

ISAIAH

Chapter 7:1-16

Introduction

It's good to be **established**. Often a business or a school or a Church will tout the year it was established in order to demonstrate that it is solid and trustworthy and reliable.

It's not restricted to *institutions*; we describe *individuals* this way as well. We speak of being established in our career or calling.

Christians are told repeatedly in the Bible both that God will establish you and that you should establish yourself:

1 Peter 5:10 ...may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle *you*.

James 5:8 You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

The verse in First Peter snuck-in a phrase that explains why it can be difficult to remain established. He said, "after you have suffered a while..." Suffering - what we might call the storms of life - can shake your foundations.

The people in Isaiah's day were described as being shaken by storms:

Isaiah 7:2 And it was told to the house of David, saying, "Syria's forces are deployed in Ephraim." So his heart and the heart of his people were moved **as the trees of the woods are moved with the wind**.

Instead of being shaken they should believe and be established:

Isaiah 7:9 "...If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established.""

Believe what? Two things are brought out in the text that you must believe. We'll organize our thoughts around them and see: #1 Believe The Message That God Is With Us And You Will Be Established, and #2 Believe The Messiah Is "God-With-Us" And You Will Be Established.

#1 Believe The Message That God Is With Us And You Will Be Established (v1-9)

When the winds of trouble start to blow through your life you see how established you really are.

The trouble could be anything; you'll have to think in terms of your own life and experiences. For the people of Isaiah's time the trouble was political.

Isaiah 7:1 Now it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, *that* Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to *make* war against it, but could not prevail against it.
Isaiah 7:2 And it was told to the house of David, saying, "Syria's forces are deployed in Ephraim." So his heart and the heart of his people were moved as the trees of the woods are moved with the wind.

These were perilous times. The nation of Israel was split into two separate and warring kingdoms. The northern kingdom consisted of ten tribes and was called Israel or "Ephraim," after the largest tribe; the southern kingdom consisted of two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, and was called "Judah."

Now we add Syria and Assyria to the mix. Assyria was growing as a world power and as a threat to smaller nations. Syria and Ephraim tried to pressure King Ahaz of Judah to join them in an alliance against Assyria. He refused because he had secretly made a treaty with Assyria! Now Syria and Ephraim were massing against Ahaz to invade Judah and "his heart and the heart of his people were moved as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind."

God sent Isaiah with a message for King Ahaz:

Isaiah 7:3 Then the LORD said to Isaiah, "Go out now to meet Ahaz, you and Shear-Jashub your son, at the end of the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller's Field,
Isaiah 7:4 and say to him: 'Take heed, and be quiet; do not fear or be fainthearted for these two stubs of smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria, and the son of Remaliah.
Isaiah 7:5 Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah have plotted evil against you, saying,
Isaiah 7:6 "Let us go up against Judah and trouble it, and let us make a gap in its wall for ourselves, and set a king over them, the son of Tabeal" -
Isaiah 7:7 thus says the Lord GOD: "It shall not stand, nor shall it come to pass.
Isaiah 7:8 For the head of Syria *is* Damascus, and the head of Damascus *is* Rezin. Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be broken, so *that it will not be* a people.

Isaiah 7:9 The head of Ephraim *is* Samaria, and the head of Samaria *is* Remaliah's son. If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established.'""

Ahaz was inspecting the city water system. God sent Isaiah to him with a message of hope that could establish his shaky heart. Essentially he told him that "God is with us" in this storm, so there is nothing to fear. The two kings who threatened Judah were nothing more than "stubs of smoking firebrands" - smoldering stubs of firewood - about to be permanently extinguished by God. Isaiah delivered this message in 734BC. Just two years later Assyria invaded and defeated Syria. Then, just twelve years later in 722BC, Assyria invaded and defeated Ephraim. Within sixty-five years, by 669BC, the northern kingdom no longer even existed.

God was going to accomplish these things regardless the response of Ahaz. Ahaz could go on being shaken; or he could be **established** by believing Isaiah's message.

Believing God's message is *always* the way to be established. For us the "message" is the Bible, the Word of God.

There are at least two things about the Word of God we can discover from Isaiah. One is the *message* itself; the other is the *meditations* on the message.

The message itself is the straightforward meaning of the text in its context. Isaiah flat-out told Ahaz what would and would not come to pass. The Bible is filled with straightforward, flat-out messages that can encourage us in the darkest of storms if we will believe them.

There are also meditations. For example: Isaiah's message was accompanied by his *son* and some *symbols*.

A meditation on his son Shear-Jashub reveals that his name means, *a remnant shall return*. Judah could not ultimately fall to its enemies because God had made unconditional promises that must be fulfilled.

Then there is the symbolism. Isaiah and his son met Ahaz "at the end of the aqueduct of the upper pool... on the highway to the Fuller's Field."

The "aqueduct" was the channel through which life-giving water flowed to satisfy the thirst of the people and provide their other needs. It's symbolic of the Spirit of God which flows through God's channel to satisfy your spiritual thirst. God's channel is Jesus Christ Who promised to send the Spirit as living water to your soul.

Isaiah mentions "the highway." The "highway" was an elevated path. Do a meditation on the word "highway" and you'll read:

Proverbs 16:17 The highway of the upright *is* to depart from evil; he who keeps his way preserves his soul.

Later Isaiah would write about the future kingdom of God on earth and say,

Isaiah 35:8 A highway shall be there, and a road, and it shall be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean shall not pass over it, but it *shall be* for others. Whoever walks the road, although a fool, shall not go astray.

