



Isaiah 7:13-25

God with Us ~ The Whistler ~ The Razor

Sorry for the glaring omission a couple weeks ago. We inadvertently skipped over Chapter 7, verses 14-25. So, tonight we are going back to look at that section of Isaiah in depth. To give the text a bit more context, we’re going to start in verse 13, even though we covered it a couple weeks ago. As the renowned French economist Fredric Bastiat said, “Repetition may not entertain, but it teaches.” Amen!

We’ll look again at the multi-layered prophetic word from Isaiah concerning Immanuel, “God with us.” There are three predominant views of the interpretation of these verses. Yet, there is obvious room for more investigation and interpretation. This section is followed by two specific revelations given to Isaiah that Brian Simmons refers to as “The Whistler” and “The Razor.” These illustrations communicate God’s desire to bring truth and correction to His people in very convincing ways. Yahweh is clear, decisive and thorough in His actions towards the people He loves, yet who have rejected Him and poorly chosen to serve other gods.

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Notes	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p>Isaiah 7:13 And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. ¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶ 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>q 7:13 Or “men.” The Targum reads “prophet.”</p> <p>r 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>s 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>t 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>u 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>v 7:16 This prophecy was fulfilled when Assyria defeated first Syria (732 BC) and then the northern tribes of Israel (722 BC).</p>	<p>Isaiah 7:13 So Isaiah said, “Pay attention, family of David. It’s bad enough to try the patience of a prophet q but even worse when you try the patience of my God as well! ¹⁴ The Lord himself will give you a sign. r Behold—the virgin s will conceive and give birth to a son and will name him God Among Us. t ¹⁵ He will eat curdled milk and honey, u and he will know enough to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶ Yet even before that time comes for him to know good and evil, the lands of those two kings you dread will be deserted. v</p>

English Standard (ESV)	Passion Translation (TPT)	Passion Translation (TPT)
<p>¹⁷ The LORD will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father’s house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria!</p> <p>¹⁸ In that day the LORD will whistle for the fly that is at the end of the streams of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria.</p> <p>¹⁹ And they will all come and settle in the steep ravines, and in the clefts of the rocks, and on all the thornbushes, and on all the pastures.</p> <p>²⁰ In that day the Lord will shave with a razor that is hired beyond the River—with the king of Assyria—the head and the hair of the feet, and it will sweep away the beard also.</p> <p>²¹ In that day a man will keep alive a young cow and two sheep, ²² and because of the abundance of milk that they give, he will eat curds, for everyone who is left in the land will eat curds and honey.</p> <p>²³ In that day every place where there used to be a thousand vines, worth a thousand shekels of silver, will become briars and thorns. ²⁴ With bow and arrows a man will come there, for all the land will be briars and thorns. ²⁵ And as for all the hills that used to be hoed with a hoe, you will not come there for fear of briars and thorns, but they will become a place where cattle are let loose and where sheep tread. (Is. 7:18–25 ESV)</p>	<p>w 7:18 Or “Niles,” a reference to the flooding of the Nile that brought swarms of dog flies, which are known to buzz like bees and whose bite is extremely painful.</p> <p>x 7:19 Or “every bush (possibly the stinkwood).” In this case, the flies and bees are the foreign warriors coming to invade. God’s whistle brought them into the land. Experts tell us that beekeepers can persuade bees to come out of their hives or return from the fields by whistling. Like bees gathering to sting (the hill country of Assyria was known for its bees), these warriors will assemble into every compromise. The steep ravines are a picture of the slippery slopes of darkness that bring “defeat into our hearts. These flies and bees are found where there is corruption and decay within the soul. Crevices of the rocks are where we hide our compromises. The thorn bushes are symbols of our flesh life, with its briars and offenses that do not yield to God (Matt. 13:7, 22). “Every stagnant pool” points us to the stagnant places in our lives that we have not allowed to be renewed and revived.</p> <p>y 7:20 Or “the river.” Ahaz had paid tribute and, in a sense, hired the king of Assyria to shave Syria and the northern kingdom. Instead, the king now serves God’s purposes in bringing judgment and devastation to Judah.</p> <p>z 7:20 Or “the hair of the feet.” In ancient times, the feet were used euphemistically for genitalia. The hair of the head points to the king (Ahaz); the legs, his soldiers; the beard, the officials of the land. Thus, “shaving” was a metaphor for the Lord stripping from them all that they had: their livelihoods, crops, and private ownership of their land. This supernatural “shaver” will be Assyria coming to cut off their pride, their glory, and their boasts. Often the victors would shave the heads of the vanquished. Mourners had their heads shaved (Isa. 15:2). So Judah will mourn over their ways as judgment falls. Shaving off the beard was an embarrassment to Hebrew men (2 Sam. 10:4–5).</p> <p>aa 7:23 See Song. 8:11–12.</p> <p>ab 7:23 See Isa. 5:1–7.</p>	<p>¹⁷ The Lord Yahweh is going to bring days of catastrophic trouble—on you, on your people, and on the whole royal court—not seen since the northern kingdom of Israel broke off from Judah. He is going to bring the king of Assyria with his great army!</p> <p>¹⁸ In that day, the Lord Yahweh will whistle and call for flies from Egypt’s lower streams. w He will whistle for bees from the land of Assyria, ¹⁹ and they will swarm down upon you and settle into the steep ravines, the crevices of the rocks, on every thorn bush and at every stagnant pool. x</p> <p>²⁰ In that day, the Lord will take his “razor,” the hired king of Assyria from beyond the Euphrates, y and he will shave your head, your legs, z and also your beard, leaving you ashamed and exposed!</p> <p>²¹ In that day, if a farmer keeps alive only one heifer and two goats, ²² they will give so much milk that he will have more than he needs. And everyone left in the land will have all the milk and honey they desire.</p> <p>²³ In that day, the fine vineyards, each with a thousand vines and worth a thousand pieces of silver, aa will be a wilderness overgrown with weeds, briars, and thorn bushes. ab ²⁴ People will hunt there with bow and arrow but will find nothing except thorn bushes and briars! ²⁵ The once-cultivated hillsides where vineyards used to grow will be completely overgrown with thorns so that people will be afraid to go there. It will become a place where cattle graze and sheep trample.”</p>

