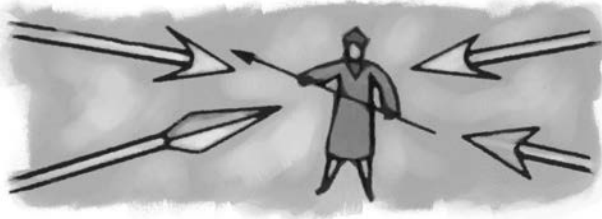


When Your World Is Falling Apart



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Isa. 7:1–9, Isa. 7:10–13, Isa. 7:14.*

Memory Text: “ ‘ ‘ ‘If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established’ ” ’ ” (*Isaiah 7:9, NKJV*).

One Sabbath Connie and Roy drove into their driveway after church. A bantam hen flew frantically across the yard in front of them. Something was wrong. The pet birds were supposed to be safely in their pen but had gotten out. Quick investigation showed a tragedy in progress. Beethoven, the neighbor's small dog, also had escaped her yard and was down by the pond with Daisy in her mouth. Daisy was a beautiful laying hen with fluffy white tail feathers. Connie rescued Daisy, but it was too late. Her precious pet, now with a mangled neck, soon died in Connie's arms. She sat down in the yard, holding the dead bird, and wailed.

Another pet was deeply disturbed. A tall, white duck by the name of Waddlesworth saw Connie holding Daisy and seemed to have assumed she had killed her. So, for the next few weeks, whenever Waddlesworth saw Connie, he would viciously attack her, pinching her painfully with his strong bill. Sometimes it is hard to sort out who your friends and enemies are.

This week we'll look at a king of Judah who also had this problem, and we'll seek to understand why he made the wrong choices he did.

* Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, January 16.

Danger From the North *(Isa. 7:1–9)*

What terrifying crisis did King Ahaz face early in his reign? (*2 Kings 15:37, 38; 2 Kings 16:5, 6; Isaiah 7:1, 2.*)

The kingdoms of northern Israel (Ephraim) and Syria (Aram) ganged up on the smaller country of Judah to the south. This happened when Judah was weakened by attacks from the Edomites and Philistines. In the past, Judah had fought against Israel, but an alliance between Israel and Syria presented an overwhelming peril. It appears Israel and Syria wanted to force Judah to participate with them in a coalition against the mighty power of Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria (*called “Pul” in 2 Kings 15:19*), who continued to threaten them with his expanding empire. Israel and Syria had put aside their longstanding struggle against each other in view of a greater danger. If they could conquer Judah and install a puppet ruler there (*Isa. 7:5, 6*), they could use its resources and manpower.

What was Ahaz’s solution when his world was falling apart? (*2 Kings 16:7–9, 2 Chron. 28:16.*)

Rather than recognizing that God was the only Friend who could rescue him and his country, Ahaz tried to make a friend out of Tiglath-pileser III, the enemy of his enemies. The Assyrian king happily complied with his request for aid against Syria and Israel. Not only did Tiglath-pileser receive a rich bribe from Ahaz, but he also gained a good excuse to take Syria, which he promptly did (*2 Kings 16:9*). The power of the Syrian-Israelite alliance was broken. In the short run, it appeared that Ahaz had saved Judah.

This action on Ahaz’s part, however, should not come as a surprise. He had been one of the worst kings ever to rule Judah up to that point. (*See 2 Kings 16:3, 4; 2 Chron. 28:2–4.*)

When we read about what Ahaz was like, it is understandable why he reacted to danger as he did. What lesson is here for us on a personal level? If we’re not obeying the Lord now, what makes us think we’ll have the faith to trust Him when real trials come? (*See James 2:22, Jer. 12:5.*)

Attempted Interception *(Isa. 7:3–9)*

While Ahaz was weighing his political options to meet the threat from Israel and Syria, God knew some things he did not. For one thing, it was God who had allowed trouble to come upon him in order to discipline him and bring him to his senses (*2 Chron. 28:5, 19*). Moreover, although appealing to Tiglath-pileser for help seemed logical and attractive from a human standpoint, God knew it would bring the Davidic kingdom of Judah under foreign control from which she could never recover.

