

Immanuel: God is With Us pt 1

Trust Him in the Crisis

By Jeff Noblit

sermonaudio.com

Bible Text: Isaiah 7:1-16

Preached on: Sunday, November 30, 2014

Anchored in Truth Ministries

1915 Avalon Ave.

Muscle Shoals, AL 35661

Website: www.anchoredintruth.org

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/anchoredintruth

Well, while you were watching the end of the ballgame, I was in my bedroom with my grandson. He was watching Bubble Guppies and I was studying Isaiah 7. I really mean this, I enjoy a good ballgame but Isaiah chapter 7 is better than a ballgame. It's better than a national championship. If you haven't got that in perspective, you're not saved. There's nothing wrong with enjoying a ballgame. My daughter is going to play one tomorrow and I'm think I'm going to drive to Arkansas and watch it. There's nothing wrong with a ballgame, but there's perspective, there are priorities and God takes care of that when you get regenerate. Amen? We don't act super spiritual like we can't enjoy stuff, we can, but nothing compares to him. Or I can't think of anything better than Isaiah 7 and Bubble Guppies. It's just good stuff.

We're going to talk about Immanuel, which means of course, "God with us," and three parts to that. The first part today will be Immanuel, God is with us, you can trust him in a crisis. You might even say, well, you must trust him in the crisis. Isaiah 7, beginning in verse 1, we'll go down through to verse 16.

1 Now it came about in the days of Ahaz, the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Aram and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to wage war against it, but could not conquer it.

Now let me just stop right there for a commentary. That sounds so complicated. What you have here is you've got the northern kingdom, Israel, and the southern kingdom, Judah. There has been a division and the northern kingdom, Israel, is besieging the southern kingdom, Judah, and the northern kingdom, Israel, has come into an alliance with the Aramaeans, we also call them the Syrians, later they became known Assyria or the Syrians. So you've got the northern kingdom which represents the world and the flesh uniting with the pagan entity, the Aramaeans, to come against tiny remnant, Judah, the godly remnant which represents the true church. That's what we just read. Alright, that's what's happening. Verse 2,

2 When it was reported to the house of David, [that's Judah, Jerusalem] saying, "The Arameans have camped in Ephraim," his heart and the hearts

of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake with the wind. 3 Then the LORD said to Isaiah, "Go out now to meet Ahaz, you and your son Shear-jashub, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, on the highway to the fuller's field, 4 and say to him, 'Take care and be calm, have no fear and do not be fainthearted because of these two stubs of smoldering firebrands, on account of the fierce anger of Rezin and Aram and the son of Remaliah. 5 Because Aram, with Ephraim and the son of Remaliah, has planned evil against you, saying, 6 "Let us go up against Judah and terrorize it, and make for ourselves a breach in its walls and set up the son of Tabeel as king in the midst of it," 7 thus says the Lord GOD: "It shall not stand nor shall it come to pass.

Boy, I like verse 7. Verse 8,

8 "For the head of Aram is Damascus and the head of Damascus is Rezin (now within another 65 years Ephraim will be shattered, so that it is no longer a people), 9 and the head of Ephraim is Samaria and the head of Samaria is the son of Remaliah. If you will not believe, you surely shall not last. ""

10 Then the LORD spoke again to Ahaz, saying, 11 "Ask a sign for yourself from the LORD your God; make it deep as Sheol or high as heaven." 12 But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, nor will I test the LORD!" 13 Then he said, "Listen now, O house of David! Is it too slight a thing for you to try the patience of men, that you will try the patience of my God as well? 14 Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel. 15 He will eat curds and honey at the time He knows enough to refuse evil and choose good. 16 For before the boy will know enough to refuse evil and choose good, the land whose two kings you dread will be forsaken."

