

Scripture Reference: Isaiah 7:1-16

Date: December 2, 2012

Title: "YHWH is with Us"

Focus: God is near.

Intro:

1. It is implied by some and outright stated by others, that if God exists at all, He is distant both physically and relationally.
2. However, the repeated testimony of the Bible is a message of the nearness of *God*. That He is *with us*.

Body:

vv. 1-2; No Way Out, What Do I Do?

- This takes place during the period of the divided kingdom, Israel is in the north, Judah in the south.

Ahaz was king of Judah.

He was young and seen as a push over.

He was a faithless person. He rejected the covenant with YHWH and worshipped Baal, and later Assyrian gods. He even offered his two sons in pagan worship.

Rezin was king of Syria (Aram, Arameans - the territory and predecessors of the Syria and the Syrians).

Pekah was the King of Israel.

- The area including Israel, Syria, and Judah, was coming under the dominance of Assyria and its ruler, Tiglath-pileser III.
- Pekah and Rezin wanted to break free of Assyrian control. They wanted Ahaz to join forces in resisting Assyria.
- Ahaz wasn't inclined to go along, so Rezin and Pekah invaded Judah. As a result, Ahaz was frightened.
- In his rebellion and distress YHWH reaches out to offer assurance and direction. What does this tell us about God?

v. 3; God is a Source of Comfort (2 Cor. 1:3-4)

- At this stage, God directs Isaiah to speak with Ahaz.
- He is told to take his son, with him (This is the only mention of Isaiah's son.) Why?

His son's name was *Shear-yashub*, which means, "*a remnant shall return*."

Recognizing God's involvement in life, Hebrew practice was to give names conveying a message either about the person or from God to the nation.

Examples: Esau - "Hairy, red" - Gen 25:24-26 / Isaac - "He laughs" - Gen 17:17

- Isaiah's son's presence is an *unspoken* assurance that whatever happens, God will take care of

Judah.

- YHWH provides quiet testimony, as well as direct action.

vv. 4-16; A Promise Given

- Isaiah plainly tells Ahaz two things:

1. *"Take care and be calm, have no fear and do not be fainthearted because of these two stubs of smoldering firebrands."*

Rezin and Pekah were not a threat. They were a lot of smoke, but had little fire.

If Ahaz were willing to trust God and wait, eventually Judah would be secure. They would have to wait 65 years (v. 8).

If, Ahaz chose not believe the words of YHWH, Judah *"surely shall not last"* (v. 9).

- That was Ahaz's problem. He didn't want to wait or trust God. He wanted what he wanted, when he wanted it, as he thought it should be.

2. Ask YHWH for a sign (vv. 10-16)

As proof He could be trusted, YHWH asks Ahaz to test Him, to request a sign.

Feigning piety, Ahaz would have none of this.

Therefore, God provides one anyway. It would be:

1. A male child

2. He would be called Immanuel, "God is with us."

3. He would eat curds and honey (well nourished).

4. Unlike King Ahaz, He would know to refuse evil and choose good.

5. By 3 y/o he would choose good and refuse evil. Israel and Aram would be desolate and the threat would be gone (within three years).

God wanted to engage Ahaz in a personal encounter. He asked him to place his confidence in him, rather than the Assyrians as he was planning.

The essence of this narrative is the nearness of God; that He was with them.

Closing:

1. That God is not far away is what causes this account to resonate as a prophecy of Jesus.

2. Rebellion and distress cannot keep God from being near and reaching out. He is one who is with us.

3. The ultimate experience of this is the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.