The stakes were staggeringly high. So, the Lord sent Isaiah to intercept the king (apparently as he was inspecting Jerusalem’s water supply in preparation for a siege) in order to persuade him not to contact the Assyrian leader.

Why did the Lord tell Isaiah to take his son, Shear-jashub, with him? *(Isa. 7:3.)*

Ahaz would be startled when Isaiah greeted him and introduced his son, named “A Remnant Shall Return.” Remnant of whom? Shall return from what? Because the boy’s father was a prophet, the name sounded like an ominous message from God about people going into captivity. Or was it about returning to God in the sense of repenting (the verb “return” also carries the meaning of repentance)? The message from God to Ahaz was: it means what *you* make it mean! Turn from your sins or go into captivity, and from captivity a remnant will return. The decision is yours!

How did God’s message address the king’s situation? *(Isa. 7:4–9.)*

The threat from Syria and Israel would pass, and Judah would be spared. Powers that looked to Ahaz like huge, fiery volcanoes were in God’s sight only “two smoldering stumps of firebrands” (*Isa. 7:4, NRSV*). There was no need for Ahaz to appeal to Assyria for help.

But in order to make the right decision, Ahaz needed to trust the Lord and His promises. He needed to believe in order to be established (*Isa. 7:9*). The words for “believe” and “be established” are from the same Hebrew root, from which come also the word for “truth” (that which is reliable) and the word *amen* (affirming that which is true/reliable). Ahaz needed to be sure in order to be made sure; he needed to rely in order to be reliable.

Look at that last section of Isaiah 7:9. Why are faith and belief so important in order to be “established”? Established in what? How does this principle apply in the life of the Christian?

Another Chance *(Isa. 7:10–13)*

Ahaz did not respond to Isaiah’s call for faith. So, God mercifully gave the king another chance, telling him to ask for a sign that was “deep as Sheol or high as heaven” (*Isa. 7:11, NRSV*). Here is one of the greatest invitations to faith ever given to a human being. Unlike lotteries or sweepstakes, God placed no restrictions in fine print. God did not even limit His offer to the half of His kingdom, as human rulers did when they reached the upper limit of their generosity (*see Esther 5:6, Esther 7:2, Mark 6:23*). He was ready and willing to empty all of heaven and earth for a wicked king if he would only believe! As a sign, Ahaz could have asked for a mountain of gold or soldiers as numerous as grains of sand by the Mediterranean.

Why did Ahaz respond in the way he did? *(Isa. 7:12.)*

At first glance, Ahaz’s answer seems pious and respectful. He would not put God to the test, as the Israelites had centuries before, during their wilderness wanderings (*Exod. 17:2, Deut. 6:16*). But the difference was that God *invited* the king to put Him to the test (*compare Mal. 3:10*). To take Him up on His overwhelmingly generous gift would please Him, not test His patience. But Ahaz was not even willing to allow God to help him to believe. He barred and bolted the door of his heart to shut out faith.

Read Isaiah 7:13. What is Isaiah saying here?

Isaiah pointed out that by refusing to put God to the test, outwardly to avoid wearying God, Ahaz, in fact, wearied God. But the most troubling aspect of this verse is the fact that here Isaiah refers to “my God,” by clear contrast to Isaiah 7:11, where the prophet asked the king to ask a sign of the Lord “your God.” When Ahaz refused the divine offer, he rejected the Lord from being his God. The Lord was the God of Isaiah—but not of Ahaz.

What does this day’s study teach us about God’s forbearance and willingness to bring all of us to salvation? What also does it tell us about the blindness and hardness of the human heart when not surrendered completely to the Lord? In the end, even if God had given Ahaz any sign that he had wanted, do you think Ahaz would then have believed? Explain your answer.

Sign of a Son *(Isa. 7:14)*

An offer of a sign as “deep as Sheol or high as heaven” (*Isa. 7:11, NRSV*) did not move Ahaz. So, when God says He Himself will come up with a sign (*Isa. 7:14*), we expect it to have breathtaking dimensions that only the divine imagination could devise (*compare Isa. 55:9, 1 Cor. 2:9*).

