

# DELIVERANCE THROUGH GOD'S PRESENCE: A SIGN GIVEN IN A VIRGIN'S CHILD NAMED IMMANUEL, GOD WITH US ISAIAH 07:10 – 08:10

## *Introduction*

Hope – having a great expectation within the heart – is one of the strongest forces on earth. Hope can bring about marvellous and unbelievable results. Great achievements are accomplished by people who have dreams and who are stirred to action by the hope that they can fulfil those dreams. Now think about the opposite of hope, about a person who is gripped by a sense of hopelessness. When hopelessness sets in, a person feels there is no future for him, no reason to dream, to aspire, to achieve or to solve problems. Hopelessness demoralizes a person, makes him pessimistic, cynical, despondent, discouraged and often throws him into despair and depression. But not hope. Hope is the very opposite. When strong hope fills the heart of a person, the person looks to the future and believes that dreams can be accomplished. A longing within the person's soul is aroused to tackle the task, solve the problem, finish the project, and experience the joy of the dream.

Hope, having a dream of a bright and glorious future – this is the thrust of the present Scripture. The people of Judah and Jerusalem were facing a severe crisis, that of being attacked by Syria and the Northern Kingdom of Israel. For years these two nations had been bitter enemies, but the threat by Assyria aroused them to form an alliance. Apparently Syria and Israel strongly urged King Ahaz of Judah to join the alliance, but Ahaz refused. As a result, the coalition launched an invasion against Judah and set up a siege around the capital Jerusalem. Their purpose was to conquer the nation and to set up a puppet king who would support their rebellion against the Assyrian Empire. This is, *The Deliverance from Threatening Enemies (Syria and Israel): Hope Given Through Five Clear Signs*. We discuss two of them here.

1. Deliverance through believing in God's mercy (7:1 -9).
2. Deliverance through God's Presence (7:10-25).
3. Deliverance through heeding God's warning of impending judgment (8:1-10).
4. Deliverance through spiritual separation (8:11-22).
5. Deliverance through God's light shining in the darkness of this world (9:1-7).

## **I. *Isaiah 07:10-25 Deliverance through God's Presence: A Sign Given in a Virgin's Child Named Immanuel, God with Us***

When enemies threaten God's people, they can be delivered by God's presence. King Ahaz refused to believe God's promise. If he had trusted the LORD, he would have broken his alliance with Assyria and led the people to seek the LORD for deliverance. But Ahaz was

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an unbeliever, a leader who put his total trust in the arm of the flesh, the power of military alliances. Thus, the LORD determined to send a second sign to King Ahaz, a sign that is one of the great promises of Holy Scripture. This sign would be that a child would be born to a virgin. The name of the child would be Immanuel, which means *God with us* (v. 14).

1. Because Ahaz had continued in unbelief, the LORD soon sent Isaiah with a second message for the king (vv. 11-13). In a last attempt to stir belief within Ahaz, the LORD made an unusual offer to the king. Ahaz could ask the LORD for a supernatural sign. No matter what the sign was, God would grant the king's request. But Ahaz rejected the offer, using the excuse that he would not put the LORD to a test. In this statement, the king was exposing a wicked, hypocritical heart. Although God's Word forbids putting the LORD to a test (Deu 6:16), this offer was being made by God Himself. When God makes a promise to a person, that individual is not putting God to a test by claiming the promise. Ahaz's refusal was not due to his concern for obeying God's Word. Ahaz was an evil ruler, a man who wanted nothing to do with God. He had even barricaded the door of the temple, disallowing worship therein (2 Chr 28:24). His real reason for rejecting the offer of the LORD was that he had already decided to trust Assyria, not the LORD (2 Kng 16:5-7). When Ahaz rejected God's offer, righteous anger surged through Isaiah's body and he immediately rebuked the king. Ahaz had exhausted God's patience because of his unbelief and rejection of the LORD.
2. Whether Ahaz wanted a sign or not, the LORD was going to give a sign and the sign would be supernatural. Furthermore, the sign would not be for Ahaz's benefit but, rather, for the benefit of the whole "house of David." Note that this sign would be given by the LORD Himself. The sign would be that of a virgin who would bear a son named Immanuel, meaning *God with us*. (vv. 14-16). Of course, we may assume that this sign had an *immediate fulfilment* for the king and the people of that day. Most likely Isaiah's wife was a virgin before she conceived her first son or else some other virgin woman would get married and bear a son whom she and the father would name "God with us." Throughout the years while the child grew into manhood, people would be reminded of God's promise to always be with them if they would simply trust Him. Note that the child would be reared in poverty, reared during a time when only the curds of milk and honey were available for food. It would be a time of national crisis. Notice, too, the promise of God: when the child was old enough to know right from wrong, approximately a two-year period, both Syria and Israel would be destroyed. What a wonderful promise from the LORD to King Ahaz and the people of Judah.

