

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

GOD WITH US

Isaiah 7:1-14

Keywords: Virgin birth, Christmas, Gospel, Birth of Christ

PowerPoint Presentation included: NONE

SermonAudio Blurb: In this Christmas message Pastor Henry seeks to teach on a well-known passage and establish it firmly in its setting. In doing so he seeks to show both the mercy of God and the judgment of God.

- I. Introduction.
 - A. There are three key Old Testament passages that predicted the birth of Jesus Christ.
 - B. Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; Micah 5:2. (A contemporary of Isaiah's)
 - 1. What stands out in each of these?
 - 2. They emphasize the coming of God to man.
 - 3. Or to put it a different way—the deity of the messiah.
 - C. And it is right here with that one of the key teachings of the Christian faith comes to the forefront.
 - 1. One way to know if one's faith or religion is true or not is if it affirms fully that Jesus Christ is God.
 - a. Not 'a god' like the JW.
 - b. Not one of many gods, like the Mormons.
 - c. Not godlike, like so many eastern religions.
 - d. But the one, true God.
 - 2. It is the difference between heaven and hell, salvation and destruction.
 - D. Isaiah 7:1-14.
- II. Historical setting.
 - A. Great national crisis, 600 years before Jesus was born.
 - B. King of Judah was Ahaz.
 - 1. Worthless and evil.

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2. During the height of Assyrian kingdom.
 3. Most of Israel had rejected God.
 4. Many believed that God had abandoned them.
- C. Much earlier—Israel split.
1. Rehoboam—Judah (2)
 2. Jeroboam—Israel (10)
 3. Rehoboam did foolish things.
 4. But the ordained will of God regarding the Temple, the priesthood, and the kingly line that was established by God was rejected by Israel/Jeroboam.
 - a. Every king of Israel was evil.
 - b. God never blesses sin.
 5. Part of what makes this important is that the Messiah/savior was to come from the line of King David, the grandfather of Rehoboam.
 6. The capital of Israel was Samaria.
 - a. This is where the Samaritans we read of in the New Testament came from.
 - (1) The people were not a people after God's heart.
 - (2) They quickly abandoned God and His Word and covenant.
 - (3) They became syncretic in their religion.
 - (4) Which is why the orthodox Jews in the days of Jesus despised them so much.
 - (5) For a Jew to look at a Samaritan was to look at a rebel.
 - b. It was known as Israel, Samaria, and Ephraim. It was the Northern Kingdom.
 - (1) In fact in the prophets, often when Israel is used it refers to this rebellious 10 tribes.

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- (2) Ephraim was where Jeroboam came from that tribe. Note Isaiah 7:2, 5, 8, 9, 17 says Ephraim.
- 7. The Southern Kingdom was made up of Judah and Benjamin.
 - a. Usually the Old Testament calls this kingdom as Judah.
 - b. Faithful to God and the Covenant.
 - c. Kept the kingly line of David.
 - d. Kept the Temple.
 - e. Keepers of the Covenant.
 - f. Kept the Priests and sacrifices.
 - g. This does not mean that the kings of Judah were godly.
 - (1) Most were just as bad as the Northern kingdom—Israel.
 - (2) When you read about Judah, usually it is speaking of both tribes—Judah and Benjamin.
- 8. These were rival kingdoms.
 - a. At times there was a kind of peace.
 - b. But other times they fought and made treaties with foreign kings against their brethren.
- D. Isaiah came on the scene in Judah.
 - 1. Isaiah 6:1 is where he came into his calling.
 - 2. Uzziah, the king will die this year.
 - a. Was a good king overall.
 - b. Made one major mistake, burning incense in the temple. The result was being struck with leprosy until he died.
 - c. This was another reminder of how those righteous and those following God were to obey. It is significant that many Jews did not suffer or die with their blatant idolatry and even desecration of the Temple and the reason simply may be that they made no real claim to love and follow YHWH.
 - 3. Followed by Jotham.

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- a. A good king as well.
 - b. 2 Chronicles 27:2 And he did right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Uzziah had done; however he did not enter the temple of the LORD. But the people continued acting corruptly.
4. After Jotham comes his son, Ahaz, and it is here that we find our passage in 7 is founded.
- a. An evil man, that defies true description.
 - b. 2 Kings 16:8 he gives a present to the king of Assyria by robbing all the treasures from the Temple—all for peace.
 - c. Here is how the bible describes him: 2 Chronicles 28:1-4 Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; and he did not do right in the sight of the LORD as David his father had done. 2 But he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel; he also made molten images for the Baals. 3 Moreover, he burned incense in the valley of Ben-hinnom, and burned his sons in fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had driven out before the sons of Israel. 4 And he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree.
 - d. This was a man who did everything in his power to worship anything and anyone but YHWH, the one true God!
- E. Fall of the kingdoms.
1. Israel—722 B.C.
 - a. Assyria is on its ascendancy at the time of Isaiah prophecy. It began its rise in 790 B.C.
 - b. Assyria reaches its peak in 664 B.C. when it overran Egypt. Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, will fall to Babylon in 612.
 - c. In 609 to 605 the Assyrian Empire is destroyed by the Babylonians.
 - d. But in 722 B.C. they conquered Israel.
 2. Judah—586 B.C.

