

Book of Isaiah



Chapter 7

*Theme: Prediction of the virgin birth of Immanuel
and of Assyria's invasion of Judah*

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Chapter 7

In these chapters the prophet focused on the deliverance God would bring the nation. Judah's deliverance from the Aram-Israel alliance (7:1-4) pictures her ultimate deliverance. And the fall of the Assyrian Empire (10:5-19), resulting in "deliverance" for Judah, pictures the fall of all nations who oppose God and His people. Isaiah did not say that these deliverances would bring about the glorious kingdom. But he did indicate that the glorious kingdom, the Millennium, eventually will come (chap. 11). It will be greater than any previous kingdom. In that kingdom "the holy seed" (6:13), the believing remnant (10:20-21), will sing a song of thanksgiving (chap. 12).¹

This section of Isaiah provides a historic introduction to the theological problem described prior (cf. 2 Kings 16 and 2 Chron. 28). King Ahaz had to make this decision of faith because he faced the threat of military invasion. Though warned by the prophet, the king made the wrong decision and experienced the bitter consequences. All four subdivisions of this section focus on Assyria and deal with the implications of trust in her rather than God. As Isaiah had faced his moment of decision (ch. 6), so King Ahaz did now. In chapter 6, Isaiah made the right decision to trust and obey God. In chapter 7, Ahaz made the wrong decision to distrust and disobey God. But with the bad news of Ahaz's apostasy comes the assurance that God would raise up a faithful Anointed One in the future.

A unifying theme in this subsection is children. The children were understandably a major concern of the Israelites, threatened as they were with invasion. However, the children also embodied qualities that the adult Israelites needed to adopt to survive, such as innocence, trust, and acknowledged weakness (cf. Matt. 18:1-7). Indeed, a child promised in this passage, who turned out to be Jesus, would eventually save them. As Jesus appealed for an attitude of childlike in His hearers, so did Isaiah.

This introductory segment provides the basic information about the historical situation that Judah faced, plus God's command concerning that situation. Would King Ahaz face his threat from God's perspective or from man's? Would he trust in Yahweh or in soldiers? Would he exercise faith or resort to works?²

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

[in the days of Ahaz] Chs. 7-12 were written during the reign of Ahaz. They contain many references to the ten-tribe kingdom being in league with Syria against Judah, and to the coming Assyrian invasion of both kingdoms of Israel, and end with prophecies of the Millennium. For the historical background of the reign of Ahaz see 2Ki. 15:37 -- 2Ki. 16:5.³

¹ The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

² <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

³ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

[Pekah] Pekah's reign was the last prosperous one in the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel. It began two years before Uzziah died and continued to the third year of the reign of Ahaz, so these events happened during the first years of the reign of Ahaz.⁴

In 2Kings 16:2 we read, "Twenty years old was Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord his God, like David his father." The prophecy of chapter 7 follows the call and commission of Isaiah in chapter 6, which took place at the death of Uzziah. Jotham, his son, succeeded him to the throne; and he reigned sixteen years. In 2Kings 15:32-34 we are told, "In the second year of Pekah the son of Remaliah king of Israel began Jotham the son of Uzziah king of Judah to reign. Five and twenty years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord: he did according to all that his father Uzziah had done." Jotham was a good king, as was his father Uzziah. Ahaz, Jotham's son, succeeds him, and he does that which is evil.

Ahaz will reign for sixteen years, and he will be a very bad king indeed. There will be a time of civil war during his reign. It will be a time of great distress in Israel. If you want to know just how bad things were, the record is in 2Kings 16:3-4: "But he [Ahaz] walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel. And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree." Ahaz is a bad egg, I can assure you of that, and he is frightened because Israel in the north teamed up with Syria, and they are coming against him. Although they do not prevail at first, Ahaz has every reason to believe that they finally will prevail.⁵

The year was 734 B.C. Ahaz, king of Judah in Jerusalem, was about to be attacked by an alliance of the northern kingdom of Israel and Aram. He was frightened by the prospect of the possible end of his reign and by the invading armies that killed many people or took them as captives (2 Chronicles 28:5-21). But, as Isaiah predicted, the kingdom of Judah did not come to an end at this time. The sign of Immanuel would be a sign of deliverance.⁶

In the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham: Ahaz was a wicked king of Judah, worshipping other gods and even sacrificing his son to Molech (2 Kings 16:1-4). The only good thing Ahaz seemed to do was father Hezekiah, who became a good king of Judah.⁷

He was a cowardly, superstitious and hypocritical ruler, one of the worst kings Judah ever had. (Bultema)

The Date of the Prophecy. The events mentioned date the prophecy: Ahaz is king in Judah. That means that Tiglath-Pilezer is king of Assyria. Rezin is king of Damascus so the time is before the fall of Damascus to Tiglath-Pilezer in 731 B.C. Pekah is king of Israel in Samaria so it is not a long time before the fall of Damascus. The attacks on Judah by the allies, Rezin and Pekah, have taken place. That narrows down the time considerably. The time can not be more

⁴ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

⁵ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁶ Life Application Study Bible.

⁷ <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-7.html>

than one or two, at the most three, years before the fall of Damascus. The invasion of Syria-Israel into Judah against Ahaz was still going on. The attacks will precipitate an invitation by Ahaz for Tiglath-Pilezer to help him fight against Damascus and Israel. Isaiah enters to tell Ahaz to trust God instead of an alliance with the Assyrians.

But Isaiah showed Ahaz that this allied attack from Syria and Samaria, even though intense and destructive, would fail and was only secondary. While the expansion of the Assyrian Empire was the event to which all other actions were simply reactions. It was the main event of the period which made any attempt to alter the outcome an exercise in futility. The Syro-Samaritan attack on Judah was a reaction to Assyrian expansion and was futile. It served only to exhaust the participants and leave them vulnerable to Assyria. Isaiah's message to Ahaz actually is that he should not concern himself about the war with Israel and Syria because the worst is yet to come and will follow shortly,--"even the kings of Assyria." So he says in verses 17 ff. This history needs to be well in mind or the reader will not understand the imagery of Isaiah. An introductory chapter (link below) is added on the history of Assyria and the interaction with Israel, Judah and Syria at this time. The names of the kings in the period are foreign to most readers. Attention to learning the background of those kings and nations and the historical events will open these next chapters (7 - 12) as well as great portions of the rest of Isaiah for you. Without the preliminary historical backgrounds of the Assyrian kings (from circa 735 to 695 B.C.) and their interaction with Israel and Judah, the book will remain closed. Read the chapter on Assyrian Kings and their interaction with Israel and Judah now. A chart showing the interaction is in the chapter on Assyrian kings.⁸

Rezin king of Syria and Pekah . . . king of Israel: The alliance between these two nations and their unsuccessful attack on Jerusalem is described in 2 Kings 16.

The attack on Jerusalem was ultimately unsuccessful, but the war against Judah took a great toll against the southern kingdom. 2 Chronicles 28:6 documents the damage: For Pekah the son of Remaliah killed one hundred and twenty thousand in Judah in one day, all valiant men, because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers. 2 Chronicles 28:5 says that the Syrian army carried away a great multitude of them as captives. The king of Israel also captured 200,000 men, women and children as captives, but sent them back to Judah at the command of the prophet Oded (2 Chronicles 28:8-15).

All in all, when the events of this chapter unfold, the nation of Judah had faced terrible calamity, and was devastated. As the combined armies of Israel and Syria approached Jerusalem, it looked like everything would be lost. Ahaz was challenged to trust God when things were bad, and it looked like soon, all would be lost.

Went up to Jerusalem to make war against it, but could not prevail against it: How was Ahaz saved from this attack? Because he entered into an ungodly alliance with Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, and even gave Tiglath-Pileser silver and gold that was found in the house of the Lord as a present to win his favor and protection (2 Kings 16:7-9).

When Ahaz went to meet Tiglath-Pileser, his new master, in Damascus, he saw the pagan altars and places of sacrifice. He copied these designs and remodeled the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem after the pattern of the pagan temple and altars in Damascus. Ahaz is a powerful, extreme example of someone who enters into an ungodly alliance for good reasons, and is thoroughly corrupted thereby (2 Kings 16:10-18).

