

INTRODUCTION

The prophet Isaiah wrote some 700 years before the birth of Jesus. Inspired by God the Holy Spirit he predicted that God would enter history as a little baby in order to save his people from their sins.

Isaiah lived in Judah during the second half of the eighth century BC. His prophecy of Immanuel was written just before fall of the northern, ten-tribed Kingdom of Israel.

GOD'S PROMISE OF DELIVERANCE (verses 3-9)

Isaiah called King Ahaz to trust in God, warning: "Hold God in doubt, and you'll not hold out."

GOD'S PROMISE SPURNED (verses 10-12)

God offered Ahaz a sign, as a demonstration of His power, but Ahaz spurned the offer because he had already decided to rely on Assyrian help, rather than on God's help.

GOD'S SIGN: IMMANUEL (verses 13-17)

The promise that a virgin would conceive and bear a son, and call his name Immanuel (or "*God is with us*") is remarkable for:

1. Its setting. The background for this grand announcement is a rather grubby piece of political manoeuvring by small Near Eastern countries, and particularly the scheming of an ungodly king of Judah.
2. Its sublime origin. God planned this matter before the "*foundation of the world*." (Ephesians 1:4) We see it clearly prefigured in the divine prophecy recorded in Genesis 3:15.
3. Its simplicity. "*... a virgin shall conceive and bear a son ...*" The birth of a baby boy seems a strange way for Almighty God to break into human history in order to save men from their sin. But this was no ordinary birth.
4. Its supreme importance. Jesus was to bear the title Immanuel, that is, "*God is with us*."