

A Trek Through Isaiah 07 - 7:1-17

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Is 7 - 12 Overview

Book structure

- In the first section about the King
- After Isaiah's atonement and commission.

Structure

- Darkness and Light in Judah 7:1 – 9:7
 - Judah's Moment of Decision 7:1-12
 - Divine Judgment 7:13 – 8:8
 - A Believing Remnant Amid An Unbelieving People 8:9-22
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Darkness and Light in Judah 7:1 - 9:7

Judah's Moment of Decision 7:1-12

Judah is in crisis

7:1-2 Now it happened 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. When it was told 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 before the wind.

- Assyria rising as a world power.
- Syria & Israel allied to resist Assyria; wanted Judah to join them.
- Syria & Israel began to attack Judah during the reign of Jotham (2 Ki 15:37).
- Attacks continued during the reign of his son Ahaz. Judah had already been defeated once by Syria and Israel.
 - 2Ch 28:5-8 So, Yahweh his God gave him into the hand of the king of Aram; and they struck him and carried away from him a great number of captives and brought them to Damascus. And he was also given into the hand of the king of Israel, who struck him with a great slaughter. Indeed, Pekah the son of Remaliah killed in Judah 120,000 in one day, all men of valor, because they had forsaken

Yahweh, the God of their fathers. And Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, killed Maaseiah the king's son and Azrikam the ruler of the house and Elkanah the second to the king. Then the sons of Israel carried away captive of their brothers 200,000 women, sons, and daughters; and they plundered also a great deal of spoil from them and brought the spoil to Samaria.

- Syria took many captives to Damascus.
- Israel killed 120,000 men; took 200,000 captives.
- 2Ch 28:9-11 But a prophet of Yahweh was there, whose name was Oded; and he went out before the army which came to Samaria and said to them, ...return the captives whom you carried away from your brothers, for the burning anger of Yahweh is against you."
- 2Ch 28:14-15 So the armed men left the captives and the plunder before the commanders and all the assembly. Then the men who were designated by name arose, took hold of the captives, and they clothed all their naked ones from the spoil; and they gave them clothes and sandals, fed them and gave them drink, anointed them with oil, led all their feeble ones on donkeys, and brought them to Jericho, the city of palm trees, to their brothers; then they returned to Samaria.
 - The prophet Oded prevailed upon Israel to release the captives.
- Now Ahaz receives word that Syria and Israel are preparing to attack again.
 - Have camped in. Heb nuach: to rest, settle down.
 - Not just word of the alliance, which was ten years old. Fresh news that was startling.
 - Perhaps as v19 "come and rest": Israel swarming with Syrian soldiers.
- The result is panic in the Judean court.
 - House of David. Ahaz and all his court.
 - Shook shook as the trees of the forest shake before the wind.
 - Heb nua: to shake, to stagger, to wander.
 - As Israel at Mt Sinai in Exo 20:18: Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled...

Yahweh speaks to Ahaz

He is warned about the real danger

7:3-6 Then Yahweh 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, to the highway of the fuller's field, and say to him, 'Take care and stay quiet, have no fear and do not be fainthearted because of these two stubs of smoldering firebrands, on account of the burning anger of Rezin and Aram and the son of Remaliah. 'Because Aram, with Ephraim and the son of Remaliah, has counseled evil against you, saying, "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,"

- Ahaz busy with preparations for defense; inspecting the city's water supply.

- Isaiah sent to him with the word of the LORD
 - Shear-Jashub.
 - "A remnant shall return"
 - Isaiah and his family a living object lesson.
 - Ahaz had already suffered defeat at the hands of Aram and Israel. Yahweh is reassuring him that He will perform His word: a remnant of the nation and the Davidic line will remain.
- Three warnings
 - Take care and stay quiet. Danger of acting rather than trusting.
 - MOTYER sees the second verb as subordinate to the first: be careful to be quiet.
 - Isaiah's counsel is to avoid rash action and wait for Yahweh.
 - Ps 131:2 But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me.
 - Quietness due to trust.
 - Ahaz has a choice; his choice will determine the course of the Davidic dynasty.
 - Have no fear. Danger of fearing man rather than fearing God.
 - Do not be fainthearted. Danger of being timid.
 - Josh 1:9 Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."
 - Two stubs of smoldering firebrands. All that is left of a once-blazing fire. Both Aram and Israel are in decline.
- The threat: 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
 - What is planned: to conquer Jerusalem and depose Ahaz. This would be the end of the Davidic dynasty
 - Yahweh knows what is planned

He is assured of the security to be found in Yahweh

Is 7:7-9 thus says Lord Yahweh: "It shall not stand, nor shall it happen. "For the head of Aram is Damascus and the head of Damascus is Rezin (now within another sixty-five years Ephraim will be shattered, so that it is no longer a people), and the head of Ephraim is Samaria and the head of Samaria is the son of Remaliah. ""

- Lord Yahweh. Sovereign
- It shall not stand, nor shall it happen. What the sovereign King says.
- Reasons for faith
 - Enemy capitals are mere cities.
 - Enemy rulers are mere men.
 - In 65y Ephraim will not even be a nation. Refers to the importation of foreign settlers by Assyria in 671 BC, which removed the possibility of resurrecting the northern kingdom.
 - Contrast Judah: capital is the city that Yahweh had chosen for Himself; ruler is the king of the Davidic covenant.

