

# The Light Shining in the Darkness (Part 1)

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[ 0 : 00 ] So if you have your Bibles with you, and I hope that you do, then turn to Isaiah chapter 7.

And my text for this morning will take in verses 1 through 17. So Isaiah 7, 1 through 17.

As we look at this wonderful passage of Scripture, a prophecy, of course, that is very much connected with this season, this particular time that we celebrate, the celebration of the birth of Christ.

It is a passage, at least part of it, one particular part of it that is quoted in Matthew's Gospel. And so we read that or had that read earlier this morning.

So if you have your Bibles open to it, Isaiah chapter 7, and I want to begin reading with verse 1.

Now it came to pass in the days of Ahaz, the son of Jotham, son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezan, king of Syria, and Pekah, the son of Ramaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to make war against it, but could not prevail against it.

[ 1 : 31 ] And it was told to the house of David, saying, Syria's foe, forces, are deployed in Ephraim. So his heart and the heart of his people were moved as the trees of woods are moved with the wind.

That means they were afraid, okay? Shaking with fear. Then the Lord said to Isaiah, Go out now to meet Ahaz, you and Shirjeshub, your son, at the end of the aqueduct from the upper pool on the highway of the fuller's field.

And say to him, Take heed, be quiet, do not fear, or be faint-hearted. For these two stubs of smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezan and Syria and the son of Ramaliah.

Because Syria, Ephraim, another name for Israel, by the way, and the son of Ramaliah have plotted evil against you, saying, Let us go up against Judah and trouble it.

Let us make a gap in its wall for ourselves. And set a king over them, the son of Tabel. Thus says the Lord God, It shall not stand, nor shall it come to pass.

[ 2 : 51 ] For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezan. Within sixty-five years, Ephraim will be broken, so that it will not be a people.

It means they'll be taken into captivity. The head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Ramaliah's son. If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established.

Moreover, the Lord spoke again to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign for yourself from the Lord your God.

Ask it either in the depth or in the height above. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, nor will I test the Lord.

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? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign.

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel. Curds and honey he shall eat, that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good.

[ 3 : 56 ] 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. The Lord will bring the king of Assyria upon you and your people and your father's house, days that have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah.

I'm going to stop right there, although it's really kind of important. We have the time to go back and look at the larger context to see what has happened before and what's going to happen later in the book of Isaiah in this kind of not only prophecy, but also a bit of history, Israel's history and Judah's history.

And it would be good for us, and I will have us look at a couple of passages in 2 Kings that also tell us the history around this particular event as King Ahaz is the leader of Judah, the southern kingdom, and all that pertains to the story.

Now we want to focus ultimately on the prophecy, don't we? We know it's a prophecy of something that did not happen right then, this virgin conceiving and having a child, but a prophecy that, of course, would be fulfilled many, many hundreds of years later and has for us been fulfilled, was fulfilled in Bethlehem through the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now tonight, the choir, as I've already mentioned, is going to be presenting the Christmas cantata, and the title of it is, if you've noticed in the bulletin and different ways we've published it, it is Shine on Us, Shine on Us, and among the collection of songs that they shall sing or we shall sing, because I'm going to kind of be numbered among them, and looking forward to that, one of my personal favorites in this collection, and you'll hear it tonight, is the one entitled I Have Seen the Light.

[ 5 : 58 ] I just really love that particular number. I have seen the light, and at one point in the song, the ladies are going to ask a question. They're going to ask it through singing.

They get to be the ones to ask the question, and here's the question. There in a manger, an innocent baby, who could believe he was the one? That's a pretty good question, and when you consider the whole scene of the birth of Christ, and the stable, and the manger, and those humble surroundings, and when you see that manger, who would believe it?

This was the one, the one to come, the Messiah. Well, then the men get to answer the question. Good for the guys, get to answer the question, but really, it is the answer for all of us, men and women, and here's the answer.

I can believe it. I know it's true. He changed my life. He is the light. He is God's son. I just love that part of the song.

Now, you'll get to hear it tonight. I'm not going to sing any of it right now, though I'm really tempted, because I like it so much. But, so, really, that kind of helps me in selecting my subject.

[ 7 : 14 ] I want to talk about this, this light shining in the darkness, and I want to talk to you about that, not only this morning, but also next Sunday.

