

## ISAIAH

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Isaiah chapter 7 as we continue our study through the Word of God. Back in Isaiah chapter 6 we saw Isaiah tell us that **“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.”** Isaiah 6:1.

Now as we move into chapter 7 of Isaiah we will see that Ahaz, the grandson of Uzziah is King in the Southern Kingdom of Judah and he is dealing with Rezin King of Syria and Pekah the King of the Northern Kingdom of Israel who joined forces to defeat Ahaz and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. With that as our background, let's begin reading in Isaiah chapter 7 beginning in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

## ISAIAH 7

### VERSES 1-2

1. It has been a while since we were in Kings and Chronicles so let me just give some background information to set the stage for what is happening here in Isaiah chapter 7. As we saw last week Uzziah was a good King for the most part. The problem for Uzziah is that at the end of his life he allowed pride to cause him to enter the Temple to burn incense to the Lord, something only a priest was to do.

When the priests in the Temple saw what was going on 80 of them got in his face to try and stop him. But instead of listening to them he became angry with them. And as he lashed out at them leprosy broke out upon his forehead and he was quickly taken away from the Temple. For the rest of his days he lived in isolation co-reigning with his son Jotham.

His son, Jotham was a good King also, not as good as his father Uzziah. He also did what was right in the sight of the Lord.

Now we come to Jotham's son, Ahaz who is now King and he did not follow in the ways of the Lord. He was truly a wicked King! He worshipped the pagan god's, Baal, sacrificed his children in the fire to the god Molech. (2 Kings 16:1-4).

During his reign we see that Rezin King of Syria and Pekah the King of the Northern Kingdom of Israel join forces to defeat Ahaz and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. This was a judgment of God upon them, upon King Ahaz for his wickedness and it affected the whole nation.

This judgment was heavy upon them and we see a great slaughter take place. According to what we are told in II Chronicles 28:5-8 we see that Ahaz lost 120,000 Judean soldiers and 200,000 civilian hostages in these battles with Syria and Israel. And granted these armies were only able to defeat Elath in Judah but there was a great slaughter for the Southern Kingdom because of their sin!

Now 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 was bad, it looked like all would be lost. Ephraim was where Samaria was located and now the Syrian and the Northern Kingdom of Israel's forces were gathering together there in Ephraim preparing for battle against Judah. What happens when your trust is not in the Lord? You begin to shake like the trees when they are blown and that is what we see here. Not only was the King distressed but so were the people. Thus, out of that lack of trust they make a deal with the Assyrians to fight for them instead of the Lord.

Please understand that the Syrians and Assyrians are not the same people. The Syrians were to the north of Jerusalem and the Assyrians were North East. And it was the Assyrians who were gathering strength and they were very cruel. Upon capture they would take off your clothes, put a hook in your nose, and drag you back to Assyria, whose capitol was Nineveh. This is who Ahaz made an alliance with for protection from the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Syrians.

We see this unfold for us in II Kings 16:7-9 where we are told, **“So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, saying, ‘I am your servant and your son. Come up and save me from the hand of the king of Syria and from the hand of the king of Israel, who rise up against me.’ 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 it as a present to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria heeded him; for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus and took it, carried its people captive to Kir, and killed Rezin.”**

Some read this and come to the conclusion that because it worked it must be of God. Make no mistake about it, just because something works does not mean God is in it. Yes Tiglath-Pileser defeated the Syrians, killing Rezin their King, and giving Ahaz some security, but his security was not in the Lord. I see two major issues that come from this.

First of all, 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 by it. (II Kings 16:10-18). Be warned!

Secondly, the one he made a deal with turned on him and the King of Assyria, Tiglath-Pileser was now distressing Ahaz. If you sleep with the snakes you will get bit! How sad, that instead of trusting in the Lord he was trusting in man and he lost!

For King Ahaz, he did not see God in the midst of this crisis and thus he did not turn to Him. We need to understand that God is present in our crisis, He is there with us. And what He wants us to do is to trust in Him and not in the strength of man as I have said. He wants to save us but if we refuse to look to Him, He will discipline us!