- 1 Ki 14:21 ...Jerusalem, the city which Yahweh had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put His name there.
- Ps 89:3-4 "I have cut a covenant with My chosen; I have sworn to David My servant, I will establish your seed forever And build up your throne from generation to generation." Selah.

He is challenged

7:9b If you do not establish your faith in Yahweh, you surely shall not be established.

- faith or fall.
- Faith in God removes fear
 - Pro 3:25-26 Do not be afraid of sudden dread Nor of the storm of the wicked when it comes; For Yahweh will be your confidence And will keep your foot from being caught.
- As Yahweh challenged Cain in Gen 4:7: "If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is lying at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must rule over it."
- Crisis of faith: would Ahaz trust God's word?

Yahweh speaks to Ahaz again

7:10-11 Then Yahweh spoke again to Ahaz, saying, "Ask a sign for yourself from Yahweh your God; make it deep as Sheol or high as heaven."

- God takes the initiative to speak to Ahaz a second time.
- Spoke again. Likely at a later time when the entire court was gathered.
- Ask. Gracious offer but also a command. To refuse is to disobey Yahweh.
- A sign. Judah's whole history was a sign of Yahweh's care for them. He had made it clear in His word that they were His chosen people. But He now offers Ahaz a sign just for him. If Ahaz had the smallest amount of faith in Yahweh, a sign would authenticate it.
 - As the demonic boy's father in Mk 9:24: "I do believe; help my unbelief."
- Yahweh your God. Isaiah is urging Ahaz to see Yahweh, the covenant God of Israel, as his God. But he will not.

Ahaz rejects Yahweh

7:12 But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not test Yahweh!"

- I will not ask.
 - With open eyes, Ahaz refuses.
 - He had already made up his mind to trust in politics rather than to trust in Yahweh.
 - 2Ki 16:7-11 So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, "I am your servant and your son; come up and save me from the hand of the king of Aram and from the hand of the king of Israel, who are rising up against me." Ahaz also took the silver and gold that was found in the house of Yahweh and in the treasuries of the king's house, and sent a gift to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria listened to him; and the king of Assyria went up against Damascus and seized it and took the people of it away into exile to Kir, and put

Rezin to death. Now King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria and saw the altar which was at Damascus; and King Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the likeness of the altar and its pattern, according to all its workmanship. So Urijah the priest built an altar; according to all that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus, thus Urijah the priest made it, before the coming of King Ahaz from Damascus.

- Allied with Assyria in politics and religion.
- Took silver and gold from the LORD's house to send a gift.
- Replaced the altar in the temple with one patterned after the altar in Damascus.
- Very sad that Ahaz entreats Assyria with gifts and submission to do what Assyria intended to do anyway.
- Here we see his calculating mind: If he received a sign in front of the whole court, he would have to act on it.
- I will not test Yahweh. Pretending piety.
 - Referring to Dt 6:16 You shall not put Yahweh your God to the test...
- The house of David has now turned completely away from Yahweh and rejected His covenant with them.
 - As Adam in Gen 4:6 ... and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.
 - Adam had experienced fellowship with Yahweh, and knew what He had commanded, yet he deliberately turned away and disobeyed.
- The human Davidic dynasty is now without hope. But Yahweh will accomplish His word.

Divine Judgment 7:13 – 8:8

A sign will be given

7:13-17 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? "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel. He will eat curds and honey in order that He will know to refuse evil and choose good. "For before the boy will know to refuse evil and choose good, the land whose two kings you dread will be forsaken. "Yahweh will bring on you, on your people, and on your father's house days which have never come since the day that Ephraim separated from Judah—the king of Assyria!"

- House of David. You is plural. Isaiah turns to speak to the court
- The Lord Himself will give you as sign. Ahaz had refused the offer of a sign to confirm his faith, now the sovereign Lord will give him a sign of judgment.
- Behold. Heb hinneh: announcement of a birth of great importance.
- Virgin.
 - Heb almah
 - Much controversy.

