

Main Scripture: Isaiah 7:10-14

Setting the context: Matthew 1:18-23

Message Title: "Jesus, God's GPS"

<sup>7</sup> Yet this is what the Sovereign LORD says:

" 'It will not take place,  
it will not happen,

<sup>8</sup> for the head of Aram is Damascus,  
and the head of Damascus is only Rezin.

Within sixty-five years

Ephraim will be too shattered to be a people.

<sup>9</sup> The head of Ephraim is Samaria,  
and the head of Samaria is only Remaliah's son.

If you do not stand firm in your faith,  
you will not stand at all.' "

<sup>10</sup> Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, <sup>11</sup> "Ask the LORD your  
God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the  
highest heights."

<sup>12</sup> But Ahaz said, "I will not ask; I will not put the LORD  
to the test."

<sup>13</sup> Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, you house of David! Is it  
not enough to try the patience of men? Will you try the  
patience of my God also? <sup>14</sup> Therefore the Lord himself  
will give you<sup>c</sup> a sign: The virgin will be with child and will  
give birth to a son, and<sup>d</sup> will call him Immanuel.<sup>e</sup>

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<sup>c</sup> The Hebrew is plural.

This passage from Isaiah teaches us three things:

1. ***The need for reassurance*** (7:1-2): The southern tribe of Judah is threatened with invasion by the northern ten tribes and Aram.
2. ***The nature of reassurance*** (7:3-9): God instructs Isaiah to assure Ahaz that this simply will not happen, for the enemy armies will soon be crushed and broken.
3. ***The negative response to reassurance*** (7:10-12)
  - a. The Lord's sign (7:10-11): God invites Ahaz to ask for any sign he might desire to validate Isaiah's promise.

Who was Ahaz?

**AHAZ** (Heb. *'āḥaz*, 'he has grasped'). 1. King of Judah (732-715 BC), son of Jotham. The name Ahaz is an abbreviated form of Jehoahaz. This is confirmed by an inscription of Tiglath-pileser III. (*Yauhazi*, see *ANET*, p. 282). His age at the time of his accession and the length of his reign (2 Ki. 16:2; 2 Ch. 28:1) both give rise to chronological problems (\**CHRONOLOGY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT*).

Early in his reign, Pekah, king of Israel, and Rezin, king of Syria, tried to force him to join their anti-Assyrian alliance. Failing in this, the allies invaded Judah (2 Ki. 16:5).

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<sup>d</sup> Masoretic Text; Dead Sea Scrolls *and he or and they*

<sup>e</sup> *Immanuel* means *God with us*.

Heb Hebrew

BC before Christ

*ANET* J. B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 1950; <sup>2</sup>1965; <sup>3</sup>1969

The Judaeans suffered heavy casualties and many were taken prisoner. The intervention of the prophet Oded secured the repatriation of the prisoners (2 Ch. 28:5-15). Isaiah sought vainly to encourage Ahaz at the height of the crisis to put his trust in Yahweh (Is. 7:1-12), but the faithless king preferred to appeal to Assyria for help.

The price of Assyrian aid, besides being a heavy drain on the exchequer, was a century of vassalage for Judah. The Philistines and the Edomites took advantage of Judah's weakened condition to make hostile incursions (2 Ch. 28:17-18).

These calamities are represented as divine judgment on Ahaz for his flagrant apostasy. He 'even burned his son as an offering,' encouraged corrupt worship of the high places, placed an Assyrian-type altar in the temple court, used the displaced Solomonic bronze altar for divination and closed the temple sanctuary (2 Ki. 16:3-4, 10-16; 2 Ch. 28:2-

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**Ahaz** ([Hebrew](#): אֲחָז, lit. "has held", an abbreviation of **Jehoahaz**, "God has held") was king of [Judah](#), and the son and successor of [Jotham](#)<sup>[1]</sup>. He took the throne at the age of twenty ([2 Kings](#) 16:2). [William F. Albright](#) has dated his reign to 735 BC-715 BC, while [E. R. Thiele](#) offers the dates 732 BC-716 BC. His reign is described in [2 Kings](#) 16; [Isaiah](#) 7-9; and [2 Chronicles](#) 28. He is one the kings mentioned in the [genealogy of Jesus](#) in the [Gospel of Matthew](#).

He is said to have given himself up to a life of wickedness, introducing many pagan and idolatrous customs (Isa. 8:19; 38:8; [2 Kings](#) 23:12). Perhaps his wickedest deed was sacrificing his own son, likely to [Rimmon](#); he also added an idolatrous altar into the

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<sup>1</sup>Wood, D. R. W. ; Marshall, I. Howard: *New Bible Dictionary*. 3rd ed. Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill. : InterVarsity Press, 1996, S. 20

Temple (II Kings 16). He ignored the remonstrances and warnings of the prophets [Isaiah](#), [Hosea](#), and [Micah](#), and appealed to [Tiglath-Pileser III](#), the king of [Assyria](#), for help against [Rezin](#), king of [Aram](#), and [Pekah](#), Prince of [Israel](#), who threatened [Jerusalem](#). This brought a great injury to his kingdom, and his own humiliating subjection to the Assyrians (2 Kings 16:7, 9; 15:29).

He died at the age of 35 (Isaiah 14:28), after reigning 16 years, and was succeeded by his son [Hezekiah](#). Because of his wickedness he was "not brought into the sepulchre of the kings."

#### Questions for Discussion and Reflection

1. What were the instructions given to Isaiah?
2. How did Ahaz respond to Isaiah's prophecy?
3. What was the plan Ahaz had in mind?
4. How are we like Ahaz in our relationship with God?
5. Do you believe in signs?
6. Do you agree that Jesus is a sign from God?
7. What is the miracle of Christmas for you?

Heavenly Father,  
Thank you for the greatest gift we could ever receive (our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!