

(The Word for Today) Isaiah 7:14 - Part 1

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the destructive nature of sin and the importance of believing in the signs of God's existence, highlighting the consequences of unbelief and the choice to reject God's message.

Duration: 25:59

Scripture: Judges 6:36, Isaiah 7:14

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Chuck emphasizes the destructive power of sin and its impact on relationships and society. He highlights the historical lesson that a nation must be spiritually and morally strong to thrive, and when they turn away from God, they face destruction. Isaiah prophesied to the king of Judah about an impending national peril, assuring him that God would deliver them. To confirm the credibility of his message, Isaiah encourages the king to ask God for a sign, just as Gideon did in the Bible.

Transcript

Welcome to The Word for Today. The Word for Today is a continuous study of the Bible taught by Pastor Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, California. Pastor Chuck is currently teaching from the Old Testament, and for those of you following along in your Bibles, we'll be continuing today in Isaiah chapter 7, beginning with verse 14, as we continue with a topical study.

And now with today's study, here's Pastor Chuck. Ahaz was the king of Judah, the southern kingdom. Ahaz was a very wicked and evil king.

His sin brought destruction and disgrace to Judah. We realize that sin is always destructive in nature. Those things that God has termed sin are those things that if a man practices and engages in them, will have a destructive effect upon that man's life.

It will destroy you spiritually, it will destroy you emotionally, and ultimately it will destroy you physically. Sin is destructive. And God has forbidden those things that destroy.

Sin destroys relationships. And we are living today in a society that's being destroyed because of the family being destroyed because of sin. As you read history, if there is one lesson that is very clear in history, it is that lesson that a nation to be strong must be spiritually and morally strong.

And where there is a breakdown in that nation's relationship with God, there is also then the destruction of that nation. And so we read over and over in the period of the history of Israel, how that when they sought the Lord, God blessed them, they were prospered, they were strong. But when they forsook the Lord, the nation went downhill and was destroyed by their enemies.

This is one of those tragic times in the history of the nation of Judah, when they had turned from God because of their king, and they were on their way down to destruction. At this very moment, that Isaiah is standing before the king, they are facing a tremendous national peril. The northern kingdom called Israel had confederated together with Syria, a perennial enemy, and they had federated together to attack Judah.

Their plans were to destroy the city of Jerusalem and to take spoil, just to raise them. And so the people and the king were in fear. There was a tremendous trembling in the hearts of the people because of these rumors of war.

The power of Syria and Israel was coming against them. And as the king was fearful, trembling, the prophet Isaiah came out to meet him. And he told the king that he didn't need to tremble.

He didn't need to worry that this confederacy would not stand, that they would not be able to conquer over Judah, that God was going to deliver Judah from the confederacy of these two nations. In fact, God would destroy the two nations that were coming against them, and within 65 years, Israel would be completely destroyed. It actually happened within 30 years.

But Isaiah was prophesying to the king that would seem to be totally incredible, that somehow, someday, God would deliver them from this impending destruction, or threat of destruction, from the confederacy of these two nations. Because the message of Isaiah seemed to be so incredulous, Isaiah said, ask the Lord for a sign that what I tell you is true. Ask for it in the heavens above or in the depths below.

In other words, ask God to give you a sign. What would you like to see? Would you like to see the sun go back? Would you like to see, you know, stars fall? What would you like to see? Ask God for a sign. Sort of like when Gideon doubted the word of the Lord because it seemed so totally incredulous, he said, Lord, I want to put a fleece out tonight.

Give me a sign, you know, that this is really you, that you're really gonna help me. I'd like to have a sign. Let me put out the fleece, and in the morning let it be wet, you know.

And so Isaiah's saying, just ask the Lord for a sign. Maybe you'd like to have a thunderstorm. Maybe you'd like to have an earthquake.

Well, you know, what would you like to see? Just ask the Lord to give a sign to confirm that what he has told you will really happen. Now Ahaz said, I don't care for a sign. I'm not interested in a sign.

You see, the king had his own agenda. The king had taken money out of the temple treasury, and he had sent it to the king of Assyria. And he had hired the king of Assyria to attack Syria from its northern positions, so that Syria would be forced to withdraw the troops that had come down to the south, and would have to go back to defend their own nation from Assyria.