⁸ <http://www.moellerhaus.com/7-8.htm>

It is important to understand that the events of this chapter happened before Ahaz made his final decision to put his trust in Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria. Though we are told the end result of the attack in Isaiah 7:2 (could not prevail against it), Isaiah is telling us the end result before he describes his prophecy to Ahaz. This disregard for chronological order may be frustrating to us, but is completely natural to the ancient Hebrew mind.

Syria's forces are deployed in Ephraim: Ephraim is another title for the northern nation of Israel. King Ahaz heard that Syria and Israel had joined together to make war against Judah.

So his heart and the heart of his people were moved as the trees of the woods are moved with the wind: King Ahaz and his people react with fear instead of with trust in God. They are shaken and unstable in their hearts.

In this, the people of Judah really are the people of Ahaz (his people), not the people of the Lord. God was not shaken or unsettled by this threat. If the king of Judah and the people of Judah had put their trust in the Lord, they would have had the peace of God in this conflict.⁹

King Ahaz, the grandson of King Uzziah (6:1), reigned in Judah from 735-715 B.C. altogether. Early in his reign King Rezin of Syria (Aram) and King Pekah of Israel allied against him (see 2 Kings 15:37; 16:5, 10-18; 2 Chron. 28:22-24). The fact that Isaiah referred to Pekah as the "son of Remaliah," rather than as the "king of Israel," may indicate disdain for him, since to call someone "the son of" someone was a way of denigrating him. Rezin and Pekah attacked Jerusalem to force Ahaz to ally with them against Assyria, which was growing stronger farther to the northeast, and threatening to annihilate them all (2 Kings 15:37).

God protected Jerusalem, and this dual enemy could not force Judah into a treaty. This verse summarizes the attack, and the following verses give more details about it. Another less probable view is that verse 1 refers to Assyria's first attack against Jerusalem (2 Chron. 28:5-8), and the following verses to its second invasion (2 Chron. 28:17-18).¹⁰

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

Ephraim and Israel frequently used as collective nouns for the entire Northern Kingdom established from Jeroboam's rebellion. Capital was Samaria (1 Kgs 21:1) and were taken captive by Assyria in 722 B.C. (2 Kgs 17:1-6).¹¹

[the house of David] The house of David, for it was not to Ahaz only but to David in particular that God gave the promise of protection (2Sam. 7).¹²

[Ephraim] The northern kingdom of the ten tribes is called Ephraim here because that was the leading tribe; for the same reason Judah is distinguished among all the other tribes. This is why the terms Judah and Israel appear in some passages.¹³

⁹ <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-7.html>

¹⁰ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

¹¹ Chuck Missler, Khouse.org

¹² Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

¹³ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible:

[his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind] Ahaz's heart and that of his people were moved like trees when shaken with the wind.

Ahaz cannot expect the blessing of God upon him or the nation. As a result, the alliance of Rezin, king of Syria, with Pekah, king of Israel, terrifies him and his people. Previously both Syria and Israel had attempted to take Judah. Alone they could not prevail, but together Ahaz is confident that they will be able to take Jerusalem. In spite of the fact that Ahaz is a godless king, God is not yet ready to let the people of Judah go into captivity. As we already know from history, Judah is not going to go into captivity in the north, but many years later they will be taken captive to Babylon.¹⁴

7:1-2. Rezin, king of Aram, northeast of Israel, and Pekah... king of Israel (752-732) had made an alliance. Rezin may have usurped the throne of Aram, and Pekah was a usurper. Rezin was Aram's last king, and Pekah was Israel's next-to-last king. After Jeroboam II (793-753) of Israel died, the Northern Kingdom became increasingly weak. Rezin convinced Pekah to join him against Pekah's southern neighbor Judah (2 Kings 15:37; 16:5). They threatened to replace Judah's King Ahaz with a puppet king, "the son of Tabeel" (Isa. 7:6). Perhaps Tabeel was a district or a person in Aram. The prospect of such formidable enemies as Aram and Israel caused the people of Judah to be afraid. The house of David (v. 2) refers to King Ahaz who was of that kingly line. Hearing of the Aram-Israel alliance Ahaz was terrified. Ephraim, Israel's largest tribe, represented the entire nation, as is also the case in the Book of Hosea (see, e.g., Hosea 4:17; 5:3, 5, 9-14). This was in the year 734 b.c. Perhaps Ahaz thought he could call on the Assyrian King Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727) to come to his aid and attack the Aram-Israel confederacy.¹⁵

When Ahaz ("the house of David" of all people!) heard that Syria had moved its army into the Northern Kingdom (Ephraim) and had settled down there, he and his people shook with fear. The date of this attack was probably between 736 and 734 B.C. This prophecy of Isaiah is dateable to 734 B.C. Ahaz had previously suffered defeat at the hands of both these enemies (2 Chron. 28:5-8). Edom and Philistia were also threatening Judah at this time (2 Chron. 28:17-18).

What Ahaz would do would affect the future of his dynasty, the house of David.¹⁶

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

1. The confederacy shall not stand, and your defeat (that of Ahaz) will not come to pass by them (Isa. 7:3-7).
2. Within 65 years Ephraim shall be broken and not be a people (Isa. 7:8).
3. If you will not believe, you shall not be established (Isa. 7:9).¹⁷

¹⁴ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

¹⁵ The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

¹⁶ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

¹⁷ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

[Shearjashub] Shear-jashub, a remnant shall return. A son of Isaiah whose name was designed to confirm a prophecy (Isa. 10:21).

[conduit] A conduit -- a pipe, or other conductor of water.

Shear-jashub means "a remnant will return." God told Isaiah to give his son this name as a reminder of his plan for mercy. From the beginning of God's judgment he planned to restore a remnant of his people. Shear-jashub was a reminder to the people of God's faithfulness to them. The "aqueduct" may have been the site of the Gihon Spring, located east of Jerusalem. The Gihon Spring was the main source of water for the holy city and was also the spring that emptied into Hezekiah's famous water tunnel (2 Chronicles 32:30). The field where the cloth is washed was a well-known place where clothing or newly woven cloth was laid in the sun to dry and whiten (see 36:2).¹⁸

Because God is not ready to deliver the kingdom of Judah into captivity, He wants to encourage the king so he will not make an unwise and frantic alliance with Egypt. So God tells Isaiah to meet with Ahaz.

There are several things we need to look at in this verse. First of all, Isaiah is to meet Ahaz "at the end of the conduit of the upper pool." The place where he is to meet the king is suggestive. It is from this conduit that the life-giving waters pour for thirsty Jerusalem. It is here that the people can quench their thirst. You can't get much satisfaction from a pipe filled with water -- you must have a spigot on it somewhere. You must go to the place where the water comes out of the pipe.

Now this is symbolic of the fact that you are not going to get any blessing out of that house of David, but way down at the end of his line One is coming as the "water of life." That One was the Lord Jesus Christ. He came in the line of David to bring the water of life.

Isaiah is to meet the king at the upper "pool." The word for "pool" is *berekah* from the root word meaning "blessing." I can assure you that in that land a pool of water is a blessing. This same word used in Psalm 84:6, "...the rain also filleth the pools [*berakah*]," everywhere else is rendered "blessing." This is a very interesting thing.

Notice also that it is "the upper pool." Upper is the word used over thirty times for the Most High. You may recall that it was said of the one who came out to minister to Abraham that he was the priest of the Most High God (see Gen. 14:18). Now the blessing of the Most High God was given "at the end of the conduit" when Jesus came into the world.

"In the highway of the fuller's field." The highway is a path which is elevated above the surrounding land to keep the traveler's feet clean. The spiritual application of the word highway is made clear in Proverbs 16:17: "The highway of the upright is to depart from evil...." This highway is the way of holiness...Isaiah will use this same figure in Isaiah 35:8: "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness...." This very interesting symbolism refers to the One who is the way, the truth, and the life. The psalmist wrote in Psalm 84:5: "Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them." That is, blessed is the one who has the One who is the way, the truth, and the life.

Notice also that the meeting was to take place in the "fuller's field." The fuller's field was the place where folk went to wash their clothes. It was the laundry of that day. Applying this to our

¹⁸ Life Application Study Bible

own lives, if we want to get our lives cleansed, we must come to the Lord Jesus Christ. He said, "...ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3).

So you see, it is no accident that Isaiah is sent to this very interesting place for his meeting with Ahaz. It has a wonderful spiritual meaning for us.

