

## Immanuel, God's Own Sign

### Scripture Reading — Isaiah 7:1-16

*“The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.”*  
Isaiah 7:14 —

Isaiah preached at a time when the northern kingdom of Israel was allied with powerful Syria (Aram). Pekah, king of Israel, and Rezin, king of Syria, threatened to invade Judah and overwhelm Jerusalem. Ahaz, king of Judah, refused to trust the Lord for protection. Instead, his strategy was to forge a counteralliance with Assyria (2 Kings 16), an alliance that Isaiah strongly opposed.

In the face of such foolishness, Isaiah prophesied that Ahaz’s enemies would have no future. Within sixty-five years Israel would be too shattered to be called a nation. To challenge Ahaz to trust God instead of his own political maneuverings, Isaiah invited him to ask God for a sign. Ahaz gave a pious-sounding but unbelieving response: “I will not put the LORD to the test.” Human unbelief, though, is no roadblock for God, who gave a sign anyway: “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.”

In Genesis 3:15, God had offered hope through “the offspring” of the woman. Now a bit of the mystery surrounding that promise began to lift. God himself would break through the barriers of time and mortality in order to join with humanity. The ultimate assurance of God’s care—given to Ahaz and to us—is the assurance that God has “entered our neighborhood”; he has come to live among us in the birth of his Son (John 1:14)!

### Prayer

*Gracious Lord, thank you for coming in Christ through the virgin Mary, and for Jesus’s sinless humanity, which qualified him to be my Redeemer. In my Savior’s name, Amen.*

**Devotion topics:** [Bible](#), [Books of the Bible](#), [Isaiah](#)

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