But even more wonderful is the *ultimate fulfilment* of this prophecy, which is given to the people of all succeeding generations. The prophecy finds its ultimate fulfilment in Jesus Christ, who was born of the virgin Mary (Mt. 1:22-23; see *Virgin Birth of Christ*, Isa 7:14)

3. After explaining this second sign, the prophet Isaiah warned King Ahaz of God's future judgment (vv. 17-25). Although Judah would escape destruction by Syria and

Israel, the nation would face the most severe crises of its history. The people would soon suffer the worst enemy attacks they had ever known, the worst suffering since the birth of the nation when the ten tribes broke away.

- a. *In that day* — the day of God's judgment — the LORD would whistle for Egypt and Assyria to attack Judah (vv. 18-19). Like swarms of flies and bees, enemy soldiers would cover the whole countryside of Judah. Throughout Ahaz's reign, he continued to trust Assyria for help during raids and attacks by surrounding nations. Assyria responded to Ahaz's appeal, accepting a large fee for Assyrian protection. However, the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileaser ended up oppressing Ahaz instead of helping him (see 2 Chr 28:16-21). Throughout the days of Ahaz, the Assyrians caused enormous problems for Judah. And in the days of Hezekiah, Assyria finally invaded Judah because the king sought to make an alliance with Egypt against Assyria (see notes, Isa 30:1-14).
- b. *In that day* — the day of God's judgment — the LORD would use Assyria to execute His judgment against Judah (v. 20). The people would suffer utter humiliation at the hands of the Assyrians. The enemy would be like a razor, shaving off the hair of their captives, totally humiliating them.
- c. *In that day* — the day of God's judgment — the people would also suffer utter deprivation at the hands of the Assyrians (vv. 21-22). A farmer would struggle to have one cow and two sheep. The milk they produce will be enough to sustain the survivors remaining in the land. They would have only a small amount of milk curds and wild honey to eat.
- d. *In that day* — the day of God's judgment — the cultivated land would be utterly wasted (vv. 23-25). Fruitful vineyards would be overtaken by briars and thorns. The land would become wild, good only for honey and wild game. As for the cultivated farms, they too would be overtaken by briars and thorns. Only animals would graze in the fields, trampling down the soil.

**Thought 1.** When enemies attack us, we have the most wonderful promise. The LORD's *presence* will deliver us. If we trust Jesus Christ as our Saviour and walk in His righteousness, we can call upon Him for deliverance. And He will deliver us. No matter how fierce the enemy attack may be, the Lord Jesus Christ has the power to rescue us. He can empower us to walk through the most terrifying danger, the power to conquer and overcome any enemy. A victorious life — triumphing over all enemies — is the promise given us through Jesus Christ.