2. Keep in mind that what is transpiring here in Isaiah chapter 7 happened before King Ahaz made his alliance with Tiglath-Pileser the King of Assyria even though it speaks of this coalition not being able to defeat the Southern Kingdom of Judah. It is kind of an overview and then in verse 2 we see them shaking over this army that is coming against them.

Then, as we move on we will see the Lord call for Isaiah to go and speak to Ahaz, King of the Southern Kingdom of Judah and the words that are spoken to him have brought about much controversy because they are prophetic in nature. As you will see, as we get to verse 14, Isaiah is speaking of the virgin birth. Let's read on and see what Isaiah has to say to Ahaz.

### VERSES 3-9

1. Here we see King Ahaz inspecting the water supply to the city as he is preparing for this invasion. As he is doing this God tells Isaiah to go and meet Ahaz at this aqueduct, and don't go alone. He wants Isaiah to bring his son, Shear-Jashub. Why does God want Isaiah to do this?

Because God wants Ahaz to know that judgment may come, things may not go as well as he thinks because of his wickedness, but God is going to bring back a remnant of His people. You see, Shear-Jashub means "a remnant shall return." It was a glimmer of hope in these dark times. He brought his son as a walking object lesson to King Ahaz!

2. What is this message that Isaiah has for the King? He is to tell the King not to fear King Rezin and the Syrians or King Pekah and the Northern Kingdom of Israel because there is no strength in them anymore. Now that is easy for God to say but when you looked at two nations coming against one, it did not look good.

The problem for Ahaz is that he did not trust the Lord and when you are not trusting in the strength of the Lord or His promises then it is not easy to have a calm spirit in the midst of turmoil. That is what God is telling him "**do not fear or be fainthearted.**"

3. The plan of these invading nations was simple. They were going to come down upon the Southern Kingdom of Judah and defeat it and then place their own puppet King on the throne, the son of Tabeel! What is interesting to me is that God is saying that they are not going to be victorious; they are not going to win. Why that is interesting to me is that Ahaz was a wicked King also, so why would God say this?

God is gracious and merciful and I don't think that these words of encouragement and comfort are for Ahaz alone. He was to be the leader and comfort the people, but because he was shaking in his boots, so were the people. And God is saying that this conspiracy will not be victorious, don't be fearful of their plans and he was and so was the nation.

4. Notice how specific God is in regards to their demise. Within 65 years the Northern Kingdom of Israel will be nothing, they will be "**broken**" or shattered and that is exactly what took place.

First of all if Isaiah spoke these words in 734 B. C. then by 732 B. C. the Assyrians destroyed Damascus and Rezin was dead. The Assyrians had defeated the Syrians and they were taken into captivity.

Then around 721 B. C. the Assyrians took the Northern Kingdom of Israel into captivity, and by 669 B. C., 65 years after these words were spoken, Ephraim was completely wiped out, the Northern Kingdom of Israel ceased to exist.

5. One more point here about the Assyrians because they were brutal. When the Assyrians took you captive they would place their captives throughout the land, never allowing you to live with enough of your own people to cause an uprising. In Israel they then placed foreigners into the Northern Kingdom and they married some of the remaining Jews. These people were known as the Samaritans. We see in the New Testament the Jews hating the Samaritans because they thought of them as half-breeds not Jews!

6. Listen once again to the closing lines of verse 9 which says, **“If you will not believe, Surely you shall not be established.”** What is the point? Very simply, “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.” In other words Ahaz is going to have to walk by faith and not by sight. He is going to have to trust in the Words of God, the promises of God even though through his physical eyes things don’t look good.

The problem for many is that they don’t know the Lord and it is hard to trust someone you don’t know. Now I am not speaking of unbelievers but Christians who have not built that relationship with God and thus, they are unwilling to walk, they can’t trust what God has said because they have not tasted and seen that the Lord is good, they lack faith!

Imagine if someone told you these things and you had no faith in the Lord, you really didn’t know Him and thus you couldn’t trust Him. What might you do? You might smile at this person but inside you would be thinking he is a nut case! I tend to think that is what was going on in the mind of Ahaz. But God is not done speaking to Ahaz through the prophet Isaiah. Look what the Lord tells him next.

VERSES 10-12

1. This is interesting to me because God is telling Ahaz, “Here is a blank check” but Ahaz refuses to cash it. What I mean by a blank check is that God tells Ahaz to ask for a sign so that Ahaz might see that what the Lord had spoken to him was true! God has just challenged Ahaz to believe and be blessed and now God offers to give Ahaz a basis for belief.