Tiny Judah, the godly remnant, is in a crisis. Little Judah has been suffering great land loss, extensive territorial losses for some time now. Now finally, the enemy is at the gate. As you know in this day, most entities, most empires, lived behind walled cities and now the northern kingdom called Israel, backslidden wickedness is what they represent, and they have formed an alliance with the ungodly Aramaeans, the Syrians, and now together they are coming against tiny Judah. They are besieging it. It reminds me of the movie "Alamo" where Santa Anna and the Mexican troops with vast numbers, surrounded the Alamo and they just kind of taunted and terrorized them day after day after day. That's what's happening here. They're just kind of out there. They might march a little closer and act like they are going to climb one of the walls and they'll back off a little bit and that's a part of warfare, particularly in this day because if you can get the people full of anxiety and worry and terror, they are easier to defeat.

So that's what was going on and here the Bible says in verse 1, it's kind of interesting the way it words it, king Ahaz is the king of tiny remnant Judah who was being terrorized

but the enemy is Rezin, king of Aram and Pekah, the son of Remaliah. Now, Pekah is the king of the northern kingdom, Israel. It's interesting that the Bible says that he is the son of Remaliah. Now, in this day, if you come from a no account, no good father and you yourself are no account and no good, they'll say, "Well, he's the son of So-and-so," which just means he's a chip off the old block. He's as sorry and as ungodly and as unrighteous as his daddy was. So the prophet who is writing this wants to bear out that God has nothing for the northern kingdom in his heart. He knows what they are; he knows what they're about. Multigenerationally they have been caught forsakers and God deniers. Even though they would still wear some of the outward label, they had long forsaken God. Tiny Judah, though here, is being terrorized by these two kingdoms, Syria and the northern kingdom called Israel.

Now once again, notice the spiritual metaphors. We'll put this on the screen because I want you to kind of keep this in mind as we're going along. First of all, Israel, the northern kingdom at this point, represents the flesh. It represents the false church, that which would profess to be God's people and God's congregation but they are truly not. Another metaphor here, of course, the Aramaeans or the Syrians would represent the world and the devil. They would represent the worst that the world has. Here we have the professing church along with the Aramaeans or the Syrians uniting up with the world. Isn't it interesting how nothing has changed in 3,000 years? That's the way it works today. You find so many under professing Christendom today who claim to be Christianity but they are so far from the Scriptures and so far from what God has called them to be, they're just the world and the devil. Then of course, the second one on your list, the third one I'll mention is Judah. The southern kingdom always represented the godly remnant, the true church. Now, be mindful that though Judah is the godly remnant, Judah often backslid and Judah often would fall into unbelief but we see God's unmerited favor in that while he showed real obstinance against the evil of the northern kingdom, Israel, he always holds out a promise of hope for Judah that, "At least in Judah, I'm going to keep a remnant even when she backslides against me and rebels against me."

So that's basically what you have here, so in verse 2 when it says, "It was reported to the house of David, saying, 'The Arameans have camped in Ephraim,' his heart and the hearts of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake with the wind." So here we have less than three day's journey away there, the enemies are encamped in Ephraim and there's a panic now in Judah. It looks like the final assault. They had been threatening, threatening, threatening. The final march to overthrow Jerusalem is at hand and the children of Judah, the king of Judah, the people of the godly remnant, are absolutely in a panic. Terror has gripped them. It's interesting, notice what the prophet says, "the house of David." He uses that phrase, "the house of David" here is in terror. Why he says that is because he wants them to reflect back, "Back when David was your King, you, righteous Judah, devoured your enemies. You're of the house of David and now you're hunkered down trembling in fear like a little puppy." Oh, how the mighty are fallen. As a matter of fact, when David reigned as king, he required, he forced rather, the Aramaeans to submit to him. He didn't cower down in fear before them.

