

*Is. 6:10 "Render the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes dim, Lest they see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed."*

The Jews had ample time to repent and walk with God. Because they had failed to do so, and because God's foreknowledge allowed Him to see that they would continue to rebel against His authority, He would now make *the hearts of this people insensitive* to the truth. This is the same thing that God did with Pharaoh in the book of Exodus. Even before God sent Moses to Pharaoh, He knew Pharaoh would not allow the Hebrew people to depart from Egypt, *except under compulsion* (Exodus 3:19). Therefore, Pharaoh chose to rebel against God's authority even before anything is stated in the Scriptures concerning God hardening his heart. Yes, God did *harden (chazaq) Pharaoh's heart* on different occasions in the sense of giving Pharaoh the strength and courage to carry out what Pharaoh had already chosen to do (Exodus 4:21; 7:13, 22; 8:19; 9:12, 35; 10:20, 27; 11:10; 14:4, 8, 17). But *Pharaoh...hardened (made heavy—kabad) his own heart* in Exodus 7:14, 8:15, 9:7, and 9:34. It was not until Exodus 10:1 (after Pharaoh had been given numerous opportunities to repent and change his ways) that God *hardened (made heavy—kabad) Pharaoh's heart*; and even then it was for the purpose of using *Pharaoh* to drive Israel out of Egypt to His glory—not to prevent him from repenting and walking in the truth.

***Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may perform these signs of Mine among them, and that you may tell in the hearing of your son, and of your grandson, how I made a mockery of the Egyptians, and how I performed My signs among them; that you may know that I am the LORD." (Exodus 10:1-2)***

Nowhere in the book of Exodus does it say that God hardened Pharaoh's heart in such a way that he lacked opportunity to obey. Consequently, Pharaoh was not programmed (by God) for destruction before or during his stay on the earth, but rather was rejected by God because of his own choices made by his own will after arriving on the earth. (The notes associated with Isaiah 63:17 tie in well here.)

It is interesting that Paul quotes Isaiah 6:10 in Acts 28:27, applying his situation with the Jews in Rome to what Isaiah faced in his day with the same:

***For the heart of this people has become dull, And with their ears they scarcely hear, And they have closed their eyes; Lest they should see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart and return, And I should heal them." (Acts 28:27)***

Paul realized that God was unable to *heal* the nation because they had chosen for themselves to reject the truth.

*Is. 6:11 Then I said, "Lord, how long?" And He answered, "Until cities are devastated and without inhabitant, Houses are without people, And the land is utterly desolate,*

Notice Isaiah's response—"Lord, how long?" Knowing that his message would be rejected, Isaiah asked *how long* he was to speak to the southern kingdom. God's response was, "*Until cities are devastated and without inhabitant, Houses are without people, And the land is utterly desolate.*" Even though the Babylonians burned Jerusalem and the temple in 586 BC, what God states in verses 10 and 11 was fulfilled to the greatest degree in 70 AD when Titus, a Roman

general, overthrew Jerusalem. Over one million Jews lost their lives in the conflict. Note: It is interesting that the city of Rome was born in the year that King Uzziah died.

*Is. 6:12 "The Lord has removed men far away, And the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.*

This too was fulfilled to the greatest degree in 70 AD, for the inhabitants (those who were not slaughtered) were *removed*, and the majority *of the...land* was unoccupied.

*Is. 6:13 "Yet there will be a tenth portion in it, And it will again be subject to burning, Like a terebinth or an oak Whose stump remains when it is felled. The holy seed is its stump."*

This verse points to the return of the Jews to their homeland after the judgment of 70 AD, the first worldwide regathering that began in 1948—the year that Israel became a state. The regathering taking place today, a regathering in unbelief, is what, “*Yet there will be a tenth portion in it,*” makes reference. Therefore, many Jews presently in the holy land do not worship Jehovah. During the Tribulation (which will occur at some point in the future) the Jews will again be driven out (the land *will again be subject to burning*), but after a *second* worldwide regathering (Isaiah 11:11-12), a regathering in belief, the nation will sprout from a *stump* (from a lowly existence) and bear appropriate fruit during the Millennium. (The notes associated with Isaiah 11:1 tie in well here.) Therefore, the first regathering taking place today is a regathering in unbelief. The second regathering will be a regathering in belief for blessing during the Millennium.

### Isaiah 7

Chapters 7-12 could be titled "The Book of *Immanuel*" because the name "*Immanuel*" is used twice in this portion of Isaiah (Isaiah 7:14; 8:8). The phrase, "*God is with us,*" the definition of the name "*Immanuel,*" is also used in Isaiah 8:10.