Isaiah is told to take his son Shear-jashub with him. That is quite a name for a boy, but it is nothing compared to the second son whom we shall meet in chapter 8. Shear-jashub means "a remnant shall return." The interesting thing is that God has always had a remnant that was true to Him.¹⁹

God told Isaiah to go with his son... to meet King Ahaz at the end of the aqueduct of the Upper Pool. This pool was a reservoir that held water from the Gihon Spring near Jerusalem. (Isa. 22:9 refers to a Lower Pool.) Perhaps Ahaz was there to inspect the city's water supply in anticipation of an attack by Aram and Israel. The aqueduct was near the road to the Washerman's Field, just outside Jerusalem's city walls. This was the place where, about 33 years later, Sennacherib's spokesman would hurl his challenge to the Jerusalemites (36:2). The name of Isaiah's son, Shear-Jashub (which means "a remnant will return"; cf. 10:21) illustrated the prophet's message. The nation of Judah would not be destroyed by the Aram-Israel alliance.²⁰

You and Shear-Jashub your son: Isaiah was told to take his son, named Shear-Jashub, and bring a word from the Lord to Ahaz. He brought his son as a walking object lesson, because the name Shear-Jashub means, A Remnant Shall Return.

At the end of the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fullers Field: These seemingly irrelevant details make an important point. All this happened to real people at a real time and in real places. This isn't make believe or fairy tales. This is real.²¹

God instructed Isaiah to take his son Shearjashub ("A Remnant Shall Return"; cf. 6:13) and meet Ahaz at a strategic water source for Jerusalem, which Ahaz was apparently examining. The location of this pool is uncertain, but it was a reservoir for Jerusalem (cf. 36:2), perhaps near the Gihon Spring in the Kidron Valley.

A vulnerable above-ground aqueduct brought water from it into the city. The fuller's field was a place where people washed clothes, fuller being another name for launderer. Shearjashub's presence may have been designed to encourage Ahaz to believe that his enemy would not destroy Judah completely, even though they had already defeated him previously (cf. v. 4). Still, the mention of only a remnant returning was sobering. This was the very spot on which Sennacherib's field commander later stood to hurl insults at Hezekiah (36:2), the fulfillment of Isaiah's prediction of an Assyrian attack.²²

¹⁹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

²⁰ The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

²¹ <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-7.html>

²² <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

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

[Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted] Four commands to Ahaz:

1. Take heed.
2. Be quiet.
3. Fear not.
4. Neither be fainthearted

[for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Ramaliah] Three things not to be afraid of:

1. The fierce anger of Rezin, king of Syria (Isa. 7:4)
2. The fierce anger of Pekah, king of Israel
3. The evil counsel of Syria and Ephraim against you in plotting your defeat to set a king in Jerusalem (Isa. 7:5-6)

[smoking firebrands] In this figure of speech the kings of Syria and Ephraim are pictured as harmless. They were not burning tails to set everything else on fire, but only smoking tails -- the harmless conclusion of what had been formidable enemies in the past. To predict their destruction by Assyria within 65 years was the purpose of this prophecy (Isa. 7:7-9).²³

Perhaps also, the calamity and devastation that had wracked Judah thus far had made Ahaz stop trusting in God. If God loves me, why am I in this mess at all? Trust Him now, after all He has allowed to happen? Are you crazy?

Why was it so hard for Ahaz to do this? Because he didn't see the situation the way the Lord did. Ahaz looked at Israel and Syria and saw a terrible threat. God looked at Israel and Syria and saw two stubs of smoking firebrands. To the Lord, they were all smoke and no fire!²⁴

Intense anger: The end of this verse is very different in the LXX. Instead of "the fierce anger of Syria and the son of Remaliah" The LXX says: "for when (or after) the anger of my wrath has been begotten I will again (spiritually) heal also the son(s) of Syria and the son(s) of Remaliah (Israel)." In partial support of a different reading the Hebrew text has (be-char-iy 'aph) which can be translated, "in my wrath" (lit. "in the heat of my face"). Thus the Hebrew text can say that it is God's wrath which is expended. However, the words "I will heal again" are added by the LXX but they are not in the Hebrew text. The LXX translators may have added what they felt was in the larger context and what in the immediate context was implied in Shearyashub's name.²⁵

²³ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

²⁴ <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-7.html>

²⁵ <http://www.moellerhaus.com/7-8.htm>

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

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

1] **Remaliah** = Tabeal, via encryption.

Students of encrypted writing have discovered that there are examples of “secret” writing in the Old Testament. One of the oldest forms of encryption is a simple sliding alphabet used for direct substitutions. An example from Hebrew is known as “ALBAM” in which the alphabet (which itself is a Hebrew word coming from “aleph-bet”) is simply written over itself as shown in figure 1 (below).

This is then used to substitute each letter in a message with the letter over (or under) it. In Isaiah 7, we encounter the scheming of Rezin, the king of Syria, and Pekah, the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, confederating against Ahaz in Judah. In verse 6, the plan is to establish the son of Tabeal as king, if the plot would have succeeded. The Midrash notes that “Tabeal” is the name “Remaliah” encrypted using the method of Albam.²⁶

ALBAM										
11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
כ	'	ט	ח	ז	ו	ה	ד	ג	ב	א
ת	ש	ר	ק	ע	פ	צ	ס	נ	מ	ל
22	21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12

[**even the son of Tabeal**] That is, Rezin, king of Syria. Ephraim had fallen to a low, depraved state to cooperate with a foreign nation against their own race of the southern kingdom of Israel in an effort to put the king of Syria on Judah's throne.²⁷

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7:4-6 Isaiah told Ahaz not to be afraid of Rezin and Pekah, for they were mere smoldering stubs of firewood. Their lives would soon end; like firewood they would be burned up and gone. Both men died two years later in 732 b.c. Aram and Israel threatened to invade Judah, split it between the two conquering nations, and set up a puppet king.²⁸

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²⁶ Chuck Missler, Khouse.org

²⁷ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

²⁸ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

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

Ezra 4:7.

7:7-9. In response to the Aram-Israel threat the Sovereign Lord had an answer: It (the attack) would not take place; it would not happen. The reason was that both of those nations were headed by mere (only, vv. 8-9) men. Ironically Isaiah referred to Pekah by name only once (v. 1). Four other times he called him "the son of Remaliah" or Remaliah's son (vv. 4-5, 9; 8:6). He and Rezin could not thwart God's plans.

In fact Isaiah made the startling prophecy that within 65 years Israel would no longer even be a people because they would be so shattered (7:8). Isaiah gave this prophecy in 734 b.c., so 65 years later was 669. When Assyria conquered Israel in 722, many Israelites were deported to other lands by Assyria and foreigners were brought into Samaria (2 Kings 17:24). However, in 669 many more foreigners were transferred to Samaria by Ashurbanipal (Ezra 4:10), king of Assyria (669-626). This "shattered" Israel, making it impossible for her to unite as a nation ("a people").

The second sentence in Isaiah 7:9 has been translated in various ways. But it challenged Ahaz to believe what Isaiah was telling him. Obviously Ahaz was not alive 65 years later. But he could have faith that God would fulfill both predictions: that Israel would be shattered 65 years later and that in his day the northern confederacy (Aram and Israel) would not overpower Judah. If he did not believe those predictions he too would fall.²⁹

It did not happen, Ahaz was not overthrown by Syria or Israel. Nevertheless, his kingdom was severely damaged because Ahaz did not put his trust in nor seek the protection of God. He actually made things worse by his invitation of the Assyrian king, Tiglath-Pilezer, to come and help him. The notes under verse one above give an account of the initial bloody successes of Syria and Israel against Ahaz. Their conspiracy against Judah was real and it resulted in great loss of life and of many captives in Judah. Thus the advice, not to get involved with those who had the conspiracy news on their mind (below in chapter 8:11), did not mean that the conspiracy was not true. Isaiah makes it plain in verses 5 and 6 that the conspiracy to depose Ahaz by invading his kingdom is real. It means that these events in history were inevitable but that the true believer needed to trust in the ultimate victory of the plan of God which will not be altered by historical injustice. The advice to trust in God and not get involved with current human political fears even though we are in harm's way and not to seek and trust in human, worldly answers, is correct but would be very difficult for those whose homes and families were being destroyed. But that is the correct advice given to and by Isaiah. Ahaz sought political answers, not just without asking for, but by rejecting the help of God. His refusal to ask God for a sign is not humility but hypocrisy. He was simply an unbeliever.³⁰

²⁹ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

³⁰ <http://www.moellerhaus.com/7-8.htm>

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

[**three-score and five years**] The 65 years were made up of: 13 years of the reign of Ahaz (2Ki. 15:27; 16:3); 29 years of the reign of Hezekiah (2Ki. 18:1-2); and 23 years of the reign of Manasseh (2Ki. 21:1).