So, the two Sundays leading up to Christmas. I want to talk to you about this light shining in the darkness, or out of the darkness, really would be a better way of putting it. And I'm going to give that to you, or preach that, through this passage, that I've just read, here in Isaiah chapter 7, and then next Sunday, in chapter 8, the light shining in or out of the darkness.

Now, let me say just a little bit about the context here, the context of Isaiah 7 and 8. Really, it's the context of the larger text here in Isaiah.

But here's the context. It was a dark time. I mean, extremely dark time, and I don't think that we can really imagine, though really we can, I hope that we can, imagine just how dark things were for God's people during this time, and specifically for the house of David.

The house of David, or Judah, as it was called. That would be the southern kingdom. And so it was a dark, dark time, spiritually dark time, and dark in many, many other ways.

[ 8 : 35 ] Not unlike, by the way, the darkness of our day. And I hope that we will be able to see some comparisons here, or really how they are alike.

Now, for King Ahaz, he's the king of Judah at this time. For Ahaz and God's people, in the midst of this spiritual darkness, and just out and out darkness in their country, God, out of that darkness, God gave a sign.

A sign that we're very familiar with, because again, it has everything to do with what we celebrate this time of the year. And also, it's a sign that we're very familiar with, because again, it's quoted in Matthew chapter 1.

But out of this darkness, God gave a sign of his redemption. A sign of his goodness, his grace, his saving grace.

A sign that one day, at least for Ahaz and the people of God then, one day, it would be fulfilled. Now for us today, it has been fulfilled.

[ 9 : 44 ] You know, God is always good to give his people a heads up on what he's doing, what he's going to do. A heads up on those things that pertain to his purposes and his promises.

Many of those promises we have already seen fulfilled. There are many others that are yet to come. But God is good to clue us in on these things.

For example, in Amos chapter 3, verse 7, the prophet there, God said, Indeed, the Lord God does nothing without revealing his counsel to his servants, the prophets. And by the way, what he revealed to them, we have recorded in our Bible.

So, God does nothing where he does not first reveal it, his counsels, through his prophets. Even Peter in the New Testament, Peter is the speaker here, even though it's found in Acts chapter 3, verse 18, Peter said, But what God predicted through the mouth of all the prophets, he has fulfilled. Now, Peter is talking there about the cross and the resurrection. And so, that's been fulfilled when Peter spoke these words. There are other things that God has spoken through his prophets that are yet to be fulfilled pertaining to the second coming of Christ.

[ 11 : 06 ] But God gives us a heads up. He tells us what he's going to do. And he gives it to us through his prophets and he made sure that it was recorded for us in the Bible so that we would know these things.

And so, you don't have to wonder what God is up to, really. You really don't. His word tells us what he's up to. And really, I think I'm safe to say, contrary to the conventional wisdom of many believers, God has never required that we just simply merely believe him blindly.

He never really required that. God has never asked us to just kind of take a leap out into the dark. God has never asked anyone to believe anything that does not rest upon a solid foundation of biblical revelation.

That's why we need to read God's word so we know what God is doing. And we don't have to believe him blindly. In fact, that's really the idea behind this favorite passage in Hebrews 11.

1, faith is the substance. It's the substance of things hoped for. The substance of these things. And listen, our passage here in Isaiah 7 then, reveals that God is going to do something that will change the world of man for all of time and eternity.

[ 12 : 34 ] And for us, again, this is something he has already done. And it has changed everything. And centuries before he does this thing, he gives a sign to prove it, to validate it, to prove that it is true.

And this particular sign points us to that little baby that was born in Bethlehem, born of Mary, born of a woman, born of a virgin.

Now, we're going to see how this unfolds in this scripture. And we're going to do so first by noticing a serious problem.

That's number one, if you take notes. A serious problem. We really need to get a hold of this in our minds, just how serious a problem Israel, or Judah, rather the southern kingdom was in at this time. But it merely represents a serious problem, really, that all mankind has experienced and is experiencing today. A serious problem. If we were to back up one chapter in Isaiah, back to Isaiah chapter 6, then we would see the record of Isaiah's call to the ministry, and we're very familiar with that particular passage.