Now look at verse 3, "Then the LORD said to Isaiah," so here's the prophet being sent out by God to speak to the king or be a message to the king. "Go out now to meet Ahaz, you and your son Shear-jashub, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, on the highway to the fuller's field." Now, what he's doing here, he's going to check the water supply, the conduit. Of course, in this day like in many days, when you wanted to conquer a people and you wanted to overcome their walled city, you'd caught off their water supply because overwhelmingly so, they had to depend on water coming in from outside the actual city walls and if they could find out where your pools were and where your conduits came in and cut off your water, it's only a matter of time before you'll surrender to them. So a king when he knows he's besieged, would make sure he's trying to keep his water supply safe and secure from the enemy.

So God tells Isaiah, "Go out. You'll know you'll find Ahaz checking the water supply. I want you to go down there to him." He says, "I want you to take your son with you, Shear-jashub." Now, that's interesting. Here God through the prophet is trying to strengthen the faith of terrified Judah, trying to let them know that in the crisis, trust God. Trust God. And God in order to encourage Judah, sends a little boy. Interesting. A little boy. "Take your son," and all indications were that he was just a little lad," Shear-jashub." Well, the Israelites, the citizens of Judah, knew what Shear-jashub meant. It meant "a remnant will remain." God's promise, a remnant will remain. Trust God. So Isaiah walks up, he's got his little boy and by the way, Isaiah's name means "the Lord is salvation," so God sent in these strong messages. His son's name, Shear-jashub, means "a remnant is going to remain." God is going to remain. A godly remnant in Judah. "Don't be afraid of Syria or the Aramaeans in the northern kingdom. Don't fret over them. Don't worry about them. Don't lose your head. A remnant is going to remain." So here we see that man makes plans for the future but, my friend, God plans the future. I mean, humanly speaking there was every reason to be in terror. Humanly speaking, the Aramaeans are strong. They have united with the northern kingdom and these are ungodly people. They have no concern for the city of Jerusalem and the surviving remnant trying to seek the Lord. They just want power and control and they want to cause a breach in the wall and put a puppet king on the throne in Jerusalem and rule and control it all. God basically says, "Ahaz, if you'll just trust me, a remnant is going to remain."

Now, look at verses 4 and 5, "And say to him," this is Isaiah saying to the king of Judah, "'Take care and be calm, have no fear and do not be fainthearted.'" Four different things he says there. First of all he says in verse 4, "Take care." Basically that's the idea of "get a grip." Catch a hold of your emotions. Child of God, how many times have you been in something of a crisis, a difficulty, a challenge, and instead of going to the word of God and saying, "Here's what the word says. Here's where my faith is going to rest in this issue," you're so tempted to look to man and so tempted to put your hope out there and you have to by the enabling power of the Spirit of God in you, grab a hold of yourself and stay calm and stay anchored in truth. I like that phrase, stay anchored in truth. That's what the prophet is telling the king of Judah to do, "Stay calm."

Then notice the redundancy here, basically the same thing, "Take care, be calm, have no fear and do not be fainthearted." Now, he tells him why he should be like this. He says, the last part of verse 4, "because of these two stubs of smoldering firebrands." What a graphic picture. I love the way the Scriptures just graphically picture things. He says, "This wicked king of the Aramaeans and this Pekah, the son of Remaliah of the Northern kingdom, Israel, that have formed an alliance in coming against you, all they are is a couple of little stubs that have been pulled out of the fire. They are about completely burned up. All there is left is a little smoldering smoke. That's all they are. They've boasted to be something but the reality is they're nothing. Listen to me, child of God, when you're standing on the word of God, you're trying to live for God and you're trying to honor God and you're trying to follow biblical principles and the howling shouts and intimidations of the world and the flesh say, "That won't work. You won't survive. You won't get ahead. You won't be respected." All that is is a couple of smoldering firebrands that have no real impact. Their energies burn out. That's what he says they are.