2. And when you hear the response of Ahaz, “**I will not ask, nor will I test the LORD!**” it sounds very spiritual. Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 4:7, “**... ‘You shall not tempt the Lord your God.’**” So is Ahaz wrong here?

Yes he is because God told him to ask for a sign and he is refusing, why? Maybe because if he lets God into his life then God might take control of his life and he does not want that. He has plans for himself, he is in control of his life or so he thought!

And as I have said, Ahaz is going to make a deal with Tiglath-Pileser and the Assyrians for help. And once they defeat Syria and the Northern Kingdom Ahaz goes to meet Tiglath-Pileser in Damascus and he sees an altar they used to sacrifice to their gods. And when he sees this and knowing that the Assyrians and the god’s they worshiped brought about this victory, or so he thought, he sends plans back home and by the time he gets back to Jerusalem, they have this pagan altar built. They removed the brazen altar in the Temple to make room for this pagan one. The actions of Ahaz spoke louder than his words! And we will see Isaiah recognize that the Lord is not with Ahaz as we read on.



VERSES 13-16

1. Listen carefully to where Ahaz is at right now. In verse 11 Isaiah said, **“Ask a sign for yourself from the LORD your God.”** But here in verse 13 Isaiah says, **“Hear now, O house of David! It is a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also.”** It was **“your God”** before Ahaz had closed the door the final time and now it was the God of Isaiah, **“my God.”** In other words, you have turned your back on God and now He is turning His back on you!

Ahaz did not want a sign but God is going to give him one and it is not going to be good one as we shall see.

2. Now verse 14 is that controversial Scripture but I think it is only controversial because, like Spurgeon wrote, that this 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.” Don’t let people confuse you, let the Word of God, illuminated by the Spirit of God, direct you and comfort you!

3. First let’s deal with the immediate fulfillment of what Isaiah said; that this was going to be a sign to Ahaz to show God’s faithfulness. Now some like to say that verses 13 and 14 deal with the virgin birth of the Messiah and they have nothing to do with this sign to Ahaz. The verses here in Isaiah chapter 7 that deal with the child in Ahaz’s day, the sign to Ahaz is found in verses 15-17.

Now as much as verses 15-17 do apply to Ahaz's day, I also see verses 13 and specifically 14 related to what was happening during this period of time. Let me explain. First of all the Hebrew word for "**virgin**" found in Isaiah 7:14 is ALMAH, which means a young, unmarried woman of sexual maturity. Now in those days she would have been considered a virgin, not so today.

If Isaiah used the Hebrew word BETHULAH that would have solved the controversy, for it seems to mean virgin. So what is going on here? I think Isaiah 8:18 helps give us the perspective of what is going on here. Here we see Isaiah say, "**Here am I and the children whom the LORD has given me! We are for signs and wonders in Israel From the LORD of hosts, Who dwells in Mount Zion.**"

In other words, their names were to be a sign to the nation. Let me show you what I mean. Isaiah's name means "The Lord saves" or "Yahweh saves." His first son, Shear-Jashub means "a remnant shall return." At this point it seems that Isaiah's wife may have died and he married a prophetess who bore him a son named, Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, which means "speed the spoil, hasten the booty."

What does that mean? This was a reference to the Assyrians coming to take the Northern Kingdom of Israel into captivity. Remember that Ahaz is worried about Rezin King of Syria and Pekah King of the Northern Kingdom of Israel coming down upon them and God is saying that is not going to happen. That Samaria will be taken captive!

We will see that more as we move into Isaiah chapter 8 but to give you a short preview we are told in verse 4, **“for before the child shall have knowledge to cry ‘My father’ and ‘My mother,’ the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be taken away before the king of Assyria.”** So I think Isaiah’s son is a sign to King Ahaz that both those nations will not survive and thus, they will not defeat the Southern Kingdom of Judea.

Now some also feel that Isaiah called this son Immanuel or “God with us,” which was a common practice in those days, two names. Thus, in the darkness of the day, God was still with them. And you will see in a few verses here, how this all plays out.