And so the king had this strategy all planned out. And thus, he wasn't really interested in God's help or God's deliverance. For you see, he was so wicked and so evil, that he thought that if he sought the help of

the Lord, that he would then be obligated to the Lord.

And that is something that he was not at all interested in. He had so totally given his life over to sin, and to the pursuit of pleasure, that he wanted nothing to do with God. So he said, I'm not gonna ask for a sign.

He wanted nothing to do with God, because his life was so totally evil. If God helped him, he felt that that would make an obligation to God. Tragic.

When a person's heart becomes so hardened to God and the things of God, that they really don't want God to work in their lives, lest they become obligated to God. But such was the case of Ahaz. He would take the whole nation down the tubes with him, down to destruction, rather than to change his lifestyle.

He was dedicated to this life of sin, this life of evil, this rebellion against God. And if necessary, let the nation go down the tube. I don't care, I'm gonna pursue my own lust.

And thus he said, I don't want a sign. I won't ask for a sign. And so Isaiah said to the king, how long are you going to be a burden to these people? You're not only a burden to these people, you're a burden to God.

However, you say you don't want a sign, but God's gonna give you a sign anyhow. For a virgin will conceive and bear a son and call his name Emmanuel. God will give a sign to the world, the sign of the Savior.

A virgin will conceive, bear a son, call his name Emmanuel. Now this is of course indeed quite a sign, very remarkable. For a virgin to conceive without insemination.

In the Garden of Eden, when Satan tempted Eve and she ate the forbidden fruit and she gave to Adam and he also ate, as God was dealing with this sin, told Adam as the result of what you've done, you've brought a curse upon yourself, a curse upon the ground. Thorns and thistles the ground will bring forth and from now on you're gonna have to earn your bread by the sweat of your brow. To the woman he said, you're gonna have difficulty in childbirth, the labor pains.

And he said that your desire will be unto your husband. And then as he addressed Satan, who had tempted Eve, he said that one day the seed of the woman will bruise your head and you will bruise his heel. The seed of the woman, there is a prophecy there in Genesis chapter 3 of the virgin birth because a woman doesn't have a seed.

She possesses the ovum that must be fertilized by the male seed in order for conception to take place. But in God's declaration that the seed of the woman would bruise the authority or the power of Satan was a prophecy of a virgin birth. Now that's incredible.

That a woman without insemination could bear a child. Now when the angel came to Mary and told her that she was highly favored by God, because God had chosen her to be that virgin, to bring the Messiah into the world. That she was gonna have a son.

Call his name Jesus because he would save the world from their sins. Mary questioned, how can this be? I've never had an intimate relationship with a man. I've never had a physical relationship.

How can it be that I'm gonna bear a son? And she realized the incredulousness of her bearing a child. She said, I'm a virgin. But the angel said, nothing is impossible with God.

So, thus the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah, Mary is the one favored by God and chosen by God to be the human instrument. And as we read in Matthew's gospel, all of these things were done in order that it might be fulfilled. The word of the Lord might be fulfilled that he spoke through the prophet when he said, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Emmanuel.

And Matthew interprets the name Emmanuel. He said, which means God with us. John tells us, in the beginning was the word.

The word was with God. The word was God. The same was in the beginning with God and all things were made by him.

And the word became flesh and dwelt among us. Now the purpose of this supernatural sign was to confirm that it was God indeed who had spoken the truth. Now that's what God has a message for you Ahaz.

It seems incredible. You're fearful and rightfully so that the Syrian Israeli Confederacy is gonna destroy you. You're worried about that.

But they're not. They're gonna fall. If you want to know that this is really God, ask God for a sign.

To confirm it. So the signs were intended to confirm to the people that it was God who had spoken. Provide for them indisputable kind of proof or evidence that it was God's word.

And yet it's interesting that man today disputes the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. There are seminary professors who cast doubts upon the virgin birth and they have influenced many of the young students in the seminary so that a large percentage of ministers today in the United States and even a greater percentage in Europe do not believe in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. Rejecting this sign of God.

