

Stand Firm in Faith

Scripture Reading — Isaiah 7:1-14; 8:9-10

“If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.” — Isaiah 7:9

Today’s reading in Isaiah takes place many years after the kingdom of Israel had divided. The northern part, made up of ten tribes, was still called Israel (and sometimes Ephraim) and their capital was Samaria. They had hopelessly walked away from God. The southern part, known as Judah (plus the tribe of Benjamin), was not far behind. Judah was under attack by Aram (Syria) and Israel. In a panic, King Ahaz of Judah turned away from God and looked to the powerful king of Assyria for help (2 Kings 16).

Isaiah told Ahaz not to fear but to stand firm with faith in God. Israel and Syria would soon be shattered, he said. God even offered to give Ahaz a sign of his own choosing to prove that he could trust God. But Ahaz refused. So God, the true King of kings, gave both Ahaz and the house of David a sign. God said a virgin would have a son, and he would be called Immanuel, which means “God with us.”

How does that relate to us? A week from today will be Christmas. Matthew describes the birth of Christ as God’s miraculous fulfillment of the sign given to Ahaz. Jesus was born, and he is Immanuel, “God with us” (see Matthew 1:9, 23).

We may be tempted to lose heart because of warring nations or life-threatening events, but this sign remains our hope. Immanuel has come and is coming again. Stand firm in faith, sisters and brothers, for “if God is for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31).

Prayer

Lord, help us to stand firm in faith. Thank you that in Jesus nothing can separate us from your love. Amen.

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