Ahaz, one of Judah's worst kings, refused God's help, and instead, he tried to buy aid from the Assyrians with silver and gold from the Temple (2 Kings 16:8). When the Assyrians came, they brought further trouble instead of help. In 722 B.C., Samaria, the capital of Israel, the northern kingdom, fell to the Assyrian armies, thus ending the northern kingdom.³¹

Not be a people. This cannot refer to loss of statehood because loss of statehood happened only a few years later in 722 B.C. and this prophecy was circa 735 B.C.; not nearly 65 years. Nor could it refer to tribal extinction because Ephraimites are mentioned as part of the second commonwealth after 536 B.C. They never ceased to "be a people" in the sense of tribal identity. Israel and therefore Ephraim lost its political identity as a nation among other nations in 722 B.C. That lost "statehood" would never be regained. That event could not have been much more than a few years following the time that Isaiah wrote this prophecy. He could not have had such a short a term completion in mind. Furthermore he does not propose loss of statehood as a fulfillment but that the Ephraimites would cease to be a people, likely meaning an ethnic group connected with a territory. What does that imply?

As already said, It can not mean that within 65 years they would lose their tribal identity and that they would cease to be a tribe. Because a remnant of the tribe was later in the return after the Babylonian captivity of Judah (see 1 Chronicles 9:1-3) however the Ephraimites never regained the territory of Mt Ephraim. Not regaining their territory after the return may be the answer to what "not be a people" means. For they had lost statehood in 722 B.C. at the fall of Samaria with a large scale deportation of many of the Ephraimite inhabitants, but many of the Ephraimites must have remained in Mt Ephraim living among the mixed multitude whom the Assyrians had imported. Those brought in were a mixed racial group, displaced from their homelands, who had been forced by Sargon II to immigrate to Samaria in 722 B.C.. Later, more were additionally forced to settle there in the days of Esarhaddon. It was these mixed peoples who, in the period of the return of Judah from Babylonian captivity, later asked the Jews to be allowed a part in Zerubbabel's second commonwealth but were rejected.

Ezra 4:2 Then they came [from Samaria] to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither.

In the late 600's B.C. Esarhaddon, son of Sennacherib, invaded Judah, took its king captive to Assyria, and may then have completed the forced removal of the remaining Ephraimites from Samaria, so that they "ceased to be a people." That is, they ceased to be an ethnic group within a specific territory. One might think of the Armenians as an example, who long have been stateless but are still a "people" in their own territory but ruled by others. If Isaiah penned this prediction in approximately 738 to 733 B.C. then its terminus would be 678 to 673 B.C. (Esarhaddon's reign ended in 668 B.C.) and the deportation may therefore

³¹ Life Application Study Bible.

correspond to the latter time of the reign of Manasseh, son of Hezekiah, whom Esarhaddon took captive to Assyria in the latter period of Manasseh's 55 year reign. (See 2 Chron. 33:11-13) In that one group was brought in to settle Samaria by Esarhaddon as recorded in Ezra 4:2, it implies the departure of the then current inhabitants, or the last of the Ephraimites, in the days of Esarhaddon, which would be 65 years after Isaiah said they would lose their identity as "a people."³²

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

Vs 7-9 The tenor of the message is to let Ahaz know that he need not fear the alliance of his two enemies in the north. God has determined that their venture will be a failure. The problem is, how will Ahaz know it? To begin with, he is a skeptic, a doubter, and an unbeliever. How will he be convinced that what Isaiah is saying is true?

God has never asked anyone to believe anything that does not rest upon a foundation. Faith does not mean to move blindly into some area and say, "Oh, I am trusting God." That is very foolish. God never asks us to do that. For example, in our salvation we do not bring a little lamb to offer as a sacrifice; our faith rests upon the historical facts of the death, the burial and the resurrection of the Son of God. God never asks us to take a leap in the dark. He asks us to believe and trust something which rests upon a firm foundation, and it is the only foundation,

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1Cor. 3:11). If any person is an honest unbeliever and sincerely wants to know God, he will come to a saving faith. Folk with whom I have dealt who say that they cannot believe are not being honest. For example, a young fellow in San Francisco told me, "Oh, I want to believe; I am searching for the truth." There he was, living with a girl in an adulterous relationship and saying that he was searching for the truth! The fact of the matter is that no man's eyes are blindfolded unless he himself chooses to be blindfolded. If a person really wants to know God and will give up his sin and turn to Christ, God will make Himself real to him. In our day the problem is that a great many folk do not really mean business with God.

That is the problem with King Ahaz -- he doesn't mean business with God. Listen to him --³³

If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established: Here is the challenge to Ahaz. God has promised, now the king of Judah must believe. If he will not believe, it will not affect the outcome of the attack against Jerusalem. God has already decreed that their attack would not succeed. But it would affect the course of Ahaz's life and reign as king (surely you shall not be established).

As it happened, Ahaz did not believe. He did not put his trust in the Lord. He put his trust in carnal methods and the king of Assyria. Jerusalem was spared, and Ahaz no doubt believed he was successful, and his plan worked. But if he would have just trusted in the Lord, Jerusalem would have been spared, and Ahaz would have been blessed.

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

³² <http://www.moellerhaus.com/7-8.htm>

³³ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

king of Assyria, Judah would eventually be taken into captivity, and only a remnant would return.³⁴

That is an interesting phrase in Hebrew. "Believe" and "last" are the same word, "aw-MAN." The closest way to translate this into English would be, "If you will not support this, then you will not be supported."

So many times, God challenges us to walk in faith, to believe the Word, to place our trust in Him. Yes, disaster may surround us on every side. We might be in a situation that looks completely hopeless. But God's command to us is, "Have faith in Me. I'm bigger than your enemy. I'm more powerful than your predicament."

If you do not believe: The verb is used twice here. The first occasion is a causative verb and the second a simple passive. Thus the translation: "If you will not believe you will not be believed" is almost accurate as to verbal idea. However the verbs are both plural second person verbs. The KJV acknowledged this and used "ye" as the subject pronoun. The reason for Isaiah addressing Ahaz in the plural is seen below in verse 13, since Ahaz is spoken to as the representative of the House of David and not simply as a personality. Thus in this whole section the house of David is to be asked to believe and seek a sign from God which God is to give, not to Ahaz only, but to the House of David. Hence the use of the plural verbs as the "sign" is first introduced.³⁵

¹⁰Moreover the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying,

7:10-12. As a means of strengthening his faith Ahaz was told to ask the Lord... for a sign, an attesting miracle that would confirm God's word. The king could choose any miraculous work he wished, from the deepest depths to the highest heights. This was a figure of speech, a merism, that mentioned two extremes with the intention of including all the areas in between them. With a miracle performed simply for the asking, Ahaz would have visible confirmation that Isaiah's words (vv. 7-9) were truly from the Lord. Ahaz could count on the fact that the northern alliance would not defeat Judah.

But Ahaz refused to request a sign, saying he would not... test God (cf. Deut. 6:16). This answer sounded pious but probably in the way he said it showed he was not believing Isaiah. Perhaps he did not want to believe Isaiah, who had been prophesying about the eventual destruction of Judah if her people did not return to the Lord.³⁶

"According to a very marvelous interchange of idioms (communicatio idiomatum) which runs through the prophetic books of the Old Testament, at one time the prophet speaks as if he were Jehovah, and at another, as in the case before us, Jehovah speaks as if He were the prophet."

³⁴ <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-7.html>

³⁵ <http://www.moellerhaus.com/7-8.htm>

³⁶ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

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

[Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God] Ahaz was told to ask for any sign and God would give it to prove that He would protect Ahaz from the kings of Syria and Ephraim. He was so unbelieving that he wouldn't ask (Isa. 7:12). He really wanted to seek help from Assyria and continue in idolatry (2Ki. 16:7-8), and this is what God was weary about (Isa. 7:13).³⁷

God knows that Ahaz does not have faith, and He is willing to give the king faith; but Ahaz is nothing but a pious fraud -- and there are a lot of those around today. Listen to his false piety:³⁸

God commanded the king to ask Yahweh his God for a sign that He would indeed do what He had promised. Signs were immediate, physical confirmations that what a prophet had predicted further in the future would indeed happen. They either confirmed that God had caused something to happen (cf. Exod. 3:12), or they confirmed that He would cause something to happen, as he re (cf. 37:30; Jer. 44:29-30). Ahaz had the freedom to request any type of sign, and God promised to use it to bolster his faith (cf. Gideon).