But that is not the only sign. Throughout the whole universe, God has provided signs of his existence, of his power, of his wisdom. And men choose to believe the signs or they choose not to believe the signs.

But the choice is never based upon the intellect of man. In fact, the choices are often made as a denial of the intellect or in face of the intellect of man. The choices are often anti-intellectual.

The choices are made on the basis of the desire of the heart of the man. The desire of the heart of Ahaz was wicked. He was a wicked, evil man.

He had devoted his life in the pursuit of pleasure and thus to believe in God would necessitate a change of life patterns. To accept a sign from God would be the acknowledging of God. And thus he rejected the sign.

I don't want a sign. I'm not interested in a sign because he had chosen to live a life after his own flesh. And so today there are men as Ahaz who deny all of the evidence that God has placed around us of his existence, of his power, of his glory.

Because to acknowledge it would then have to face the evil that their hearts are longing after. And so if a man is chosen to live a life of evil, he will choose not to believe the signs. Jesus said that he that does evil hates the light and will not come to the light.

And that is why people are not saved. That is why people give you a bad time when you talk to them about the Lord. Talk to them about the Bible.

They give you a bad time. Why? Why won't they come to the light? Why do they hate the light? Why do people get so upset when you talk to them about Jesus Christ? Jesus said because they hate righteousness. They hate him because they are evil.

Ahaz the wicked king was saying I don't want any signs. And you may be among those today like Ahaz who are saying I don't want any signs. I said it doesn't make any difference man.

God's going to give you a sign anyhow. You know you're going to have to face the issue. The signs are there and you're going to have to deny the signs.

Intellectually you're going to have to deny the signs and choose not to believe the signs in order to pursue your life of evil. And you reject Christ in spite of all of the evidence. And it means that your choice of unbelief stems from an evil heart.

And your desire is to continue that life of sin which is bringing you to destruction. And that is why when sin does have its ultimate effect upon you and it destroys you because that is the nature of sin. It destroys and it destroys you spiritually and when it has its final effect upon you and you are destroyed you cannot blame God for your destruction.

Your destruction came as a deliberate choice on your part to continue the path of destruction. It was something you have chosen in spite of the signs that God has given to you. And so every man's destiny falls upon himself to determine.

Pastor Chuck Smith will return with a few closing comments. But first I'd like to remind you that today's message is available in its unedited form on cassette or CD. Simply write or call and ask for ordering details on tape or CD number T-3254.

Again that's tape or CD number T-3254. Well it's that time of year again. It may seem innocent but the symbols of Halloween like black cats, jack-o'-lanterns and trick-or-treat all have roots in sorcery and Satanism.

We would never knowingly get involved with anything related to Satan. But many Christians don't understand what's really behind the pagan holiday. The word for today would like to offer you a presentation hosted by Pastor Chuck Smith called Halloween trick-or-treat that traces the pagan origins and history of Halloween.

This powerful movie uncovers the mystic rites and ceremonies of Satan and will forever change your opinion of Halloween. Every year as the end of October approaches we are faced with the dilemma of family and friends pressuring us to participate in the celebration of this pagan holiday. This documentary will definitely challenge you to decide whether or not you'll continue to participate in this tradition.

If you'd like more information on Halloween trick-or-treat then simply write or call and ask one of our operators for the ordering details. Again it's called Halloween trick-or-treat. And right now if you place an order the word for today would like to bless you with Pastor Chuck Smith's pamphlet How can a man be born again? Absolutely free.

Instead of just giving candy this year the pamphlet is the perfect tool for Christians to share the gospel with loved ones and friends. Available in both English and Spanish. Again it's free when you call right now.

To order Halloween trick-or-treat for yourself or for a friend you can call the word for today at 1-800-272-WORD or write to us at P.O. Box 8000 Costa Mesa California 92628. Once again that number to call is 1-800-272-9673. And for those of you that would like to visit our website you can do so at www.twft.com. Or if you would like to email us you can do so at info@twft.com. Well coming up next time on the word for today Pastor Chuck will be continuing his fascinating study through the book of Isaiah.

That's coming up next time on the word for today. Here's Pastor Chuck. Lord help us that we Lord might not be as reprobate silver, but as gold that has been tried in the fire and comes forth pure.

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