**Mat 18:20** *“For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.”*

**Mat 28:19-20** *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

**Exo 33:14** *The Lord replied, “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”*

**Heb 13:5-6** *Keep your lives [behavior, conduct] free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"*

**Gen. 28:15** *"I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."*

**Deu 20:1** *When you go to war against your enemies and see horses and chariots and an army greater than yours, do not be afraid of them, because the LORD your God, who brought you up out of Egypt, will be with you.*

**Psa 28:7** *The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song.*

**Psa 40:17** *Yet I am poor and needy; may the Lord think of me. You are my help and my deliverer: O my God, do not delay.*

**Isa 41:10** *So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

**Isa 43:1-2** *But now, this is what the LORD says he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze."*

### ISAIAH 07:14 VIRGIN BIRTH OF CHRIST

*"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel." **Isaiah 07:14***

The virgin birth of the Messiah or Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, is one of the major doctrines of the Bible. Because of its importance, it cannot be overstressed. Note these facts about the prophecy of the virgin birth:

1. The Lord Himself was to give *the sign*. *The sign* did not refer to the prophecy but to the *given Child*. Scripture is saying that the Lord Himself would send the Child to the world. Or, to state it another way, the child would come to the people as a *sign* or *gift* from God Himself.
2. The *coming* of the Child would be a *sign*. That is, His coming was to be very significant for the people. Therefore, the people must pay attention, for God was sending the Child to earth for the very purpose of being a *gift*, a *sign* for the people.

3. The word *behold* (*hinneh*) grabs the attention of the reader, stressing the importance of what is being said. *Behold* means to look closely, to pay close attention, to watch carefully. What was being predicted is of utmost importance. What was the prediction? The most significant birth of all times was being announced.
4. The *sign* was given to the whole house of David, which means everyone (see v. 13). The word "you" in verse 14 is plural, indicating that every person throughout the nation was to pay attention to the sign. By strong implication, the sign was being given to the *house of humanity*.
5. The virgin was to *conceive and bear a son*. First, note the definite article "the" (NIV) before "virgin" (*ha almah*). This indicates that "the virgin" or unmarried woman was a person formerly referred to or promised. Henry Morris suggests that she is the mother of the "promised seed" who was to crush the head of the serpent or devil (Gen 3:15) (Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record*. p. 122 ) Of course, the *promised seed* is a clear reference to Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah who destroyed the works of the devil (Gal 3:16, 19; also see Jn. 12:30-31; Heb 2:14-15; 1 Jn. 3:8). Of extreme significance is this fact: if Jesus Christ had not been born of a virgin, He would have been a mere man who needed a saviour as much as any other person. Consequently, He could not have died for the sins of mankind nor destroyed him who held the power of death, that is, the devil.
6. In his excellent commentary *The Book of Isaiah*, Edward J. Young states that the definite article "the" used with the word '*almah* is used in a generic sense, pointing to a particular yet unknown person. He says:

*Isaiah's purpose is to distinguish the 'almah from some other kind of woman. As though he were to say, "It is not an old woman or a married woman which I behold in vision, not a bride or a girl necessarily, but an 'almah." Hence, in our English translation we may best bring out Isaiah's force by the indefinite article. By this means the prophet focuses the attention upon the 'almah.*

*At the outset we may confidently assert that the word 'almah is never employed of a married woman. At least one of these occurrences makes it clear that the word may designate one who is truly a virgin (Gen 24:43). Rebekah is called an 'almah, but she is furthermore designated a b<sup>e</sup>thulah, and it is said of her that a man had not known her. In one passage, namely, Proverbs 30:19, the word 'almah may signify an immoral girl, but it does not indicate a married girl. Perhaps the closest equivalent in English is the word damsel or maiden. Neither of these is generally employed of a married woman. Yet even these words may not be precise equivalents, for whereas they could possibly refer to married women,*

*'almah does not do so. For these reasons it may be wisest, after all, to render 'almah in English by "virgin."* (Edward J. Young. *The Book of Isaiah*, Vol. 1. p. 287)

7. In the six usages of the Hebrew word *'almah*, H.C. Leupold points out the following facts:

*Gen 24:43* – The whole context surrounding this verse clearly indicates that Rebecca is a virgin.

*Exo 2:8* – Again, the whole context surrounding this verse implies that Miriam, Moses' sister, is a virgin.

*Psa 68:25* – This verse refers to women with honourable reputations. They are women who are worthy or qualified to participate in religious services.

*Song of S. 1:3* – This woman is worthy to be desired by King Solomon. Her reputation is not questionable.

