

## II. QUOTABLE QUOTES AND SUMMARY NOTES

*“As with the anticipated king in the first half of the book, therefore, [so with the servant king in the second half of the book], the main point . . . is that the figure portrayed whom we now read in messianic terms is defined by his or their role in relation to justice and peace brought to others (in Israel to start with and then internationally). . . .”* (Williamson, p. 376.)

*“Just as the theme of the branch of the Lord ( . . . 4:2) becomes more and more explicitly messianic, so it is with the motif of the child. If the child of Isaiah 7:14-16 . . . typifies the ultimate divine Christ, the child of these verses [9:1-7] is that Christ.”* (Grogan, EBC, 74.)

*“Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given me are signs and portents in Israel from the Lord of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion.”* (Isaiah 8:18.)

*“[T]he giving of the sign of Immanuel . . . was understood messianically by the tradents [carriers] of the Isaianic tradition and shaped in such a way as both to clarify and expand the messianic hope for every successive generation of the people of God.”* (Childs, Isaiah, 69.)

### A. Summary of the whole Book of Isaiah

**“Chapters one to five** introduced the book as a whole by presenting the essential problem: Israel has been chosen by God and called to be his special people but they will not submit to him and serve him. They break the covenant he made with him, worship idols, and refused to respond to him even when he punishes them. In chapter 6 Isaiah 's initial call to ministry functions as a pattern for what God will do with the nation. As with Isaiah, it is only when God's people acknowledge their sinfulness and trust completely in him that he will act on their behalf so that they can carry his message to their rebellious and captive world. Chapters 7 to 39 compose a lengthy unit in which Isaiah makes the case that only God is able to deliver Israel from sin and give them the restoration they long for. There are many potential ‘deliverers’ around them but they will all fail and come up short.

Having laid this foundation Isaiah moves in **chapters 40 to 55** to state that God wants to deliver his people and he is able to deliver them in this section Isaiah uses a prediction of the historical return from exile as a pattern for God spiritual deliverance from guilt and for a transformation that he will bring about through the suffering of his faithful servant in this way God will form a new people for himself described in **chapters 56 to 66** these will be chosen first out of Israel and then from every nation God will accomplish what Israel could not do for themselves but he expects obedience and allegiance to him through the covenant Zion will be a magnet for the true people of God from every nation and they will live in a new heavens and a new earth in peace and prosperity.” (Eric Tulley, *Reading the Prophets as Christian Scripture*, 155-56.)

### B. Summary of 7:1-9:6

“Here is a narrative movement from 7:1–9:6 that portrays the rejection of the promise of God by the House of David and the resulting destruction of the people of God as divine hardening takes effect. Conversely, there emerges the hope of a faithful remnant adumbrated by Isaiah 's own experience of death and rebirth in chapter 6 and foreshadowed by the sign of **Immanuel**. This unfolding presentation of the entrance of God’s rule in the midst of terrifying disasters culminates the history of the Syro-Ephraimite crisis with the messianic promise of chapter 9 and anticipates its ultimate expansion in chapter 11.” (Childs, *Isaiah*, 81, emphasis mine.)

### C. Regarding 7:10-17:

“[T]he giving of the sign to Ahaz (verses 10–17) is the continuation of the previous challenge for faithfulness to the promise of God-given to the House of David in vv. 3–9. Ahaz’s refusal to trust shattered the solidarity between the House of David and the people of God (v. 17). A wedge had now

been driven between Israel that resulted in a tension both between the disobedient empirical ruling Davidian and the true messianic representative of the throne of David (9:6 [7]), as well as between faithless Israel destined for destruction and the faithful remnant who were signs of the new people of God (8:18).

It is this larger literary and theological context that accounts for the complex shaping of vv. 10–17. The sign of **Immanuel**. . . now has a double edge. For those of unbelief—Ahaz and his people—the sign is one of destruction (v. 17), but for those of belief the sign of **Immanuel** is a pledge of God's continuing presence in salvation (v. 16).” (Childs, 67-68.). (For examples of the two-edged meaning of judgment on the one hand and presence in salvation on the other, see my translation notes at verse 15, 16, 17 of chapter 7.)

#### D. Regarding chapter 8

All six units (vv. 1-4, 5- 8, 9-10, 11-15, 16-18, 19-21) “appear to relate to the aftermath of the confrontation of king and prophet in the crises evoked by the Syro-Ephraimite war. . . The dominant literary feature of chapter 8 is the autobiographical style. Three times it is said, ‘Yahweh spoke to me’ (vv. 1, 5, 11). . . The focus of the chapter differs markedly from Chapter 7 and is hardly just another duplicating sign sequence . . .” [In fact, the sign of **Immanuel** in chapter 7 and the sign of Mahershalalhashbaz in chapter 8 represent] “two distinct usages of the sign oracles by the prophet. The first has been previously described in the analysis of chapter 7. The sign, which always preceded prophecy of judgment or salvation, served as a pledge conforming its fulfillment and adumbrating its content. In contrast, the second usage of the sign [i.e., in chapter 8:1-4, not cited in the translation] was a form of symbolic action in which an event or riddle was enacted. Its revelatory meaning only emerged when it was joined to a divine word of interpretation.” (Childs, pp. 70-71.)

