

Notes

Immanuel - God with Us (7:1–25)

- Isaiah 7-12 is often called “The Book of Immanuel” (7:14; 8:8,10). These chapters highlight God’s covenant faithfulness & point forward to the coming Messiah (7:14; 9:6-7). Isaiah looks forward to the Child born into a world of sin and conflict, who will reign in righteousness and peace.

1. The Threat Against Judah (7:1–2)

- The Syro-Ephraimite War (735–732 BC) - 2 Kings 16:5–8; 2 Chronicles 28:5–21. King Ahaz of Judah faced invasion from Rezin (Syria) and Pekah (Israel, Northern Kingdom). They sought to force Judah into their anti-Assyrian coalition. When Ahaz refused, they marched against Jerusalem with the goal of overthrowing him and installing a puppet king (v6). Though Jerusalem was not captured, Judah suffered severe losses (cf. 2 Chron 28).
- News of renewed attack shook Ahaz and the people (v2). Ahaz trembled & the nation trembled with him. Ahaz faced a pressing question: Whom would he trust? Instead of seeking the LORD, Ahaz appealed to Assyria for help (2 Kgs 16:7–8). It revealed his unbelief. Ahaz was pragmatic, but faithless. Isaiah calls us to be faithful, even when fearful.

2. Isaiah’s Message to a Fearful King (7:3–9)

- God sent Isaiah - accompanied by his son Shear-Jashub (“A Remnant Shall Return”) as an acted oracle - to meet Ahaz. Judgment would come, but God would preserve a remnant. Isaiah’s message was simple & direct: “*Take heed, and be quiet; fear not*” (v4). Sometimes faith requires action; sometimes faith requires restraint. Here, faith meant waiting upon God.
- What Ahaz saw as terrifying foes, God described as “*two tails of smoking firebrands*” - smouldering stubs already burning out.
 - Rezin was killed by Assyria (2 Kings 16:9).
 - Pekah was assassinated by Hoshea (2 Kings 15:30).Faith does not deny danger; it places danger under God’s sovereign authority. What overwhelms us does not overwhelm Him.
- Isaiah declared that the plot to remove Ahaz and install “the son of Tabeel” would fail. Human schemes cannot overturn divine purposes (Prov 19:21; Ps 33:10). Isaiah makes a subtle but powerful contrast: Syria has Rezin. Israel has Pekah. But Judah has the LORD. That is the decisive difference in every crisis. Nations may scheme, but God rules.

- Isaiah added a remarkable prophecy: within 65 years, Israel would cease to exist as a distinct people (v8). Samaria fell to Assyria in 722 BC (2 Kings 17:6). The Assyrians deported many Israelites and resettled the land with foreign populations of different languages and customs.
- Then came the decisive warning: If Ahaz would not stand firm in faith, he would not stand at all (v9). Security rests not on strategy but on faith. Sadly, Ahaz refused to trust God and appealed to Assyria instead. Assyria did defeat Syria but Judah became a vassal state. Often the real issue is: are we focused on the problem or the Problem Solver (Prov 3:5–6)?

3. The Sign of Immanuel (7:10–16)

- God invited Ahaz to ask for a sign to confirm His word and strengthen his faith. Ahaz refused under the guise of piety (Deut 6:16; Matt 4:7). Refusal was not humility; it was disobedience. There is a difference between demanding a sign in unbelief (Matt 12:38–39) and receiving a sign God graciously offers (Judg 6:36–40). Rather than confessing his unbelief, he cloaked rebellion in pious language. Isaiah confronted his false piety (v13).
- Though Ahaz refused a sign, God gave one: *“Behold, a virgin shall conceive... and shall call his name Immanuel”* (v14). The Hebrew word *almah* refers to a young woman of marriageable age and often implies virginity. The Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures) uses *parthenos*, the clear Greek term for “virgin,” and this translation predates the NT. Matthew 1:22–23 apply the prophecy of 7:14 directly to the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. Isaiah 7:14 is a clear OT testimony to Christ’s deity.
- Is the prophecy of v14 a single fulfilment in Christ or a double fulfilment, one in Ahaz’s lifetime and also a Messianic fulfilment? Two Main Views:
 - Single (Direct) Fulfilment: Isaiah 7:14 refers exclusively to Christ. The sign is supernatural and finds complete fulfilment only in the virgin birth of Jesus - born of the virgin Mary, conceived by the Holy Spirit. He is truly Immanuel (John 1:14).
 - God literally came among us - *“Butter and honey shall he eat.”*
 - The faithful Son of David perfectly obeyed - *“refuse the evil, and choose the good”* - whereas Ahaz failed.
 - Dual (Near–Far) Fulfilment: The prophecy had an immediate historical reference in Isaiah’s day. V16 indicates that before the child reached maturity, the two threatening kings would be removed. The immediate fulfilment involved the birth of a child in Isaiah’s time (possibly *Maher-*

shalal-hash-baz, son of Isaiah (8:3), or another royal child). The NT presents Christ as the ultimate realization of “God with us.”

- The NT leaves no doubt: the ultimate horizon of Isaiah 7:14 is Jesus Christ. The virgin birth is real. Jesus is the true Immanuel. Immanuel is a rebuke to unbelief, but a comfort to believers - a guarantee of covenant faithfulness. Even though Ahaz refused to trust, God’s faithfulness to the house of David remained unbroken. The greatest miracle is not merely the virgin conception, but the incarnation itself (John 1:14). Christianity rests upon this truth: God entered human history in a way only He could accomplish. Christ is the exact representation of God’s nature (Heb 1:1–3).

4. The Coming Assyrian Invasion (7:17–25)

- Because Ahaz rejected God’s offer, discipline followed (v17). Assyria - the nation Ahaz trusted would become God’s instrument of chastening (10.5). Foreign armies summoned:
 - The fly represents Egypt - numerous, irritating, and invasive.
 - The bee represents Assyria - organized, aggressive, capable of a deadly sting.
 Historically, Judah became a battleground between Egypt and Assyria. They would swarm over Judah. Ahaz thought he was manipulating geopolitics. Isaiah shows: God whistles - and empires move. Judgment was not accidental; it was covenantal discipline, emphasized by the threefold repetition: *“The LORD shall bring”* (v17), *“The LORD shall hiss”* (v18), and *“The LORD shall shave”* (v20).
- Assyria is called a “hired razor” (v20). The image conveys political humiliation. Ahaz had “hired” Assyria with silver and gold from the Temple treasury. Now that hired razor would humiliate him. The Assyrians were infamous for cruelty and psychological terror, publicly shaming conquered nations. What Ahaz purchased for safety became the instrument of shame.
- Economic collapse and desolation (vv21–25). The land itself would suffer. Once-fertile vineyards would become briars and thorns. Productive farms would be reduced to grazing land. The land once described as flowing with milk and honey is reduced to subsistence living. Ahaz gained temporary relief but invited lasting damage.
- Ahaz chose fear and human strength; Isaiah proclaimed faith and “God with us.” The God who ruled over Assyria still rules today. His word to anxious hearts remains: *“Take heed, and be quiet; fear not.”*