So the sign to King Ahaz was that Isaiah’s wife who had no children, she was a virgin prior to becoming pregnant with this child, gave birth to a son and the son is a sign to the Southern Kingdom of Judah and specifically to King Ahaz of the destruction of Syria and the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

Please understand this, it is important. Isaiah was telling the wicked King that no one would destroy the people of God or the royal line of David, they would remain. When the prophet said, **“The Lord shall give you a sign,”** he used a plural **“you”**, indicating that Isaiah was also speaking to the entire nation, telling them that God would not allow Rezin and Pekah, or anyone else, to destroy them and the line of David (Gen 49:10; 2 Sam 7:13). Even though the people came into the hands of Tiglath-Pileser, who destroyed the Northern Kingdom of Israel and overran Judah on four occasions, God preserved them just as He promised.

4. We also see these words as a prophecy of the Messiah, His virgin birth. Now as much as some like to argue against the virgin birth of Christ because of the Hebrew word Isaiah used, when the Septuagint translation came out in around 250 B. C., that is the Hebrew Scriptures translated into Greek, they translated the Hebrew word ALMAH into the Greek word PARTHENOS, which means virgin.

Not only that, but when we get to the New Testament the Holy Spirit once again makes things very clear. For in Matthew 1:23, a quote of Isaiah 7:14, he uses once again the Greek word PARTHENOS, which means virgin. Listen to what Matthew tells us and I think you will see how clear this is.

In Matthew chapter 1, beginning in verse 20, we read, **“But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.’ So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ‘Behold, the *virgin* shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which is translated, ‘God with us.’”** Matthew 1:20-23.

Here we see very clearly that Mary was a virgin, they had not been married yet, they were engaged you might say, and this was a sign, that the virgin would bring forth a son and they would call His name Jesus, which means “Yahweh is salvation.”

And if you really think I am stretching it, then don't listen to me, just listen to what the Jews said of Jesus and His birth. In John 8:41 we are told, ". . . 'Then they said to Him, 'We were not born of fornication; we have one Father - God.'"" In other words, Jesus was born or conceived out of wedlock. At least that is what they thought, but why? Because they did not believe the Scriptures, if they did then they would have seen what Isaiah said was speaking of the coming Messiah, that He would be virgin born!

And yes, His name is Jesus which means "Yahweh is salvation," but the reality of what Isaiah was speaking of and came to pass in Jesus was Immanuel or "God with us!" Jesus is never called Emmanuel in the Scriptures, it is not His name but it is a descriptive title of what His earthly ministry was all about - ***GOD WITH US!***

Now there are some who still try to deny the deity of Jesus Christ, they try and tell us that He is not Almighty God but "a god." Foolishness! Notice what it says, ***EMMANUEL - GOD WITH US!*** It does not say, "**A god with us!**" And what Isaiah spoke some 700 years earlier, had now come to pass as God became flesh and dwelt among us. It is as Paul said in I Timothy 3:16, "**And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh . . .**" God was born a Man in the person of Jesus Christ, our Emmanuel, God with us!

5. And Isaiah tells King Ahaz that before this child that is born reaches maturity, speaking of Isaiah's son Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, that Syrai and the Northern Kingdom of Israel will be done away with. What happened? Isaiah spoke this prophecy in 734 B. C. and within 2 years the Syrian's went into captivity. Then, around 10 years later, in 721 B. C. the Northern Kingdom of Israel went into captivity, just as God said.

VERSES 17-25

1. Why do we see this judgment upon King Ahaz and the Southern Kingdom of Judah? It was because of their wickedness, because of their refusal to turn to the Lord God, that is what brought this judgment upon them. And Isaiah tells Ahaz that the enemy will come upon the land like a swarm of insects.

What enemy is Isaiah speaking of? He is speaking specifically of the Assyrians, the ones that Ahaz looked to for help and they were going to be the ones oppressing them besides Egypt. The Assyrians would come upon them from the north and Egypt would come upon them from the south and in the middle Judah was being squeezed in. Now they would not be taken into captivity until the Babylonians came but this was a judgment, the nation was falling farther away from God and despite the chastening, they refused to turn.

And we see how the land was devastated, the men were shaved, which was shameful in that culture. The land that was once rich was going to become barren. Make no mistake about it, the judgment of God was devastating, and, like I have said, it will be ultimately fulfilled when the Babylonians sweep through the land.