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

Isn't that sweet of him? He sounds so nice, but he is one of the biggest hypocrites you will find in Scripture. This sort of thing is sickening, and I believe God feels that way about it.³⁹

Ask a sign for yourself: Through the prophet Isaiah, God invites Ahaz to ask for a sign. God has just challenged Ahaz to believe and be blessed, and now God offers to give Ahaz a basis for belief - a sign for yourself.

But Ahaz said, I will not ask, nor will I test the Lord! This sounds very spiritual from Ahaz. He almost seems to say what Jesus said in Matthew 4:7: You shall not tempt the Lord your God. Though the words are similar, the hearts are far apart. Ahaz refused to ask for a sign, because when God fulfilled the sign, he would be obligated to believe.

This was not tempting or testing God in wrong way. It is never testing God to do as He says, and if the Lord invites us to test Him, we should. For example, in Malachi 3:10, the Lord invited Israel to give as He commanded, and thereby to prove Me now in this.

Again, perhaps Ahaz was bitter against the Lord, because of all the disaster Judah had already been through at the hands of Israel and Syria. Perhaps his mind is, I want nothing to do with the God who allowed it to get this bad.⁴⁰

Havent we, in some way, to some degree, been where Ahaz was? Havent we rejected the gracious, free gifts of God for silly and strange reasons? Here let us each descend and dive into his own conscience, to see whether we also have not matched Ahaz in his madness, or at leastwise coasted too near upon his unkind usage of the Lord, by rejecting his sweet offers of

³⁷ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

³⁸ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

³⁹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁴⁰ <https://www.studyight.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-7.html>

grace and motions of mercy, by slighting his holy sacraments, those signs and seals of the righteousness that is by faith. (Trapp)

Ahaz appeared righteous by saying he would not test God with a sign ("I will not test the Lord like that"). In fact, God had told him to ask, but Ahaz didn't really want to know what God would say. Often we use some excuse—such as not wanting to bother God or blaming some theological question that concerns us—to keep us from communicating with him. Don't let anything keep you from hearing and obeying God.⁴¹

Ahaz refused to ask for a sign. He did not want God to confirm that He would protect Judah because he had already decided not to trust God but to make other arrangements. He tried to justify his disobedience and his lack of faith with a pious statement that he did not want to test Yahweh (cf. Deut. 6:16). Testing the Lord got Israel into big trouble in the wilderness and at other times, but asking for a sign was not testing God when He commanded it. God prohibited testing Him (demanding proof) when His people doubted or rebelled against Him (cf. Ps. 95:9; Matt. 16:4; Mark 8:12; Luke 11:29), not when they wanted a sign to strengthen their faith (cf. Judg. 6:36-40; 2 Kings 20:8-11; Ps. 34:6; Mal. 3:10). Ahaz wanted to appear to have great faith in God, but he had already decided to make an alliance with Assyria.⁴²

The Lord, speaking through Isaiah, said to Ahaz, "I'm going to confirm my promise now through a miracle. Ask for anything you can imagine, and I will do it to reassure you that you can trust Me."

But Ahaz wouldn't. He said, "I won't ask, nor will I test the Lord." Now, this sounds quite reverent and respectful, doesn't it? It could be interpreted as one of the great statements of faith in the Scriptures. After all, Ahaz is quoting Deuteronomy 6:16...

Deut. 6:16 "You shall not put the LORD your God to the test..."

Ahaz's response might sound like words of great faith, reverence, and respect. But in fact, it was none of those things. This man was not faithful, reverent, or respectful. The Scriptures tell us, 2Kings 16:2-4 ...he did not do what was right in the sight of the LORD his God, as his father David had done. But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and even made his son pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had driven out from before the sons of Israel. He sacrificed and burned incense on the high places and on the hills and under every green tree.

Ahaz was far from being a righteous or faithful man. He was a worshiper of false gods, and so steeped in idolatry that he even offered his son as a human sacrifice. He was wicked to the core, and his response was not given in reverence, but in rejection.⁴³

⁴¹ Life Application Study Bible.

⁴² <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

⁴³ <http://rondaniel.com/library/23-Isaiah/Isaiah0701.php>

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

I hope you won't mind my telling a little story. One day, in a Sunday school class for junior boys and girls, the teacher was telling the story about the Good Samaritan. As she related the parable, she was painting a vivid picture. She told how the man fell among thieves, how he was beaten up, and blood was gushing out from the wounds in his body. She told about the priest and the Pharisee, and finally she came to the Good Samaritan. She wanted to clinch her presentation by making an application to the lives of the children. She first asked a little girl, "What would you have done?" She said, "Oh, I would have stayed and nursed him for a few days." The next little boy didn't want to be outdone, so he said, "And I would have brought him a box of candy." The teacher went around the class with her question, and finally came to a little girl who had a very distressed look on her face. The teacher said to her, "What would you have done?" She said, "I think I would have thrown up!" Believe me, the teacher had painted a gory picture, and that little girl was being honest.

I think God feels that way about our piety. My friend, don't think you are being pious when you say, "Oh, I won't test God." God says, "Test Me. Try Me, and see if I am not good." I actually feel fatigued when I talk to some folk who say that they are just going to step out on "faith." Oh, my friend, wait until God puts a rock underneath you. Wait until God gives you definite leading before you make a fool of yourself and bring criticism upon the cause of Christ. God says to this unbelieving king, "I'm not asking you to believe My message just because Isaiah said it. I want to put a foundation under it. I want to give you a supernatural sign so you will know that the message is from Me." But Ahaz refuses to ask for a sign. So God is going to give a sign -- not to Ahaz -- but to the whole house of David.⁴⁴

Ahaz, by rejecting the offer of a sign from God's messenger, was in effect rejecting the One who sent the prophet. The house of David (cf. v. 2) refers not to all David's descendants, but to Ahaz and those kings of Judah who would descend from him. Ahaz's answer was impious. He said he did not want to test the Lord, but by refusing to follow God's directive to ask for a confirming miracle, he was testing the Lord's patience (as well as man's patience).⁴⁵

Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also? The rulers of Judah treated other people poorly, but they treated the Lord even more poorly. If many of us expressed the same distrust we have towards the Lord towards other people, we might get a punch in the nose!

How heartily angry is the prophet, how blessedly blown up in this case to so great dishonor done to God! We should be so too. (Trapp)

Spurgeon speaks well to this point: Did I not hear some one say, Ah, sir, I have been trying to believe for years. Terrible words! They make the case still worse. Imagine that after I had made a statement, a man should declare that he did not believe me, in fact, he could not believe me though he would like to do so. I should feel aggrieved certainly; but it would make matters worse if he added, In fact I have been for years trying to believe you, and I cannot do it. What does he

⁴⁴ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

⁴⁵ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

mean by that? What can he mean but that I am so incorrigibly false, and such a confirmed liar, that though he would like to give me some credit, he really cannot do it? With all the effort he can make in my favour, he finds it quite beyond his power to believe me? Now, a man who says, I have been trying to believe in God, in reality says just that with regard to the Most High.

House of David. Even though the one addressed is Ahaz and it is he to whom the sign is given it includes the larger audience to whom it is directed. That is, to the whole house of David. It is to them that the sign is given and the house of David would look for the fulfillment of the prophetic sign long after Ahaz was dead.

The prophecy to Ahaz would in fact happen just as God had said. But notice this: the prophecy wasn't just to Ahaz. Did you notice that the Lord had directed this prophecy by saying, "Listen now, O house of David"?

This prophecy reached much further than Ahaz's situation. It was directed to the entire house of David, from which would come the Messiah, born of a virgin.

