**The Book of Isaiah III**

**Ahaz and Hezekiah: A Tale of Two Kings**

Like I said the first week: Isaiah is about faith in God’s promises. Ahaz (not faithful) vs Hezekiah (faithful).

**Last week: Isaiah II Isaiah 5-6 Here Am I, Send Me!**

Isaiah 5:1-30 “The Song of the Vineyard”

Is 5:1-2 God created a vineyard and he loved the vineyard.

The vineyard was Israel and Judah (v. 7) in context, but for us it is the church.

v. 2 He cleared the land, took out the stones and added the choicest vines. That is what God has done for his church and even in your life.

v. 2 He set up a watchtower. God protects the church.

v. 2 He created a winepress. God gives us work to do, but expects a crop.

v. 4 What more could I have done for you, O church/O Israel and Judah?

Isaiah 5:8-19 But instead of tending the vine and bearing its fruit, we built bigger and bigger houses. We became champions at drinking wine and seeking pleasure.

Isaiah 5:20-23

Woe to those who call evil good and good evil. We stopped calling sin sin.

So God uprooted and destroyed the vineyard (Israel), but he has created a vineyard for us.

Isaiah 6 Isaiah’s commission.

Isaiah 6:1-4 Isaiah has a vision of God.

The chief quality of God here is holiness! Holy! Holy! Holy!

What do I learn here? The first requirement for a prophet is to have a personal vision of the holy God in heaven.

Isaiah 6:5-7 As we would react in God’s presence. Woe is me!!! I am a sinner.

6:7 A live coal. Isaiah is forgiven. He is holy so he can speak for God.

To be God’s prophet:

1. We have to see God.

2. We have to be cleansed.

6:8-13 Whom shall I send? Isaiah: Here am I, send me.

You want to be God’s prophet?

1. You have to see God.

2. You have to be cleansed.

3. You have to wholeheartedly accept his mission to the lost.

Isaiah 6:9-10 You have to Go!

God says I am sending you to stubborn Israel and Judah. It will not be easy, folks!

Isaiah’s commission: Preach about repentance to a stubborn people for whom, other than a remnant, it is already too late.

**Isaiah 7 Unfaithful Ahaz.**

Isaiah 7:1-9 Ephraim and king Pekah (the Northern Kingdom) is allying with Aram and king Rezin (Syria) to attack Judah. They are rebelling against Assyria. This is the Syro/Ephraimite war of 734 BC.

v. 2 A scary situation for Judah. What should they do? Who should they turn to?

Three choices: Submit to Ephraim/Syria Ally with Assyria Trust God.

v. 3 God had Isaiah name his son Shear-Jashub (a remnant will return)

God says I will protect you and a remnant will return.

v. 4 This is how we should react when things look really bad—when it feels like our enemies will overpower us.

 -be careful.

 -keep calm.

 -do not be afraid or lose heart. Trust in God.

Q: When under stress from things in the world, do you keep calm, or do you get afraid and lose heart? How have you done with Covid?

What about if you lost your job or were diagnosed with cancer or your child went off the rails, spiritually?

v. 4,5 Rezin and Remaliah’s son (Pekah of Israel). Is there sarcasm here? Old what’s-his-name…)

Rezin and Pekah are mere humans. [If you trust God] v. 7 it will not happen.

v. 8 Ephraim will be shattered! (which happened during Isaiah’s ministry)

The question for today: Who do you trust? Who do you depend on when the going gets tough?

v.9 A great quote. But… If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.

Life will throw some “stuff” at you. A course you cannot pass. Non-Christians who are persecuting you or tempting you to drink or whatever…

Like we said, the key message to humans of Isaiah is that we need to maintain faith and reliance on God.

So, who will you rely on? Assyria or God? Money, health, status, education or God?

Isaiah 7:10-12. Ahaz refuses to ask for a sign—a miracle from God. Is this a good thing? Should we ask for a miracle? Ahaz does not turn to God.

God: I want you to step out on faith and rely on me to get you through it.

Ahaz: No, I plan on relying on Assyria.

Isaiah 7:13-17 God says, “I will give you a sign,” alright… But you, Ahaz, will not see that sign.

v. 14 “you” is not Ahaz. It is us! How do I know this? (you is plural)

v. 14 The sign? The virgin (young maiden) will give birth to a son who will be God-with-us. Jesus is called God-with-us in Matthew 1:22 and Matthew 28:20.

Surely Jesus will be with us always, until the end of the age.

[Aside: The Hebrew word young maiden, *alma* is ambiguous. It is not the word virgin, but it is never used of a married person in the Bible and the Septuagint has virgin, as only this would be a sign. So, yes! This is a prophecy that the successor to Ahaz/David will be born of a virgin.]

Jesus is God-with-us. Ahaz should have recognized this, but he did not look for the sign. Instead, he trusted in Assyria.

v. 16 The prophecy was fulfilled in Ahaz’ day, but not in a good way. The son of Ahaz is Hezekiah. 722 BC (12 years later) The land of Rezin (Aram) and Pekah (Samaria/Ephraim/Israel/Northern Kingdom) were laid waste v. 17 The Lord… will bring the king of Assyria.

The message: Trust in me!!! Like the Messiah, I will be with you!!!