But now, even in this time of judgment, when things are looking hopeless, God gives us hope. God will save a remnant to bring back, for God is with them. And that applies to us, no matter what we are going through, God is with us! Who or what are you going to trust in? There is only one that can truly help and that is the Lord! You see, He will meet our weakness and foolishness with His power and wisdom!

**ISAIAH 8****VERSES 1-4**

1. In this section we see more detail of what Isaiah was told in chapter 7. We start out by seeing God tell Isaiah to write on a large scroll. Why did he need to do that? Because it was a witness, it was for everyone to see these words, “Maher-Shalalp-Hash-Baz” which means “speed the spoil, hasten the booty.”

And as we have seen, Rezin King of Syria and Pekah King of the Northern Kingdom of Israel were plotting to invade Judah and place the son of Tabeel as their new King in the Southern Kingdom. That means Ahaz would be removed, they would most likely put him to death. Ahaz was fearful of what was going to happen and God is saying that it is not going to happen. Remember what we just read in Isaiah 7:7, “**thus says the Lord GOD: ‘It shall not stand, Nor shall it come to pass.’**”

And for Isaiah, he gathers two witnesses to write this down so no one can say that this was written after the fact, after the event took place!

2. Now in verse 3 we are told that Isaiah and his wife had a son and like I have said, I don't believe that this is the wife that bore his other children. His first wife might have died after she bore Shear-Jashub. And again, the reason I believe this is because of what took place in Isaiah 7:14 was a sign to Ahaz, that Isaiah's wife, who had not borne any children, who had not had sexual relations yet until she married Isaiah, conceived and bore a son. And this sign pointed to the fact that this army coming against them will be destroyed, Rezin King of Syria, and Pekah King of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, before Immanuel, a name they may have called Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, reached maturity. Many believe that it was before the age of 12 and that is exactly what did happen!

The prophecy back in Isaiah chapter 7 that was given to King Ahaz was spoken in 734 B. C. and by 732 B. C. the Syrians were destroyed by Assyria and the Northern areas of the Northern Kingdom were being attacked until finally in 721 B. C. the Northern Kingdom of Israel was completely taken into captivity by the Assyrians. Also keep in mind that by 669 B. C., 65 years after these words were spoken, Ephraim was completely wiped out, the Northern Kingdom of Israel ceased to exist, as Isaiah 7:8-9 tells us.

#### VERSES 5-8

1. God offers His people this gently flowing stream to meet their needs and they reject it, the people of the Northern Kingdom of Israel did not appreciate this but instead rejoiced in wicked leaders from Syria. And God says that He is going to send a flood upon them.



But it was not just the Northern Kingdom of Israel, it was also Judah and God was going to bring a flood of judgment upon them by the Assyrians also, even though they will not bring Judah into captivity. It is as one writer put it, “You were not willing to rest and accept the peaceful waters of Shiloah that represent the peace of God. You were afraid to drink of those waters. You were afraid to put your trust in Me, so I will tell you what is going to happen. I’m going to give you a river that will be nothing like the river of Shiloah. It will be a mighty river that will go out of its banks and completely engulf the land until everything is desolation in its place.”

2. Now there is a big controversy regarding the land of Israel, who it belongs to. Some argue that it belongs to the Jewish people; others say that it is Rome’s, and still others say it is the Palestinians. So whose land is it? In reality, none of them even though God did give the land to the Jewish people and that is where He will set up His Kingdom. But the reality is, as Isaiah tells us, “**Your land, O Immanuel.**” It is God’s land and thus, if it is His land then He can give it to whoever He wants and like I have said, He has given this land to the Jewish people!

3. Now here's the thing. By refusing what God had, Israel joined themselves to Syria and Judah to the Assyrians for protection. And instead of peace they found turmoil.

Now before we are too harsh on them, what about us? Do we refuse the life-giving water, the refreshing water that God has for our lives? Are we looking elsewhere for that peace in our lives? I will tell you this, apart from Christ, apart from resting in Him, you will never find it.

Jesus said, "**These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.**" John 16:33.