Near And Far: This is an example of the two-fold fulfillment of prophecy. Often, when you are studying the Old Testament, you run across things that were written in a certain context, but then you read the New Testament, and the Holy Spirit attributes it to something that sounds completely different.⁴⁶

Isaiah saw right through the king's hypocrisy. He warned him by addressing him as the representative of the house of David. The plural "you" indicates that Isaiah was addressing all the members of the house of David and perhaps the whole nation (cf.v. 9). Yahweh had made covenant promises that David's dynasty would continue forever (2 Sam. 7:16; 1 Kings 8:25). Ahaz should not have feared being replaced by a puppet king (v. 6). Ahaz had said he would not test God (v. 12), but by refusing to ask for a sign, that is precisely what he was doing—testing God's patience with him. He was also testing the patience of the godly in Israel who were looking to their king to trust God. The prophet had called Yahweh "Ahaz's God" (v. 11), but now that the king had rebelled against Him, Isaiah referred to the Lord as "my (Isaiah's) God." This change was ominous, suggesting that God would abandon the king. If Ahaz's decision resulted in God withdrawing support from the Davidic kings, the prophecy of Immanuel may imply that God would raise up His own King from David's house who would be faithful to Him. This could explain why God gave such a major messianic prediction at this time.⁴⁷

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

- 1) "The Lord Himself": a sign divinely given.
- 2) You (plural) = to the House of David.
- 3) Miraculous sign: v.11.
- 4) Concerned with the continuation of the House of David.
- 5) *The* virgin. Definite article.
Almah: damsel, maid, virgin: untouched.

⁴⁶ <http://rondaniel.com/library/23-Isaiah/Isaiah0701.php>

⁴⁷ <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

LXX: *parthenos* = virgin. Also, Lowth, Gesenius, Ewald, Delitzsch, Kay, et al.

6) "Immanuel" = "God with us" = the Incarnation.

7) Truly human, as other children.

Virgin Birth: Gen 3:15 fulfilled; see Rev 12: the Seed of the Woman. Rev 5: A man needed; a kinsman of Adam. Ruth: Boaz, the *goel* (the kinsmanredeemer) foreshadows Rev 5. Contrast the Blood Curse on the royal seed after Jeconiah (Jer 22:30) with the twin genealogies of Matthew and Luke. (See *Footprints of the Messiah*.)

Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae: "Be not troubled, O Ahaz... Does it not seem an impossible thing to thee, that will never happen that a virgin become a mother; But I tell thee such a virgin shall bring forth a son, before the House of David perish."⁴⁸

God puts a foundation under His prophecy; and, if you want to know whether or not the virgin birth is true, you can find out if you read the four Gospels. For example, in Matthew we read, "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt. 1:18-23).

Isaiah 7:14 has become one of the most controversial verses in Scripture because of the prophecy concerning the virgin birth. Unbelievers have quite naturally discounted it and have sought desperately, but in vain, for a loophole to reject the virgin birth. The battle has been waged about the meaning of the Hebrew word *almah*, which is translated "virgin."

The fact that the angel quotes this prophecy in Isaiah 7:14 to Joseph as an explanation for Mary's being with child before her marriage to him is satisfactory evidence that the prophecy referred to an unmarried woman who had a son without physical contact with any man. The word used by Matthew (see Matt. 1:23) is the Greek word *parthenos*, which definitely means "virgin." The same Greek word was used for the Parthenon, the Greek temple to the goddess Athena, which the Greeks characterized as being a virgin.

When the Revised Standard Version of the Bible was first published, the Hebrew word *almah* was translated "young woman," with "virgin" in the footnotes -- of course, it should have been reversed. Their argument was that *almah* meant only a young woman. While it is true that there are places in the Scriptures where it is translated "young woman," it is evident that it means "virgin."

For example, when Abraham's servant went to Haran in search of a bride for Isaac and he prayed that God would direct him to the right girl, this is how Rebekah was described: "And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her..." (Gen. 24:16). The word damsel is the Hebrew word *naarah*, meaning "young woman," but that she was a virgin was made clear also. Then when the servant was rehearsing this experience of praying for God's guidance, he said, "Behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass, that when the virgin cometh forth to draw water..." (Gen. 24:43), the Hebrew word *almah* is translated "virgin."

⁴⁸ Chuck Missler, Khouse.org

I don't think that anyone could misunderstand what is being said here. When the word *almah* was used, it referred to a virgin young woman, that is, one who had had no sexual relationship with a man.

When the liberal theologian says that the Bible does not teach the virgin birth of Jesus, I feel like asking him if his papa had talked to him when he was a boy about the birds and the bees. He can deny that he believes in the virgin birth of Jesus, but he cannot deny that Isaiah and Matthew are talking about the virgin birth of Jesus.

Notice again Isaiah's prophecy: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Isaiah said that His name would be Immanuel, but you cannot find any place in the Gospels where He is called by that name. Immanuel means "God with us." They called Him "Jesus" because He would save His people from their sins. But, friend, He cannot save the people from their sins unless He is Immanuel, "God with us." Every time you call Him Jesus, you are saying, "God with us." He is God. He is God with us and God for us. He is our Savior, born of a virgin. Have you put your trust in Him?

When Isaiah gave this prophecy in Isa. 7:14, someone probably came to him and said, "When will this take place?" I have a notion that Isaiah looked down through the centuries and said, "It will be a long time." Then how would the people of his generation know the prediction was true? The virgin birth of Christ would come to pass, just as Isaiah said it would, because God had spoken through Isaiah on many other things that were fulfilled during the days in which he spoke them. One of them was his prophecy about Hezekiah and the Assyrians, which we shall see in the historic section of Isaiah. The Assyrians once gathered outside the walls of Jerusalem, and they were 150,000 strong. Things looked bad for Jerusalem. It looked as if the city would fall. So Hezekiah went into the temple, got down on his knees, and fell on his face before God. He cried out for deliverance, and God sent Isaiah to him with a message. Isaiah told Hezekiah that he didn't have to worry. The Assyrians would not come into the city, nor would they take it. In fact, Isaiah told the king that not even one arrow would be shot into Jerusalem. There were 150,000 soldiers outside the walls of Jerusalem, and each soldier had a quiver full of arrows on his back and a bow in his hand. You would think that out of that many soldiers there would be one that was trigger-happy, one who would shoot an arrow over the wall just to see if anyone would yell. If just one soldier had shot one arrow over the all into the city, Isaiah would have rightly been declared a false prophet. But no arrows were shot; the city was spared. What Isaiah had told Hezekiah came true. And the New Testament bears witness to the fact that the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus came to pass exactly as Isaiah had predicted.⁴⁹

7:14-16. Though Ahaz refused to request a sign that would have confirmed the truth of Isaiah's message, the prophet said God would give him one anyway. The sign was to be a boy named Immanuel. Three elements pertain to the sign: (1) The boy would be born of a virgin (v. 14). (2) He would be raised in a time of national calamity (v. 15; on the curds and honey see comments on v. 22). (3) While he was still a youth, the two-king alliance would be broken (v. 16). "Virgin" translates *'almâh*, a word used of an unmarried woman of marriageable age. The word refers to one who is sexually mature. It occurs elsewhere in the Old Testament only in Genesis 24:43 ("maiden"); Exodus 2:8 ("girl"); Psalm 68:25 ("maidens"); Proverbs 30:19 ("maiden"); Song of Songs 1:3 ("maidens"); 6:8 ("virgins"). It also occurs in 1 Chronicles 15:20 (*alamoth*) and in the

⁴⁹ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

title of Psalm 46 (alamoth may be a musical term). The child's name Immanuel means "God (is) with us."⁵⁰

Most Bible scholars hold one of three views on the virgin in Isaiah 7:14-16:

(1) The boy of whom Isaiah wrote was conceived shortly after Isaiah spoke this message. A young woman, a virgin, married and then had a baby. Before he would be old enough to tell the difference between good and evil the northern Aram-Israel alliance would be destroyed. According to this view the woman was a virgin when Isaiah spoke his prophecy but was not when the boy was born because he was conceived by sexual relations with her husband. Some say this child was born to Isaiah (8:3-4). They point out that 8:1-4 corresponds in a number of ways to 7:14-17. But this view must be rejected because (a) Isaiah's wife already had a child (Shear-Jashub, v. 3) and so was not a virgin, and (b) the second child born to Isaiah's wife was not named Immanuel (8:3). In this view Ahaz would have known this woman, and hearing of the child's birth and his name Immanuel he would understand that Isaiah's prophecies were correct.

(2) A second view sees the predicted birth as exclusively messianic and the virgin as Mary, Jesus' mother. It is argued that in Isaiah 7:14 the virgin is said to be with child (lit., "the virgin is or will be pregnant"). It is also argued that Matthew, stressing the fact that Joseph and Mary's marriage was not consummated till after Jesus' birth (Matt. 1:18, 25), affirmed that Jesus' birth fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy (Matt. 1:21-23).

