

*Is. 7:10 ¶ Then the Lord spoke again to Ahaz, saying,*

The Lord *spoke again* through Isaiah *to Ahaz* in verses 11-25—and does He ever speak! Some of the most amazing prophecies in all of the Scriptures are given here.

*Is. 7:11 "Ask a sign for yourself from the Lord your God; make it deep as Sheol or high as heaven."*

As we continue through verse 25, we must follow the context of the words that God spoke to Ahaz. Sometimes He addressed events that would occur in Ahaz's day, at other times events that would occur in the distant future. One of the most important things to remember when studying any of the writing prophets (Isaiah through Malachi) is that God predicted both short and long-term prophecies through his spokesmen. The short-term prophecies, once fulfilled, validated the prophet's ministry and confirmed that the fulfillment of the long-term prophecies were certain. We must be sure, therefore, to jump timeframes when the prophet jumps timeframes. Otherwise the writing prophets make little sense. Note: The "Law of Double Reference" is a theological expression that points to those times when a writing prophet is speaking concerning one subject (event or person) in one timeframe and jumps, without warning, to a totally different timeframe. One such instance is Isaiah 9:2-3. Verse 2 addresses Christ's First Coming while verse 3 addresses His Second. A good working knowledge of the Scriptures allows one to recognize these "jumps" and, in the process, greatly enjoy the exactness of the prophet's words.

We must also note those times when God is speaking directly to Ahaz versus when He is speaking to the house of David as a whole. Otherwise, much of the significance of what is stated here is lost. You will understand what this means as we continue.

Although Ahaz was grossly deficient in the area of faith, God would give him any *sign* he desired (*deep as Sheol or high as heaven*) to prove His faithfulness to His original promise—that He would deliver Ahaz from Pekah and Rezin. The purpose of the sign was to have Ahaz realize his need for faith. After all, Ahaz was the ruler of God's people within Judah, and even though he was grossly ill-equipped to lead, God gave him every opportunity to be the man he needed to be to the southern kingdom. One thing was certain. He could never be such a man until he learned to view Jehovah as the God of the impossible—regardless of what came his way. Obviously, God was speaking directly to Ahaz rather than to the entire house of David as he spoke the words of Isaiah 7:11.

*Is. 7:12 But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, nor will I test the Lord!"*

Ahaz's response was not based on faith, for he took Deuteronomy 6:16 out of context to justify his unwillingness to accept God's offer. Deuteronomy 6:16 states, *You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.* But this did not apply here, for it was God who was encouraging Ahaz to ask for a sign. The reason Ahaz rejected this offer was that God would have to be trusted rather than the Assyrians, and Ahaz wanted no part of that.

*Is. 7:13 Then he said, "Listen now, O house of David! Is it too slight a thing for you to try the patience of men, that you will try the patience of my God as well?"*

Isaiah, all of a sudden, no longer makes statements relating to Ahaz alone; for he begins addressing the entire *house of David* (all the kings who sat on the throne of the southern kingdom were descendants of *David*, thus the phrase, "*house of David*"). Consequently, the sign was for

the purpose of encouraging the entire *house of David*, the sign being fulfilled in conjunction with the First Coming of the Messiah—an event which occurred long after Ahaz had died.

*Is. 7:14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.*

Remember that Isaiah was speaking to the house of David rather than to Ahaz. In fact, the word “you” in the phrase, “will give you a sign,” is in the plural—meaning it can be interpreted as “you all.” We can, consequently, read the first phrase of the verse as follows: *Therefore the Lord Himself will give you (all) a sign.* What good would it have done Ahaz to know of a *sign* that would occur some seven hundred years later? None! Isaiah, therefore, had to be speaking to the house of David rather than to Ahaz.

The *sign* was this: *a virgin will be with child and bear a son.* Consequently, Isaiah’s words cannot refer to someone who was already pregnant, for the conception itself is yet future. The word “*virgin*” comes from the Hebrew word “*almah*,” meaning, “young virgin.” It never refers to someone who is old or married. In the Septuagint (a translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek around 200 years before Christ’s birth) the Greek word “*parthenos*” is used for *virgin* in Isaiah 7:14, which in the society of that day meant strict virginity.