*Is. 7:1 Now it came about in the days of Ahaz, the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Aram and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to wage war against it, but could not conquer it.*

*Ahaz, the son of King Jotham, reigned from 735-715 BC and is addressed in 2 Kings 16:1-20, 17:1, and 2 Chronicles 28:1-27. He was a man who lacked faith and integrity; in fact, he was the most corrupt king who reigned during Isaiah's ministry. He did the unthinkable, for he combined the worship of Baal (which included the sacrifice of children) with the worship of the golden calf (which Jeroboam, the first king of the northern kingdom had instituted—1 Kings 12:25-29). He also allowed the high places to exist along with other abominable practices (2 Kings 16:1-4; 2 Chronicles 28:2-4).*

To understand the background that surrounds Isaiah 7, we must first know *that Rezin king of Aram (Syria) and Pekah (king of Israel) desired that Ahaz join them to fight against Assyria.* Assyria was becoming powerful enough that none of the smaller nations adjacent to her could stand. Therefore, *Rezin and Pekah, after seeing that they together were incapable of defeating Assyria, desired Ahaz's assistance. Ahaz refused, so they attacked Judah, Pekah coming against Jerusalem (he was unable to take it—2 Kings 16:5) and Rezin overthrowing Elath and removing the Jews to Damascus (the capital of Syria), thus closing off Judah's southern port (2 Kings 16:6; 2 Chronicles 28:5). Pekah failed to overthrow Jerusalem but did much harm to the southern kingdom of Judah (2 Chronicles 28:5-15). It was subsequent to this that Ahaz, rather than trust God, asked for Assyria's assistance (2 Kings 16:7-8; 2 Chronicles 28:16). When Pekah and Rezin discovered what had transpired, they felt their only alternative was to do away with Ahaz and the Davidic dynasty (all kings of the southern kingdom, good or evil, sat on the throne of King David). In fact, their desire was to establish the son of Tabeel as king in Judah (Isaiah 7:6), a king who would be sympathetic toward their cause. Consequently, instead of split up and attack different areas of the southern kingdom, as they had done previously, Rezin and Pekah would combine forces and come against Jerusalem alone. This aroused God's anger, for to have these two kings do away with the Davidic dynasty was totally out of the question. Why? God*

had promised that His *Son* (Jesus Christ) would be a part of this dynasty and *forever* sit on David's *throne* (1 Chronicles 17:10-14). God, therefore, even though displeased that *Ahaz* would place his trust in Assyria rather than His promises, sent Isaiah to *Ahaz* to encourage him by means of a *sign* (Isaiah 7:11). This background is essential if we are to properly interpret this chapter.

*Is. 7:2 When it was reported to the house of David, saying, "The Arameans have camped in Ephraim," his heart and the hearts of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake with the wind.*

As we have already learned, instead of trusting God to overthrow *Rezin* and *Pekah*, *Ahaz* placed his trust in *Assyria* (2 Kings 16:7-9). This act demonstrated a lack of faith, for had he relied on the details of the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:11-17; 1 Chronicles 17:10-14; Psalm 89:3-4, 19-37) he would have known that God's protection would have been more than sufficient. As is the case elsewhere in Scripture, those who opt out for the resources of the flesh, rather than the transcending power of God, always panic during times of distress (1 Samuel 17:1-11 is a perfect example). Therefore, when King *Ahaz* heard that *Pekah* and *Rezin* would jointly attack Jerusalem for the purpose of doing away with *the house of David*, he and the people lost *heart*.

*Is. 7:3 ¶ Then the Lord said to Isaiah, "Go out now to meet Ahaz, you and your son Shear-jashub, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, on the highway to the fuller's field,*

When God sent *Isaiah* to meet *Ahaz*, he was preparing for the attack from *Rezin* and *Pekah* by checking Jerusalem's main water source *at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, on the highway to the fuller's field*. This water source was located in the Kidron Valley, outside the city, and was called the *Gihon* Spring. It was situated *on the highway to the fuller's field*. Note: The *Gihon* Spring is a special place in the history of the nation, for it was there that *Solomon* was *anointed* as *king* over the united kingdom (1 Kings 1:33, 38, 45). King *Hezekiah*, who reigned after King *Ahaz*, rerouted the *water* from the *Gihon* Spring, causing it to empty into a *pool* inside Jerusalem. He did so by means of a tunnel, preventing the Assyrians from having an adequate water supply while besieging the city—2 Kings 20:20; 2 Chronicles 32: 3, 30. I have personally walked through this tunnel—what an experience!

