



# Isaiah 7:1-16

## God’s Message for Ahaz ~ “God with Us”

All this fighting! Why can’t Israel and Judah just get along? In fact, things have gotten so bad between them that Israel has created a partnership with Ahaz, the king of Syria, to obey take the king if Judah in Jerusalem.

In the face of this impending alliance, God gives a message to Ahaz to calm him down. He is intimidated by the size of the Israel/Syrian army and is ready to retreat before the battle even starts. God sends a message to Ahaz telling him he has nothing to fear. God also gave him a sign that would give him courage to fight and not shrink back. But Ahaz rejected the sign because he thought it would say that he didn’t trust God enough to trust a sign.

When God gives a sign and it is rejected, He rarely just looks the other way. Yahweh would give a sign anyway. This would turn out to be a very important sign, not just to Israel, but to you and I as well. The sign was of a coming baby that would be born to a virgin. His name would be Immanuel, “God with us.”

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Notes	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p>Isaiah 7:1 When Ahaz, son of Jotham and grandson of Uzziah, was king of Judah, King Rezin of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah, the king of Israel, set out to attack Jerusalem. However, they were unable to carry out their plan.</p> <p><sup>2</sup> The news had come to the royal court of Judah: “Syria is allied with Israel against us!” So the hearts of the king and his people trembled with fear, like trees shaking in a storm.</p>	<p><b>a</b> 7:1 Ahaz was the king of Judah, whose capital was Jerusalem. He took the throne at the age of twenty and reigned sixteen years. He was a young leader facing his first major test as king. See 2 Kings 16. This section of Isaiah (chs. 7–11) is known as the “Book of Immanuel.”</p> <p><b>b</b> 7:1 Or “Aram,” which is modern-day Syria. Rezin means “wicked pleasure,” a picture of the life of the flesh.</p> <p><b>c</b> 7:1 Pekah means “open-eyed, seeing,” a picture of human reasoning. This unholy alliance of the two kings threatened to invade if King Ahaz did not agree to surrender. Two kings (two principalities), Rezin and Pekah, rose up against the king of Judah. The northern kingdom of Israel (Rezin) and Syria (Pekah) joined each other to overthrow Ahaz and put “the son of Tabeel” on the throne in his place. The pressure was on King Ahaz to join this united front against the Assyrian expansion.</p> <p><b>d</b> 7:1 This verse is a summary statement of what is unfolded in the following verses.”</p> <p>“7:2 Or “the house of David.”</p> <p><b>f</b> 7:2 Or “Ephraim,” a metonym for the entire ten tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel. They are collectively called “Ephraim,” for their first king (Jeroboam) was from that tribe (1 Kings 11:26).</p>	<p>Isaiah 7:1 During the reign of Ahaz, <b>a</b> the son of Jotham and grandson of Uzziah, two kings launched an attack against Jerusalem: Rezin, the king of Syria, <b>b</b> and Pekah, <b>c</b> the son of Remaliah, the king of Israel. But they failed to conquer it. <b>d</b></p> <p><sup>2</sup> When the royal court <b>e</b> was told that Syria had formed an alliance with the northern kingdom of Israel, <b>f</b> the heart of King Ahaz and all his people trembled with fear, like trees swaying in the wind.</p>