“*Almah*” is used only seven times in the Old Testament, six of which are listed in the following verses: Genesis 24:43; Exodus 2:8; Psalm 68:25; Proverbs 30:18-20; Song of Solomon 1:3; and Song of Solomon 6:8. In none of these verses, if studied in context, does the word “*almah*” make reference to woman who is married. Thus in Isaiah 7:14, the seventh and final usage of the word “*almah*” in the Old Testament, the word “*virgin*” can make reference to, not only a woman who is not married, but can point to strict virginity as well. It can never point to a married woman. Therefore, we either have a *virgin* birth or an illegitimate birth. How could an illegitimate birth serve as a sign when illegitimate births have been frequent throughout history? Also consider this. It was God who would be responsible for the woman becoming pregnant. If God would cause a married woman or an adulteress to bear a son, we have all kinds of ethical issues that are totally irreconcilable. Consequently, you either have a *virgin* birth or an illegitimate birth. The final nail in the coffin is this. Not only was Mary an unmarried woman (and a *virgin*) when Jesus was born, but she remained a *virgin* until some time after His birth. She, of course, did not remain a *virgin* for the duration of her lifetime, for she had other offspring through Joseph after Jesus’ birth (Matthew 13:55-56). Therefore, the birth of Jesus was as supernatural as supernatural can be. It could not have been man generated. In fact, no *virgin* birth, no Savior. It is that significant!

There are two other Hebrew words that are interpreted *virgin*. The first is “*bethulah*,” which does not always mean strict virginity (read Joel 1:8). By the way, the word “*bridegroom*” (NAS) in the last phrase of Joel 1:8 actually means “husband”, meaning that the verse is pointing to a previously married woman—a widow to be specific. The other word is “*naarah*,” which for sure does not point to strict virginity, for in Ruth 2:6 it makes reference to a *woman* who had been previously married, a very famous *woman* named Ruth.

We should understand the necessity of interpreting every word, of every phrase, of every verse, of every chapter, of every book of the Scriptures, in the context in which it is stated, realizing as well the importance of the historical setting as it applies to proper interpretation. Therefore, a few things must be considered as we look at just two words from Isaiah 7:14, the words being “*a virgin*” (as translated in most Bible versions), “*the virgin*” as translated in the original Hebrew language. Because the proper rendering is “*the virgin*” (because of the original language), and

not “a virgin,” we can know that the *sign* pointed to a particular *virgin*, *the virgin* who would bear a son. But to what *virgin* did it point since no *virgin*, in fact, no female of any kind, is mentioned in the previous verses of Isaiah 7? It had to be *the woman* of Genesis 3:15 who would bear a *seed* who would destroy Satan’s authority, the *woman* that the Old Testament believers had been watching for since the days of Adam and Eve. This *woman* would bear the *seed* who would be the Savior of the world, the Messiah—who we know today as Jesus *Christ* (Galatians 3:16). Consequently, what Isaiah states here had a tremendous impact on the minds of the people of his day. Not only were they to continue to look for *the woman* of Genesis 3:15 who would bear the *seed*, but the *woman* who would bear the *seed* and remain a *virgin* throughout her pregnancy and delivery. What a miracle! Thus Jesus’ lineage would be traced through *the woman* of Genesis 3:15 because no human male was involved in His conception. Therefore, God alone is the Father of the *seed*. He also names His *seed*...*Immanuel*—meaning “God with us.” From Scripture we understand that in every case where God gives a name to an individual, the name always points to that individual’s character. Obviously, Jesus was *God* incarnate (John 1:14; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:8), “God with us,” *Immanuel*.