Isaiah was to take along his *son*, *Shear-jashub*, who is a very large player in what unfolds here.

*Is. 7:4 and say to him, "Take care, and be calm, have no fear and do not be fainthearted because of these two stubs of smoldering firebrands, on account of the fierce anger of Rezin and Aram, and the son of Remaliah.*

Isaiah told *Ahaz* to *have no fear* because *Rezin* and *Pekah* were nothing more than *two stubs of smoldering firebrands* (they were *smoldering* but no longer flaming). Even though they had taken much of the territory of northern and southern Judah, they would not overthrow Jerusalem. Therefore, God encourages *Ahaz* to trust Him rather than Assyria.

*Is. 7:5 'Because Aram, with Ephraim and the son of Remaliah, has planned evil against you, saying,*

*Rezin and Pekah's evil plan is described in verse 6.*

*Is. 7:6 "Let us go up against Judah and terrorize it, and make for ourselves a breach in its walls, and set up the son of Tabeel as king in the midst of it,"*

Rezin and Pekah desired to conquer Jerusalem for the purpose of setting *the son of Tabeel* on the throne, thus establishing a new dynasty (the notes associated with Isaiah 7:1 give more details concerning this subject). This never happened, of course, but it is interesting that *Tabeel* is mentioned later in Jewish history (Ezra 4:7). Evidently some of his descendants gained prominence in Jerusalem while the Jews were in exile in Babylon. They, therefore, came against the Hebrew people when they returned to rebuild the *city* (read Ezra 4:7-22). Arnold Fruchtenbaum of Ariel Ministries teaches that Isaiah uses a play on words here by using the Hebrew word "*Tabeal*" (KJV) in Isaiah 7:6 (meaning "good for nothing"), the normal spelling being *Tabeel* (read Ezra 4:7), meaning "God is good." Isaiah was a master of the Hebrew language and does things similar to this throughout his book (the Introduction to this study adds much to what is addressed here).

*Is. 7:7 thus says the Lord God, "It shall not stand nor shall it come to pass.*

This plot to replace the Davidic dynasty with the dynasty of Tabeel would *not stand or come to pass*.

*Is. 7:8 "For the head of Aram is Damascus and the head of Damascus is Rezin (now within another 65 years Ephraim will be shattered, so that it is no longer a people),*

Even though *Rezin* was *head of Damascus*, he would not overthrow Jerusalem and become its leader. Also, *within another 65 years Ephraim* (the northern kingdom of Israel) would *no longer be a people*. This prophecy seems (on the surface) to be invalid, for it was given in the year 735 BC. Assyria actually overthrew the northern kingdom in 722-721 BC, a difference of 14 years—not 65. How then can this prophecy be interpreted without contradiction? Read 2Kings 17:22-24, for *Esarhaddon* (Ezra 4:2), who reigned over Assyria from 681 to 669, did what is described in 2Kings 17:22-24 in the year 670 BC, exactly *65 years* after Isaiah met with Ahab. He displaced the Jews and brought a hoard of Gentiles into the land, resulting in a new breed of people inhabiting the territory originally populated by Israel. As a result, those who had inhabited the northern kingdom were *no longer a people* (Isaiah 7:8). Note: During the Millennium the tribal territories of both the northern and southern kingdoms will once again be established (Ezekiel 48:1-35), and the remnant of Jews making up the nation will all be believers (Romans 11:26).

Note: Ashur-banipal, whom many believe to be Esarhaddon's son (who succeeded him on the throne of Assyria), is evidently *Osnappar* of Ezra 4:10. He completed the work his father had begun a year or so earlier by importing additional Gentiles into Samaria (read Ezra 4:10). His reign in Assyria began in 669 BC.

*Is. 7:9 and the head of Ephraim is Samaria and the head of Samaria is the son of Remaliah. If you will not believe, you surely shall not last."*

Pekah, *the son of Remaliah*, was *the head of Samaria*, but that was all he would be. In other words, he would be defeated in the short-term. If Ahaz would *not believe* he would *not last* as king over the southern kingdom. The converse was true as well. Had he believed he would have had a very successful reign. In other words, *without faith it is impossible to please* God (Hebrews 11:6). Somehow Ahaz needed to appropriate the promises of God rather than fear the intimidation of man.