

Pentwater Bible Church

Isaiah Message 15

March 24, 2019



Birth of the Virgin by Domenico Ghirlandaio Cir 1485–90

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Pentwater Bible Church

The Book of Isaiah

Message Fifteen

TRUSTING IN THE LORD

March 24, 2019

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Isaiah 7:1–16

And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it. ²And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart trembled, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the forest tremble with the wind.

³Then said Jehovah unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shear-jashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, in the highway of the fuller's field; ⁴and say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither let thy heart be faint, because of these two tails of smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria, and of the son of Remaliah. ⁵Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have purposed evil against thee, saying, ⁶Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set up a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeel; ⁷thus saith the Lord Jehovah, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass. ⁸For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken in pieces, so that it shall not be a people: ⁹and the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.

¹⁰And Jehovah spake again unto Ahaz, saying, ¹¹Ask thee a sign of Jehovah thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. ¹²But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt Jehovah. ¹³And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David: Is it a small thing for you to weary men, that ye will weary my God also? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. ¹⁵Butter and honey shall he eat, when he knoweth to refuse the evil, and choose the good. ¹⁶For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land whose two kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken (ASV, 1901).

THE UNHOLY ALLIANCE

Isaiah 7:1–2

And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it. ²And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart trembled, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the forest tremble with the wind (ASV, 1901).

JUDAH		ISRAEL	
Years (BC)	King	Years (BC)	King
931 - 914	Rehoboam	931 - 910	Jeroboam I
914 - 911	Abijah	910 - 909	Nadab
911 - 870	Asa	909 - 886	Baasha
870 - 845	Jehoshaphat	886 - 885	Elah
853 - 842	Jehoram	885 - 885	Zimri
842 - 841	Ahaziah	885 - 880	Tibni
841 - 835	Athaliah	885 - 874	Omri
835 - 795	Joash	874 - 853	Ahab
796 - 767	Amaziah	854 - 853	Ahaziah
789 - 737	Azariah	853 - 841	Joram
737 - 721	Jotham	841 - 813	Jehu
730 - 715	Ahaz	813 - 796	Jehoahaz
715 - 686	Hezekiah	798 - 782	Jehoash
697 - 642	Manasseh	792 - 751	Jeroboam II
642 - 640	Amon	751 - 750	Zachariach
640 - 609	Josiah	750 - 750	Shallum
609 - 609	Jehoahaz	750 - 740	Menahem
609 - 598	Jehoiakim	740 - 738	Pekahiah
608 - 598	Jehoiachin	738 - 718	Pekah
598 - 587	Zedekiah	718 - 709	Hoshea

This chapter contains the assurance from the Lord of the preservation of the Davidic line unto the appearance of the Messiah the Lord Jesus. The chapter begins identifying the rulers who were conspiring against each other as the Lord led them. Ahaz was the king in the southern kingdom of Judah, Pekah the king in the northern ten tribes of Israel and Rezin the king of adjacent Syria.

Solomon the last of the kings in the United Monarchy was told by God that he would lose the kingdom because of his idolatry by following other gods. He was led into this by his many pagan wives. He had 700 wives and 300 concubines and the many wives turned his heart away from the Lord (I Kings 1–8).

MAP OF CANAAN - TWELVE TRIBE PORTIONS



I Kings 11:9–13

⁹And Jehovah was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned away from Jehovah, the God of Israel, who had appeared unto him twice, ¹¹and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which Jehovah commanded. ¹²Jehovah said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant ¹²Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it, for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. ¹³Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but I will give one tribe to thy son, for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen (ASV, 1901).

After the civil war following Solomon's death in 931 B.C. his son Rehoboam assumed the throne. He did not follow in his father's manner of ruling. He forsook the wise counsel of the old men who had served Solomon and listened to the young inexperienced friends for advice on how to reign.

I Kings 12:6–11

⁶And king Rehoboam took counsel with the old men, that had stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, saying, What counsel give ye me to return answer to this people? ⁷And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever. ⁸But he forsook the counsel of the old men which they had given him, and took counsel with the young men that were grown up with him, that stood before him. ⁹And he said unto them, What counsel give ye, that we may return answer to this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke that thy father did put upon us lighter? ¹⁰And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou say unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou speak unto them, My little finger is thicker than my father's loins. ¹¹And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions (ASV, 1901).

They counseled him to be harder on the people than his father had been. This enabled Jeroboam to take the ten northern tribes and establish a new nation.