*Song of S. 6:8* – These women stand over queens and concubines in moral purity; therefore the fact that they are virgins is implied.

*Prov 30:19* – This passage includes the expression, "the way of a man with a maiden." But then immediately there is a contrast with the adulteress (v. 20), which places the maiden in the category of the unblemished.

Mr. Leupold concludes his position with this comment: "Adding up the results of this investigation we conclude that *'almah* in Hebrew signifies a marriageable young lady of unblemished reputation. It cannot be denied that such a one is to be classified as a virgin." (H.C. Leupold, *Exposition of Isaiah*, Vol. 1, p. 156). Note the scholarly strength of Mr. Leupold's position.

8. The Messiah or Saviour had to be born of a virgin, completely apart from a human father. If He had not been, He simply would have been another man. As a mere man, He would have needed a Saviour as much as any other person. But since Jesus Christ was given birth by the Holy Spirit of God (the divine nature) through Mary (the human nature), He is the God-Man. His nature is perfect, the divine-human nature. Christ's nature is totally different from the nature of any other created being. He is the Perfect Being, the sinless Person who has been raised from the dead (due to His sinless, holy nature) and given the perfect body. As the perfect, sinless Person, Jesus Christ stands before the human race as the Ideal Man. He is the *Pattern* of what all people should be. As the Ideal Man, He could pay the penalty for the sins of every person. His death would thereby become the Ideal Death and cover the penalty for everyone. Through His death, every person can be set free from the penalty of rebellion against God and become acceptable to God.

Again, this is the critical importance of the virgin birth. If Jesus Christ had been *mere man*, He would have needed a Saviour as much as any of us do. But since He was born of a virgin by the Spirit of God coming upon Mary, He is the God-Man. As the God-Man, he was able to live as a human being and to secure righteousness — a sinless perfection — for us. Because He kept His divine nature and entered the world through a virgin, He was able to live a sinless life *and* to die for us. Thereby, He is able to save us from our sins and make us acceptable to God. The words of Warren W. Wiersbe state it well.

*Of course, the ultimate fulfilment of this prophecy is in our Lord Jesus Christ, who is "God with us" (Mat 1:18-25; Luke 1:31-35). The virgin birth of Christ is a key doctrine; for if Jesus Christ is not God come in sinless human flesh, then we have no Saviour. Jesus had to be born of a virgin, apart from human generation, because He existed before his mother. He was not just born in this world; he came down from heaven into the world (John 3:13; 6:33; 41-42 50-51, 58). Jesus was sent by the Father and therefore came into the world having a human mother but not a human father (4:34; 5:23-24, 30; 9:4). (Warren W. Wiersbe. *Be Comforted*, p. 33)*

9. The Son was to be named Immanuel, meaning *God with us*. As long as this particular Son was known by people, they would be reminded that God was always present with them and caring for them. When a person is honest as well as skilled in studying and understanding the Scripture, it is difficult to understand how he can deny that the clear meaning of '*almah* in Isaiah's mind (and the LORD God of Scripture) is *virgin*.

*While, technically, virgin is not required, the context clearly necessitates the usage as it suggests something extraordinary...In the New Testament, both Mat. 1:23 and Luke 1:27 have parthenos (GED #3795), making it clear that the Messiah was born of a virgin." (The Old Testament Hebrew-English Dictionary, p. 516)*

**Mat 1:23** *"The virgin [parthenos] will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" — which means, "God with us."*

**Luke 1:27** *To a virgin [parthenon] pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.*

*Primarily "parthenos" [virgin] denotes "an unmarried girl" in secular Greek. Gradually through usage, the word's range of meaning narrowed and it came to refer specifically to a young girl who had not had sexual relations. Another term for any young woman, married or not, is neanis. Parthenos, however, was usually reserved for "virgin." (The New Testament English, p. 91) □*