Surprise! The sign is a son. But how could a young woman bearing a child and calling him “Immanuel” be a sign of biblical proportions?

Who is the woman, and who is her Child?

Nowhere does the Old Testament point out a fulfillment of this important sign, as it had done for the signs given to other people, such as Gideon (*Judg. 6:36–40*). So, here are some of the possible fulfillments, based on the Old Testament alone:

1. Because the word for “young woman” refers to a young woman of marriageable age, many assume she is a married woman living in Jerusalem, perhaps the wife of Isaiah. Isaiah 8:3 does record the birth of a son to Isaiah by “the prophetess” (*referring to his wife, whose prophetic messages consisted, at least, of her children; compare Isa. 7:3, Isa. 8:18*). However, this son was named Maher-shalal-hash-baz (*Isa. 8:1–4*), not Immanuel. Nevertheless, the signs of the two boys are similar in that before they reach the stage at which they can choose good or evil, Syria and northern Israel would be devastated (*Isa. 7:16, Isa. 8:4*).

2. Some suggest that Immanuel is Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, who became the next king. But nowhere is the name Immanuel applied to him.

3. Because Immanuel is somewhat mysterious and His name, commonly translated “God with us” refers to God’s presence, He could be the same as the special Son prophesied in Isaiah 9 and 11. If so, His exalted description as divine (*Isa. 9:6*) and “the root of Jesse” (*Isa. 11:10, NRSV*) surpasses anything that could be ascribed to good King Hezekiah.

4. A natural birth to an *unmarried* woman of marriageable age would result in an illegitimate child through illegal promiscuity (*see Deut. 22:20, 21*). Why would God refer to such a child as a sign to inspire faith?

In contrast, the New Testament identifies Jesus as Immanuel (*Matt. 1:21–23*), born miraculously and with purity to an unmarried but betrothed virgin. Jesus also is the divine Son (*Isa. 9:6, Matt. 3:17*) and the “shoot” and “root” of Jesse (*Isa. 11:1, 10; Rev. 22:16*). Perhaps an earlier “Immanuel,” whose development proved to Ahaz the timeliness of prophetic fulfillments, served as a forerunner of Christ. We do not know. But we know what we need to know: “when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman” (*Gal. 4:4, NRSV*), to give us the presence of God with us.

Dwell on the reality of Christ’s coming into humanity. What kind of comfort can this reality give us amid what seems like a cold, fearsome, and uncaring world?

“God Is With Us”! (Isa. 7:14)

Like the name of Isaiah’s children (Shear-jashub, “a remnant shall return,” and Maher-shalal-hash-baz, which means “swift is booty, speedy is prey”), the name of Immanuel has a meaning. It is literally “with us God.” But the commonly accepted translation “God with us” misses something important. As with other Hebrew names of this kind that lack verbs, the verb “to be” must be supplied, because it is not expressed in Hebrew. So, Immanuel must be translated “God *is* with us” (compare the same words in Isa. 8:10), just as the name “Jesus” (Greek, and short for Hebrew Yehoshua, or Joshua) means “The LORD *is* salvation,” with the verb again being supplied (compare Isaiah, which means, “salvation of the LORD”).

But the name “Immanuel” is not just an abstract description; it is an assertion of a promise that is fulfilled now: “God *is* with us”!

What is the significance of the promise that God is with us?

There is no stronger assurance and comfort. God does not promise that His people will not endure hardship and pain, but He promises to be with them. The psalmist says: “Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me” (*Ps. 23:4, NRSV*).

“God says: ‘When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you’ (*Isa. 43:2*).

“Where was the Lord when the Babylonians threw Daniel’s three friends into the fire? With them (*Dan. 3:23–25*). And where was the Lord during the time of Jacob’s trouble when he wrestled until daybreak? In Jacob’s arms, as close as he could get (*Gen. 32:24–30*).