References to children: 7:3, 14-16; 8:1-5, 18; 9:6-7;10:19; 11:6, 8.)

### III. ISSUES

#### A. Who was the first child born in fulfillment in the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14

Although the identity of the child born at the time of Isaiah is not clear—nor is it meant to be in light of its later meaning and fulfillment as a larger-than-life God-like king (see the quote from Childs below)—I agree with Grogan who believes that “[t]he mother is a royal contemporary of the prophet, whose child’s name would symbolize the presence of God with his people and who would foreshadow the Messiah in whom God would be incarnate.” (Grogan, *Isaiah*, EBC, 63, following J.A. Alexander.)

“An unmarried young woman within the royal house would shortly marry and conceive. Her son would be called **Immanuel** (“God is with us”), probably in ignorance of the prophecy (which may have been given in the presence only of Ahaz) . . . . Before the child is old enough to eat the characteristic food of the Land of Promise in its solid form . . . the Assyrians would lay waste the lands of Aram and Israel which they did in 733–732 B.C., only a year or two after the prophecy was given.

The “sign” of the child, therefore, constitutes an indication that the all-sovereign and all-knowing God has the situation completely in hand. And it rebukes the king's lack of faith in him. it is true that the instrument of this devastation was to be Assyria, the very power Ahaz was courting instead of relying wholly on God. But in fact the events of 733–732 not only heralded the downfall in 722 of Samaria . . . but within a generation led to the devastation of Judah itself (cf. 1:7)

\*Even more on the mark is Childs: “One of the most significant features of this verse [7:14] is the mysterious, even vague and indeterminate, tone that pervades the entire passage. The reader is simply not given information regarding the identity of the maiden, or how precisely the sign functions in

relation to the giving of the name Immanuel. It is, therefore, idle to speculate on these matters; rather the reader can determine if there are other avenues of understanding opened up by the larger context. Specifically, what is the significance of learning how the sign of Immanuel was interpreted from within the subsequent tradition in chapter 8 (cf. below [bottom of p. 6 here])?" (Childs, *Isaiah*, 66, emphasis mine.)

B. How can we be sure a second future fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14 was intended and fulfilled in Jesus?

This will become much clearer when we look next week at Isaiah 9 and 11. For now, note the following:

"The prophecy was given to the House of David and not simply to Ahaz ('you' in v. 14 is plural). In the fullness of time the messianic child would be born of that house. He was to be a symbol of God's salvation of his people, not simply from physical foes like Rezin and Pekah but ultimately from sin (cf. Mat 1:21). He represents the final purpose of God in his person as well as his work. For he is, in fullness of meaning, God with us; and his mother was a virgin at the time of her conception and not simply, as in the case of the earlier royal mother, at the time of the prophecy. . . ." (Grogan, 64.)

"It is characteristic of Isaiah to introduce a messianic theme at a somewhat general level before spelling it out in unambiguously messianic terms. This interpretation, therefore, enables us to see the passage as part of a wider pattern in the book. So, we are contending, Isaiah predicted the coming of a boy who would be a sign from God to his contemporaries and who would foreshadow Christ in whom the terms of the prophecy—abstracted from its historical situation—would be fulfilled in fullest measure. In terms of his heavenly origin and his destiny of suffering, death, and burial as well as his exaltation to the highest place where he fills the whole universe (Eph. 4:9–10), the ultimate fulfillment in Christ of the sign to Ahaz embraces in principle the whole range of options presented to that king (Isa 7:11). It is noteworthy that Matthew's next OT quotation (Mat. 2:5-6) comes from a prophecy of Isaiah's contemporary, Micah. This contains mysterious hints of preexistence, makes reference to the child's mother (Mic. 5:2-3), gives Bethlehem as the place of birth, and stresses its insignificance, thus providing a possible spiritual link with the Midian-Gideon theme (. . . 9:4)." (Grogan, *Isaiah*, EBC, 64-65.)

Again, note Childs: "The mysterious name of Immanuel in 7:14 receives clarification in two passages in chapter 8 that belong roughly to the same period of this Syro-Ephraimite crisis. The judgment announced by Isaiah will come and cover the whole land, but the remnant has hope because the land belongs to Immanuel (8:8). Again in 8:9ff., in spite of the evil plans of distant nations their council will not prevail because God has so willed it through Immanuel (v. 10). In sum, *Immanuel is no longer the unborn child of 7:14, but the owner of Israel's land and the source of the divine force that brings the plans of conspiring nations to naught (Ps.2:1ff.). Notwithstanding the extraordinary mystery and indeterminacy surrounding the giving of the sign of Immanuel, there are many clear indications that it was understood messianically by the tradents [carriers] of the Isaianic tradition and shaped in such a way as both to clarify and expand the messianic hope for every successive generation of the people of God.*" (Childs, *Isaiah*, pp. 68-69, emphasis mine).