The Spirit is given to lead you into a life of obedience and holiness to the Lord - to keep you on the "highway of the upright."

Then there is the meditation of the symbol of the Fuller's Field. This was the place people went to wash their clothing; it was the laundry. It is a picture of the washing of water by the Word of God as you apply it to your life.

The **message** to Ahaz was clear and it was made more meaningful by **meditating** on it. God is with us; who therefore can be against us? Not only would the storm pass, but Ahaz could be part of God's remnant, filled with the life-giving Spirit to satisfy his every need and make him holy as it cleansed him on a daily basis.

God has a message for you in your storms. God can be with you in them and through them. I said, "can be," because something must occur first. Before you can truly believe the message,

#2 Believe The Messiah Is "God-With-Us"
And You Will Be Established
(v10-16)

Ahaz was a wicked, unbelieving man:

2 Kings 16:3 But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel; indeed he made his son pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out from before the children of Israel.

2 Kings 16:4 And he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree.

It wasn't enough to believe the message. He must first believe the Messiah.

It's always that way! You must first believe in the Messiah before His message can establish you. Who is this Messiah?

Isaiah gave Ahaz one of the most important prophecies in the Bible. He told him that the Messiah would be "Immanuel," *God-With-Us*, and be born of a virgin.

Isaiah 7:10 Moreover the LORD spoke again to Ahaz, saying,

Isaiah 7:11 "Ask a sign for yourself from the LORD your God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above."

Isaiah 7:12 But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, nor will I test the LORD!"

We've seen that Ahaz was a wicked, unbelieving man. When he said he would not "test the Lord," it was not *humility*; it was *hypocrisy*.

Isaiah 7:13 Then he said, "Hear now, O house of David! *Is it* a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also?"

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

Isaiah 7:15 Curds and honey He shall eat, that He may know to refuse the evil and choose the good.

Isaiah 7:16 For before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you dread will be forsaken by both her kings.

Isaiah quits talking to just Ahaz for a moment and addresses the "house of David." He is going to give them a "sign." "The virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel."

There are two fulfillments of this prophecy. The first was ordinary; the second was miraculous. The first and ordinary fulfillment was in the days of Isaiah. We know this because verses fifteen and sixteen are a promise that before this "child" is mature "the land" Ahaz was dreading - Syria and Ephraim - would "be forsaken by both her kings." A "child" could be considered mature at twelve years of age. As I mentioned earlier, this was in fact historically fulfilled. Within twelve years of this prophecy both Syria and Ephraim were overcome

by Assyria and "forsaken." The "virgin" in this case refers to an ordinary young woman who would be a virgin when she married then have a son who would serve as a sign. It's likely that this virgin-bride was Isaiah's second wife - his first wife having died after Shear-jashub was born.

Isaiah's second son was named Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, which means, *quick to plunder*. The account of his birth is in chapter eight. Even though his name is Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, in verses eight and ten of chapter eight he is referred to as "Immanuel" and "God-with-us."

Before you stone me as a heretic remember I said that there were two fulfillments! The second was miraculous. In the New Testament Isaiah 7:14 is applied to the virgin Mary, the human mother of Jesus:

Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 1:19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.

Matthew 1:20 But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 1:21 And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

Matthew 1:22 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying:

Matthew 1:23 "*Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,*" which is translated, "God with us."

King Ahaz was being introduced to the Messiah. He would be none other than God Himself, God in human flesh, God Incarnate - **God-With-Us**. We now know He was and is Jesus Christ.

The Doctrine of the Virgin Birth is one of those things you must believe to be saved. It is numbered among the five fundamentals of the orthodox Christian faith, the others being: (1) The inspiration and authority of Scripture, (2) The deity of Jesus Christ, (3) The substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ, and (4) The bodily resurrection and Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

The Doctrine of the Virgin Birth is non-negotiable. Critics of the Bible try to undermine the miracle of the virgin birth. The major criticism concerns the particular word Isaiah used for "virgin," which they point

out can simply describe any young woman. If you get further into the grammar, the Hebrew literally reads, "Behold the pregnant virgin is bearing a son and she calls His name Immanuel." The "sign" is that the virgin is *still* a virgin both at the time she is pregnant and when she brings forth her son. The young woman could never be called a virgin during her pregnancy - unless this was a miracle.

Jesus was conceived in the womb of Mary by a miraculous work of the Holy Spirit and without a human father. It made possible the true humanity of Jesus without inherited sin.

Without the virgin birth of Jesus you could have no Savior and no salvation from sin. Sin requires death for its payment. God does not die; so the Savior must be fully human in order to be able to die. But the death of an ordinary human could never pay for the sins of the whole world; so the Savior must also be fully God. The Savior must be fully-human *and* fully God; He must be the unique God-man, God incarnate - **God-With-Us** - through the virgin birth.

Looking back to our text: King Ahaz of Judah had his own plans for weathering the political and personal storms of his life. They were insufficient; he and the people he ruled "were moved as the trees of the woods are moved with the wind."

When the winds blow through your life... There is only one way to be established. It is to know God personally by believing in Jesus Christ as your Savior from sin.

Conclusion

Be certain you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Whatever storm you are in or heading for - nothing is more essentially than your salvation be established by grace through faith in Jesus.

If you are certain you know the Lord... Then know that God is with you in your storms! Nothing can separate you from His love; He will never, ever, not ever leave you or forsake you; He has gone to prepare a place for you and will return for you to take you there; in the mean time He has not left you comfortless but has given you His Holy Spirit to come alongside you in your walk.