## II. *Isaiah 08:01-10 Deliverance through Heeding God's Warning of Impending Judgment:*

### *Symbolized in the Name of Isaiah's Child Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz*

When enemies threaten God's people, they can be delivered by heeding God's warnings of impending judgment. After King Ahaz's second refusal to heed God's warning, God gave the people a third sign. However, this time the sign was a fourfold warning that judgment lay just over the horizon. Again, this sign was symbolized in the name of one of Isaiah's children, a son named Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz. Note the Scripture and outline:

1. Even before this particular son of Isaiah was born, God instructed the prophet to record the child's name on a large scroll. He was to take the scroll to Uriah the priest and Zechariah the father-in-law of King Ahaz (2 Chr 29:1). They were to witness that the name had been written down before the child was born. These two witnesses were unbelievers who served as chief officials to King Ahaz. Uriah the priest (a false priest) had helped Ahaz build a heathen altar in the temple area (2 Kng 16:10-16). By having these two unbelieving officials sign the document, their signatures would prove once the judgment of God actually fell that God had forewarned the people. His Word would be proven true. Therefore, the people needed to heed His warnings when they were issued.
2. In mercy, God gave a third sign, a third warning to the people of Judah. Judgment was at hand unless they heeded His Word, repented and turned back to Him (vv. 3-6). In fulfilment of the sign, when Isaiah slept with his wife (a prophetess) she conceived and gave birth to a son. As the LORD had instructed, Isaiah named his son Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, which is the longest name in the Bible. The child's name means quick to plunder, swift to the spoil. The child was a sign of coming judgment upon Syria and Israel. Even before the child could speak — about one or two years old — these two nations were to be destroyed by Assyria. As pointed out above, Assyria attacked both Damascus (Syria) and Samaria (Israel), plundering the wealth of both nations. This means that Isaiah's prophecy was given somewhere around 734 B.C. (John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, p. 1050).

But the child also served as a sign of coming judgment upon the people of Judah (vv. 5-6). They had rejected the gentle waters of *Shiloah*, apparently a small stream somewhere around Jerusalem. The descriptive phrase *flowing waters* is a picture of God's care and provision for His people down through the centuries. Instead of trusting the LORD's care and provision, they were focused on rejoicing over the deaths of the Syrian king Rezin and the Israelite king Pekah. Both men died in defence of their country against Assyria.

3. Because the people rejected the LORD, Isaiah described the coming judgment (vv. 7-8). God would send upon them the mighty army of Assyria because they rejected the gentle flowing waters of *Shiloah* — the LORD's care and provision. Like the mighty floodwaters of the Euphrates River, the war machine of Assyria would sweep across the



land of Judah. And note, the floodwaters would reach all the way up to the neck (that is, Jerusalem), meaning that the waters would nearly, but not totally, drown the people. Assyria would be like a mighty bird of prey: its outspread wings would spread its destructive power over all the land. Only Jerusalem would escape the coming devastation. However, the people behind its walls would experience terrible suffering. Note the reference to the land, that it belonged to Immanuel (v. 8). Despite the judgment and devastation, the Lord still possessed the land. Immanuel — God's presence — guaranteed that God had not forgotten His people. Even in the midst of judgment, the LORD would be with the true believer, strengthening him to walk through the judgment.

4. God gave great assurance of deliverance to His people, to the genuine believers (vv. 9-10). The nations of the world would raise their war cry against Judah; but these nations would be broken, shattered and destroyed. They would plan their strategies, yet their plans would prove futile. Immanuel (the LORD) would be with His people (7:14) and the promised land was His (8:8).

**Thought 1.** God warns us of His wrath to come. The terrifying Day of Judgment is imminent for all who oppose God's people and stand against them. When a person threatens us — whether verbally or physically — he will face the terrifying judgment of God. No mistreatment or injustice escapes the eye of God, especially the abuse of people and, in particular, genuine believers. If we refuse to heed God's warnings, we will not escape. Listen to His warning of terrifying judgment:

**2 Pet 2:9** *If this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.*

**2 Pet 3:7** *By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.*

**Jude 1:14-15** *“See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”*

**Rev 1:7** *Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be!*

**Rev 20:11-15** *Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. ■*