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- a. Babylon which will take the southern kingdom captive in 586 B.C
- b. Isaiah anticipates both captivities and lives through the first one.

III. The message of Isaiah to Ahaz.

A. The setting (7:1-2).

1. Pekah (peekah) is the king of Israel—a wicked man.
 - a. He has made an alliance with Syria which was a neighboring nation.
 - b. The purpose was to help protect each other from the Assyrians who were on the march.
 - c. NASB calls Syria Aram, which was its original name. Its king was Rezin (raisin).
2. Meanwhile, Ahaz take a different approach.
 - a. He goes straight to Assyria and bargain with them for protection.
3. This makes Israel and Syria very angry so they decide to lay siege to Jerusalem as a payback.
 - a. This is where the riches from the Temple are given away as a bribe.
4. Notice the way Isaiah describes the reaction in vs 2.
 - a. What a wonderful, yet sad, word picture there.
 - b. It speaks of the great dread that came upon the people of Judah.
 - c. This people, so blessed by God had put their faith in everything but God. Now He was their enemy and they had no knowledge on how to be made right with Him.
 - d. And they had good reason to be afraid, they were much smaller than Israel and Syria.
5. In the midst of this time of great sin, treachery, rebellion and fear, God sends His prophet.

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- B. The promise (7:3-7).
1. God comes to Ahaz through Isaiah.
 - a. This is the way of God—seeking those who do not seek Him.
 - b. Shows grace to a wicked king.
 - c. Notice what is told to Isaiah—bring your son along with you.
 - (1) Shear-jashub (shey ar JAH shub).
 - (2) “A remnant shall return.”
 2. Vs 2 “reported to the house of David” in other words, though Ahaz had abandoned God, God had not abandoned the throne of David. Why?
 - a. 2 Samuel 7:13 "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.
 - b. Psalm 89:3-4 "I have made a covenant with My chosen; I have sworn to David My servant, 4 I will establish your seed forever, And build up your throne to all generations."
 - c. Psalm 89:28-37 "My lovingkindness I will keep for him forever, And My covenant shall be confirmed to him. 29 "So I will establish his descendants forever, And his throne as the days of heaven. 30 "If his sons forsake My law, And do not walk in My judgments, 31 If they violate My statutes, And do not keep My commandments, 32 Then I will visit their transgression with the rod, And their iniquity with stripes. 33 "But I will not break off My lovingkindness from him, Nor deal falsely in My faithfulness. 34 "My covenant I will not violate, Nor will I alter the utterance of My lips. 35 "Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David. 36 "His descendants shall endure forever, And his throne as the sun before Me. 37 "It shall be established forever like the moon, And the witness in the sky is faithful."
 - d. The Christmas story is all about God's faithfulness to that covenant.

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3. Notice how he describes Rezin and Pekah.
 - a. Again an excellent word picture.
 - b. This is a picture of two torches which are almost fully burnt out.
 - c. There is still some fire, but mostly just smoke.
 - d. God tells him not to fear, their plans shall not take place (4-7).
 - e. And if Ahaz would only see this through the eyes of faith in God, he would realize that they can be stamped out without an effort.
 - f. The real Matthew Henry says this, “The more we have an eye to God as a consuming fire the less reason we shall have to fear men.”
 4. Sadly, Ahaz would not believe.
- C. The Warning (7:8-9).
1. It is one thing to hear the word of God.
 2. It is another thing to believe it.
 3. Will Ahaz believe that Aram and Rezin are mere stubs?
 4. ESV has good translation in vs 9. “If you are not firm in faith, you will not be firm at all.”
 5. The warning is clear.
 6. Much like Joshua before entering the land. Whom are you going to serve? Make your decision here and now.
 7. What is also noteworthy is that this promise and warning is given to Ahaz even though he is not seeking it.
 - a. This is the way of God.
 - b. Comes to those who do not look for Him, want Him, care about Him.
 - c. Ahaz, like countless others, has not even thought of asking God about the terrible situation he finds himself in.

