

But God left us with a divine record of His Son's earthly origin, even in the middle of an eighth-century B.C. prophecy about human kings. It's time we paused this month to thank God for the truth and accuracy of His Word, which makes it possible for us to know what we believe