“Even when the Lord does not appear in physical form on earth, He goes through the experiences of His people with them. Where was the Lord when the mob condemned Stephen? ‘Standing at the right hand of God’ (*Acts 7:55*). But when Jesus ascended to heaven, He ‘sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high’ (*Heb. 1:3*). Why did He stand when Stephen was in trouble, about to be stoned to death? As Morris Venden has said, ‘Jesus wasn’t going to take that sitting down!’ ”—Roy Gane, *God’s Faulty Heroes* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald® Publishing Association, 1996), p. 66.

Even though we have the promise that “God is with us,” what difference does that make if we still face terrible trials and suffering? What good does the knowledge of His presence, then, do for us? Explain your answer.

Further Thought: “ ‘His name shall be called Immanuel, . . . God with us.’ ‘The light of the knowledge of the glory of God’ is seen ‘in the face of Jesus Christ.’ From the days of eternity the Lord Jesus Christ was one with the Father; He was ‘the image of God,’ the image of His greatness and majesty, ‘the outshining of His glory.’ It was to manifest this glory that He came to our world. To this sin-darkened earth He came to reveal the light of God’s love,—to be ‘God with us.’ Therefore it was prophesied of Him, ‘His name shall be called Immanuel.’ ”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 19.

“Well would it have been for the kingdom of Judah had Ahaz received this message as from heaven. But choosing to lean on the arm of flesh, he sought help from the heathen. In desperation he sent word to Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria: ‘I am thy servant and thy son: come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me.’ 2 Kings 16:7. The request was accompanied by a rich present from the king’s treasure and from the temple storehouse.”—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*, p. 329.

Discussion Questions:

- 1 When you are in the process of making a decision, is it appropriate to ask God for a sign? What dangers are possibly inherent in doing something like that?
- 2 It is good to have human assistance, but how do you recognize its limits?
- 3 Russian author Leo Tolstoy wrote to a friend that “once a man has realized that death is the end of everything, then there is nothing worse than life either.” How does our knowledge that “God is with us” answer such a statement?

Summary: God brought faithless King Ahaz to circumstances in which he had to make a difficult decision: To believe or not to believe, this is the question. Even though the Lord offered him any sign that his imagination could devise, he refused to allow God to demonstrate a reason why he should believe. Instead, he chose as his “friend” the king of Assyria.

Floating Red Book

By ANDREW MCCHESENEY, Adventist Mission

Toroni Kumar Tripura was thrilled to receive a Bible with a beautiful red cover in his remote village in southeast Bangladesh. The Bible arrived as a reward for completing a series of Bible lessons by mail.

But Toroni had to be careful.

His father served as a priest in the family's traditional religion, and he would not be pleased that his son had a Bible about the God of heaven.

Toroni, however, wasn't worried. He had studied the Bible lessons every night while his parents slept, and he also intended to read the red Bible at night.

The plan seemed to work.

Toroni tended Father's cows during the day and, after returning home at night, waited until his parents were asleep to eagerly switch on a tiny flashlight and read about God.

One night Father caught Toroni reading the Bible. He was furious. After his son left the house the next day, he seized the red Bible and threw it into the muddy waters of the Chenggi River.

Toroni was distraught when he realized that his red Bible was missing. He quickly understood what had happened.

What could he do? He couldn't afford to buy another Bible. The correspondence school probably wouldn't send him a second Bible. But he longed to read more about God.

Some time passed. One afternoon Toroni was swimming in the Chenggi River when he saw something floating on the water. He had seen plastic bottles and other garbage in the river, but this looked different.

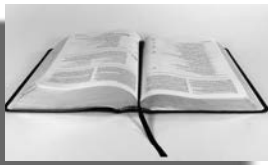
He swam closer.

Reaching out, he grabbed the object with his hand and hastily swam to shore. Climbing onto the riverbank, he raised his hand to see a dripping red Bible.

He couldn't believe it. It was his missing Bible.

Toroni placed the book on the grass in the hot sun to dry. It took 14 days to dry the Bible, and then he began to read it again. As he read, he fell in love with God.

Even though he risked angering his father, he couldn't keep the new-found love to himself. He told other villagers about the God of the red Bible that wouldn't sink in the river. The astounded villagers asked to know more. Today most of the villagers, including many of Toroni's relatives, worship the God of the red Bible.