Well, I can imagine Ahaz says, "Prophet, preacher man," that's what he probably said, "Preacher man, you might think they are nothing but I've seen their armies. They are mighty." But you see, God doesn't see how man sees. But when you're in a crisis and you're struggling in your faith to stand on the word of God, by the way, it's tough to grab a hold of yourself sometimes when it's your spouse that wants to drift away; when it's your children that you have to always love but not side with; when it's a dear friend that wants to be worldly and without being condemning or condescending, you want to try to stand on the word of God, that's a crisis and you're pulled. You've got to be careful and not lose your head. Stay calm. Stay rested in the word of God because if you lose your head and for sure if you lose your temper, you've already lost your faith. Well, that's what the prophet is saying to him here, "Don't do that."

Verse 6, this is what those two enemies are saying, "Let us go up against Judah and terrorize it," they had been doing that, "cause a sickening dread to be among them," is what that means. "And make for ourselves a breach in its walls and set up the son of Tabeel as king in the midst of it." So they have a strategy here: let's bring terror, then we're going to invade, then we're going to kind of keep everything in check but we're going to put a puppet king on the throne that will be in alliance with us. Boy, look what God says through the prophet, "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'It shall not stand nor shall it come to pass.'" You listen to me child of God, we use that phrase "true church" a lot because what else are you trying to be if you are not trying to be a true church? We're not saying it braggadociously. We're not saying it because we think we've arrived but, my dear friends, what are you trying to be if you're not trying to be a true church? If we're not going to be true, let's shut up the doors and let's go home and forget the whole thing. If you're striving to be a people of God and a true church, a lot of stuff may happen and there may be times when it looks like we're not going to make it but you listen to me, God determined a remnant will remain, Shear-jashub that's what his name means. God sent the prophet with his son, Shear-jashub, and said, "Go down there to Ahaz and tell him, 'A remnant is going to remain. Don't be afraid. Keep the course. Stay with it. Don't backup.'" I've been preaching that for 35 years. I hope it I preach it for 35 more.

I'll just give you a little story, one or two of you are in on this story. Some of you have heard something about this story. 25 years ago, you did an audacious thing in one sense, you voted for me to be your senior pastor. My goodness, once again I have to reflect on the fact that that was a bold leap of faith. I was green. I had a lot to learn. Still do and I've proven I had a lot to learn but you thought God had led me to be your pastor and you thought I was genuine and sincere and I believe by God's grace I was and am. But there were a number of people who did not want me to lead. They did not want what I had clearly shared and that was we were going to strive to be a biblical church. We would be changing some things to be more scriptural. And there was a very wealthy, prominent businessman who had had quite a leadership role in the church up to that time and he pulled two of our deacons aside and he said, "I'm leaving now that Jeff Noblit is the pastor and we're going in this new direction," which is really an old direction. And he said, "This thing won't last six months." He said, "It won't last six months." In other words, "I'm pulling my finances out." Well, this has lasted 25 years and six months so far. God said, "It will not stand." Now, God is no respecter of persons. That has nothing to do with Jeff Noblit or the deacons or you folks who stood faithful. It has to do with God and when his name and his word don't align, you listen to me, it doesn't matter what it looks like, God's remnant is going to remain, it's going to stand. And God has allowed us somehow in his grace to be steady and a faithful witness for him and his truth while other ministries go up and down and up and down and up and down. I'm glad we got off of that roller coaster. I'd rather have 40, 50 additions a year who are people who want to be a part of a true church than 150 or 200 and then three years later somebody else have a bigger carnival and they're gone.

God said, "You listen to me, king Ahaz," through the prophet, verse 7, "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'It shall not stand nor shall it come to pass.'" Why? Look at verse 8, "For the head of Aram is Damascus and the head of Damascus is Rezin (now within another 65 years Ephraim will be shattered, so that it is no longer a people)." Here's what he says, "Those two nations have only one power, they are run by men. They are run by men. They are run by mere men. Judah, your head is God." That's the difference. Now look, Judah wasn't perfect. Judah would backslide. Judah had to repent often. Judah would get worldly too but God had just chosen, "I'm going to keep a remnant of Israel," and for this season, the remnant was tiny Judah. Not the northern kingdom, Judah. These nations are mere men and they are only mere men and God says, "It's going to be 65 years and they are going to be shattered. They're going to be so destroyed they won't even be called a people anymore."