[ 13 : 55 ] It happened, the Bible says, during the year, or the year, that King Uzziah died. Remember this vision that Isaiah had of the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up when Isaiah went into the temple that day.

And it's perhaps one of our favorite passages in the book of Isaiah, and we're pretty familiar with it. Alright, so that's chapter 6. Then when we get to chapter 7, Isaiah fast-forwards 20 years.

It's 20 years later now. And he fast-forward to the reign of Uzziah's grandson. Alright, not his son, but his grandson, Ahaz.

Right? Now, Uzziah, according to Scripture, was a good king. One of the kings of Israel and Judah. He was a good king. Jotham, his son, also was a pretty good king.

The Bible said of both of these kings that they did that which was right in the sight of God. So, they're good kings. But then along comes Ahaz. And Ahaz is something quite different.

[ 15 : 05 ] Ahaz, Uzziah's grandson, Jotham's son, was on the throne of Judah during this time. Judah, again, the southern kingdom.

And according to 2 Kings chapter 16 verse 2, so you have to go to 2 Kings chapter 16 to get the larger story of what's going on here. But in 2 Kings chapter 16 verse 2, the Bible says he, that's Ahaz, did not do what was right in the sight of the Lord as God, his God, like his ancestor David. And not only David, but like his father Jotham and his grandfather Uzziah. He didn't do what was right in the sight of God, but walked in the way, the Bible says here, the way of the kings of Israel. That means the northern kingdom. Israel was the name for the northern kingdom. This was the time when the kingdom was divided into two.

Israel, the northern kingdom, Judah, the southern kingdom, Jerusalem, the capital of Judah, and Ahaz is the king of Judah. All right? Now, how wicked was King Ahaz?

[16:18] Well, 2 Kings chapter 16 verse 3, just listen to it. He, again, this Ahaz, 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, according to the Canaanite nations and the Canaanite religion.

What did Ahaz do? Ahaz was so wicked that he sacrificed his own son as a burnt offering to a pagan God.

Now, you're talking about darkness, a spiritual darkness that ran deep, not only within the heart of wicked King Ahaz, but also among the people of Israel, God's chosen people.

It was a dark time for God's people ruled by a wicked king, but it was even worse than that, because, and this is what we learned from Isaiah chapter 7, God's people are now facing invasion. They're faced with invasion. Verse 1, again, says that Rezan, king of Aram, that's just another name for Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, that's the northern kingdom ruled by a wicked king, Israeli king, these two become allies.

[17:45] allies, and these two allies say that they're going to attack Jerusalem, that's the capital of Judah, the southern kingdom, and Ahaz, the king of Judah, is afraid.

He's terrified. Why? Because he believes that they will do it, and they can do it. And if you just look at some of the history, prior history, separately, both Syria and Israel had tried this before and failed.

But now, together, in this alliance, Ahaz is pretty sure that they're going to be able to do it, and he's terrified. So Ahaz, along with the people of the city of Jerusalem, are shaking, literally shaking, in sheer terror.

That's what Isaiah is describing in this kind of word picture in verse two. They're shaking like trees in a forest, shaking in the wind. They're terrified. It's a dark time. dark time for God's people.

But it's about to get much worse. Because Ahaz is afraid, terrified, really, and because Ahaz is an unbeliever, and he really is, he's not a follower of the one true God, Yahweh, not a believer in him, even though he's one of God's chosen people.

[19:03] So because Ahaz is afraid, and because he is an unbeliever, he has rejected the one true God, what does he do? He decides to call for help. Get some help. Not from God, but from the Assyrians.

Don't get confused between Syria and Assyria, two different nations. The Assyrian nation was the superpower of the day. They were the superpower.

And again, referring back to 2 Kings chapter 16, in 2 Kings 16, 16, 16, 16, 7, this king, stupid, faithless, unbelieving, wicked Ahaz, he, the Bible says, sends messengers to Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, saying, I am your servant and your son.

March up and save me from the king of Syria and the king of Israel. Now, can you imagine it? Here is the king, God's king of his people, Judah, and he is saying, not, Lord, I'm your servant, he's saying to this pagan, wicked king, I'm your servant.

And I'm not your son, Lord, I'm this pagan king's son, and Lord, don't save us. He's saying, save us to this wicked king, Tiglath-Pileser, the king of Assyria.