Study Focus: *Isaiah 7:1–9****Part I: Overview***

Another king comes upon the scene in Isaiah 7. This time, the protagonist is King Ahaz, the grandson of Uzziah. His reign leads the nation into abominations performed by the surrounding nations. When the kings of Aram and Israel wage war against his nation, Ahaz is so overcome by fear that the Lord sends a message through the prophet Isaiah in order to encourage him to trust in Him: the plans of those nations are not going to succeed. But Ahaz needs to believe; otherwise, he will not see God's liberation of Israel. This study is divided into three sections, entitled: (1) the challenge of King Ahaz; (2) the Lord looks after the king; and (3) look quietly.

Part II: Commentary

The Challenge of King Ahaz

The Bible says that Ahaz is not a good king. He “did not that which was right in the sight of the LORD his God” (*2 Kings 16:2*). The biblical record is explicit concerning his performance: “He walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and even made his son pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had driven out from before the sons of Israel. He sacrificed and burned incense on the high places” (*2 Kings 16:3, 4, NASB*). He was a harmful influence to the nation of Judah. As happened in other cases, when kings start to walk far away from the Lord, problems arise in their lives and in their nation. It is also evident in the first section of the book: “Woe to the wicked! It will go badly with him” (*Isa. 3:11, NASB*). Both records, the book of Isaiah and the second book of the Kings, state “that Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it” (*Isa. 7:1; compare 2 Kings 16:5*). When King Ahaz realizes the enormity of the threat he is under and the possibility of a military confrontation with the surrounding nations, “his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind” (*Isa. 7:2*).

Sometimes, God's own people forget that the Lord expects faithfulness from those who have entered into a covenantal relationship with Him. Thus, God in His dark providences permits hard circumstances to come upon His people as a means of awakening them to their need of seeking the Lord and returning to His light. “He arises to make the earth tremble” (*Isa. 2:19, NASB*). “The LORD arises to contend, and stands to

judge the people. The LORD enters into judgment with the elders and princes of His people” (*Isa. 3:13, 14, NASB*). In “these verses Isaiah moves to an indictment of the leadership. They are acting irresponsibly and unjustly, destroying the very thing entrusted to them. This theme of foolish leadership, especially on the level of elders and princes, recurs throughout the book (7:1–17; 14:4–21; 22:15–25; 28; 29; 32:3–8), and it is against this backdrop that the longing for, and the promise of, one who will rule in justice and righteousness stands out.”—John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1–39*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), p. 137. Fear paralyzes the king. Dire though the circumstances facing him may be, the impending threat constitutes a precious opportunity to come back to the Lord.

The Lord Looks After the King

In Isaiah 7:3, Isaiah offers an interesting description of God’s care. The narrative does not say that the king seeks the Lord; it is the Lord who takes the initiative. The verse says, “Then said the LORD unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz.” The Lord is portrayed in this chapter as the God who goes out, through the prophet, to meet a fearful man. The reader can see a similar attitude from God in the Garden of Eden, in which we see God Himself “walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze. . . . The LORD God called to the man, and said to him, ‘Where are you?’ ” (*Gen. 3:8, 9, NRSV*). Both of them, Adam and Ahaz, though the causes are different, are justifiably afraid.

Another remarkable detail in this episode is that Isaiah receives instructions as to where he could meet the king. “Then said the LORD unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, . . . at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller’s field” (*Isa. 7:3*). This verse not only provides a clear affirmation of God’s foreknowledge, but it also tells us about the watch care of the Lord over all of our steps in our life journey as individuals. The Bible is full of stories wherein we can see how God sends His prophets to give a word of hope, or sometimes a word of reproach, to His beloved servants. Under whatever circumstance, God’s purpose, in the end, is to help His people to trust Him and be faithful to Him.

Look Quietly

We saw in Isaiah 7:2 that King Ahaz panics over the thought of impending war. The whole nation trembles along with their monarch. However, what is God’s perspective about this situation? Sometimes we fail in our finite perspective to perceive God’s character. We think that He is concerned only with the spiritual matters of our lives. However, the Bible shows us that our Lord is a God who looks after His children in all of life’s spheres,

including secular matters or issues apparently not connected to spiritual aspects.

