

**Isaiah 7:1-9**  
**February 25, 2018**

**Open with Prayer**

**HOOK:**

Q: How do you know when you're not standing firm in your faith? [Let people come up with their own red flags]

Faith in God is easy when life is going well, but that's not always the case when the harder times come. I think all of us can agree that one of the ways we spiritually grow is when our faith gets tested. How strong is our faith when it feels like the world is against us? Or when prayer is going unanswered for so long? Or when an important relationship starts to deteriorate? It's times like these when we tend to feel God's "absence," though we know that's not true. We have His promise that He will never leave us or forsake us.

**Transition:** In our more difficult chapters of life, we can find ourselves tempted to misplace our trust when we "feel" weaker in our faith. We are going to see an example of this when we read about Ahaz, the king of Judah. In fact, we will read 2 Kings 16:5-9 first so that we understand where Ahaz placed his trust. You need to know this before we read Isaiah 7.

In the meantime, as we study chapter 7, I want us to be in tune with **HOW** we can stand firm in our faith. The answers are in this text. So please consider that **all of us can stand firm in our faith BY adhering to God's DIRECTIVES found in today's study.** First, let's read 2 Kings 16:5-9 for some background information. Let's begin.

**2 Kings 16:5-9**

Q: What was Ahaz dealing with? [Aram and Israel of the Northern Kingdom was fighting against Jerusalem.]

Q: So where did Ahaz place his trust? [The king of Assyria, Tiglath-Pileser]

Q: How did Ahaz secure that trust with the king of Assyria? [He paid the king of Assyria with silver and gold found in the temple of the Lord AND in the treasuries of the royal palace as a gift.]

**Transition:** So now we're ready to read Isaiah 7. We are keeping an eye out for God's DIRECTIVES on how to stand firm in our faith. Let's start with verses 1-9.

**BOOK (NIV 1984): Isaiah 7**

V.1:

- When Ahaz son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, was king of Judah, King Rezin of Aram (Syria) and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel marched up to fight against Jerusalem, but they could not overpower it.

V.2:

- Now the house of David was told, “Aram has allied itself with (or has set up camp in) Ephraim”; So the hearts of Ahaz and his people were shaken, as the trees of the forest are shaken by the wind.

V.3:

- Then the LORD said to Isaiah, “Go out, you and your son Shear-Jashub (means a remnant will return), to meet Ahaz at the end of the aqueduct of the Upper Pool, on the road to the Washerman’s Field.

V.4:

- Say to him, ‘**Be careful, keep calm** and **don’t be afraid. Do not lose heart** because of these two smoldering stubs of firewood—because of the fierce anger of Rezin and Aram and of the son of Remaliah.

V.5:

- Aram, Ephraim and Remaliah’s son have plotted your ruin, saying,

V.6:

- “Let us invade Judah; let us tear it apart and divide it among ourselves, and make the son of Tabeel king over it.”

V.7:

- Yet this is what the Sovereign LORD says: “It will not take place, it will not happen,

V.8:

- 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

V.9:

- 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.**” (all or nothing!)

### **Process Observations/Questions:**

**Q V.1-2:** Let’s set the scene. Who are the three kings and what nation do they represent?

- King Ahaz, the king of Judah [Southern Kingdom]
- King Rezin, the king of Aram (aka Syria) [Northern Kingdom]
- King Pekah, the king of Israel (aka Ephraim – Israel’s largest tribe) [Northern Kingdom]

Q: This won’t be as obvious, but why were Rezin and Pekah trying to “overpower Jerusalem?” [They were feeling threatened by Assyria, so they were trying to pressure Ahaz to form an alliance against Assyria.]

Q: Based on our 2 Kings reading, why did Ahaz refuse to join them? [He had made a treaty with Assyria. It was a political move on Ahaz’s part to protect Judah.]

Q: How are Ahaz and the people feeling once Aram and Israel attacked them? [They were shaken.]

### **Q V.3-9:**

Q V.3: How does the Lord intervene in this situation? [Go out, you and your son Shear-Jashub (means a remnant will return), to meet Ahaz at the end of the aqueduct of the Upper Pool]

Trivia Q: In light of the recent attack, why do you think Ahaz was found at the end of the aqueduct? [He was probably inspecting the water supply for Jerusalem and making sure it wasn't compromised in the recent attack and protect it from any future attacks.]

**(Significance of Isaiah's Son going with Isaiah to meet Ahaz at the Aqueduct: The presence of the child was a LIVING prophecy. The names of the prophet (Isaiah means *the LORD saves*) and his son (Shear-jashub means *a remnant will return*) were symbolic, indicating that God was fully capable of preserving His people through the crisis.)**

Q V.4: The Lord sees how shaken His people are, so He provides four specific DIRECTIVES in this verse. Let's tag them and then explore them:

- "Be careful" – What does the Lord mean by that? [Let people engage]
- "Stay calm" – How do we do that?! [Let people engage]
- "Don't be afraid" – Sounds good, but how do we stop being afraid? [Let people engage]
- "Don't lose heart" – How do you make sure you stay encouraged? [Let people engage]

Q V.4, 7: What does Isaiah tell Ahaz to help him "stay calm, not be afraid, and don't lose heart?" [In God's eyes, these two threatening kings were nothing but two smoldering stubs of firewood; It will not take place, it will not happen. As history shows, Isaiah spoke this prophecy in 734 B.C., and then Assyria defeated Syria in 732 B.C. These two kings died two years later at the hands of the Assyrians.]

Q V.9: The Sovereign Lord has one more thing for Isaiah to tell His people. What was it? [If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.]

Q: This reads as a conditional statement. Ahaz has his part, while God has His part. What do you like about this rule of faith? [Let people engage.]