[20:33] You come and save us. Ahaz, even took money out of the temple treasury in order to pay for this. Took God's money. Now, see, what I'm trying to have you see is this darkness, spiritual darkness, a wicked king, wicked worship, wicked faith, wicked alliances with pagans and pagan nations.

Can it get any worse for God's people? Well, yes, because little did Ahaz know before this, but the Assyrians had their wicked plans of their own.

He didn't know this, but they would invade Syria and Israel just like he hoped, just like he had asked for, and they would conquer these two what Isaiah calls smoking firebrands.

They would do this, but, unknown to Ahaz, Assyria's secret plan was to conquer Judah as well.

Right? They're going to take out all three. Chapter 17 says, God says, a day is coming. He said, days that have not come since the day that Ephraim, that's another name for Israel, departed from Judah.

[21:57] not since the dividing of the kingdom. All right, now what is coming? Assyria is coming. The king of Assyria is coming.

Isaiah said to Ahaz in verse 17, the Lord will bring the king of Assyria upon you and your people and your father's house.

His father's house, by the way, would be David, David's house. This is important. These are dark days, spiritually dark days for God's people and the nation of Judah, idolatry, running rampant throughout the nation.

Gross immorality, unchecked, running throughout the nation. Wicked national leaders who are not believers in God, not followers of God's word.

The murder of innocent babies. enemies. The fear of foreign attackers. Sounds kind of familiar, doesn't it?

[ 23 : 03 ] Now, here's the wonder of it. God, in this darkness, this spiritual darkness, God made a light shine out of this darkness.

It was the light of his revelation. A revelation of his glorious plan, not just for the immediate time, though there was a revelation of his promise that would preserve Judah, but also this revelation extended way beyond Ahaz and the people of Judah at this day, on into our day.

And so the light of his revelation comes to us in the form of a promise. And that's number two, a sovereign promise. A sovereign promise.

See, we not only see in this passage and the history that describes and helps us understand this time period, not only do we see in this text a serious problem, and I'm talking about a serious problem, spiritual darkness, but we also see a sovereign promise, or what we might call a saving deliverance.

A saving deliverance. It is a promise that is issued to Ahaz, though Ahaz didn't receive it, but it is given to him if he will be faithful.

[ 24 : 29 ] It's a promise, though, to us, for us, if you will be faithful, if you will believe. A promise to all those who believe. In Isaiah chapter 7, we discover a series of signs, signs, signs, and these signs point us to, or validate, the sovereign promise of God for all those who will believe.

It's a promise extended not only to the people who lived in that day, but a promise delivered for all who will believe.

Now, let's just look at these signs. God tells Isaiah to meet with King Ahaz. He's sending his prophet to the king. The king is afraid.

He's terrified. And so God sends his prophet. And he says to him in verse 4, take heed or calm down, basically is what that means.

Calm down. Be quiet, he said. It means shut up your mouth. You know, sometimes God has to say that too. Would you just be quiet with you?

[ 25 : 47 ] Talk to me. Do not fear, he said. That is, in this sense, don't panic. And that's exactly what Ahaz was doing and all the people of Judah.

Don't panic. Do not be faint harshed. That is, don't despair. Don't despair. I mean, these are good words for us today as well.

This is what he said to King Ahaz. Now, why should he not be afraid? Well, because Isaiah says, well, God says through Isaiah, though Syria and Israel have, verse 5, plotted evil against you, God says, this is verse 7, it shall not stand.

Won't happen. Won't happen, it shall not come to pass. All right, so this is God's sovereign promise to Ahaz and all of Judah, whether Ahaz believed it or not.

This was his promise to Ahaz and all of Judah. This is not going to happen. They're not going to conquer you. It won't come to pass.

[ 26 : 57 ] All right, that's a promise. God's sovereign promise. Now, what does that have to do with us? Well, that's a good question because, you know, it kind of seems that the historical facts here in this passage are far removed from anything that would pertain to us or even matter to us.

But listen, what God promises to Ahaz has everything to do with what we're celebrating this time of the year, the birth of Christ.

But more than that, it has everything to do with our celebration of the cross. Our salvation in it as our Lord and Savior.

has everything to do with it. You see, Ahaz is king of Judah, right? What it says, we know that, historic. King of Judah. Judah's the southern kingdom.