Proponents of this view point out that since Isaiah spoke this prophecy to the house of David (Isa. 7:13) and not just to Ahaz himself, the sign was given not just to the king but to the entire kingly line and the entire nation. However, if the fulfillment did not occur until Joseph and Mary's day, how does the prophecy relate to Isaiah's point that the Aram-Israel confederacy would soon be defeated? And how does the birth of the Lord Jesus relate to the eating of curds and honey (v. 15) and to the breaking of the alliance before the boy was old enough to know good and evil? (v. 16) Proponents of this view answer that the time is similar: the two years of Jesus' babyhood (before He would know between right and wrong) point to the same time segment, two years, within which the Aram-Israel threat would be gone.

(3) A third view, a combination of the first two, sees the prophecy as directed primarily to Ahaz regarding the breaking of the alliance. The 'almâh was a virgin when Isaiah spoke his message, but then she would marry and have a baby. When the Aram-Israel alliance was broken the boy would still be young. Centuries later the Holy Spirit led Matthew to quote Isaiah 7:14 as a statement that was also true of a virgin birth (i.e., a birth to a woman who was still a virgin). This is the first of many prophecies about the Messiah given by Isaiah. (See the chart "Messianic Prophecies in the Book of Isaiah.")

The sign must have had some significance for the historical situation in which it was given. The sign involved not only the birth and the boy's name (Immanuel, "God [is] with us," would assure the people of God's presence), but also a designated length of time: before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings... will be laid waste.⁵¹ **7:14-16 "Virgin"** is translated from a Hebrew word used for an unmarried woman who is old enough to be married, one who is sexually mature (see Genesis 24:43; Exodus 2:8; Psalm 68:25; Proverbs 30:19; Song of Songs 1:3; 6:8). Some have compared this young woman to Isaiah's young wife and newborn son (8:1-4). This is not likely because she had a child, Shear-jashub, and her second child was not named Immanuel. Some believe that Isaiah's first wife may have

⁵⁰ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

⁵¹ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

died, and so this is his second wife. It is more likely that this prophecy had a double fulfillment. (1) A young woman from the house of Ahaz who was not married would marry and have a son. Before three years passed (one year for pregnancy and two for the child to be old enough to talk), the two invading kings would be destroyed. (2) Matthew 1:23 quotes Isaiah 7:14 to show a further fulfillment of this prophecy in that a virgin named Mary conceived and bore a son, Immanuel, the Christ.⁵²

A Virgin: The Hebrew word in the text that is translated virgin is "almah." It has a definite article in Hebrew as can be seen in the last word in the first line in the Hebrew text above. It is "ha'almah" or literally "the virgin." Only after the beginning of the Christian dispensation did Jewish scholars insist that the word means a young woman who is not necessarily a virgin and therefore they say a virgin birth was not predicted. Irenaeus is the first one to answer that argument and his points have not been improved upon. One of the most telling arguments he uses is that the Septuagint translators not only translated the verse here but they told what it meant, to them, before the advent of Jesus. It is obvious from their translation that they believed that one who would be called "God with us" required a virgin birth.⁵³

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

[Butter] Curdled milk (Job 20:17). This was the common way to use milk in the East.

[honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good] Butter and honey were common food for children. The infant was first nourished with honey, and then with milk. Hence, the prophecy about the child Isaiah had with him when he gave this message to Ahaz (Isa. 7:3) -- he would not be weaned or old enough to discern between good and evil before the two kings would be destroyed (Isa. 7:15-16).⁵⁴

Jesus was reared as a poor peasant in Palestine. This food was the simple diet of the poor.⁵⁵

Eating curds (thick, sour milk) and honey, the diet of the poor, in contrast to bread and wine, pictures a time of poverty in the land (cf. v. 22) following the Assyrian invasion that would follow relief from the Syro-Ephraimitic threat.

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

Forsaken of both her kings: The general announcement that Damascus and Samaria will lose their sovereignty is given here. It does not have a date for its inception nor completion because no date has been given for the "virgin birth" which is a miraculous sign from God. This sign is included as one of many evidences to show God's future interest in Israel in spite of the loss of

⁵² Life Application Study Bible.

⁵³ <http://www.moellerhaus.com/7-8.htm>

⁵⁴ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

⁵⁵ Thru The Bible with J. Vernon McGee.

statehood that is imminent. The future sign of the "virgin birth" shows that God is not finished in his dealings with the children of Israel even though extinction of the Kingdom of Israel is in the near future. The promise that both of the kings would be gone before and extend to the virgin birth, is incredibly historically correct. It adds an element to the coming messianic period to look for. Isaiah said here that the period of the "virgin birth" will commence with no king having been in Samaria or Damascus from the time of the loss of their sovereignty under the Assyrian kings. In Isaiah's view the coming of the Messiah will be characterized by many things, one of which will be that there will have been no sovereign in Samaria nor Damascus when the "virgin birth" child shall be with us. Damascus lost sovereignty to Tiglath-Pilezer in 731 B.C. Sovereignty of Damascus was held by foreign powers from then until very recently. Syria first lost home rule to Assyria, then Babylon, followed by Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, then Arabs, then Turks and Crusaders reciprocated control until the Turkish Empire took over from the 1200's until 1917. Samaria never seated a king or had self rule ever again from 722 B.C. until the present. The "land that you abhor" has certainly "been forsaken" of both her kings.⁵⁶

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

The Lord will bring the king of Assyria upon you: This was bad news to Ahaz, who had been foolishly trusting in Assyria instead of the Lord. It is as if the Lord is saying, It will seem to you like trusting in Assyria is a clever move, because the armies of Syria and Israel will be defeated. But the Assyrians will end up defeating you also.⁵⁷

[The LORD shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come] Instead of being told to fear the trouble that was to come from Syria and Ephraim, Ahaz was warned of Assyria whom he was trusting in for deliverance. Rezin and Pekah did defeat Ahaz because of his continued sins. Multitudes of Jews were taken captive to Syria and 200,000 to Ephraim; besides this, 120,000 were killed in one day (2Chr. 28:1-15). Edomites and Philistines had also invaded his country (2Chr. 28:16-23). He had appealed for help from Assyria, but instead the king had become his enemy (2Ki. 16:7-8; 2Chr. 28:20). Later the Assyrians came against Judah in the days of Hezekiah and conquered the land, except Jerusalem (Isa. 37:1 -- Isa. 39:8; 2Ki. 18-19). Assyria also took the ten tribes captive (2Ki. 17), and thus brought days of trouble such as never before in Israel, upon both Ephraim and Judah.⁵⁸

[departed from Judah] The nation of Israel was divided into two kingdoms, 1009 B.C.. (1Ki. 12).

[king of Assyria] See Isa. 10:5; Isa. 36:1 -- Isa. 37:38; 2Ki. 15:19-20; 2Ki. 16:7 -- 2Ki. 17:41; 2Ki. 18:17 -- 2Ki. 19:37.

⁵⁶ <http://www.moellerhaus.com/7-8.htm>

⁵⁷ <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-7.html>

⁵⁸ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

7:17-19. God said He would send the king of Assyria to Judah. These would be the worst enemy attacks since the 10 Northern tribes (here called Ephraim; see comments on v. 2) broke... from the 2 Southern tribes in 931 b.c. From Ahaz's day on, Judah was troubled by the Assyrian Empire, to which it had to pay a large tribute. Ahaz called on Tiglath-Pileser to rescue him from Aram and Israel, which the Assyrian king gladly did. However, Tiglath-Pileser gave Ahaz trouble, not help (2 Chron. 28:20-21). Then in Hezekiah's reign Sennacherib, king of Assyria, invaded Judah, who had asked for help from Egypt (Isa. 30:1-5), and was about to take it when, in 701 b.c., God miraculously delivered Jerusalem (chaps. 36-37). God's hand was in all this for He would whistle for flies from Egypt (i.e., Egyptian soldiers were as numerous and bothersome as flies) and for bees from... Assyria (i.e., Assyrian soldiers who were vicious as bees).⁵⁹