Verse 9, "The head of Ephraim is Samaria and the head of Samaria is the son of Remaliah." In other words, the prophet is saying, "You know what Remaliah was, he was nothing and now his son is just like him. He's on the throne of the northern kingdom. It's not going to come to anything. Don't worry about it." Then he tells tiny Judah, he tells the king of Judah, the last part of verse 9, "If you will not believe, you surely shall not last."

Now here we come to the interesting part which comes into the Immanuel prophecy, of course, that has its ultimate fulfillment in Christ but remember when we're dealing with the Old Testament typologies, that is, types that have their final fulfillment in New Testament revelation. Here we have a type of Christ that, of course, is finally revealed in the Lord Jesus coming, born of the Virgin Mary, but when you have typology, you cannot leave the text. In other words, this prophecy had to have also made sense to the people it was originally written to while at the same time it has its ultimate fulfillment in the New Testament revelation of Jesus. It's got to have both.

So let's look at this. Look at verse 10, if you will, actually verses 10 and 11, "Then the LORD spoke again to Ahaz, saying, 'Ask a sign for yourself from the LORD your God; make it deep as Sheol or high as heaven.'" So in verses 10 and 11, God says through the prophet to king Ahaz who is trembling, who is afraid, who is really already committed to compromise, "If you need a little encouragement, ask for a sign and I'll give you a sign that I'm going to take care of you and I'm going to protect you. Just ask for one." Now, Ahaz has already decided, 2 Kings 16 bears this out, Ahaz, king of Judah has already decided that he's not going to trust the Lord, he's going to form an alliance with Assyria. Don't get that mixed up with Syria which are the Aramaeans, but Assyria. So he's already down the road in compromise when the prophet tells him to ask for a sign.

So now, plotting his own course, king Ahaz doesn't want a sign. He's already got his plan to take care of it in the power of his own understanding and in the power of his own flesh. I mean, if God gives him a sign now, he would be under necessity to trust and believe God. He doesn't want to do that. That's where some of you are. That's why a lot of people hate Bible preaching because when you hear the word of God, the truth goes out, then you're obligated to stand in faith on it. It would be better just to give you something else so that you can go on in your flesh. That's the way carnal people think and that's where Ahaz was. "Don't give me the truth, then I'm accountable to it and I know how grossly wrong my purposing to dishonor God is. Don't give me that." That's where Ahaz is but Ahaz here veils it and covers it up.

Ahaz says in verse 12, "I will not ask, nor will I test the LORD!" Oh, you hypocrite. He is just covering up his rebellion. "Oh, I'm too spiritual to do that. Oh, I'm too godly to do that." No, you've already trusted in Assyria and you've already made an alliance with another pagan kingdom. You're no better than the northern kingdom right now. You're already against all the witness of God, going to trust in a human force to protect you instead of trusting in God."

Verse 13, "Then he said," now this is the prophet speaking for God, "Listen now, O house of David!" You see that phrase again and say, "Look how far backwards you've backslidden from the mighty days when David trusted God and had great victories." "Listen now, O house of David! Is it too slight a thing for you to try the patience of men, that you will try the patience of my God as well?" So there's a justifiable impatience on the part of God here and he said, "You've already tried the patience of men and that's one thing." I think what he's saying here is, "Your people have grown very restless and impatient with your vacillation and your unwillingness to take a stand and lead them in a

strong and clear way. You're just all over the place, Ahaz." Have you ever known political leaders like that? They just couldn't make a stand. They just couldn't be out front. They weren't strong. It leaves the people kind of wondering, "Well, where are we?" "Well," he says, "you've been testing your people like that and now you're trying to test the patience of God also?"