Our problem is that we go to the world for our peace and we don't find it and we get mad at God. Our peace will not be found in this world, only in Him. This world has tribulation for us and we can see that, thus, may we rest in Him, our Immanuel, God with us!

#### VERSES 9-10

1. These alliances they both made with man will not stand, they will be broken, they will be destroyed, and these alliances will eventually lead to Israel's and then Judah's downfall and destruction. God will use the Assyrian army to bring these nations of Syria and Israel down and they will also come down upon Judah but not destroy them. God's Word will come to pass no matter what man may say or what man may try to do to stop it. We can rest in that truth, that His promises will come to pass.

Let me ask you this question. Who is God with? Not in these alliances made with man, but with those who look to Almighty God, He is **THEIR** Immanuel!

I think the Bible is clear that He has a faithful remnant among the apostasy that was going on back then and the apostasy that we see growing today. He has those who will stand with Him. And thus, we know who we are and we know who He is and that breaks us and it drives us even closer to the Lord, the One who is with us. You see, I guess that was not the right question, “Who is God with.” I think the bigger question is, “Are you with Him?”

#### VERSES 11-15

1. Keep in mind that fear had caused the people to take their eyes off of God or not look to God but to look to these alliances that they made with man to help them. The people in general were all for these alliances. And God is encouraging Isaiah not to follow them.

What a great lesson for us to learn and apply to our lives. We see all these so-called Christian groups joining forces to do battle against the enemy, to see people get their needs met and in the long run they don't bring them to Jesus, it is a social gospel that is being proclaimed. We see this in the Seeker Friendly churches, the Purpose Driven churches, the Emerging churches, Youth Specialties, it is amazing and everyone wants you to join with them. I think we need to listen to the Lord on this one, as He told Isaiah, that we “**should not walk in the way of this people.**” Follow the Lord and not man, I don't care if they call themselves Christians, if they are not following the Lord, don't follow them.

But be careful, it is not always easy to do what is right, to do what God wants, especially when you are standing alone or in the minority, but it is what is best! It is much easier to be carried away by the liberal tides that are flowing strong than to go against those tides and do what God has said. But judgment will come upon them. It is better to obey the Lord than man and don't let the fear of man cause you to go against the Lord. The fear of the Lord should drive you to do what is right!

2. Another important point that I think we need to talk about is this idea of CONSPIRACIES! Isaiah is warned not to be taken in by all this talk of conspiracies and I think we need to heed that warning today. I see an increase among some Christians to talk and be fearful of this conspiracy and that conspiracy and yet the Lord tells us not to, “**. . . be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.**”

“The government is going to do this; the government is going to do that! They are listening to our conversations! They are watching us! They are following us! They are going to implant chips in us!” And the list goes on and there are all kinds of conspiracy theories out there. Are some right? I am sure some are but that is not the issue. The issue is this, do not “**. . . be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.**”

Because we fear the Lord and not man, what can man do to us? You see, many have lost that perspective and they are fearful of man and that may cause them to do something, make some kind of alliance with non-Christians, and God is not for that! We see that with the abortion issue, we see that with the Tea Party political group, joining together but not all Christian. Trust in the Lord, look to Him and don't get overwhelmed by all this because God is with us – He is our Immanuel! Instead of fearing conspiracies and threats, fear God.

3. In verses 13 through 15 we see what happens if you follow the Lord and if you don't follow the Lord. A lesson and a warning! If you follow Him He will become a sanctuary for you. It speaks of a place of refuge from the battles that are going on around you. A place of rest, a place of comfort, a place where you will find peace and safety!

Now for those who turn from Him, they will be broken, taken into captivity. And Isaiah is speaking both to the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. These alliances they made will not stand but they will be the thing that breaks them, takes them into captivity.

### VERSES 16-18

1. What was the thing that set Isaiah and the remnant apart from those who turned from the Lord? They were not only focused upon the Lord but the truth of God set them apart, they trusted in the Word of God despite the circumstances they found themselves in.

For Isaiah, He was not going to let the outward circumstances, the ridicule of the people, distort his view of God and of God's promises to Him and the nation. He was going to treasure God's Words, and wait upon God, hope in the Lord! And please understand that when I say that Isaiah waited upon the Lord I am not speaking of inactivity. He was totally attentive to the Lord, focused on the Lord and ready to move as the Lord lead him. And remember, waiting upon the Lord is connected to His Word not apart from His Word!