- **Bible Knowledge Commentary** ~ John A. Martin

• **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" translates hDmVIAo, 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 hDmVIAo 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).
- **7:17-19.** God said He would send the king of Assyria to Judah. These would be the worst enemy attacks since the 10 Northern tribes (here called Ephraim; see comments on v. 2) broke ... from the 2 Southern tribes in 931 B.C. From Ahaz's day on, Judah was troubled by the Assyrian Empire, to which it had to pay a large tribute. Ahaz called on Tiglath-Pileser to rescue him from Aram and Israel, which the Assyrian king gladly did. However, Tiglath-Pileser gave Ahaz trouble, not help (2 Chron. 28:20-21). Then in Hezekiah's reign Sennacherib, king of Assyria, invaded Judah, who had asked for help from Egypt (Isa. 30:1-5), and was about to take it when, in 701 B.C., God miraculously delivered Jerusalem (chaps. 36-37). God's hand was in all this for He would whistle for flies from Egypt (i.e., Egyptian soldiers were as numerous and bothersome as flies) and for bees from ... Assyria (i.e., Assyrian soldiers who were vicious as bees).
- **7:20-25.** Judah would experience deprivation and humiliation. Assyria, like a razor, would shave Judah's hair. In the ancient Near East shaving one's hair and beard was a sign of humiliation or deep distress (cf. Job 1:20; Isa. 15:2; Jer. 47:5; 48:37; Ezek. 7:18; Amos 8:10; Micah 1:16). The abundance of ... milk was a distressful factor, not a good one. With many animals dying, a farmer's young cow and two goats would have no young to nurse, and so the milk (and curds from it) would be plentiful for the people. Honey would also be abundant because wild flowers would grow in the desolate fields and bee swarms would be more plentiful. All this would fulfill the sign given Ahaz by Isaiah (Isa. 7:15): he will eat curds and honey. Also the farmers would have no crops because of the ruined farmland. The vineyards would be ruined along with the cultivated land, and only briars and thorns (mentioned three times in vv. 23-25) would grow. [Vol. 1, p. 1050] The land would be good only for grazing by cattle and sheep.
- In that day (v. 21) denotes a time of judgment on the nation of Judah. Often this phrase (as in 4:2, e.g.) is used eschatologically to refer to the time of extreme judgment in the Great Tribulation just before the Messiah will return to establish the millennial kingdom. But sometimes as here (7:21) it refers to a judgment to come on the nation soon. The near judgment pictures the extreme judgment to come at the end of the age.
- **Discussion Questions:**
1. Brian Simmons says in his notes on Is 7:14, "*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.*" Talk about the different ways this was accomplished through the incarnation of Jesus. How is this a "partnership?" What roll do we serve as "partners?"

2. In Is 7:17, Isaiah prophesies that God is going to “bring days of catastrophic trouble—on you, on your people, and on the whole royal court—not seen since the northern kingdom of Israel broke off from Judah. What was the “catastrophic trouble” He brought when Israel broke off from Judah? How does God feel when we initiate or instigate division in the Body of Christ?

3. Brian Simmons calls God “The Whisperer” when He calls flies and bees to invade His disobedient people. As you look at our nation in its present rebellious state, what might the Lord be “whispering for” that might cause us to turn our faces back to Him? Like in verse 20, what “razor” might the Lord be using to reveal that we are really “ashamed and exposed?”

4. A bit of good news comes in verse 22 when Isaiah prophesies that they will have “all the milk and honey they desire.” How might this promise by the Lord pertain to the contemporary church and God’s love, care and protection towards her?

5. Why do you think it is still so difficult for the people of God to receive discipline and correction from the Lord? We have the counsel of scripture and still we rebel at the thought that He may desire our lives to look different than they do. What can we do to train ourselves to be more responsive to the Holy Spirits’ voice when it comes to discipline?