

Family Worship: The Sign of Immanuel and the Call to Believe

Key Scripture Text

"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 7:14, NKJV)

Daily Scripture Memory Verse

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

Devotional Teaching and Application

In our study of Isaiah chapter 7, we are placed right in the middle of a national crisis, in the middle of political intrigue. Ahaz, the wicked king of Judah, is facing an invasion from the combined armies of Syria and Israel. The survival of the house of David is on the line, and Ahaz is scared to death. His heart, and the heart of his people, are moved with fear, even as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind. But instead of looking to the Lord, Ahaz is a prudent man in the worldly sense; he is formulating a plan to appeal to the pagan king of Assyria for his protection. He is seeking a political alliance with unbelievers to save himself.

Then the Lord sends Isaiah to meet Ahaz with a command: take heed, be quiet, and do not fear these enemies. God tells him that the plans of Syria and Israel will fail. But then comes a foundational, fundamental biblical truth: "If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established." What do we mean by this? It is quite simple. If you do not believe the Word of God, if you will not trust in His promises and obey His commandments, you will not be firm in your life. You will not be stable. You will be weak, tossed to and fro, and you will have no godly legacy. Ahaz is offered a miraculous sign to confirm God's Word, but he hypocritically refuses it because he has already made up his mind to trust in Assyria. He does not want to put himself in a position where he has to submit to Jehovah.

Because Ahaz rejects the Word of God, the Lord Himself gives a sign, not for Ahaz, but for the true believers, the remnant. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son. This is not a normal birth; this is a miraculous birth. This is the center of the gospel message. This son is the promised Messiah, Jesus Christ, and His name is Immanuel, which means "God with us." Ahaz teaches us a critical lesson: when the church looks to worldly alliances or ungodly leaders for deliverance, we invite our own judgment. The Emmanuel prophecy is the absolute guarantee of the triumph of the kingdom of God through the Son of David. We do not need to make history through compromise; we only need to obey the Word of God, and God will make history.

Questions for Children

Parents, use these questions to help your children recall the main facts of today's reading. It is important for them to understand that God is in control of history and that we must trust Him when we are afraid.

1. When King Ahaz was afraid of his enemies, who did he try to get help from instead of God?
2. What does the name "Immanuel" mean?

By teaching them these truths, they will learn early on that they do not need to figure everything out on their own, but that they can trust the God who is always with His people.

Theological Reflection Questions

As older children and adults consider this passage, we must examine where our true trust lies. Ahaz was shrewd in his worldliness, counting up his resources and discounting God. Use these questions to search your own heart and discuss how this applies to us today.

1. How did King Ahaz's refusal to ask for a sign actually reveal the hypocrisy and rebellion in his heart?
2. Why is the virgin birth of Jesus Christ essential to proving that God will keep His covenant promises to the house of David?
3. In what ways are we tempted to act like Ahaz today by making alliances with unbelievers or trusting in politics rather than trusting and obeying the Word of God?

When we think deeply about these things, we realize that true stability does not come from controlling our circumstances, but from resting firmly upon the promises of the living God.

Practical Applications for Obedience

The goal of studying God's Word is that we would be established in our faith and practice. We must govern ourselves under the direction of His Word rather than the panic of our culture.

1. Identify any area in your life, family, or business where you are relying on worldly shrewdness or alliances with unbelievers rather than trusting God's provision.
2. When you hear troubling news in the world or in politics, practice being quiet and resting in God's sovereignty before you speak or react in fear.
3. Remind one another this week that "God is with us" by specifically pointing out how Christ's kingdom is advancing, even when the world seems chaotic.

As you implement these practices, remember that the obedience of a child of God is not insignificant. It is the very stuff upon which the kingdom grows.

Family Prayer Prompt

Father, we thank You for this glorious promise and prophecy. We thank You that we live on this side of its fulfillment, that the Virgin Mary had her Son, and that Jesus Christ lived, died, and rose again for us. Lord, forgive us for our unbelief. Forgive us for being so much like Ahaz, looking to the world for our security and trying to reason our way out of trials using worldly wisdom. Give us the courage to believe Your Word, that we might be firmly established. Remind us daily that Immanuel has come, that You are with us, and that Your kingdom will never fail. We ask this in the powerful name of Jesus. Amen.