2. Now we talked a little about this before and here in verse 18 we see the reason Isaiah named his children like he did. They were to be a sign to those around them of God and what He was doing. Isaiah means “The Lord saves” or “Yahweh saves.” This spoke of the attitude and hope Judah needed to have. His first son, Shear-Jashub means “a remnant shall return.” This spoke of the restoration God would eventually bring. And his next son is named, Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, which means “speed the spoil, hasten the booty.” This spoke of the coming attack on Syria, Israel, and Judah by Assyria.

Isaiah was called to a prophetic ministry and his children were used as a sign in those prophetic messages. In other words, “Look at us! We are the message!” How does that relate to us today? Interestingly enough, Paul quotes this verse in Hebrews when he said, **“For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying: ‘I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.’ And again: ‘I will put My trust in Him.’ And again: ‘Here am I and the children whom God has given Me.’”** Hebrews 2:11-13.

We need to apply this to our lives because just as much as Isaiah’s children were a living witness of the truth of God’s Word, so are we as God’s children! In I Peter 2:4-5 we are told, **“Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”**

We are living stones, we are representatives of Christ in this dark world and thus, we are to be shining for Him just as Isaiah and his children were in his day! For many people the only Bible they will ever read is you? What are you speaking to them about the God you serve? What are they reading?

VERSES 19-20

1. When I read this I just shake my head in amazement at how far God's people had fallen. Instead of going to the living God for comfort, direction, hope, and-so-on, they were going to the dead spirits, demons actually, to find out what they should do, to receive comfort and hope. How sad when a people have turned so far from God that they are now running to demons, the occult for help!

2. Now let me also say this. We are bringing this back into the church. Look at the Roman Catholic Church and how they prey to dead saints, have visitations of Mary all over the world, they encourage loved ones to speak to those in their family that have died. And you may not see it as a big deal, but God does and He condemned His people in Isaiah's day for doing it and He is doing the same today!

We see that in Protestant churches that people getting involved in this. From speaking to their dead loved ones to going to psychics, palm readers, tarot cards and-so-on. Let me share this article with you to show you what I mean regarding Christians seeking the dead for comfort, hope and-so-on. In this article called "Visions of Deceased Loved Ones" there are a few stories of how God brought back their dead relatives to talk with them. We are told,

1. I recently experienced a friends' death back around Thanksgiving time (November, 2009). Her 25 year old cerebral palsy disabled son just told me (February, 2010) that he had been crying for his mother, and asking God to help him, because he missed his mother.

At some point, the room became dark, and his mother appeared in glorious apparel. She then “read a letter” to him to comfort him, and tell him that she had to die, and leave him behind, so that he would learn to do things on his own.

She also advised him to return to a certain church campground where he had been before, where yearly revivals took place. He said when the vision was finished, he felt a tremendous peace.

2. When I was younger, and still living with my parents, my grandmother died. My mother had fallen asleep in the living room on the sofa. She awoke to see a figure in the hallway, dressed in a white nightgown. She ignored it because she thought it was me, up for some reason.

The figure went over to one of the pictures in the hallway and pointed to it. It then walked off.

She fell back asleep, until awakened by a phone call from my grandfather. My grandmother had gotten up in the middle of the night, fallen, and died.

When my mother went home to the funeral, she found money behind the picture frame in my grandmother’s hallway, just as the dream/vision indicated. My parents were able to buy a new car that they needed with the money.

- <http://heavenawaits.wordpress.com/visions-of-deceased-loved-ones/>

Now some would say I am being too harsh here, why wouldn’t God bring back our dead relative if we really missed them? One reason, **IMMANUEL!** God is with us and He wants us to look to Him for that comfort, for that hope and not the dead!



Some point to the fact that we do see this in the Old Testament. We find it in I Samuel chapter 28 as Saul visits a medium to find out what he is to do in battle. Now this is a very controversial section but I don't think it needs to be when you look at the rest of the Scriptures.

First of all, as this medium, we call her the witch of En Dor, but the reality is she was a medium that contacted the dead. And as King Saul goes to her and she does her work, all of a sudden here comes the prophet Samuel from the dead! Surprise, surprise!

