

was. As God's messenger, Isaiah utters a strong rebuke: "Hear ye now, O house of David; is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore, the Lord himself shall give you a sign."

We note that the sign is addressed not only to Ahaz, but to the entire house of David. This house is thought of as groaning under the misery of having the throne of David occupied by a man who has turned away from God. Yet the whole house of David is at fault, for Ahaz is not alone in this attitude of unbelief and apostasy toward God. It would be only natural to expect some declaration here that in His own time God will replace Ahaz by one who will be a worthy representative on the throne of David.

We can also, of course, expect something in relation to the promise previously given, that God will protect His people. The word of comfort is not addressed to Ahaz and the house of David but to the godly people, some of whom are standing there. With this in mind, and understanding that these two elements can be reasonably expected in the sign that is to follow, we are in a position to explain what is, in some ways, a difficult passage.

### **The Sign of Immanuel**

The prediction is as follows (Isa. 7:14-16):

"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel† Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrent shall be forsaken of both her kings."

"Immanuel" is Hebrew for "God with us."

This prediction has been interpreted in various ways. Some wish to take it all as referring to the distant future and some wish to take it all as referring to the immediate future.

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†The New Scofield Reference Bible reads "the virgin shall conceive ..."