



ISAIAH

THE LORD SAVES

CHECK-IN

Before you dig into the passage

Ask your group to share how they have applied the teaching from last week. How have you responded to God's Word this past week? How have you responded to God's call to serve him? What can you praise God for and how do you need to repent in light of last week's teaching?

READ

Isaiah 7:1-17

As the text is central to the discussion, read the week's text together. Consider using a few different translations.

OBSERVE

Make text-based observations (What?)

Guide your group to make observations from the text. Focus on elements like words, grammar, structure, tone, literary devices, genre, etc.

1. Discuss the genre and historical context of Isaiah 7. Read 2 Kings 16 and 2 Chronicles 28 along with Is. 7:1-2.
2. How does Isaiah refer to the king of Judah (Ahaz) throughout this passage?
3. How did Ahaz and his people respectively respond to the news of the Syro-Ephramite coalition? What is Ahaz doing when Isaiah goes to him?
4. What imperatives does Isaiah give Ahaz? (v. 4) What does Isaiah *not* say to Ahaz? (*Note: he does not condemn him or interpret the war as punishment from God!*)

5. What warning and what promise does God give Ahaz in verses 7-9? (*See 2 Sam 7:16 for further context.*)
6. What invitation does God give Ahaz? How does Ahaz respond and why? (v. 10-12)
7. What sign does God say he will provide? (v. 14)
8. What is God's punishment for Ahaz's unbelief? What hope remains? (v. 15-17)

INTERPRET

What does the passage mean (So what?)?

Based on the observations, what did the text mean to its original audience? What is God saying?

1. How is God's faithfulness revealed in this passage?
2. Given Ahaz's character (2 Kings 16:1-4), what is revealed about God through his message to Ahaz (and sending Isaiah) and his invitation to provide a sign?
3. What is Isaiah drawing attention to by referring to Ahaz as the "house of David"? What does this say about the implications of Ahaz's response to God?
4. What does this passage reveal about the condition of Ahaz's and his people's hearts? Why do you think Ahaz was given the imperatives in v. 4?
5. How does the meaning of Isaiah's son's name (v. 3) add to the meaning of Isaiah's message?
6. What does Isaiah's reference to the king of Syria and the king of Israel say about their power and influence? (Compare v. 1 with vv. 4-6.)
7. What does verse 9b mean ("If you are not firm...")? What does it indicate about the centrality/importance of faith to Ahaz's life?
8. Why did Ahaz refuse God's offer to provide a sign? What would it have meant for him had he asked God for a sign? (*He would have had to use God's strategies to get through the crisis, admit God has control, and give God the glory for the outcome.*)
9. What is the meaning of the sign God says he will provide? What hope does this provide? (*See commentary notes on p. 59 & 62 of the CG Leader's Manual.*)

APPLY

What should we do and why (**Now what?**)?

In light of the meaning of the text in its context, what principles apply to us today?

1. When has your heart been “[shaken] as the trees of the forest shake before the wind” (v. 2)? How do anxiety and fear affect your life?
2. How do you usually respond in a time of crisis? Do you “count it all joy” when you face trials (James 1:2-4)? What do you think about God in times of crisis?
3. Are you currently in a time of crisis, like Ahaz was? (*E.g. struggling marriage, grief, ageing, infertility, depression and anxiety, unemployment, loneliness, struggling friendships, health issues, moving, parenting, ageing parents, etc.*)
 - a. In what ways have you been like Ahaz, filled with unbelief and desiring to take matters into your own hands? What is the effect of this on yourself and those around you?
 - b. How have you stood firm in your faith, remembering that God is with you and that he enables you to respond to your situation how Christ calls you to respond? How did this affect you and those around you?
 - c. How can your unbelief turn to belief? What could you do to strengthen your faith? What effect would this have on your response to your situation?
4. In verse 12 we see how Ahaz uses God’s Word to avoid the reality of God. When do you find it easier to talk about the Bible and give the “right answers” to avoid talking about the condition of your heart? What might cause you to do this?
5. What does it mean to “be firm in faith”? How can you have a saving faith? (*Refer to the extra resources provided. Share the gospel!*)
6. How is the promise in verse 14 fulfilled in Jesus Christ? What hope and assurance does this provide, especially in times of crisis?
7. God has also given us, the Church, other signs to remember his presence and commitment to your salvation - i.e. Holy Communion & Baptism. How will your approach to these signs change in light of this passage?

PRAYER

Lead your group in a prayer in response to this passage. Spend time repenting of your own unbelief and declaring trust in Jesus.