So God says in verse 14, "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel." The word "virgin" there is the Hebrew word "almah" and the word "almah" almost always means "a chaste virgin; young girl; a girl not yet married." But it doesn't absolutely mean that. As a matter of fact, there is a word that means only and always "virgin" but that's not the word "almah." The word "almah" almost always means that but it can mean just a young lady. We do know that in Genesis 24, Rebecca is called "almah" which means "a virgin." We do know in Solomon 6:8 that it's used in reference to an unmarried virgin. We do know in Exodus 2:8, Miriam is referred to by this word and it does mean a virgin. In Proverbs 30 it is used again and it is used of a virgin. So that's the most likely understanding but I think there's something interesting here, "almah" could also be a young woman who is married which would make sense for this day. There are not two incarnations. There are not two virgin births. There is only one and that's Mary when she gave birth to the Lord Jesus Christ. But you see, if you use the word "almah" here, then you have a proper interpretation that for this day and time, a child could be born to the young maiden, wife of Isaiah the prophet and he would have a message to the nation but it could also have an ultimate fulfillment in the true virgin, the virgin Mary, when she gave birth to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and that's the brilliance and the wisdom of God in using the term "almah." Both interpretations are true: one for this place in the history when the Jews were needing this here, a sign from God, and then an ultimate fulfillment for all mankind forever when Jesus was born of the virgin Mary.

So now God's got a much more powerful message. First of all, Isaiah shows up and Isaiah's name by itself means, "the Lord is salvation." Isaiah has his son with him, Shear-jashub, who says "a remnant will remain." Now there's another child that is going to be born to a young maiden and I believe it's Isaiah's wife and this child's name is Immanuel, "God is with you." So what a powerful message from God, "The Lord is salvation. A remnant is going to remain. God is with us. Believe." But Ahaz won't believe. He has already decided, "No, I can't trust my faith. I can't trust the prophet." Now, there is a parallel, I think, for us here but the text of Scripture was not completed in this day and God was speaking through prophets so the parallel for you and I today would be that you trust the word of God and the faithful and true preaching of the word of God. Stand on that. Don't be frightened by fear. Grab a hold of yourself. Don't be led astray by your emotions, dear ladies. Catch yourself. Anchor yourself to the word of God. Because the Lord is our salvation, God is going to maintain a remnant. Don't worry about it. We're going to make it. And Immanuel, God is with us. What a beautiful picture this is.

Now, let me go to right quick to some conclusions for practical application on this section of text. First of all, the flesh, the false church and the world are always our enemies. The flesh, the false church and the world are just always there and in every

generation it's been that way. You can go back to the early Reformers and the early Baptists and you'll find the world hated them, they had to fight fleshliness in their own ranks and then there was the great state churches and the great organized churches of the day that hated them. It's always been that way. The early apostles had the great organized religious faith against them. Then of course, the Gentiles were against them. That's always there and that's what we see here. The northern kingdom is the false church. The Aramaeans or the Syrians are the world and the devil. But we always have these enemies always coming against us. I mean, the fallen wisdom of natural man is always wanting to displace the wisdom of God revealed in the Scriptures. Did you hear that? Did you hear that? That's a battle we always have: the fallen wisdom of natural man is always crouching in, pressing in, fighting to get into the church so that we will base our church both what we believe and what we do on the fallen wisdom of man, not on the revealed wisdom of God and the word of God. There is never an age when that is not a challenge. Now, some ages are harder than others but that's always a challenge.

Then the false church which is represented by the northern kingdom. You do understand that in this day, the northern kingdom would have said, "We're God's people," as loud or if not louder than tiny Judah would have said, "No, we're God's people." So the northern kingdom representing the false congregation and look, a false congregation is any congregation that has been taken over by the rule of man instead of the rule of God. Now, we all struggle some with the rule of God but some churches have been just settled and on track under the rule of man, not the rule of God.