“From Ahaz’s point of view Syria and Ephraim constitute a major threat, but from God’s point of view they are negligible and need not occupy the king’s time. It is not always easy to gain the divine perspective. Yet, unless we seek it, we are always in danger of paying too much attention to the passing and paying too little attention to the significant. Furthermore, apart from a diligent search for God’s perspective in every circumstance, we conclude too easily that God is concerned only about spiritual affairs and not about practical matters, a fallacy which leads eventually to the loss of God in all affairs.”—John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1–39*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, p. 196.

In Isaiah 7:4, God instructs His prophet to communicate with the king. “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’” (*NASB*). Sometimes, we ask how we can deal with life amid unwanted circumstances. The Bible says, “Take care and be calm” (*NASB*). Other translations include “Take heed, and be quiet” (*KJV*) and “Be careful, keep calm” (*NIV*). In the Hebrew language, the clause “take heed, and be quiet” consists of two words, *hiššāmer w^hhašqet*. The first word comes from the verbal root *šmr*, which, in this case, could be translated as “to be on one’s guard, be attentive, take care.”—Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, vol. 4, p. 1584.

It seems that the implicit counsel from the Lord to the king is to abstain from all noise or activity that would shut out God’s voice and to stay on guard. The other word in the Hebrew sentence is *šqt*, which because of its verbal form is better translated as a reflexive verb “to keep the peace . . . to keep oneself quiet” (Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, vol. 4, p. 1641) or “to show quietness” (David J. A. Clines, ed., *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* [Sheffield, England: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011], vol. 8, p. 550). In short, a suggested translation for *hiššāmer w^hhašqet* could be “look quietly.”

The exhortations and promises from Isaiah 7:4 to the end of the section (*Isa. 7:9*) offer enough reason for trusting in the Lord’s promises. First, God bids the king to “fear not, neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands” (*Isa. 7:4*). So, Rezin and Pekah, the kings of Syro-Ephraimite coalition, might make a little smoke; but such fire would be negligible. Second, while it is true that the coalition “has planned evil against you” (*Isa. 7:5, NASB*), “it shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass” (*Isa. 7:7*), says the Lord. And God emphasizes,

you need to trust, because “if you do not stand firm in faith, you shall not stand at all” (*Isa. 7:9, NRSV*). George B. Gray properly comments on this section, pointing out that “Isaiah condemns two things in Ahaz: his fear, for it is needless; his faith in material resources—here typified by a secure water supply in time of siege; the only faith that will secure the real solidity of the state is faith in Yahweh.”—George B. Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah*, I—XXVII, *The International Critical Commentary* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975), vol. 1, p. 118.

In some circumstances in life, the most important thing is not what happens in our external environment, nor what our sight can contemplate, but what happens in our inner life. Thus, we must pray for, and cultivate, the capacity to understand from God’s perspective what is happening around us.

Part III: Life Application

- 1. King Ahaz, along with his people, face some severe challenges as they gauge the risk of war with the Syro-Ephraimite alliance. Sometimes, life puts us in situations that threaten us. What important or practical steps are necessary for us to follow in order to best cope with these circumstances?**

- 2. In the second part, the study explores the particular care of God in meeting King Ahaz’s needs. The Lord sends His messenger**

to meet the king “in the highway of the fuller’s field” (*Isa. 7:3*).
What lessons can we learn from this episode?

3. In the third section, we learn how God encourages the king to trust not in material things but in His help. His words to the king are “Look quietly.” How is it compatible with Ellen G. White’s counsel below?

You may be perplexed in business; your prospects may grow darker and darker, and you may be threatened with loss; but do not become discouraged; cast your care upon God, and remain calm and cheerful. Pray for wisdom to manage your affairs with discretion, and thus prevent loss and disaster. Do all you can on your part to bring about favorable results. Jesus has promised His aid, but not apart from our effort. When, relying upon our Helper, you have done all you can, accept the result cheerfully.—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 122.