Isaiah 7:18-25 This is exactly what happened! The Lord whistled for bees from Assyria. Assyria will come, will destroy Samaria and nearly destroy Judah.

Do you get the message?

Isaiah 9:1-7

Obviously a prophecy of the Messiah, how does Jesus fulfil vs 1-2?  (see the maps in the power point)

Isa 9:6-7  To us a child is born… A messianic prophecy. This is the same child of a virgin in Isaiah 7:14. What will Messiah be like?

v. 6 He will be a Son.

v. 6 He will be a governor, v. 7 He will reign on David’s throne (fulfilling 2 Sam 7:16 in which God promised that David would never fail to have a descendant on his throne)

v. 6. He will be called Wonderful Couselor (the Holy Spirit), Might God (Jesus) and Everlasting Father. Here we see the trinity.

He will be called Prince of Peace.

He will rule forever (no end)

His kingdom will be upheld by justice and righteousness.

v. 7 Messiah/Jesus will reign on David’s throne. (The promise: 2 Sam 7:16.)

**Isaiah 36-38 Faithful Hezekiah.**

Isaiah 36:1-3 The 14th year of Hezekiah 701 BC. (about 35 years later)

Sennacherib took all the fortified cities of Judah, including the brutal destruction and captivity of Lachish . (see the photos in the power point)

Like Ahaz, Hezekiah has 3 choices: 1. Submit to Assyria, 2. seek an alliance with Egypt or 3. rely on God.

Let us imagine that in this case, Sennacherib (or his field commander) will represent Satan. What is Satan’s strategy here? What are you tempted to feel right now?

Isaiah 36:4-22

Satan’s schemes. Satan to you: v. 5 On whom are you relying?

v. 6 Egypt is a splintered reed of a staff. Egypt is no help to you.

v. 7 On Jehovah? I already took all your towns. Face reality. Look around you. Do you really think God is in control?

Don’t rely on Hezekiah. He is a fanatic. He even tore down your high places. Don’t listen to your preacher. He is out of touch with the real world.

v. 8 The world says, “Come, let’s bargain. I’ll give you 2000 horses (if you can put riders on them, you pipsqueak nation). Let’s reach a compromise. You can go to church, be religious, as long as you continue to rely on the world for your true power and strength. I’ll give you a great position with benefits (but you will have to be out of town, not take care of your family and miss church)

v. 10 Satan: God told me to do this.

v. 11 Us to Satan: Please do not go after our young disciples. (Satan does not agree)

v. 14 Do not rely on God for deliverance. That is foolishness. This is what your worldly friends say.

v. 16 This is what Satan says: Make peace with me. I will take care of you (but you will be my slave). Make compromises with the world. It is what everyone does, even the “Christian” people.

v 18-20 Have the other gods saved them? Christianity is not logical. Only weak people are Christians.

v. 20 A fatal error on the part of the field commander: How can Jehovah deliver Jerusalem from my hand?

He is calling out God. A bad choice. The guy who did this was dead the next morning, by the way)

v. 21 (wisely) They refused to answer Satan. When Satan throws his junk at you, sometimes just keep your head down and do what is right.

Do not engage in a debate with your worldly friends. Just do the right thing and let your life speak for itself.

Isaiah 37:1-20 Hezekiah’s faithful response.

Read Is 37:1-4 Hezekiah sets a great example of how to trust in Jehovah:

v. 1 Hezekiah puts on sackcloth. He humbles himself before God at the temple.

v. 2 He seeks the advice of his spiritual mentor, Isaiah.

v. 3 Hezekiah repents and decides to rely on Jehovah, not on Egypt.

v. 4 Isaiah tells him to pray for the remnant in Jerusalem. Great symbolism.

Read 37:14-20 Hezekiah’s prayer. A great example.

v. 16 You alone are God.

v. 17 Notice Isaiah’s boldness. He calls boldly on God to intervene.

v. 18-19 Isaiah is “real” with God about what is going on. I am in trouble, God. I am in debt, God. I do not know how I will pass this test, God. The person I am studying with has a hard heart, God.

v. 20 But he prays boldly, nevertheless.

Isaiah 37:21-25 God’s response.

v. 21 Because you prayed this. Amazing. God had a different plan, but because of the prayer of a single faithful man, he changed the entire direction of the war!!!!

v. 23 You made a really big mistake, Sennacherib, when you decided to ridicule and blaspheme me!

Like Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4:30 “Is this not the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my majesty and for the glory of my majesty?”

Is this not a great Hope program that exists because of my hard work and dedication?

Is this not an awesome Bible group, the result of my hard work and spirituality?

God’s answer: Read Isaiah 37:30-35 God rules the nations.

- In the third year…

-a remnant

-from Mt. Zion a band of survivors. We are that remnant, that band of survivors.

v. 35 God: I will defend this city!!! I will save it for my sake.

Here is this week’s memory passage.

Isaiah 37:36-37 God vindicates the faith of Hezekiah. God rules the nations.

Conclusion:

Let us not be like Ahaz who refused to seek a sign from God, but who instead sought help in a tough situation from the world.

Let us be like Hezekiah who relied on God in spite of terrible and seemingly impossible circumstances. God vindicated Hezekiah and he will vindicate you.