"The addition of the name **Immanuel** to a prophetic threat [in chapter 8] is striking evidence that the transmitters of the tradition of chapter 7 have continued to reflect on the theological significance of the mysterious child of the promise. The reference in 8:[8] also shows that Immanuel has remained not just a sign name but now receives a definite profile and is addressed as the Lord of the land of Judah. Finally, the double-edged feature of the original promise of chapter 7 has continued. Immanuel partakes of the judgment enveloping the people and land of Judah, but the divine judgment executed by the Assyrians has its limits explicated because of the reality of 'God-with-us'" [8:10] (pp.71-73.)

## IV. RELEVANT PASSAGES

### Isaiah 9:1-7

Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—<sup>2</sup>The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned. <sup>3</sup>You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder.<sup>4</sup>For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor. <sup>5</sup>Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire.

<sup>6</sup> For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.  
And he will be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  
<sup>7</sup> Of the greatness of his government and peace  
there will be no end.  
He will reign on David's throne  
and over his kingdom,  
establishing and upholding it  
with justice and righteousness  
from that time on and forever.  
The zeal of the LORD Almighty  
will accomplish this. (NIV.)

### Isaiah 11:1-10

<sup>1</sup>A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;  
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.  
<sup>2</sup> The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—  
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,  
the Spirit of counsel and of might,  
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD—  
<sup>3</sup> and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.

He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears;  
<sup>4</sup>but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.  
He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.  
<sup>5</sup> Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.<sup>6</sup> The wolf will live with the lamb,  
the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will  
lead them.<sup>7</sup> The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw  
like the ox.<sup>8</sup> The infant will play near the cobra's den, and the young child will put its hand into the viper's  
nest.<sup>9</sup> They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain,  
for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.  
<sup>10</sup>In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his  
resting place will be glorious.

**Appendix: Yahweh, the Messiah, and the Remnant** (after VanGemeren, *Prophets*, 261-63)

“Yahweh will bring about the new age of transformation in creation and in a redeemed community through his Messiah. The descendants of David had fallen short of his expectations, as is implied by Isaiah's magnificent adumbration of the Messiah. According to him, the Messiah (1) descends from David, (2) has the Spirit of God, (3) enjoys a Father-Son relationship, (4) brings in a new era of unparalleled peace, prosperity, and righteousness, and (5) establishes a new community (9:2-7; 11:1-9). Clearly, the prophetic portrayal of the Messiah was a criticism of the age in which Isaiah lived; it was . . . ‘a massive criticism of the king--even of court ideology as such.’

Both the certainty and the fulfillment of God's promises are in the divine guarantee and in the names and perfections of the Messiah. First, the Lord guarantees the new age and the new leadership, ‘The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this’ (9:7). No king in Judah or power coalition could bring about the era of fulfillment. Restoration is the work of God alone, and he shall accomplish it in accordance with his word. Therefore, man's hope lies in God: the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. Yahweh alone will bring about the complete fulfillment of the promises made to David.

Second, the names of the Messiah signify the power, presence, protection, and blessing of God. (Here follows a quotation of 9:6) . . . He is the Servant of God, the Son of David (11:1; Luke 1:32–33; Rev. 22:16), and he is empowered by the Spirit of restoration (11:1–4; Luke 3:22), the Immanuel of God (7:14; see Mat. 1:22-23) will bring in a universal rule of peace to humankind and creation. However, the wicked will not escape his wrath (11:4–8; Luke 2:14; Rev. 19:11–16). The Messiah is faithful and will establish the Kingdom of God in justice, righteousness, peace, and fidelity. Further the Messiah will inaugurate an era of happiness. His kingdom will bring a new age of glory and holiness on earth. The blessedness of the new age is the “light” (9:2; Luke 1:78-79; 2 Cor.4:6) against the ‘darkness’ of divine abandonment (8:22). The Messiah is God’s instrument of bringing the light of deliverance, glory, holiness, and rest.

They will neither harm nor destroy  
on all my holy mountain,  
*for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord*  
as the waters cover the sea.”

In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples, the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be *glorious* (11:9-11, emphasis mine; see 2:2-4; 6:3; Rom 15:7-13).

The future belongs to the remnant, who follow Isaiah’s example of hoping in the Lord (8:17; 10:20-21). They constitute a purified and renewed community. The hope of the godly will be rewarded by the messianic King, whose rule will bring a renewal of God’s blessing to the people (9:2-7; 11:11-12).” (VanGemeren, *Prophetic Word*, pp. 261-63.)