I Kings 12:25–33

²⁵Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the hill-country of Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and he went out from thence, and built Penuel. ²⁶And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now will the kingdom return to the house of David: ²⁷if this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem, then will the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah; and they will kill me, and return to Rehoboam king of Judah. ²⁸Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold; and he said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy

gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. ²⁹And he set the one in Beth-el, and the other put he in Dan. ³⁰And this thing became a sin; for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. ³¹And he made houses of high places, and made priests from among all the people, that were not of the sons of Levi. ³²And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he went up unto the altar; so did he in Beth-el, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Beth-el the priests of the high places that he had made. ³³And he went up unto the altar which he had made in Beth-el on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart: and he ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and went up unto the altar, to burn incense (ASV, 1901).

After a time had passed the southern kingdom of Judah had an evil king named Ahaz. Ahaz is characterized in the Bible as an evil man who participated in the most monstrous of idolatrous practices (2 Kings 16:3). Ahaz ignored any trust in the Lord for his circumstances and tried to get military help from Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria. This alliance produced religious and political outcomes that Ahaz did not expect. Ahaz surrendered to Assyrian domination. He even placed an altar made from a Syrian model in the temple (II Kings 16:11). Ahaz suffered the final humiliation of not being buried in the royal tombs (II Chronicles 28:27). He was a wicked King.

Pekah was the king in the northern kingdom and was equally wicked. He is named in the Isaiah passages as being the son of Remaliah. This designation was given here to reveal his usurpation of the throne from his predecessor Pekahiah who was not his father. Normally the throne passed from father to son. He was an officer in Pekahiah's army who became king in a bloody coup by murdering King Pekahiah (2 Kings 15:25). Ahaz on the other hand received his throne in the prescribed manner from his father and grandfather.

Rezin was the king of Syria during the reigns of Pekah in Israel and Ahaz in Judah. When Ahaz refused to join Rezin and Pekah in fighting against Assyria, Rezin persuaded Pekah to ally with him against Ahaz (II Kings 15:37; 16:5). Ahaz appealed for help to Tiglath-pileser of Assyria, who came against Rezin and Pekah and destroyed their kingdoms.

The northern ten tribal area is also referred to as Ephraim because the first northern king *Jeroboam built Shechem in the hill-country of Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and he went out from thence, and built Penuel (I Kings 12:25)*. It is also thought that he was originally from the tribe of Ephraim. Other books refer to the northern ten tribes as Ephraim (Jeremiah 31:9, Hosea 5:3).

Because Ahaz had plunged the southern kingdom into a spiritual low by the introduction of idolatry (II Chronicles 27:5–6) God influenced Rezin and Pekah to attack Judah. Even though Judah under Ahaz was militarily weak God protected them for the promises made to David regarding the Messiah (II Samuel 7). Upon hearing of the Syrio-Israel alliance Ahaz was terrified.

Isaiah 7:3–4

³Then said Jehovah unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shear-jashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, in the highway of the fuller's field; ⁴and say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither let thy heart be faint, because of these two tails of smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria, and of the son of Remaliah (ASV, 1901).

The Lord said to Isaiah *Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and take Shear-jashub thy son.* The prophet was in the city of Jerusalem, and Ahaz was not, as appears by the place where he was to meet him. Ahaz who was outside the city immediately returned to lead the defense of the capital Jerusalem. Isaiah now leaves Jerusalem at the Lord's leading and goes to the king. Along with his son he is instructed to not fear these two kings are really nothing more than the half-lit ends of fire pokers, half-burned off and completely burned out. They don't burn any more, but only still keep smoking. In other words, they can't hurt Judah and Ahaz. *Shear-jashub* Isaiah's son was given that name which means a remnant will return, symbolizing that fact that after the seventy-year Babylonian captivity a remnant will return.

GOD PROMISES VICTORY

Isaiah 7:5–9

⁵Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have purposed evil against thee, saying, ⁶Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set up a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeel; ⁷thus saith the Lord Jehovah, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass. ⁸For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken in pieces, so that it shall not be a people: ⁹and the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established (ASV, 1901).

Both of these men's lives would end soon. Just like firewood they would be burned up and turned to ash. Both men died two years later in 732 B.C. Both of them in alliance threatening to invade Judah. Their plan was to split it between the two conquering nations, and set up a puppet king who was the son of one called Tabeel. He is not specifically named but was one who would benefit them. With this victory they could eradicate the royal line of David. This would have, if possible, broken the Messianic line. In response to the threat God said the attack would not take place. The reason was that both of those nations were headed by mere men and as such not dependent upon the Lord. Interestingly Isaiah referred to Pekah by name only once in the first verse. The other times he called him "the son of Remaliah" or Remaliah's son emphasizing his unholy manner of seizing the throne in the northern kingdom. There is no way that Pekah and Rezin could change God's plans to bring His Messiah through the Davidic line.

