

## Ahaz and Isaiah

### Commentary for November 1, 2011 — The Character of Judah's King

Read the "[November 2011 Newsletter](#)." There I discuss that the Antichrist, by declaring that he is Christ and God, shall fraudulently arrange events (with the help of Satan and his minions, spirit and human) so it will appear that the prophecies of the Old Testament about Christ are being fulfilled. Some important prophecies of Isaiah are discussed in this month's presentation by Dr. Ernest Martin, "Isaiah, Part 3," especially the Immanuel prophecy.

### *The History of King Ahaz*

King Ahaz of Judah plays an important part in the section of Isaiah that Dr. Martin discusses. What kind of person was King Ahaz of Judah? He was evil in the extreme. He became king at age 20 and reigned for 16 years (2 Kings 16:2).<sup>1</sup> He set up idols and images of foreign gods, and committed abominations by worshipping these gods (2 Chronicles 28:2-3). He even sacrificed his own sons (plural!), burning them alive on the altar of the pagan god in the Valley of Hinnom (2 Kings 16:3; 2 Chronicles 28:3). Yet he was still the King of Judah, of the House of David, and Isaiah treated him with respect due to God's anointed.

When Syria and the northern kingdom of Samaria (Israel) demanded that Judah ally with them against Assyria, God through Isaiah told Ahaz to refuse them. Ahaz was "shaken" by the threat posed by Judah's two northern neighbors (Isaiah 7:2). This was a metaphor, meaning that Ahaz and the people were panicked. God promised Ahaz that He would deal with the threat. Ahaz rejected the alliance offer.

Rezin, king of Damascus and Pekah, king of Samaria conspired to replace Ahaz with another king, a "**son of Tabeel**" (Isaiah 7:6). They attacked and surrounded Jerusalem (2 Kings 16:5; Isaiah 7:1). The countryside was devastated and thousands of captives were taken from Judah (2 Chronicles 28:5, 8). But God sent a warning to the Israelites through the prophet Oded and the prisoners of Judah were released (2 Chronicles 28:8-13).

In spite of Judah's defeat in battle and the devastation of the land, the siege of Jerusalem failed. Yet Ahaz was still fearful in spite of Isaiah's comforting words that God would deal with Syria and Samaria. Ahaz did not listen and he proceeded with his own plan. Ahaz sought help from the Assyrians and became their vassal without God's approval.

While these events were occurring, God gave the Immanuel prophecy to Ahaz through Isaiah. The prophecy had mixed elements of near-term fulfillment and far future fulfillment within it. This was the source of some misunderstanding, even by the apostles. It required Christ to explain these prophecies of Isaiah (and other prophecies) to them after His resurrection:

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<sup>1</sup> Ahaz' son Hezekiah began his reign at age 25 (2 Kings 18:1-2). This means that Ahaz fathered Hezekiah when he was quite young. God saved Hezekiah from being sacrificed by Ahaz.

**“And he [Jesus] said unto them, These are the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.”**

• **Luke 24:44-45**

One particular prophecy of Isaiah had a near-term fulfillment

**“For before the child [Isaiah’s second son] shall have knowledge to cry, ‘My father,’ and ‘my mother,’ the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before [by] the king of Assyria.”**

• **Isaiah 8:4**

Ahaz still did not trust God and again made his own arrangements with the king of Assyria:

**“So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, saying, ‘I am your servant and your son: come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me.’**

**And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of YHWH, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria.**

• **2 Kings 16:7-8**

The Assyrians invaded Syria, captured its capital of Damascus, and king Rezin was killed (2 Kings 16:9). Samaria (the northern kingdom of Israel) was raided (2 Kings 15:29) and became subservient to Assyria. In the 12<sup>th</sup> year of Ahaz the Assyrian army attacked and besieged Samaria. After three years the northern kingdom was subjugated, its capital Samaria captured, and the people of Israel were exiled in several stages (2 Kings 17:1, 5).

Threats to Judah continued and Ahaz fought in the south and west after God’s prophecy was fulfilled (that Syria and Samaria were to be removed as a threat). Sensing Judah’s weakness, the Edomites attacked in the south and the Philistines from the Mediterranean coast, plundering Judah. Ahaz again panicked and sought Assyrian help. Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglathpileser, king of Assyria. Judah had to give heavy annual tribute to Assyria. He sacrificed to Syrian gods there, which became the downfall of Judah (2 Chronicles 28:23).

**“For YHWH brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel; for he made Judah naked, and transgressed sore against YHWH. ...**

**And in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against YHWH: this is that king Ahaz.”**

• **2 Chronicles 28:19, 22**

Ahaz also saw a great pagan altar in Damascus and had a similar altar built and placed in the Temple (2 Kings 16:10–18; 2 Chronicles 28:23), and moved the Solomonic altar. He did other abominable things (2 Chronicles 29:7). Ahaz built the sun dial that went backwards during the reign of his son Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:9–11; Isaiah 38:8).

Isaiah and his times are very complex but rewarding. Note also that the prophecies of Hosea and Micah, contemporaries of Isaiah, were given during the times of Ahaz of Judah (Hosea 1:1; Micah 1:1), although their prophecies are difficult to link to this specific period.