Note: Jesus’ lineage through Mary is given in Luke 3 while Matthew, in Matthew 1, gives Jesus’ lineage through Joseph. Matthew does this to prove that it was impossible for Jesus to be Joseph’s son. Had Jesus been Joseph’s son He could not rule successfully, for *Jeconiah* (v.11), who is also *Coniah* of Jeremiah 22:24 and 28, could have no son *prosper* while *Sitting on the throne of David* (Jeremiah 22:24-30). Neither could Jesus have been Savior, for all who are born of earthly fathers are born with a sin *nature*, a sin *nature* that condemns a person before God (Ephesians 2:3) and must be eradicated through the cross (Romans 6:6; Romans 7:4; Galatians 2:20). Consequently, had Jesus been Joseph’s son, He would have been born with a sin nature and, therefore, condemned before the Father—even if He had lived a sinless life while being Joseph’s son. Believers should greatly appreciate the fact that the cross eradicates their sinful nature the moment they accept *Christ* (Romans 6:6, 7:4, Galatians 2:20).

This prophecy confirms that the house of David will still be in existence when *the virgin* has a son. Therefore, the house of David was more than secure in Ahaz’s day. Had Ahaz understood this truth he would have severed all ties with Assyria and entered into the most exciting adventure known to man, the adventure of faith. He refused, however, and reaped consequences greater than he could have ever imagined.

*Is. 7:15 "He will eat curds and honey at the time He knows enough to refuse evil and choose good.*

The *virgin* birth of verses 13 and 14, a *sign* that would occur in the distant future, was a *sign* to the house of David that the Davidic dynasty would prevail. God now needed to guarantee Ahaz that Pekah and Rezin would not prevail, and He did so by giving Ahaz a “sign” that would occur in the near future. Note: When Isaiah uses the word “you” in verses 15-17, he is using the singular *you* instead of the plural *you all*, thus he is again speaking to Ahaz rather than to the house of David.

*Is. 7:16 "For before the boy will know enough to refuse evil and choose good, the land whose two kings you dread will be forsaken.*

Isaiah used the definite article, “*the*,” to point to a particular *boy*, *the boy* being Isaiah’s son *Shear-jashub* first mentioned in Isaiah 7:3. As the *seed* of *the woman* of Genesis 3:15 (*Immanuel* of Isaiah 7:14) would be a *sign* to the house of David (Isaiah 7:14), *the boy* of Isaiah 7:16 (*Shear-jashub* of Isaiah 7:3) would be a “sign” to Ahaz. Before *Shear-jashub* would *know enough to*

*refuse evil and choose good*, Pekah and Rezin would die. *Pekah* was killed in 2 Kings 15:30 and *Rezin* in 2 Kings 16:9, fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy exactly as stated.

*Is. 7:17 "The Lord will bring on you, on your people, and on your father's house such days as have never come since the day that Ephraim separated from Judah, the king of Assyria."*

The Scriptures confirm that Ahaz reaped terrible consequences from refusing to listen to Isaiah's counsel. After the Assyrians had killed Rezin of Syria (thus destroying the coalition between Rezin and Pekah), they made the southern kingdom a subjugated people (2 Chronicles 28:20-21). *Hezekiah*, Ahaz's son, fell under this same oppression (Isaiah 36:1-2). In fact, Isaiah 7:17 predicted that none of the previous attacks by Judah's enemies were as severe as that which Assyria would inflict on the southern kingdom. In fulfillment of this prophecy, forty-six cities were taken by Assyria during the reign of King Hezekiah (the annals of Sennacherib, included in the notes associated with Isaiah 36:1, confirm this fact). *Jerusalem* would also be besieged by the *Assyrians*, as validated by Isaiah 36-37. Read Isaiah 36:1-2 and note that *King Hezekiah* stood on the same geographical location as Ahaz while being confronted by Assyrian aggression. *Hezekiah*, however, stood in faith, and *Jerusalem* was delivered. The notes associated with Isaiah 36-37, though long in nature, provide much detail as to what occurred here.

*Is. 7:18 And it will come about in that day, that the Lord will whistle for the fly that is in the remotest part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria.*

The explanation of this verse will be coupled with the notes associated with verse 19.

*Is. 7:19 And they will all come and settle on the steep ravines, on the ledges of the cliffs, on all the thorn bushes, and on all the watering places.*

A hoard of troops from *Assyria* and *Egypt* would settle in a major portion of the land of Judah for the purpose of doing battle. *Assyria* would win, as is confirmed on several occasions in the Scriptures (read verse 20 as an example).