- Traditionally seen as a prophecy of the virgin birth.
- Disputed in modern times. Asserted that almah can mean a young woman, married/unmarried, good/bad, and that the prophecy refers to a woman of Ahaz' time. However, many attempts to identify the woman but no agreement.
- Points
 - A woman who is a virgin will bear a child
 - The definite article could refer to a particular woman who was well-known, but none is known. More likely, Isaiah is indicating a type of woman.
 - What type of woman? In Scripture, almah used for virgin, young woman. Never refers to a married woman. Almah is the only Heb word that can specifically mean an unmarried woman who is sexually mature but has not known a man.
 - Not a natural birth
 - Hebrew grammar has the noun as the subject of both verbs: The virgin will be with child and the virgin will bear a son.
 - The woman will be good.
 - Matthew refers this passage to the birth of the Messiah
 - Mat 1:22-23 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: (23) "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).
 - The context of Isaiah and of the whole Bible rules out an illegitimate birth.
 - An illegitimate birth would not have been out of the ordinary.
 - The birth will be significant
 - Known formula for announcing a significant birth.
 - The only episode of Ahaz' life recorded by Isaiah. The prophecy is Yahweh's response to the unbelief of the House of David.
 - 7:14 quoted by Matthew to refer to Jesus' birth.
- before the boy knows. Time span for the fulfillment of the prophecy. Perhaps 13y (Jewish age of accountability).
- two kings you dread. Ahaz feared them. Isaiah has said why there is no need to fear them
- Yahweh will bring on you...the king of Assyria!
 - God bringing Assyria. What Ahaz had desired. 2Ki 16:7 So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, "I am your servant and your son. Come up and rescue me from the hand of the king of Syria and from the hand of the king of Israel, who are attacking me."
 - A remnant will be preserved, but first Judah must be humbled.

My position

- 7:14 is a prophecy of the virgin birth.
- Does not refer to a child born during Ahaz' time.
- Isaiah uses the time for a child to grow to maturity as an illustration of the time before the coming judgment.
- Interim fulfillments
 - Aram and Israel were unsuccessful in conquering Jerusalem.
 - In the time it would take a child to reach the age of moral accountability (13y), Aram and Israel were overcome by Assyria.
 - Israel ceased to be a nation in 65y, when Assyria brought in foreign settlers.
 - Assyria invaded Judah, capturing all its fortified cities except Jerusalem. So much for Ahaz' political solution.

What could a believing Jew have learned from Isaiah's prophecy?

- Believing:
 - As Simeon in Lk 2:25: And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the comfort of Israel...
 - Righteous: followed the law of Moses
 - Devout: a man of faith
 - Waiting for the comfort of Israel
 - Sure that Yahweh is faithful and will deliver His people
 - Waiting expectantly for the promised Messiah
- From the prophecy
 - The virgin will be with child and bear a son
 - Not a natural birth: no human father, not descended from Adam, no sin nature, qualified to accomplish atonement.
 - Male child. Like the Deliverer Gen 3:15
 - Call His name Immanuel
 - Means "God with us"
 - Yahweh always intended to dwell with His people
 - Ex 25:8 referring to the tabernacle: "And let them make a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them.
 - 2 Ch 7:16 referring to the temple: "So now I have chosen and set this house apart as holy that My name may be there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.
 - However, their sin separated them from Him.
 - The Son is Yahweh's solution to the problem of sin. He will enable Yahweh to dwell with His people. If read literally, then He Himself is Yahweh with His people.
- From the context
 - Prophecy is Yahweh's reply to Ahaz' choice of apostasy
 - I will perform My word: a remnant of Judah will be preserved, Jerusalem will be preserved, the throne of David will be preserved.

- I will do it through a Son born to a virgin.
 - Isaiah is speaking the word of Yahweh. This son must be the Messiah.
- From the Scriptures
 - Much said about the Messiah.
 - OT books available: Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1&2 Samuel, part of 1&2 Kings, Obadiah, Joel, Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Psalms of David, Proverbs of Solomon, Isaiah 1 - 5.
 - Isaiah has already spoken about Him as The Branch of Yahweh (Is 4:2)
 - Regarding sin and salvation
 - All have sinned, starting with Adam (Gen 3 and following)
 - Sin separates from God (Gen 3 sent out from the Garden)
 - Atonement for sin requires the shedding of blood (Gen 3, Lev 17:9)
 - A sacrifice for sin must be perfect (Lev 4)
 - A substitute can atone for sin (Ex 12 the Passover, Lev 16 the scapegoat)
 - Yahweh will provide the substitute (Gen 22:8 offering of Isaac)
 - A Deliverer would come to defeat Satan (Gen 3)
 - The Redeemer will be a close relative (Ruth 4)
 - The Messiah will suffer, surrounded by enemies, be killed, be raised from the dead (Ps 22)
 - The Messiah will defeat death (Hos 13:14)
 - The Messiah will provide salvation for all mankind (Joel 2:32)
 - Regarding the throne of David
 - A scepter will arise from Judah (Num 24:17 Balaam's prophecy)
 - Yahweh will exalt His king (1 Sam 2:10)
 - A son of David will sit on his throne forever (2 Sam 7:13-16)
 - Regarding Zion
 - Yahweh will save Zion for His people to inhabit (Ps 69:35)
 - Yahweh's King will rule from Zion (Ps 110:2)
 - Zion will be lifted up above the whole world. Yahweh will reign there, and all nations will come to her to hear His word. (Is 2:2-4)
 - Zion is the city of life everlasting (Ps 133:3)
- It's unlikely that even believing Jews saw all this at the time. But they could get a glimmer of what Yahweh intended, and Isaiah will have much more to say about this son. Ahaz and his court persisted in their unbelief and ignored Isaiah's words.

References

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