

## 2 Nephi 17 — Isaiah 7 — The Sign of Immanuel and the Trembling House of David

*The Syro-Ephraimite war (c. 734 BC), Ahaz refuses a sign, the Lord gives the sign of Immanuel — a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, c. 734 BC.*

Christology embedded in geopolitics. King Ahaz of Judah is threatened by an alliance of Syria and Israel; the Lord sends Isaiah with his son *Shear-jashub* (a-remnant-shall-return) to meet Ahaz at the waterworks. The Lord offers any sign Ahaz wants; Ahaz refuses with false piety; the Lord gives the sign anyway — *a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel*. Matthew (Matt. 1:23) cites the verse at the birth of Christ.

Two-thousand-year debate; two-layer fulfillment.

### Ten Insights

- 1. In the days of Ahaz (v. 1).** Historical specificity. The Syro-Ephraimite war (734 BC). Prophecy operates within real-world geopolitics, not above it.
- 2. Moved as the trees with the wind (v. 2).** Fear is contagious in political-leadership contexts. The king's fear becomes the people's fear becomes the nation's collapse.
- 3. Shear-jashub (v. 3).** *A remnant shall return* — Isaiah's son carrying the prophetic doctrine as a living name. Prophets sometimes embed signs in their family-life.
- 4. Meeting at the waterworks (v. 3).** The prophet meets the king at the place of military-defensive planning, not at the temple. The Lord meets the disciple where the disciple is actually engaged.
- 5. Aman / te'amenu (v. 9).** *If you do not have aman, you cannot be amen-ed*. Hebrew pun — same root underlies *amen*. Trust is the existential precondition of stability.
- 6. Sign offered freely (v. 11).** *Ask it either in the depths, or in the heights above*. The Lord generously authorizes faith. Signs are not stingy; refusal is.
- 7. Ahaz's false piety (v. 12).** False piety can disguise covenant-refusal. Citing a true principle (Deut. 6:16) to refuse a genuine divine offer.
- 8. Behold, a virgin shall conceive (v. 14).** *Almah* — young woman, virginally presumed in OT usage. LXX renders *parthenos* (virgin) c. 250 BC. Matt. 1:23 cites Christologically. Two-layer: Hezekiah immediate; Christ deeper.
- 9. Immanu-El — God with us (v. 14).** The Incarnation in name-form. Matt. 1:23 — *they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us*. Foundational LDS Christology.
- 10. Hiss for fly and bee (v. 18).** Egypt as fly; Assyria as bee. The Lord summons foreign powers as instruments of judgment. *Sharaq* (whistle) parallel to 2 Ne. 15:26.

### Cross-References

Gen. 24:43 (almah of Rebekah); Ex. 2:8 (almah of Miriam); Ex. 3:8 (milk and honey); Deut. 6:16 (tempt not the Lord); Ruth 4; 1 Sam. 1:13 (almah of Hannah); 2 Sam. 7:14 (Davidic Son); 1 Kgs. 22:19; 2 Kgs. 16:1–20 (Ahaz history); 2 Kgs. 18 (Hezekiah's resistance); Ps. 22; Ps. 110; Ps. 132:11; Isa. 8:8, 10 (Immanuel repeated); Isa. 9:6–7 (Mighty God, Prince of Peace); Isa. 11:1 (rod from Jesse); Isa. 28:16; Isa. 40:9–11; Isa. 49:1; Isa. 53; Jer. 23:5–6; Jer. 33:15; Mic. 5:2 (Bethlehem); Hag. 2:23 (signet); Zech. 6:12; Mal. 3:1; Matt. 1:18–25 (citation — Mary's virginal conception); Matt. 2:1–12; Lk. 1:26–38 (annunciation); Lk. 1:35 (overshadow); Lk. 2:1–20 (birth); Jn. 1:1, 14 (Word made flesh); Rom. 1:3; Rom. 9:5; Gal. 4:4; Phil. 2:6–11; Heb. 1:5; Heb. 2:14–17; 1 Tim. 3:16; 1 Jn. 4:2–3; 1 Ne. 11 (condescension); 2 Ne. 6:5; 2 Ne. 9; Mosiah 3:5–8; Alma 7:9–13 (Mary named); Hel. 14:1–13 (Samuel's signs); 3 Ne. 11–18; Eth. 3; D&C 19:18 (suffering caused myself, even God, to tremble); D&C 76:23; D&C 93:1–20; D&C 130:22; Articles of Faith 1, 3.