Then of course, the world and the devil represented by the Aramaeans and the Syrians, ever persistent and seductive ploys that they used to divert God's church to worldly purposes, worldly doctrines and worldly methods. That's number 1, number 2, I won't much more than mention it because I said a lot about it already: God will not forsake his own. God told Ahaz, "A remnant is going to remain. Don't you look at what it looks like. God's not going to forsake his own." Are you going to be the next one that walks out the door and says, "I don't know if I'm going to be for this anymore. I don't think that's going anywhere." You're going to be badly deceived. God's not going to forsake his remnant. He's not going to do it. He doesn't have to have me, he doesn't have to have you as individuals but he's going to have a remnant for his own name and for his own glory.

Number 3: God's work is often insignificant to the natural eye. As a matter of fact, I would say not only is it often insignificant, it's almost always insignificant for the natural eye. I mean here's, first of all, over on the side here is mighty Assyria, the mightiest nation and army of the day. Assyria was like the Germans under Hitler in their prime when they would just, Hitler would announce, "We're taking this country," and he'd sweep in and get it. That's what Assyria could do. Then the Syrians or the Aramaeans in the northern kingdom are mighty. I mean, from the human eye, those are the folks who had it going on. But God says, "No, my favor is on little Judah." Isn't it interesting when Jesus came? Every person who was looking for the Messiah and by the way, in those days every Jew was looking for the promised Messiah. They were looking for the wrong kind of promised Messiah but they were looking for the promised Messiah. They would all clamor around Jerusalem, the spiritual and theological headquarters of the world.

Jerusalem was called "the valley of vision." That's where God spoke. That's where God revealed his plan. While everyone is clamoring around Jerusalem looking for what God is going to do, God was speaking in Bethlehem to a little baby and almost everybody missed it but a few shepherds, a couple of cows and a few sheep. Everybody is looking at Assyria and Syria and the northern kingdom and God says, "You'd better look at some little boys I've sent with Isaiah. One's name means 'a remnant is going to remain' and the other one's name means Immanuel, 'God is with us.'"

Do you know what a true regenerate born-again child of God is? A rare thing. It's someone who hears the clear but small voice of God, "I'm here. Yeah, that's impressive out there and that's clamoring for your attention over here and that looks fun over there but I'm here." Why would God send Jesus to tiny Bethlehem? Because God said, "I have some folks who are going to worship him and adore him, the ones I tell." It started with the shepherds, added some wise men, trickled down to you and I today. Just like Judah needed to look to those little boys for the truth, so we look to that little boy who was born of the virgin Mary. Insignificant to human understanding but God's true power was there.

The threat of destruction was real, it was at the door of tiny Judah. The flesh, the world and the devil were doing all they could to get in and control and destroy them. How was tiny Judah going to be saved? And my friend, how are you going to be saved? How are you going to be saved? Judah only looked to Assyria to save them. We must not make that mistake. Assyria, in a sense, represents human effort; a human trying to save himself in his own strength. That's what Assyria represents. You say, "Well, I'm going to save myself. I'm going to join a church. I'm going to start taking the ordinance of the church. I'm going to start tithing to the church. I'm going to begin to attend there. I'm going to do some work there." Do you know what that is? That's trusting Assyria. That's what that is. "Well, I'm going to save myself. I'm going to clean up my morals. I'm going to quit some of the things I'm doing." Well, you'll make a better neighbor but that's just trusting Assyria. "You see what I'm going to do, I'm going to put some good works into my life. I'm going to start donating money to charities. I'm going to do some good things for good people. I'm going to help this institution. I'm going to contribute to that thing." I want to tell you, all of that may make the world a little bit better place but that will not save you. That's trusting Assyria.

None of these can wash away your sins. The Bible says, "There is a way which seems right to a man but the end thereof is the way of death." There is only one way of salvation, he's the Immanuel child. Ahaz didn't get it. Most of Judah didn't see it. But they also experienced real destruction because of that and so will we. Have you pledged your hope in that quiet, clear to the world, insignificant message of the little baby born in Bethlehem who was God's Immanuel child, God with us? If your confidence is there, you can know you're saved and safe forever. God is with us. Trust him in the crisis.

Let's stand together in prayer.