

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Isaiah: Jahweh Is Salvation

XII. God's Promising Sign Of Messiah's Miraculous Birth Amid His Peoples' Short-Term Crisis (Isaiah 7:10-16)

I. Introduction

- A. Not only leaders like Judah's king Ahaz, but God's people like Ahaz's subjects in Judah at times face humanly formidable threats to their welfare from opposing parties, cf. Isaiah 7:1-2.
- B. God throughout Scripture calls His people to trust Him to deliver them from what makes them afraid, and nowhere is this call more filled with hope than in Isaiah 7:10-16. We study this passage for edifying insight:

II. God's Promising Sign Of Messiah's Miraculous Birth Amid His Peoples' Short-Term Crisis, Isa. 7:10-16.

- A. We learned in our last study out of Isaiah 7:1-9 that God had promised to deliver Judah's king Ahaz from the threat of the Aram-Israel alliance to invade Judah and replace him with their own puppet king.
- B. To make this promise even more comforting to Ahaz, the prophet Isaiah was directed of God to have Ahaz ask for an attesting sign from the Lord, "whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights" (Isaiah 7:10-11 NIV), meaning God offered to do any miracle Ahaz suggested to bolster his faith!
- C. Ahaz refused to ask for a sign, piously claiming he would not put the Lord to the test (Isaiah 7:12) when in reality he was cloaking his unbelief in Isaiah's word and thus in God's offer of a sign, B. K. C., O. T., p. 1047.
- D. King Ahaz accordingly rejected God's messenger, Isaiah and the Lord Who sent him, but God in grace first chided Ahaz for testing not only Isaiah's patience, but for testing God's patience in rejecting His offer for a sign (Isaiah 7:13; *Ibid.*), and then the Lord graciously offered to give a sign of His own choice, Isaiah 7:14a.
- E. That sign would be that a "virgin" would be with child and bear a son, calling Him, "Immanuel," or "God with us," Isaiah 7:14 NIV, *ftn.* Some take this verse to predict *not only* Christ's virgin birth that occurred 700 years later as Matthew 1:18-23 claims, *but also* the birth of *another* child by *natural* means in *Ahaz's* day *in order to make the sign meaningful to king Ahaz* (J. A. Alexander, Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah, 1974, p. 166-173). However, a close study reveals that there was not such double prediction (as follows):
 - 1. By the word translated "virgin" in the NIV, had Isaiah meant any woman indiscriminately, wed or unwed, he could have used the word *na'arah*; had Isaiah meant either a virgin, a betrothed virgin or a married woman, he could have used the word *bethulah* and had he meant a child, he would have used *yaldah*, but that would have been inappropriate for Isaiah 7:14. (Edward J. Young, The Book of Isaiah, vol. I, p. 288)
 - 2. Instead of using any of these other words for "virgin," Isaiah used *'almah*, the **only** Hebrew word that means an "unmarried woman of marriageable age" (*Ibid.*, Young; *Ibid.*, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1048)
 - 3. Also, in this context, Isaiah could **not** mean she would be with child by way of *immorality*, for that would **not** make her being with child a reasonable sign from a holy God as Isaiah 7:14a holds it was.
 - 4. Isaiah thus foretold that an unwed woman would be with child while being morally upright, that she would thus be with child *miraculously*, and only Mary the mother of Jesus can fit this description, *Ibid.*, p. 289!
- F. Speaking of this Child, the Messiah, Jesus, Isaiah predicted (1) He would be born of a virgin, (2) He would be raised in a time of national hardship (curds and honey are plentiful when cows and goats have no young to nurse as many animals are dying, *Ibid.*, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 1047, 1049) and (3) while he was still a youth, the land of the Aram-Israel alliance would be laid waste, Isaiah 7:16 NIV; *Ibid.*, p. 1047.
- G. In history, in 3 years (*Ibid.*, p. 1048), Assyria had destroyed Damascus of Syria, laying waste its land, the land of the Aram-Israel alliance seen as a unit that Ahaz had so feared (*Ibid.*), and Christ was born 7 centuries later!
- H. One may wonder how Christ's birth 7 centuries later is a meaningful sign for Ahaz, but Isaiah views Jesus' conception, birth and early childhood as *itself consisting* of a *timeline* for the *timeline* of the *fall* of *Ahaz's foes*, *Ibid.* The time it would take from Christ's miraculous conception to His being of age humanly to make moral decisions, about 3 years, set the timeline for the fall of the Aram-Israel union in Ahaz's era, *Ibid.*
- I. This sign of Messiah's supernatural conception and birth sets the stage for all of Judah's later kings and people to take heart in the hope of Messiah's coming deliverance from all of her later dreadful foes, Isaiah 7:13a, 2!

Lesson: *Whether it be Ahaz in his era or any subsequent era, God has timelessly wanted His people to rely on Him to guard them from dreadful foes, especially as noted in the great deliverance wrought by His Son, Jesus Christ!*

Application: *(1) May we trust in God as our Deliverer from foes we greatly dread. (2) May we who look forward to Christ's return put our ultimate hope in His deliverance, and live for Him without fear in the hope of His return!*