### Apocryphal Correlations

**Wisdom of Solomon 18:14–15.** *Thy almighty word leapt down from heaven out of thy royal throne* — direct Incarnation-language; closest Wisdom-tradition Christ-Immanuel image.

**1 Enoch 46–48 (Similitudes).** Son of Man named before the creation of sun and stars; concealed then revealed — closest extra-canonical Christological pre-existence.

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**4 Ezra 7:28–29.** *My Son the Messiah shall be revealed* — explicit pre-Christian Jewish messianic incarnation-anticipation.

**Targum Jonathan on Isaiah 7:14.** Aramaic targum cautiously renders *the young woman* but preserves the messianic interpretation — pre-Christian Jewish ambivalence on the specifically virginal reading.

**2 Baruch 30:1.** *The Anointed One shall be revealed in glory* — direct pre-Christian Anointed-One prophecy.

**Psalms of Solomon 17:21–46.** Davidic Messiah revealed in the days of trouble — same time-of-trouble + Messiah-deliverance pattern.

**Testament of Joseph 19:6.** *A virgin shall give birth to a Lamb without spot* — closest extra-canonical virgin-and-lamb explicit parallel.

**Ascension of Isaiah 11:1–22.** Christian-era expansion of Isaiah's vision — Beloved descending through the seven heavens and being born of Mary.

**Dead Sea Scrolls 1QIsaa.** Great Isaiah Scroll (c. 125 BC) preserves *almah* in v. 14 — same Hebrew text the LXX translators worked from when they chose *parthenos*.

## Hebrew Word Studies

***she'ar yashuv* (שְׁאֵר יָשׁוּב, a remnant shall return)** — v. 3. Isaiah's son's prophetic name; the remnant-doctrine incarnated in a child. Prophetic family-life as witness.

***aman* / *te'amenu* (אָמֵן / תְּעִמְנוּ, trust / be made steady; root of amen)** — v. 9. *If you do not have aman, you cannot be amen-ed.* Every sacrament-amen affirms this verse. Trust is the disciple's existential foundation.

***almah* (עַלְמָה, young woman / virgin)** — v. 14. OT term for young marriageable woman, virginally presumed. LXX (250 BC) renders *parthenos*. Matthew cites Christologically (Matt. 1:23).

***Immanu-El* (עִמָּנוּאֵל, God with us)** — v. 14. The Incarnation in name-form. Foundational LDS Christology — Jesus is Immanuel; Jesus is God with us.

***sharaq* (שָׂרָץ, whistle / hiss-call)** — v. 18 (cf. Isa. 5:26). Shepherd's whistle to the sheep — here to the fly of Egypt and the bee of Assyria as instruments of judgment.

## Personal Application

*Three practices. First, receive the sign offered. Ahaz refused the sign with false piety. Modern disciples sometimes do the same — out of cynicism or fear. When the Lord offers a sign — through prayer, scripture, blessing, or quiet impression — receive it. Refusing is Ahaz, not piety. Second, let Immanuel be your name for Christ. In moments of loneliness, separation, or fear, call Christ Immanuel. God with us — not God above, not God remote, but God with me, now. Third, cultivate aman daily. Each day, identify one situation in which your trust is weak; deliberately exercise aman; observe whether the te'amenu (steadiness) follows. The amen at the close of every prayer is your daily declaration.*