Q: What do you learn about the Lord after reading these last six verses?

- V.3 Nothing goes unnoticed by God. When He sees His people in need, He sends help?!
- V.4 He shows us HOW to stand firm in our faith
- V.4 He expects us to **believe Him**
- V.7 God thwarts human plans that aren't aligned with His will.
- V.9 God sees when our faith is either weak or placed where it doesn't belong. And He gives us a roadmap on how to stand firm to help us.

### **LOOK:**

In order to stand firm in our faith, we need to adhere to God's directives on how to do that. We are told to "be careful; be calm; do not be afraid; don't lose heart; and "to ask the Lord for a sign." Stated more broadly, faith in God's promises is the only way to find peace in the midst of trouble. "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You" (Isaiah 26:3, NKJV)

### **Close in Prayer**

## **Commentaries for Today's Lesson:**

**Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *Be Comforted* (pp. 30–32). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

### **ISAIAH 7–12**

*God Is with Us!*

Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts” (8:18).

This statement by the Prophet Isaiah is a key to understanding the meaning of the events and prophecies in this section. In his previous messages, Isaiah focused on the *spiritual* needs of his people, but in this section he deals with the *political* situation and the failure of the leaders to trust the Lord. Four symbolic names are involved in Isaiah's messages, each of them with a very special meaning: Immanuel, Maher-shalal-hash-baz, Shear-jashub, and Isaiah.

#### **1. Immanuel: A message of hope (Isa. 7:1–9)**

*A promise to King Ahaz (Isa. 7:1–9).* These were perilous days for the nation of Judah. Assyria was growing stronger and threatening the smaller nations whose security depended on a very delicate political balance. Syria and Ephraim (the Northern Kingdom) tried to pressure Judah into an alliance against Assyria, but Ahaz refused to join them. Why? Because he had secretly made a treaty with Assyria! (2 Kings 16:5–9) The king was playing “power politics” instead of trusting in the power of God. Syria and Ephraim planned to overthrow Ahaz and put “the son of Tabeel” on the throne, and Ahaz was a frightened man.

The Lord commanded Isaiah to take his son Shear-jashub (“A remnant shall return”) and meet Ahaz as the king was inspecting the city's water system. Ahaz's heart had been wavering, and the hearts of his people had been shaking for fear (Isa. 7:2); but Isaiah came with a message of assurance: “Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted” (v. 4). How would Ahaz find this inner peace? By believing God's promise that Judah's enemies would be defeated. “If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established” (v. 9, NKJV). Faith in God's promises is the only way to find peace in the midst of trouble. “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You” (26:3, NKJV).

In God's eyes, the two threatening kings were nothing but “two smoldering stubs of firewood” (7:4, NIV), who would be off the scene very soon; and they both died two years later. Furthermore, within sixty-five years, Ephraim (Israel, the Northern Kingdom) would be gone forever. Isaiah spoke this prophecy in the year 734 B.C. Assyria defeated Syria in 732 B.C. and invaded Israel in 722 B.C. They deported many of the Jews and assimilated the rest by introducing Gentiles into the land; and by 669 B.C. (sixty-five years later), the nation no longer existed.

**Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament (Is 7–12)*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

### **ISAIAH 7–12**

There are two important principles to keep in mind as you study OT prophecy: (1) the prophets saw Christ's coming in humiliation and in glory, but did not see the period of time between these events—the church age (1 Peter 1:10–12); and (2) each prophecy grew out of a definite historical situation but looked beyond that present day to the future. We shall see these principles in the chapters before us now. The prophet is dealing with a definite crisis in Judah's history—the impending attack by Israel (the Northern Kingdom) and Syria—and he tells the nation exactly what will happen. Within these prophecies, Isaiah also announces the coming of the Messiah. Note the prophecies he gives.

## **I. Judah Will Be Delivered from Her Enemies (7:1–9)**

### *A. The situation (vv. 1–2).*

Assyria was growing stronger and threatening the other nations, so Israel and Syria joined forces to protect themselves. They wanted Judah to line up with them, but she would not. Actually, Ahaz was secretly bargaining with Assyria to protect him (2 Kings 16:1–9). The nation was frightened because Syria and Israel were about to attack and there seemed to be no way of escape.

### *B. The promise (vv. 3–9).*

God sent Isaiah and his son Shear-jashub (“The remnant shall return”) to meet King Ahaz while the ruler was inspecting the Jerusalem water supply. Isaiah gave the king a message of hope and confidence: “Don't be afraid of Syria and Israel, for within sixty-five years they will be broken.” This prophecy came true: Assyria defeated Syria (Damascus) in 732, and Israel (Ephraim, Samaria) in 721, within the allotted time given.

**Martin, J. A. (1985). Isaiah. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 1, pp. 1046–1047). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

## **1. 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.

### *a. 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). 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.

*b. 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 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 Washerwoman'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.

**Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith (p. 1002). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.**

**7:3–9** Isaiah promised that Ahaz, king of Judah, had nothing to fear even though the armies of Rezin of Aram (Syria) and Pekah of Israel were attacking Judah. On the other hand, 2 Ch 28:5–8 indicates that Judah was defeated, losing 120,000 soldiers with 200,000 people taken captive. Isaiah's prophecy was based on the condition that Ahaz would trust God (Is 7:9), which he failed to do. Thus the consequences of the war were more serious than what they would have been if Ahaz had acted in faith. Consideration of the Syro-Ephraimite War, on the whole, shows that while Judah lost some battles, it did not lose the war. Ahaz foolishly called on the king of Assyria, Tiglath-pileser III (2 Ch 28:16, 20).