And so Ahaz is king in Jerusalem. That's the holy city. Ahaz then represents the house of David.

[ 28 : 10 ] Right? He represents the house of David. Ahaz represents the lineage of David. That's saying the same thing twice. Two ways.

House of David, the lineage of David. From which, from this lineage, would come another king one day. Right?

Ultimately, and for us, has come. king of David, the king of the house and lineage of David. The Bible refers to him as the lion of Judah.

Messiah, and that's Jesus Christ, our savior. The Messiah. Now, just stating that, does that help us understand what's at stake here in Isaiah chapter seven?

Israel, the northern kingdom, and Syria are ultimately, and ultimately, us, Syria, are threatening to do what? To annihilate the house of David.

[ 29 : 22 ] That's what they're threatening to do. See, this is not just history of Israel. This is our history. Redemptive history.

This is key to it all. They're threatening to put an end, to cut off the lineage of David, the house of David. So, the real danger here, is that threat to end the lineage of David, which is the lineage of our Messiah.

He will come out of the house of David, the lineage of David. And all this threatens to bring an end to that, to annihilate that. This is not, of course, the first time, not the first time in history that this threat has come.

And, of course, you know, God is not going to allow anyone to do that. There's never really any danger of it happening. But we can see how it came close so many times down through the history of the Old Testament.

In fact, that's what is the chief value of the Old Testament history, the history of Israel, all the way back to Genesis, and seeing how the line of the Messiah was being threatened every step of the way.

[ 30 : 35 ] Of course, it was never going to happen. No one was ever going to be able to do that. Not these smoldering firebrands, Israel and Syria. Not even the superpower of Syria is going to be able to do this.

God's not going to allow them to do this. Not even Satan, who, by the way, is the power behind all of this. God says it will not happen. It will not come to pass.

This is God's sovereign promise. It's something much bigger than just a promise to Ahaz, that these kings of Israel and Syria are not going to conquer him.

And that Assyria is not going to be able to succeed. Not just a promise to them to set them at ease so that they don't panic, so that they don't become discouraged and disillusioned and despair. It's much bigger than that.

It's the promise that we have believed in and have received the benefit. And it's incredible how God reveals this promise here in this passage through a series of signs and name signs and place signs.

[ 31 : 44 ] So it all begins in verse three with the name of Isaiah's son. Begins there really. Then the Lord said to Isaiah, go out now to meet Ahaz, you and Shirjashub your son.

Isaiah had a couple of sons. we'll meet the second one next week. That's an unusual name. It's Shirjashub. Even in the Hebrew tongue, it's an unusual name.

To be a name. But you see, the name is a sign. The son is a sign. How do we know that? Are we just kind of speculating that? No, because Isaiah says so. Isaiah himself said so in Isaiah chapter 8 verse 18.

He said, here I am with the children the Lord has given me to be signs. His sons were given to be signs and wonders, miracles, in Israel from the Lord of hosts.

So his name is a sign. It's a sign. And the sign is, of course, in the meaning of it. And the name means, in the Hebrew tongue, it means a remnant will return.

[ 32 : 58 ] A remnant will return. So let's think about this. To whom then is this promise given? And we'll get to exactly what this promise is eventually, but to whom is the promise given?

Well, the name of Isaiah's son tells us. The promise is given to the remnant. The remnant, who are they? Well, they're the faithful. They're the believing, those established.

And in the larger sense, because the promise is much bigger than just the immediate time period, then this remnant is the faithful of all the ages, including you, if you believe.

And so the people to whom God gave this promise were certain ones living then, and since then, and now, until Jesus comes again, those who are yet to live, they're the faithful, the believing, and as a result, those established saints.

Verse 9 says, if you will not believe, surely you shall not be established. Implication being, if you will believe, you will be established. So to whom is the promise given to you, to me, to the remnant, to the faithful, those who believe, those who stand firm in their faith, and are established, saved.

[ 34 : 38 ] All right, so now what is the promise? Oh, this is really amazing. What God says next, verse 3, the Lord said to Isaiah, go out with your son Shirjashub to meet Ahaz, and go where?

At the end of the aqueduct. He got very specific in where he wants to meet Isaiah to meet Ahaz.