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Translation (TPT)	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p><sup>3</sup> And the LORD said to Isaiah, “Go out to meet Ahaz, you and Shear-jashub your son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the Washer’s Field. <sup>4</sup> And say to him, ‘Be careful, be quiet, do not fear, and do not let your heart be faint because of these two smoldering stumps of firebrands, at the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria and the son of Remaliah. <sup>5</sup> Because Syria, with Ephraim and the son of Remaliah, has devised evil against you, saying, <sup>6</sup> “Let us go up against Judah and terrify it, and let us conquer it for ourselves, and set up the son of Tabeel as king in the midst of it,” <sup>7</sup> thus says the Lord GOD:</p> <p>“It shall not stand, and it shall not come to pass. <sup>8</sup> For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin. And within sixty-five years Ephraim will be shattered from being a people. <sup>9</sup> And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is the son of Remaliah. If you are not firm in faith, you will not be firm at all.”</p> <p><sup>10</sup> Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz:</p> <p><sup>11</sup> “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” <sup>12</sup> But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” <sup>13</sup> And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup> Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name filmanuel.</p>	<p><b>h</b> 7:3 Ahaz was likely inspecting the city’s vulnerable water supply. It is good to be vulnerable and on the road to being purified and made ready for God to use “on the road to the Washer’s Field.” The heavenly Washer wants to cleanse our hearts from unbelief, hiding in false belief systems that close our hearts from a true work of the Spirit. God wants to make you an aqueduct or “channel” of the upper (heavenly) pool.</p> <p><b>i</b> 7:3 Or Shear-Jashub, which in Hebrew means “A remnant will return.” Isaiah was married and had at least two sons (8:1–4). Shear-Jashub was a walking oracle of hope, with a promise in his name: God will preserve a “holy seed” as a remnant (6:13).</p> <p><b>j</b> 7:4 Both Pekah and Rezin were dead within two years of their hostilities against Ahaz.</p> <p><b>k</b> 7:5 Or “Ephraim.”</p> <p><b>l</b> 7:8 Or “shattered and no longer a people.” Some scholars see this sentence as a scribal commentary that got merged into the text. M. Scott, “Isaiah 7:8,” ExpTim 38 (1926/1927), 525–26.</p> <p><b>m</b> 7:9 By implication, the head of Judah would be “David’s son, Ahaz. Notice that God sees a city as the head of a nation and the head of a city to be a human leader. This is the principle of the stronghold/strongman. If the chief city of a nation is taken, the nation will fall. If the chief leader/spirit in a city is taken, the city will fall. See Mark 3:27.</p> <p><b>n</b> 7:9 Or “If your faith does not hold, you will not be able to hold it together.” We must be willing to take God at his word and lay our fears to rest or we will be insecure, unstable, and unable to stand against our foes. Sadly, Ahaz did not heed the words of God and sought help instead from the king of Assyria, even using the gold of the temple to buy his favor (2 Kings 16:7–8). Ahaz was one of the worst of Judah’s kings, yet he had the living God standing ready to help him if he would turn back to the Lord.”</p> <p><b>o</b> 7:11 This would be a sign to Ahaz proving that God is trustworthy and can keep his word. God is willing to prove himself to Ahaz and to us.</p> <p><b>p</b> 7:11 Or “as deep as sheol or as high as heaven”; that is, something so outside human experience that only God can do it.</p> <p><b>q</b> 7:13 Or “men.” The Targum reads “prophet.</p>	<p><sup>3</sup> Then Yahweh spoke to Isaiah and said, “Go and meet with King Ahaz. You’ll find him on the road to the Washer’s Field <b>g</b> at the end of the aqueduct where it empties into the upper pool. <b>h</b> Take with you your son, whom you named a Remnant Will Return. <b>i</b> <sup>4</sup> Give him this message: ‘Stay calm! Be quiet and guard your heart! Don’t panic or be discouraged over these two smoldering stumps of firewood, because of the rage of Rezin and Aram the son of Remaliah. <b>j</b> <sup>5</sup> Syria has plotted with the northern kingdom of Israel <b>k</b> and the son of Remaliah to come against you. <sup>6</sup> They are saying, “We will attack Judah and cut off Jerusalem—we will terrorize and conquer it for ourselves and install the son of Tabeel as king!””</p> <p><sup>7</sup> Now hear what the Lord Yahweh says: “They will not succeed—it will never happen! <sup>8</sup> For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin. Sixty-five years from now the northern kingdom of Israel will be shattered, with nothing left of it. <b>l</b> <sup>9</sup> The head of the northern kingdom of Israel is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is the son Remaliah. <b>m</b> If you do not “stand firm in your faith, you will not be able to stand at all!” <b>n</b></p> <p><sup>10</sup> Again Lord Yahweh spoke to Ahaz <sup>11</sup> “Go ahead—ask for a sign from Yahweh, your God. <b>o</b> Ask for something big, so miraculous <b>p</b> that you will know only God did it!”</p> <p><sup>12</sup> Ahaz answered, “I will not ask. I won’t attempt to test the Lord Yahweh.”</p> <p><sup>13</sup> So Isaiah said, “Pay attention, family of David. It’s bad enough to try the patience of a prophet <b>q</b> but even worse when you try the patience of my God as well!</p>

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<p><sup>14</sup> Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.</p> <p><sup>15</sup> He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good.</p> <p><sup>16</sup> For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted.</p>	<p><b>r</b> 7:14 This is a double sign. There is the sign of the Virgin Mary and the virgin bride of Christ of the last days. See 2 Cor. 11:2.</p> <p><b>s</b> 7:14 Although the ambiguous Hebrew word for “virgin” (‘almah) is more often translated “a girl of marriageable age,” the context is God performing a miracle sign (v. 11). This sign is not merely for Ahaz but for the family (house, including descendants) of David. There is nothing miraculous about a young woman having a baby; it happens every day. However, the Septuagint translates this word as “virgin” here as well as in Matthew’s quotation for the virgin birth of the Messiah (Matt. 1:23). No child with a human father could be the fulfillment of Immanuel, “God among us.” However, some scholars view Isaiah’s other son, “Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz” (8:3), as the Immanuel referred to here.</p> <p><b>t</b> 7:14 Or “Immanu El (“God became one of us,” Matt. 1:23).” A new nature is about to be planted in the soil of humanity. Immanuel is a term used for this new creation life coming down out of heaven. It will begin as a man but will soon become a company of men and women. Immanuel is the partnership of heaven and earth, God and humanity.”</p> <p><b>u</b> 7:15 This coming “son” will be one who has the kingdom promises as his diet (John 4:32). Milk and honey represent the promised land, where God fulfills all of his promises. Jesus is the only one who has fulfilled the Father’s desires. Feeding on the promises enabled him to choose the right. He resisted temptation by means of the Word of God dwelling in him. Strength to reject evil comes from feeding on truth. See Matt. 4:11.</p> <p><b>v</b> 7:16 This prophecy was fulfilled when Assyria defeated first Syria (732 BC) and then the northern tribes of Israel (722 BC).</p>	<p><sup>14</sup> The Lord himself will give you a sign. <b>r</b> Behold—the virgin <b>s</b> will conceive and give birth to a son and will name him God Among Us. <b>t</b></p> <p><sup>15</sup> He will eat curdled milk and honey, <b>u</b> and he will know enough to refuse the evil and choose the good. <sup>16</sup> Yet even before that time comes for him to know good and evil, the lands of those two kings you dread will be deserted. <b>v</b></p>

