



AHAZ'S SIGN

The story of Christmas began long before those events in Bethlehem. Holy men and women of God looked forward to the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ virtually from the dawn of creation.

This is that story.

More than 700 years before the birth of the Savior, the people of Jerusalem were frightened. Their peace was threatened by a ruthless power from the north, a country called Assyria, who was taking over nation after nation.

Judah's neighbors, Ephraim and Syria were hastily forming political alliances to guard against the threat. Judah's king, Ahaz he refused to join the alliance, choosing instead to bargain with Assyria directly for his nation's safety. That angered the Kings of Ephraim and Syria and they promised to invade Judah and remove Ahaz as king. It was a tense time for the nation of Judah.

Isaiah the prophet came to Ahaz and told him not to fear the two allied kings. Don't listen to them, be at peace he said, and trust the Lord. But the threat was too much for Ahaz. In his heart he could not find the faith to believe it.

How could he? Their doom, Judah's doom seemed sure no matter what Isaiah promised.

Isaiah knew that and he said to Ahaz, "Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above."

To seek signs of ourselves is evil, but when the Lord commands us to ask for one, it is evil not to ask for a sign.

Moreover and to be told that his sign can come from the depths of hell or the heights of heaven, whatever Ahaz wants, must mean that God is very determined that this doubting man believe His promises.

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Stubbornly, Ahaz refused to ask for the sign.

Isaiah was disgusted with him and all his nation, and said the Lord would give him and them a sign anyway. “Behold,” He said addressing himself now to all the nation, “a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel.” Which means God with us.

A virgin bearing a son? That’s impossible. Yet, that is exactly what God did on that first Christmas when Jesus was born. The impossible.

But Ahaz would not live to see that sign fulfilled. Christ would not be born for another seven hundred years. So why was the sign given? Because prophecy stands beyond the generations.

This was not just a sign to Ahaz, but to all the children of God that doubt Him and His promises. Every Christmas is a reminder that God did once and can do again the impossible.

Any of you listening to me that are troubled for any reason and seek peace, need only look at the miracle of Christmas to awaken your latent faith. This is, ironically, the season of the coldest weather and yet for a time, the warmest hearts.

When Christmas comes “God is with us” again, in our hearts, our homes, and even our music. One need only look how our world changes this time of year to know that Christ is still in Christmas.

Indeed, Christmas is an everlasting sign to a doubting world that God is still with us and that He loves us that He can still do the impossible.

Glenn Rawson
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