And so the first bit of the description of the location is the end of the aqueduct.

Now, what's an aqueduct? Well, it's something that carries water. And there would be several aqueducts that would feed water from the mountains, surrounding mountains, and water sources, to the city of Jerusalem so that people could have the life-giving water.

So, he's to go to the end of the aqueduct. He's to take his son, the remnant, and Amideh has at the end of the aqueduct, now the end is the most important part of the aqueduct.

That's where you get the water. The life-sustaining water comes at the end of the aqueduct. There would be a pool. There is indeed, we'll get to that.

[ 35 : 48 ] Verse 3, Isaiah was to meet Ahaz at the end of the aqueduct of the upper pool. The upper pool. Now, there's more to that than just, you know, some kind of general description of this pool.

Because in the Hebrew, the word pool is often used in Scripture to mean the blessing. Now, you can see how that would work here.

You know, there's where the blessing of the water comes. You know, it's not along the aqueduct, it's at the end of the aqueduct where you have access to the water. So, pretty easy to understand how blessing could fit in here, but the word actually does mean blessing.

Blessing. But it's not just any pool. Isaiah says the upper pool. And the word upper is used, forget this, in Scripture to mean most high.

And we can also see that logically too. The most high pools are sort of all the aqueducts and the ends of the aqueducts where the pool is, where water is accessible.

[ 37 : 04 ] This is the upper one, the most high one. And yet it's very interesting, this description. In Genesis chapter 14 verse 18, for example, when Abraham meets with the king of Salem, Melchizedek, definitely some messianic implications there, Melchizedek, we know that from Hebrews.

But he is called, Melchizedek is called priest to God most high. It's the same word. most high. Here's the sovereign promise of God.

The aqueduct represents the lineage of David, the house of David. And it is at the end of the aqueduct, the end of the house of David, where the living water comes.

the life-giving, sustaining water is made available. Who is that? That's Jesus. At the end of the house of David, of the house and lineage of David.

You see, Jesus is the upper pool, the blessing of the Most High, at the end of the aqueduct, the lineage of David.

[ 38 : 27 ] So it is, He is the life-giving blessing of the Most High God who comes to us through the end of the house of David.

Do you see? And, by the way, if we read a little further, verse 3, He is the highway. Isaiah, go to the upper pool by the highway, at the highway.

And so, Jesus is the highway. He is the way, and the way to where? Verse 3, to the Fuller's Field. What is that?

Well, you could say that the Fuller's Field was one of Jerusalem's laundromats, where they would go to clean things, and clean clothes, and clean themselves.

This was the place where people went to be cleansed, and Jesus is the way to cleansing. See, every part of this points to Him. What a prophecy, and word pictures, and place names, and so forth, and word meanings, and such.

[ 39 : 34 ] This is God's sovereign promise. God has worked all of this out for those who have eyes to see it. Ahaz didn't see it, but you have to have a heart to see it as well. God says, no darkness, no evil, no wickedness will overcome my plan to send a Savior to the world, my Messiah, and I will preserve a remnant among my people down through the ages who will stay firm in their faith, and the house of David will not be destroyed.

My Messiah cannot be stopped, not by Syria, not by Israel, not by Assyria, not by Satan himself. Now, Syria is going to come later and threaten in the house of David.

By the way, we can read ahead all the way to Isaiah 36 and 7, 20 years later, actually, from when Isaiah gives this prophecy to Ahaz, 20 years later, Assyria will besiege the city of Jerusalem with, get this, 200,000 soldiers.

Tucker, how would you like to face 200,000 soldiers? 200,000 soldiers come to besiege Jerusalem. And the king of Assyria announced his evil threat to then king of Judah, Hezekiah.

And from where was this threat announced? This is amazing. Isaiah 36 and verse 2, then the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh, his general, with a great army, 200,000 strong, from Lachish to King Hezekiah Jerusalem, and he stood, guess where?

[ 41 : 26 ] By the aqueduct from the upper pool on the highway to the fuller's field. Brought his army right there and gave his announcement, we're here to destroy you.

And according to Isaiah chapter 37 verse 36, 200,000 Assyrians gathered there to destroy effectively the house of David and really effectively Messiah's lineage.