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Then Isaiah is given the prophecy that within 65 years Israel would no longer even be a people because they would be broken in pieces. 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 (II Kings 17:24). However, in 669 many more foreigners were transferred to Samaria by Ashurbanipal (Ezra 4:10), king of Assyria (669–626). This “broken” Israel, made it impossible for her to reunite as a nation. This was one of the Assyrian’s mode of conquering so that the conquered people could not rise up against them.

When God said, “*If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established,*” He was essentially saying if you don’t believe me it is because you don’t trust Me. Ahaz was wicked, insecure and dishonest. As such he was always suspect of anything or anyone who would assuredly lie like him. By him not trusting the promise it would lead him to make an alliance with Assyria which made his position as king even more insecure (II Kings 16:7–18; II Chronicles 28:16, 20).

GOD PROMISES THE MESSIAH

Isaiah 7:10–16

¹⁰And Jehovah spake again unto Ahaz, saying, ¹¹Ask thee a sign of Jehovah thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. ¹²But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt Jehovah. ¹³And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David: Is it a small thing for you to weary men, that ye will weary my God also? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. ¹⁵Butter and honey shall he eat, when he knoweth to refuse the evil, and choose the good. ¹⁶For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land whose two kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken (ASV, 1901).

God now speaks directly to Ahaz and offers him a sign if he will ask for it. Ahaz’s refusal is a refusal of the way of faith. The Pharisees in the gospels “asked for a sign,” but would not have believed it even if they had received it. Gideon asked for a sign to strengthen his faith (Judges 6:37, 39), and got it, and because of it went to war confidently against the Midianites. Here, God Himself proposed to give a sign, and allowed Ahaz to choose what the sign should be. In this instance there was nothing wrong in accepting the offer. By saying ask in either in the depth, or in the height above, in other words ask *any* sign you want, either in hell or in heaven because nothing shall be refused. He then refuses it possible based upon the prohibitions in the Mosaic law (Exodus 17:7; Deuteronomy 6:16). But in doing so he was refusing to comply with a Divine invitation and it was therefore tempting God to refuse to comply with God’s request. God replies by asserting that Ahaz has not just refused but *rejected* God clearly demonstrating a lack of trust in Him. Ahaz’s rejection of God and what God might have to tell him is an indication of little faith in God. He is not really interested in trusting God, for he probably had already developed his own plan to put his trust in Assyria to deliver him from Syria and Israel. By Ahaz saying *I will not tempt Jehovah*; he is revealing his true attitude toward God. The unsaved will often disguise their unbelief with pious respect to Him in a show of exaggerated animation. Those who are unregenerate in order to be politically or socially correct will not trust God but pretend to by not offending Him or complying with their perception of what He wants of us. The Lord Jesus provided similar examples of this behavior for us.

Matthew 6: 1–9

¹Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. ²Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. ³But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: ⁴that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

⁵And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. ⁶But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. ⁷But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. ⁸Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him (KJV).

Now the Lord responds to Ahaz's refusal to ask for a sign with a magnificent one, the Messiah of Israel who is God indwelling flesh will be born of a virgin. This is assurance that the promise to bring the seed of the woman in the Garden of Eden will be fulfilled (Genesis 3:15). The Messianic line promised would not be broken. The Hebrew text does not simply say a virgin but says The Virgin. *Butter and honey shall he eat, when he knoweth to refuse the evil, and choose the good* as the Messiah Jesus no doubt did; since he was born in a land flowing with milk and honey, and in a time of plenty. Milk and honey were normal foods for infants then. It was also a time of relative peace because of the Roman Pax Romana. This phrase points at the place where, and the time when, the Messiah should be born, as well as expresses the truth of his human nature, and the manner of his upbringing. *When he knoweth to refuse the evil, and choose the good;* means not knowledge of good and bad food, but knowledge of moral good and evil. Finally, the Lord closes with additional assurance when He says, *"the land whose two kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken."* This is a promise that that the wicked king Ahaz will be delivered because the territory of the Syrian and Israelite kings will be destroyed. This near-term prophecy was confirmed with Tiglath-pileser's capture of Damascus in 732 B.C. and the killing of Rezin (II Kings 16:9). Pekah too, was slain about two years after this prophecy was given. Out of this region the messianic ruler would arise and give light to those who lived in a land of darkness. In 732 a palace conspiracy led by Hoshea plotted the assassination of Pekah. He was put to death in the coup d'état and the throne was usurped by Hoshea.

Next message: THE KING OF ASSYRIA WILL COME

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