Assyria: This verse, and verses 18 and 20 and 8:4, 7, name Assyria (not Samaria and Syria) as the real coming scourge which God promised to use to punish and purge Israel. The five fold mention of the name of the nation emphasizes the certainty of the soon coming events to Isaiah's hearers. The Assyrians would bring about the extinction of the political entity of the northern kingdom of Israel and the political existence of the associated tribes erroneously called the "ten tribes." Thus the warning is given and Assyria is mentioned in 5 separate verses in these two chapters as the coming invader of whom Israel and Judah should both fear. See also 10:5 where Assyria is described as the rod of God's punishment.⁶⁰

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

Flies and bees are symbols of God's judgment (see Exodus 23:28). Egypt and Assyria did not at this time devastate Judah. Hezekiah followed Ahaz as king, and he honored God; therefore, God held back his hand of judgment. Two more evil kings reigned before Josiah, of whom it was said that no other king turned so completely to the Lord (2 Kings 23:25). However, Judah's doom had been sealed by the extreme evil of Josiah's father, Amon. During Josiah's reign, Egypt marched against the Assyrians. Josiah then declared war on Egypt, although God told him not to. After Josiah was killed (2 Chronicles 35:20-27), only weak kings reigned in Judah. The Egyptians carried off Josiah's son, Jehoahaz, after three months. The next king, Jehoiakim, was taken by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon. Egypt and Assyria had dealt death blows to Judah.⁶¹

Yahweh would summon the armies of Assyria and Egypt to do His bidding as one whistles (or hisses) at insects (cf. 5:26). The ancients could evidently control flies and bees by hissing at them.

⁵⁹ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

⁶⁰ <http://www.moellerhaus.com/7-8.htm>

⁶¹ Life Application Study Bible.

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

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

Ahaz sent gifts to Tiglath-Pileser, King of Assyria, to hire him to come and deliver him from Syria and Israel (2 Kgs 16:5-9). Tilgath Pileser takes Damascus, 732 B.C. (2 Kgs 16:9), and Rezin, 2 years after this prophecy. Verses 20-25 describe the results of the invasion when there would be large grazing areas available but insufficient men to cultivate the fields.⁶²

[In the same day] In the same day -- when Judah would be invaded and the land destroyed by the armies of Assyria and Egypt, the destruction would be as clean as a man shaving with a razor.

[razor that is hired, namely, by them beyond the river, by the king of Assyria] The Assyrian king is compared to a razor that is hired, referring to Ahaz hiring him to help destroy Syria and Ephraim. After this he turned on Judah and became a bigger scourge than the others would have been (2Ki. 16:7-8; 2Chr. 28:21).⁶³

7:20-25. Judah would experience deprivation and humiliation. Assyria, like a razor, would shave Judah's hair. In the ancient Near East shaving one's hair and beard was a sign of humiliation or deep distress (cf. Job 1:20; Isa. 15:2; Jer. 47:5; 48:37; Ezek. 7:18; Amos 8:10; Micah 1:16). The abundance of... milk was a distressful factor, not a good one. With many animals dying, a farmer's young cow and two goats would have no young to nurse, and so the milk (and curds from it) would be plentiful for the people. Honey would also be abundant because wild flowers would grow in the desolate fields and bee swarms would be more plentiful. All this would fulfill the sign given Ahaz by Isaiah (Isa. 7:15): he will eat curds and honey. Also the farmers would have no crops because of the ruined farmland. The vineyards would be ruined along with the cultivated land, and only briars and thorns (mentioned three times in vv. 23-25) would grow. The land would be good only for grazing by cattle and sheep.⁶⁴

Hiring Assyria to save them would be Judah's downfall (2 Kings 16:7, 8). To "shave" Judah's hair was symbolic of total humiliation. Numbers 6:9 explains that after being defiled, a person who had been set apart for the Lord had to shave his head as part of the cleansing process. Shaving bodily hair was an embarrassment—an exposure of nakedness. For a Hebrew man to have his beard shaved was humiliating (2 Samuel 10:4, 5).⁶⁵

If Ahaz understood and believed what the Lord said, it would have terrified him. The Assyrians were well known for their sheer cruelty, especially over the nations they conquered.

⁶² Chuck Missler, Khouse.org

⁶³ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

⁶⁴ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

⁶⁵ Life Application Study Bible.

They delighted in the torture and humiliation (shave with a hired razor . . . the head and the hair of the legs).

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 2 Samuel 10:4-5.⁶⁶

Shave with a hired razor: Assyria is actually to be a tool used by God to do his will of punishing a sinning Israel. This is later elaborated on by Isaiah in chapter 10:5,6 and verse 15 where he shows that Assyria has been chosen to do this task, but there he says Assyria has done much worse than God intended. Thus it is God who is bringing the Assyrians and not Ahaz; all the more reason why he should let the will of God be done and not interfere.⁶⁷

Judah's Sovereign would particularly use Assyria, as a barber uses a razor, to remove all the "hair" from Judah, to completely humiliate her (cf. 2 Sam. 10:4-5). Prisoners and slaves were shaved as a mark of dishonor, and this condition signified insult and disrespect.

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

[in that day, that a man shall nourish a young cow, and two sheep] In that day -- when Assyria destroyed Israel there would be only a remnant left so that a cow and two sheep (figuratively speaking) would produce plenty for all the men left (Isa. 7:21-22).⁶⁸

In that day (v. 21) denotes a time of judgment on the nation of Judah. Often this phrase (as in 4:2, e.g.) is used eschatologically to refer to the time of extreme judgment in the Great Tribulation just before the Messiah will return to establish the millennial kingdom. But sometimes as here (7:21) it refers to a judgment to come on the nation soon. The near judgment pictures the extreme judgment to come at the end of the age.⁶⁹

7:21-25 Judah's rich farmland would be trampled until it became pastureland, fit only for grazing. No longer would it be a place of agricultural abundance, "a land flowing with milk and honey" (Exodus 3:8), but a land with only briars and thorns.⁷⁰

Only one cow needed: This is a description of the abundance in the land of Galilee where with minimal effort a man could have a good living. For his family to live a good life he required but one cow and two sheep who would provide more than he needed for sustenance. Galilee is a geological blessing, beautiful scenery, well watered, protected by mountains which surround the whole of the area, amazingly fertile plains and hills which bring forth an abundance of olives and vineyards and the climate enhanced by the location of the Sea of Galilee 650 feet below sea level, where, as a result of a slight salt content from adjacent mineral springs, fish were abundant

⁶⁶ <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/guz/isaiah-7.html>

⁶⁷ <http://www.moellerhaus.com/7-8.htm>

⁶⁸ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

⁶⁹ The Bible Knowledge Commentary

⁷⁰ Life Application Study Bible.

so that many could make a living on the fishing industry. Isa. 2:7 describes the abundance of the nation just before its destruction: "Their land also is full of silver and gold, neither is there any end of their treasures; their land is also full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots": It was into this good land that Tiglath-Pilezer was to enter and leave its cities in ruins, its cattle slain or taken as a prize, and its fields filled with stones, and the dead lying unburied in the cities, the region depopulated and the "lucky" ones carried away to a life of servitude. See also Isa 28:1.⁷¹

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

In that day of woe, instead of having flocks and herds, the Judahites would be fortunate to have only one heifer and a couple of sheep. There would be such a lack of abundance of milk that they would have to curdle it to preserve it. They would also have to resort to eating honey instead of the variety of food items that they previously enjoyed. Even though food and drink would be scarce, it would be good food and drink because God would provide for the people who survived the Assyrian invasion.⁷²

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

[in that day, that every place shall be, where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings, it shall even be for briers and thorns] In that day -- when destruction would come to the land, there would be briers and thorns (because of the desolation in the land) in the place of thousands of vines and silver pieces paid as rent on vineyards. Hunters would search for the many wild animals which would occupy the former habitations of men (Isa. 7:24). In all former cultivated and productive lands there was to be nothing left but pasture for animals.⁷³

Then it will happen: The condition of the beautiful land is described after the visit of Tiglath Pilezer who left little of any population to till the ground or tend cattle. Even the attempt to repopulate the land with foreigners according to Assyrian policy would create little progress in restoration while the best land would be used only for grazing, while grazing land would grow up in briers and thorns, literally..⁷⁴

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

⁷¹ <http://www.moellerhaus.com/7-8.htm>

⁷² <http://soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/isaiah.pdf>

⁷³ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible

⁷⁴ <http://www.moellerhaus.com/7-8.htm>

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

[mattock] This tool was used in mountainous places where a plow could not be easily handled for turning the soil.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Dake's Annotated Reference Bible