

Faithless, Foolish, and Disobedient

Isaiah 7

(Background: 2 Kings 16-17, 2 Chronicles 28)

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Ahaz, the king of Judah, was in serious trouble. The kingdom of Judah had been invaded by Rezin (king of Syria) and Pekah (king of Israel). The remaining citizens of Judah were huddled in Jerusalem, looking out over the devastation of their entire land, awaiting the final blow, shaking “as the trees of the forest shake before the wind.” This was the setting for our study today. In this crisis, God had a message of deliverance for King Ahaz. Would Ahaz have faith in Yahweh, or would he rely on his own schemes and plans? Isaiah 7 has several relevant truths for all who seek to live wisely in times of difficulty.

Faith is the proper response to any crisis. (7:1-11)

The fear that Ahaz and the people of Judah had was an entirely natural response. Their land was decimated, and their enemies were at the gates. Yet, God called on Ahaz to have faith and obey amid their crisis. In verse 4, God gave clear direction: “Be careful, be quiet (still), do not fear, do not let your heart be faint.” When trouble hits, there is always a temptation to lose faith, panic, and rely upon the world’s ways. These four simple commands are God’s step-by-step directions to overcoming those temptations. In God’s perspective, what Ahaz sees as a raging fire about to consume him is nothing more than a smoldering stump. If Ahaz followed these directions, it would reveal his faith in God and lead to his deliverance; however, as we read on, we see that Ahaz had plans of his own. He would attempt to preserve himself through an alliance with Assyria and blatant idolatry. God’s word came to pass, “If you are not firm in faith, you will not be firm at all.”

Again, God demonstrated His immeasurable grace by giving Ahaz one last chance to show a hint of faith by inviting Ahaz to ask for a sign confirming God’s promise in verse 7. But instead of taking God at His word and asking for a sign, faithless Ahaz tried to manipulate and fool God with an expression of false piety.

You can’t fool God. (7:12-17)

Ahaz had already begun to establish his alliance with Assyria and had shown himself to be a faithless, foolish, and disobedient king of Israel. To make matters worse, he tried to fool God by pretending to revere Him. (vs 12) God was not fooled, and instead of bringing a word of deliverance, God Himself gave Ahaz a sign that would prove God’s promise in verse seven but also would be a sign of coming judgment upon the people of Judah.

World Superpowers are at God’s beck and call. (7:18)

In this chapter, we can see clearly how God views the alliances and superpowers of the world. The conquering nations of Syria and Israel are described as smoldering

stumps; the mighty nation of Egypt is a mere fly, Assyria a small bee. The two greatest world powers are nothing more than insects that obey God's whistle.

We would be wise to recognize the power and might of the sovereign creator God. God will use every world power for His specific purpose. There are times when the natural response to a situation is fear and panic, but may we be reminded of our creator God, who would use every crisis in our lives for His good purpose!

Our lives can get very dark when we deviate from God's directions. (7:19-25)

The last thing I would have us consider is just how dark things can get when we deviate from God's direction. These verses reveal total devastation to the land of Judah. Egypt would indeed come from the south, Assyria would invade from the north, and those two nations would decimate Judah to the point where nothing could grow, and the few survivors would have to live off milk curds and wild honey. This would be one of the darkest times in Judah's history, but we also see how dark Ahaz's life became as he pursued his faithless, foolish, and disobedient plans. (See 2 Kings 16-17, 2 Chronicles 28)

May this reality be a lesson to us today! I know how dark it became when I lived a faithless, foolish, and disobedient life! I thank God for His grace, discipline, call to repentance, and willingness to forgive! I have no doubt we all have had these dark times in our lives and have seen those we love deviate from God's clear direction and enter the inevitable darkness. I pray that we practice repentance and preach the grace of the sovereign God to those in darkness.

GRACE NEWS AND NEEDS

Men's Ministry:

- ***Cornhole Tournament Next Sunday, Sept 10 @ 12pm.***
- ***Retreat, Sept 29-Oct 1. Sign up on the patio (spots are limited).***

Youth Ministry: Sign up for events @ gccramona.com/youth

- ***Apologetics Conference, Sept 22-23.***
- ***River Trip, Oct 20-22.***

Crown Financial Management Class:

- ***Sundays 8:30-10 am beginning Oct 8th. Sign up with Jeff on the patio***

Awana: Club starts Sept 13; sign up at ramonaawana.org

VOM Needs for September: Financial Donations

For more information on our events and ministries, visit www.gccramona.com