

### Sabbath School Lesson #3 – When Your World Is Falling Apart – 9-15 January 2021

**C**hrist has given us His gifts. The gifts of the Spirit are for the building up of the body of Christ, and none of them has been used for this purpose more than the gift of prophecy. When Jehoshaphat had received from the prophet of the Lord a message for the people, he said: "Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper" (2 Chronicles 20:20). And to the same effect Isaiah, when he had delivered a prophecy from God to the king of Judah, said to him, "And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established" (Isaiah 7:9). What, indeed, can establish the people of God like prophecy? The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus (Revelation 19:10). It was the Spirit of Christ that was in the ancient prophets (2 Peter 1:10-11), and that same Spirit is to be with His people even unto the end.

**Sunday: Danger From the North** – Ahaz was one of the kings of Judah, and reigned in Jerusalem (see 2 Kings 16:1-2; Isaiah 1:1). He was a descendant of David, and one of the ancestors of Jesus according to the flesh (2 Kings 16:2; Matthew 1:9). Yet in 2 Chronicles 28:19, in an account of the invasion of "the south of Judah" by the Philistines, we are told that "the Lord brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel; for he made Judah naked, and transgressed sore against the Lord." The worship of God had fallen into sad decay in the land of Judah. King Ahaz, during his reign of sixteen years, had gradually made up his mind that there was no profit in serving Jehovah or maintaining His worship. The treasures of the temple had been used to purchase the alliance of heathen kings, "for Ahaz took away a portion out of the house of the Lord, and gave it unto the king of Assyria; but he helped him not" (2 Chronicles 28:21). The reign of Ahaz was filled with disaster, but although the prophets Micah, Hosea, and Isaiah, proclaimed faithfully the cause of the evils, and exhorted the people to return to the Lord, to find in quietness and confidence the needed strength, they would not hearken. Instead they leaned upon those who smote them, for Ahaz said, "Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me. But they were the ruin of him, and of all Israel" (verse 23). At last king Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and cut them in pieces, and shut up the doors of the house of the Lord, and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem.

**Monday: Attempted Interception** – To halt ruin to the nation due to the choices of king Ahaz, the Lord sent Isaiah to plead with Ahaz to believe and be established. This was a call to Ahaz to exercise the faith that Abraham had, to believe as did Abraham. When it is said that Abraham "believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness" (Genesis 15:6), the full meaning conveyed by the Hebrew is that Abraham *built upon God*. The same idea is found in 2 Chronicles 20:20, where we have the words of Joshua, "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper." In reality the prophets exhorted people to build upon the Lord, if they would be established; and contrariwise we have the words of Isaiah to Ahaz, that because he would not build upon the words of God, he should not be established (Isaiah 7:9). Ahaz had given up faith in the Lord and so he could not build upon the Lord. Jesus Christ is the source of all faith. Faith has its beginning and end in Him. There can be no real faith that does not centre in Christ. When Abraham believed in the Lord, he believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. God has never been revealed to man except through Jesus Christ. The fact that Abraham's belief was personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, is further shown by the fact that it was counted unto him for righteousness. But there is no righteousness except through the faith of Jesus Christ. Our Lord Jesus Christ "is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30). No righteousness will be of any worth at the appearing of the Lord except "that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Philippians 3:9). But since God Himself counted Abraham's faith for righteousness, it is plain that his faith was centred in Christ alone, in whom he was made righteous. This is the faith that was to intercept and establish king Ahaz and save him, if only he had believed.

**Tuesday: Another Chance** – The Lord wanted to help the king's unbelief, and through the prophet Isaiah invited Ahaz to ask for a sign (Isaiah 7:11-13), which had he asked, it

would have strengthened his faith. But Ahaz refused assistance from the Lord, which would have helped his faith. How many have longed for “another chance,” yet in this life we are given “another chance”, for the Lord says: “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). Put your will on the side of belief rather than of unbelief. God will not force us to belief. He throws up evidences before our face, but only we can choose the faith option. Ahaz had lost faith, the Lord in His mercy invited him to ask for a sign, Ahaz should have simply responded saying, “help my unbelief” (Mark 9:24). We too, when today are invited by the Lord to ask for a sign so that we may “taste and see that the LORD *is* good” (Psalm 34:8), if we lack the faith, let us cry out “help my unbelief”! Inspiration assures you, “Cast yourself at His feet with the cry, ‘Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.’ You can never perish while you do this – never” {DA 429.1}.

**Wednesday: Sign of a Son** – In thirteenth verse of the seventh chapter of Isaiah we noticed that Ahaz refused to ask of a sign from the Lord to assure him that the Lord will help him in the battle against the enemies so that Ahaz needed only to trust in the Lord. When Ahaz refused to ask for a sign, the prophet said to him: “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (verse 14). There are a number of instances in the Bible where secondary applications are made of Old Testament Scriptures. Take for example Hosea 11:1 “When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.” This has a primary application to God bringing His people (the Hebrews) out of Egypt but Matthew, over 700 years after Hosea wrote the words, applies them to the child Jesus. Thus Matthew makes a secondary application of them, “When he [Joseph] arose, he took the young child [Jesus] and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son” (Matthew 2:14-15). No one though, exactly as Hosea had originally written them, could have applied these words to the coming Messiah. This is because Hosea continued by saying that the Hebrews, after their deliverance from Egypt, went on to worship graven images. Matthew therefore, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, lifted a singular statement from its original context and applied it to Christ. It is the same with Isaiah 7:14. As Christians we regard this text as a prophecy of the virgin birth but when Isaiah said to King Ahaz that, “... the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel [which means ‘God with us’], the immediate application was to God promising to be with the king in battle against his enemies. Yet Matthew, some 700 years later, gives it a secondary application to the birth of Christ: “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Matthew 1:23). Centuries ago this was written, yet it is living truth today. The birth of the child of the virgin, who, being the Son of God, was God manifest in the flesh, was not merely God with the virgin, but God with us. The Son of God was born of woman, to teach us that every “son of man” is by birth a son of God (read Luke 3:23-38); and that to the extent that we do not exhibit and being partakers of “the Divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4) we come short of our privileges. “As many as received Him, to them gave He power [right or privilege] to become the sons of God;” but He is given to “all people” alike, and therefore everybody has the same privileges by birth that any other one has, whether he accepts and uses them or not. What an “unspeakable gift” is ours! The more we meditate upon it, the more wonderful and unspeakable will it appear to us.

**Thursday: “God /s With Us”!** – Satan the ruler of the darkness had deceive man to believe that God was cruel, vindictive, and passionate. Even the Jews, the people God had chosen to be the bearers of light to the world, had departed from God, and while professedly separate from the heathen, were enveloped in heathen darkness. Then Christ came, and “The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up” (Matthew 4:16). His name was Emmanuel, God with us. “God was in Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:19). God refuted the falsehoods of Satan, not by loud arguments, but by living His life in man for all to see it. He demonstrated the power of the life of God manifested in man. When your world is falling apart, remember, God is with us!