## THE BIRTH OF IMMANUEL (CHAP. 7)

Isaiah prophesied about a Child to be born who in some way would relate to the nation’s deliverance. The birth of the Baby, to be named Immanuel, has great significance for the line of David.

### - The historical situation (7:1-2)

- 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.

#### - **The assurance that Judah would not be destroyed (7:3-9)**

- 7:3. God told Isaiah to go with his son ... to meet King Ahaz at the end of [Vol. 1, p. 1047] 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.
- 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.
- 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.

#### - **Ahaz's rejection of a sign (7:10-12)**

- 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.

#### - The Lord's response (7:13-25)

- 7:13. 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).
- 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). [Vol. 1, p. 1048] "Virgin," is 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 and in the title of Psalm 46. The child's name Immanuel means "God (is) with us."
  - 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 woman 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.
  - Within about three years (nine months for the pregnancy and two or three years until the boy would know the difference between good and evil) the alliance would be broken. It was broken in 732 B.C. when Tiglath-Pileser III destroyed Damascus. After Tiglath-Pileser had defeated Aram and put Rezin to death Ahaz went to Damascus to meet the Assyrian monarch (2 Kings 16:7-10). Ahaz liked an altar he saw in Damascus, and had a sketch of it drawn so a similar altar could be set up in Jerusalem. No wonder Isaiah and God were angry with Ahaz. Even after the alliance had been broken by Tiglath-Pileser Judah had no peace. Though Assyria did not defeat Judah, she had to pay Assyria a heavy tribute. Isaiah foretold the consequences of Ahaz's attitude (Isa. 7:17-25).

#### - **Messianic Prophecies in the Book of Isaiah**

- 1. He will be called before His birth to be God's servant (49:1).
- 2. He will be born of a virgin (7:14).
- 3. He will be a Descendant of Jesse and thus in the Davidic line (11:1, 10).
- 4. He will be empowered by the Holy Spirit (11:2; 42:1).
- 5. He will be gentle toward the weak (42:3).
- 6. He will be obedient to the Lord in His mission (50:4-9).
- 7. He will voluntarily submit to suffering (50:6; 53:7-8).
- 8. He will be rejected by Israel (49:7; 53:1, 3).
- 9. He will take on Himself the sins of the world (53:4-6, 10-12).
- 10. He will triumph over death (53:10).

- 11. He will be exalted (52:13; 53:12).
- 12. He will come to comfort Israel and to bring vengeance on the wicked (61:1-3).
- 13. He will manifest God's glory (49:3).
- 14. He will restore Israel spiritually to God (49:5) and physically to the land (49:8).
- 15. He will reign on David's throne (9:7).
- 16. He will bring joy to Israel (9:2).
- 17. He will make a New Covenant with Israel (42:6; 49:8-9).
- 18. He will be a light to the Gentiles (42:6; 49:6).
- 19. He will restore the nations (11:10).
- 20. He will be worshiped by Gentiles (49:7; 52:15).
- 21. He will govern the world (9:6).
- 22. He will judge in righteousness, justice and faithfulness (11:3-5; 42:1, 4).

**- Discussion Questions:**

1. Why do you think Judah and Israel had such a difficult time getting along? Do you think things would have been different if the Twelve Tribes had stayed together? Had they not split up, do you think they would still have gone into captivity in Babylon?
  
2. Ahaz refused the sign from the Lord regarding the attack from Israel—Syria because he felt he would be putting God to the test. Have you ever felt a tension between a “word” you have been given and trusting what the Word of God says?
  
3. Isaiah must have been a bit concerned for his own livelihood when Ahaz refused the sign from God. Have you ever had someone blatantly reject a word you were about to give them? What would you say to someone if God gave you a word for them, yet they were uncomfortable receiving it because they felt it would mean they weren't trusting God? Would you give it anyway?
  
4. When Isaiah prophesied about the child who would be born of a virgin, do you think he understood what he was prophesying? In general, do you think we are uncomfortable prophesying a word we don't quite understand?