Now did Samuel really come back from the dead to speak to Saul? I use to think he did but that would go against Scripture. You see, if God did bring Samuel up from the dead, why? In other words, God could have spoken to Saul or He could have sent a prophet to Saul.

Also, in I Chronicles 10:13-14 we are told, **“So Saul died for his unfaithfulness which he had committed against the Lord, because he did not keep the word of the Lord, and also because he consulted a medium for guidance. But he did not inquire of the Lord; therefore He killed him, and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.”** You see, if it was truly Samuel then Samuel would be speaking for the Lord and yet, here in I Chronicles it says that Saul did not inquire of the Lord! God was no longer speaking to Saul!

Folk's, Paul reminds us in II Corinthians 11:14, **“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.”** Do you see the deception that is out there and the only way to know the truth is to know God's Word for it will set you free from the lies, the deception that is out there!

One more verse and that is found in Luke chapter 16 in the story of the rich man and Lazarus. They are both in Hell, the rich man is on one side and Lazarus is in Abraham's bosom being comforted because he died in faith and the rich man died out of the faith and was tormented. And listen carefully to what this rich man says to Abraham in Luke 16:27-31, "**Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.'** And he said, '**No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'** But he said to him, '**If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'**"

The rich man wants Lazarus to come back from the dead and go and speak to his family and warn them. And you would think that would be good, but Abraham tells them that they have the Word of God and if they don't believe that then it won't matter if someone did come back from the dead. Now you can argue with me on that but think about it, Jesus came back from the dead and do people all believe in Him today? Absolutely not and it will be the Word of God, the Sword of the Spirit that will either draw them to the Lord or it will condemn them!

2. Now this leads us right into verse 20 of Isaiah chapter 8 which says, "**To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.**" If you are going to a church that is not teaching the Word of God, why are you? There is no light there, and I don't care how you slice it. What we read here is a rebuke from God to those who have moved outside His Word, for those that are receiving new revelations from God.

Listen to Paul's warning in I Timothy 4:1, "**Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.**" Thus, the only safe guard we have is a commitment to the Scriptures.

When you move away from God's Word you are moving into an area of darkness and that darkness is very dangerous because you don't know where you are going, you don't know where it will lead! And think about this. If someone is spiritually dead, there is no light in them, then verse 19 could also be speaking of them. How many Christians listen to those who are not saved, they are spiritually dead. They have not heeded the warning that was given here in Isaiah!

Spurgeon wrote, "Let us remember, as ministers of the Gospel, what M'Cheyne beautifully said; 'Depend upon it,' said he, 'it is God's Word not man's comment upon God's Word, that saves souls;' and I have marked, that if ever we have a conversion at any time, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the conversion is rather traceable to the text, or to some Scripture quoted in the sermon, than to any trite or original saying by the preacher. It is God's Word that breaks the fetters and sets the prisoner free, it is God's Word instrumentally that saves souls, and therefore let us bring everything to the touchstone." ***TO THE LAW AND TO THE TESTIMONY!***

3. Now what is the result of seeking the dead, of traveling down this road that is pitch black?

Let's read on and see!

VERSES 21-22

1. Make no mistake about it; the days ahead were going to be difficult. There was not only going to be a famine of the Word of God, but a physical famine also. And my how people turn when things get tough. They are mad at their King for getting them in this mess. They are mad at God even though they have not sought Him. You see, the reality here is they brought this upon themselves. God was chastening them with the desire that they would repent and turn to Him. Sadly they became angry with God and blamed Him instead of their own sinful behavior.

And the end result of them refusing to turn to Him, of refusing to repent was that **“they will be driven into darkness.”** Dark days are coming upon them for their sin but they can’t blame God, this is their choice!

2. As I close this evening, let me leave you with this to think about. If there is a disagreement between God’s Word and the word of the messenger, guess who is wrong? Hopefully this isn’t hard for you to figure out because the messenger is wrong. The Word judges the messenger; the messenger doesn’t judge the Word. That is the problem today, we have pastors and teachers that are judging the Word of God and telling us if that is true or not, what it means and their way of thinking is way off. Folks, walk in the light as He is in the light and you will not stumble in the darkness that is out there! ***TO THE LAW AND TO THE TESTIMONY!***