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- d. He brings a message of hope, of salvation, of reconciliation, of forgiveness.
- e. He calls people to believe His message.
- 8. But Ahaz was so hard-hearted that he could not and would not hear the good words from Isaiah.
 - a. This was a watershed moment for Ahaz.
 - b. A murderer of his own children. A mocker of God. An idolater in the greatest measure.
 - c. Given a chance to repent, to believe.
 - d. Salvation stands at his very doorstep and he turns away.
 - e. He does not hear words of good, but only burden.
 - f. So much like people of today, they hear, “Turn from your sin, turn and follow Jesus and you will have life.”
 - g. But they understand that to be, “lose your freedom, lose your joy, lose pleasure.”
- D. The Sign (7:10-14).
 - 1. Vs 10-11, invites Ahaz to ask for any sign he could choose to know if this is true!
 - a. What would you ask?
 - b. Amazing indication of the hard heart of Ahaz.
 - c. I suspect that Ahaz is like many people. He has money and reputation tied up in his politics. Maybe kickbacks with Assyria. Unknown, but he was not interested in what God had to say to him.
 - d. His trust is clear, and it did not include God.
 - 2. Vs 12, declines.
 - a. So religious sounding.
 - b. But so foolish and hypocritical.
 - c. He was testing God constantly in his sin and rebellion.

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- d. Much like in the prophecy of Malachi 3:10.
- e. What about you?
 - (1) Have you heard the gospel promises?
 - (2) How have you responded?
 - (3) Have you rejected them, mocked them, been bored by them?
 - (4) God stretches out his hand to rebellious people, offering them life and joy and they turn from it.
 - (5) Ahaz is alive and well in our land.
- 3. Vs 13, Isaiah is angered by the arrogance.
- 4. Vs 14, God gives the sign anyhow.
 - a. The sign was given, but he would never enjoy it or see it.
 - b. A virgin would bear a son, who shall be God in human flesh!
 - (1) The struggle of commentaries.
 - (2) The struggle is so often because there is an unbelief in the truthfulness of the Word of God.
 - (3) Why did he use the word Almah instead of the word Bethulah which can mean a maiden, meaning an unmarried women.
 - (4) First, because in the days of Israel, an unmarried woman was a virgin. Sex outside of marriage was an exception, not a rule.
 - (5) Second, when the Old Testament was translated into Greek, they used the word Parthenos for Almah, which always means virgin.
 - (6) Third, the real problem is that those who get all tied up on this simply will not let the bible interpret itself. Matthew 1:23 quotes this passage and used the word Parthenos.
- 5. Jesus was the fulfilment.

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- a. Matthew 1:23.
- b. Christmas is not about a baby.
- c. It is about God...
 - (1) Give gospel.
 - (2) He is the Creator of heaven and earth.
 - (3) He is the Holy One, hater of all sin.
 - (4) He is glorious in his absolute, unending power.
 - (5) He is LORD.
 - (6) And there is only one thing we owe Him that is proper.
 - (a) Our worship.
 - (b) To turn from our small, worthless idol—those things we think are needed to be happy.
 - (c) And to turn to the living God and follow him.

IV. Conclusion

- A. The mystery of this sign—how they must have puzzled over it.
 1. How words like Isaiah 9:6-7 only added to that puzzle. Isaiah 9:6-7 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. 7 There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore
 2. For some, these were words of life, where as these Israelites were led away into captivity, these words became an anchor of hope for many.
 - a. All was not lost.
 - b. God would come.
 - c. YHWH would make all things right.

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- d. God would be with us.
3. But when?
 - a. Hundreds of years pass. Generations come and go.
 - b. How the people must have cried, "How long O' Lord!"
 - (1) Yet our time is not God's time.
 - (2) Galatians chapter 4 tells us, "That in the fullness of time, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made unto the law." Exactly at the right moment in history Jesus Christ was born, at the right conflux of events, at the right strategic point in the history of man Jesus Christ arrived.
 - c. And even now, today, we wait for that day our Lord shall return.
 - (1) Not as a baby.
 - (2) Not in weakness and humility.
 - (3) But in glory and power.
 - (4) And many Christians who have given so much up that they might follow Him. So many who suffer greatly at the hands of Ahaz's. They cry, "How long O' Lord!"
 - (5) Let us wait and endure. Let us press on, fixing our eyes through faith upon the author and finisher of our faith, Jesus Christ.

Small Group Questions

- What stood out for you in this message? Where was there encouragement or conviction?
- How are you seeking to remove the Christmas story from sentimentalism and bring it to focus on our faithful God?