



• Unbelief delays destiny

• The divine miracle-child is replaced by Isaiah's own son

• Common biblical principle – something or someone acts as a stand-by for an undated promise

Isaiah has been speaking as if the divine miracle-child were to be born there and then in the days of Ahaz and Isaiah. There are reasons for this. God offered a sign immediately if Ahaz would believe and ask for it<sup>1</sup>. The sign was to speak of the immediate end to the threat from Pekah and Remaliah's boy. But now a modification is introduced. Unbelief delays destiny — a point that was apparent in 2:1–4:1 but now appears again. The divine miracle-child is replaced by Isaiah's own son, and the birth of the miracle child is now said to be pushed into the distant future

7:11

This is a common biblical principle. When a promise is spoken of as undated and yet it is not immediate, then something or someone else acts as stand-by, a temporary-measure. If in Old Testament times God's prophet was not yet to come, the prophets will be God's interim measure. If God's final priest was not yet to come, the descendants of Aaron would act as a substitute till he came. If the blood of the Son of God was not to be shed immediately, the blood of bulls and of goats would be a shadow of what was to come. If God's Son of David was not yet to come, then for many centuries the kings of Judah would be the temporary sons of David. God talks as if the miracle-child might be conceived immediately. Yet Ahaz's unbelief is about to bring not salvation but disaster. So the birth of the Saviour will not be just yet. Ahaz refused an immediate sign. So be it! Isaiah's son will act as a substitute and the miracle-child will come at a later time altogether.

1. Isaiah's son acts as the substitute for the miracle-child

• Isaiah's son will stand in for the miracle-child

• The threat from Pekah and Ramaliah's boy will disappear

### 1. Isaiah's son acts as the substitute for the miracle-child.

*<sup>1</sup>Yahweh said to me, 'Take a large placard and write on it with an ordinary pen: Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz. <sup>2</sup>And I will call in Uriah the priest and Zechariah son of Jeberekiah as reliable witnesses for me.' <sup>3</sup>Then I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and gave birth to a son. And Yahweh said to me, 'Name him Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz. <sup>4</sup>For before the boy knows how to say "My father" or "My mother", the wealth of Damascus and the plunder of Samaria will be carried off by the king of Assyria.'*

Aram and Israel will be destroyed but that will not help Judah. Isaiah is to publicize a name with four nouns in it: 'Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz' ('speed-spoil-haste-booty'). One might think it is to be the name of the miracle-child (who also will have a fourfold name in 9:6). But then a little later Isaiah is told it is to be the name of his own son. His own son will take over from the miracle-child the task of being a time-measurement. It will be before his **own** son grows to be able to talk that the threat from Pekah and Remaliah's boy will have disappeared.

2. The miracle-child is to be expected not immediately but ahead in the undated future after an Assyrian invasion

• Isaiah predicts Assyria's invasion

### 2. The miracle-child is to be expected not immediately but ahead in the undated future after an Assyrian invasion.

This is implied in the replacement of the miracle-child by Isaiah's son. It is also implied in that Isaiah now predicts that soon Assyria will arrive to take over Judah.

*<sup>5</sup>Yahweh spoke to me again:  
<sup>6</sup>'Because this people has rejected the gently flowing waters of Shiloah and rejoices over Rezin and the son of Remaliah,  
<sup>7</sup>therefore, behold, Yahweh is about to bring against them the mighty floodwaters of the River — the king of Assyria with all his pomp. It will overflow all its channels, run over all its banks  
<sup>8</sup>and sweep on into Judah, swirling over it, passing through it and reaching up to the neck.*

*Its outspread wings will cover the breadth of your land,  
O Immanuel!*

• **'Shiloh' – stream, symbolising faith**

• **Those in Jerusalem had to trust God's provision**

• **Israel broke away from Judah, but their unbelief would be punished – swept away by a flood of judgement**

(i) **Unbelief delays promises**

(ii) **God still protects His people even when promises are delayed**

(iii) **Faith – trusting God's faithful daily provision**

(iv) **Lack of faith leads to judgement**

'Shiloh' was a little stream that brought water into Jerusalem. It symbolized faith – for Jerusalem's water came from outside Jerusalem. God's supplies had to come from outside its own resources. Those who lived in Jerusalem were in a safe place but they had to trust in provision from outside constantly coming to them. 'Shiloh' also spoke of confident and peaceful faith, for the word resembled shalom ('peace'), as did the name of the city itself, *Jerusalem* or *Jeru-shalayim*.

'This people' refers to the northern kingdom, Israel. Because they broke away from Judah, not trusting in the Jerusalem-promises of salvation, God was allowing the Assyrians to come upon them. They were turning to Rezin, king of Aram, and to Remaliah's boy as their own choice of a king for northern Israel. But their unbelief would be punished. Because they would not accept quietly flowing peace from the promises of God, instead they would experience mighty overflowing floodwaters — the Euphrates, the river of Assyria. Instead of being gently given steady supply in a place of safety by a stream of peace coming from God, they will be swept away by an overflowing river, a flood of judgement also coming from God, drowning the people in God's anger. It would sweep away northern Israel and then flow on to almost drown Judah also. Changing the picture, Isaiah says it will be like a monstrous bird of prey swooping down to pick up a carcass. The tragedy was that the monstrous bird of prey was swooping down on the land that should have been rescued by Immanuel, the miracle child. But Ahaz's unbelief meant that even the land that would be the locality of the coming of Immanuel would for the immediate age ahead be not a land of salvation but a land under judgement for its unbelief.

(i) Unbelief delays promises; (ii) even while God delays his promises to his people he still protects them; (iii) the way of faith is the way of trusting God's steady and quietly flowing daily provision for life and godliness; (iv) if God's steady supplies are not expected, his overwhelming judgement might come instead.

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