But God promised that it's not going to happen. And his promise was sure and by the end of the day before the Assyrians shot one single arrow, 185,000 of them lie dead on the fields, destroyed by, the Bible says, the angel of the Lord.

Incredible. The light shining out of the darkness. You see, there is in this world today a serious problem.

We know it, don't we? Spiritual darkness. We used to think of that in terms of other nations, but now we know it's true of our nation.

[ 42 : 44 ] Spiritual darkness. promise. But God has a solution. A solution that was decided upon in eternity past.

It's pretty difficult to even use the word decided when you talk about eternity past. And that solution was a sovereign promise. A sovereign promise that out of the house of David would come, and for us has come, the blessing of the Most High.

And he is the way to cleansing. He is the only way to God. The highway. He is the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's a pretty significant prophecy. Now let me ask you something. We draw to a close here. We've got one more point. Let me ask you is that can you trust that promise? I think most of you would say yes.

You have trusted. Continue to trust. There may be some who have not yet trusted that promise. I mean the promise that God is going to send a Savior and that he did send it.

[ 43 : 52 ] And it's none other than Jesus Christ who was born in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago, lived 30 short years, died upon a cross, was raised from the dead, and he's the way, the truth, and the life.

No one gets to the Father but by him. How many of you have trusted that? Will it work for you? Well, you'd better believe it.

It will. And why should you believe? Well, because God has given, and here's another third point, a sure proof, a sure proof of his sovereign promise.

See, there's a serious problem in spiritual darkness. And out of that darkness comes a sovereign promise, saving deliverance.

That you and I can trust because, among other things, a sure proof, a sure proof, a supernatural demonstration.

[ 45 : 06 ] Verse 10, Moreover, the Lord spoke again to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign for yourself from the Lord your God.

That is, Ahaz, if you want proof, proof of this promise, that the promise is sure, ask for a sign. Ask for a sign.

That doesn't mean you and I can ask for a sign, okay? It's not meant to be normative for all Christians today. Well, I believe God will give me a sign. He's already given it. He said, Ahaz, just ask for a sign, whatever you like, ask for it.

Whatever it is. Verse 11, he said, ask it either in the depth or in the height above. Meaning, you want some miracle from the depths of hell, or do you want one from the heights of heaven? really just saying, there's nothing too extreme. Whatever, I believe that Ahaz could have asked for anything he would.

[ 46 : 12 ] Just name it. No matter how absurd. But instead, what did Ahaz say? He said, I will not ask. Nor will I test the Lord.

Lord, I don't get the idea that Ahaz is being super spiritual. He doesn't believe any of this. He doesn't believe it.

He's not even going to bother with this. I'm not going to ask for this. I'm not going to, in your words, test the Lord. I remember people quote scripture to criticize scripture.

I'm not going to test the Lord. So, essentially, God says, okay. I'm going to give you a sign anyway. It's not really to you.

Now, I'm kind of reading between the lines. You don't want a sign? Then I'll bypass you. I'm going to give a sign to the world. To the world. So that the world may know that my promise of a Savior is sure.

[ 47 : 25 ] It's true. It's true. I'll give you a sign. So great. So huge. So incredible. So unexplainable. So supernatural. That if you don't believe it, when it happens, if you don't believe it in my promise, my promise of a Savior, then there is no hope for you.

And what is that sign? Verse 14, Behold, the virgin shall conceive, bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel. And that happened, didn't it?

Who has believed that he is the one? I believe. I know it's sure.

He changed my life. He's God's son. The proof of it is that he was born in a miraculous way. Now there are other proofs, okay?

Not the only one. But if you don't believe that one, then there's no hope for you. The sign. Light shining in the darkness.

[ 48 : 36 ] In the darkness of Old Testament times, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Emmanuel. It's a light shining in the darkness of the New Testament times.

and on into our times. Galatians 4.4, but when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his son, born of a woman.

He is virgin born, just like Isaiah said. Born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law. That's every one of us.

that we might receive the adoption as sons. Assure, prove, the virgin shall conceive and have a child.

He shall be called Emmanuel, God with us. I've seen the light shining in the dark, bursting through the shadow, delivering the dawn.

[ 49 : 45 ] I've seen the light whose holy name is Jesus. His kingdom is forever. He reigns on heaven's throne.

Amen. Amen.

Thank you.