



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

BIBLE CONFIDENCE SERIES

“The Virgin Will Conceive”

Understanding Isaiah 7:14 in Its Own Setting and Matthew 1

The short answer

Isaiah gave King Ahaz a sign during a frightening crisis: God was still with His people, and the kings Ahaz feared would not defeat His purposes. Matthew shows that this promise reaches its greatest fulfillment in Jesus—the promised Son, born of the virgin Mary, who is truly “God with us.”

“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son. They shall call his name Immanuel,” which is, being interpreted, “God with us.”

Matthew 1:23 WEB; compare Isaiah 7:14

Simple · Clear · Scripture-grounded



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PART ONE • BEGINNER GUIDE

One familiar verse has two important settings

This Companion was not written to replace your Bible. It was written to help you fall in love with it. Every page is intended to send you back into God's Word with greater confidence, deeper understanding, and a clearer picture of Jesus Christ.

Foundational truth

The Bible is God's self-revelation. Earlier passages have real meaning in their own setting, and the New Testament helps us see how God's plan reaches its fullness in Jesus Christ.

What you will learn

01

What Isaiah's audience heard

Enter the fear, politics, unbelief, and promised timetable of Isaiah 7.

02

What Matthew announces

See why Matthew applies Isaiah 7:14 to Jesus' miraculous conception and birth.

03

How the two settings belong together

Hold the near historical significance and the greater messianic fulfillment together without flattening either one.

Recommended preparation

This applied guide follows *How the New Testament Uses the Old Testament*, *What Does Fulfilled Mean?*, *Promise or Pattern?*, and *Direct Prophecy, Typology, Echo, and Allusion*.

How to use this guide

Pages 2–9 explain the central message in beginner-friendly language. Pages 10–13 form an optional early-intermediate section for readers who want to explore the harder questions.



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BEGIN WITH ISAIAH

Judah is frightened by two invading kingdoms

Isaiah 7 takes place during the reign of Ahaz, king of Judah. Syria and the northern kingdom of Israel joined forces against Jerusalem. When the royal house heard the news, the king and people shook “as the trees of the forest are shaken with the wind” (Isaiah 7:1–2 WEB).

God sends reassurance before Ahaz asks

The Lord tells Isaiah to meet Ahaz with his son Shear Jashub. The message is direct: remain calm, do not fear, and do not lose heart. The planned attack will not succeed (Isaiah 7:3–7).

The central issue

The crisis is not only military. It exposes whether Judah’s king will trust the Lord’s word or seek security through human power. “If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established” (Isaiah 7:9 WEB).

A helpful historical note

This conflict is commonly called the Syro-Ephraimite crisis. “Ephraim” can refer to the northern kingdom of Israel because Ephraim was its dominant tribe. Ahaz later appealed to Assyria for help instead of resting in God’s promise (2 Kings 16:5–9).

Read before continuing

Open your Bible and read Isaiah 7:1–17. Mark every command, promise, sign, child, and time reference.



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THE SIGN IN ISAIAH

God offers a sign to an unbelieving king

The Lord invites Ahaz to ask for a sign “either in the depth, or in the height above.” Ahaz refuses with religious-sounding words: “I will not ask, neither will I tempt Yahweh” (Isaiah 7:10–12 WEB). But this is not humble faith; God had commanded him to ask.

The Lord gives His own sign

Isaiah addresses the “house of David” and announces: “Behold, the virgin will conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:13–14 WEB).

01

A child will be born

The birth is a visible sign within a promise God’s people can remember.

02

His name carries a message

Immanuel means “God with us.” The name announces God’s presence in the middle of danger.

03

His growth supplies a timetable

Before the child is old enough to reject evil and choose good, the lands of the two feared kings will be deserted (Isaiah 7:15–16).

Beginner memory anchor

In Isaiah’s setting, the promised child assures the house of David that the immediate threat will not overturn God’s purposes.



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READ WITH CARE

Who was the child in Isaiah's day?

Isaiah does not identify the child in a way that has produced universal agreement. Readers have proposed Isaiah's son, a royal child such as Hezekiah, or another child known to the original audience. Each proposal faces questions, and Scripture does not require us to settle the child's precise identity before understanding the sign's function.

What can we say confidently?

- The sign addressed a real crisis in Ahaz's lifetime (Isaiah 7:1–17).
- The child's early development marked the short timetable for the downfall of the feared kings (Isaiah 7:15–16).
- The name Immanuel declared that God was present and faithful to His purposes for David's house.
- The sign did not mean Judah would avoid every consequence. Assyria would also become an instrument of severe judgment (Isaiah 7:17–25).

A faithful posture

Where Scripture gives certainty, speak clearly. Where sincere interpreters disagree, explain the options humbly and keep the passage's central message in view.

Why the “house of David” matters

Isaiah's plural address reaches beyond Ahaz personally to David's royal line (Isaiah 7:13). God had promised David an enduring house and kingdom (2 Samuel 7:12–16). The crisis therefore raises a larger question: will human unbelief cancel God's covenant promise?



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BEGINNER ANSWER

Why does Matthew say “virgin”?

Some Bible translations use “virgin” in Isaiah 7:14, while others use “young woman.” That difference can feel confusing, but the main point is simpler than it first appears.

01

Isaiah gave a real sign

The promised child and the name Immanuel spoke to Judah’s immediate crisis and declared that God was with His people.

02

Matthew describes a miraculous conception

Matthew plainly says Mary became pregnant by the Holy Spirit before she and Joseph came together (Matthew 1:18, 20, 25).

03

Jesus brings the sign to its fullest meaning

In Jesus, “God with us” is more than a reassuring name. God the Son truly comes among His people to save them from their sins (Matthew 1:21–23; John 1:1, 14).

What a beginner needs to remember

Faithful scholars may debate the exact nuance of Isaiah’s Hebrew word and the identity of the earlier child. Matthew’s inspired narrative removes any ambiguity about Mary: Jesus was conceived miraculously and born of a virgin.

Save the word study for later

The Hebrew and Greek details are explained in Part Two. You do not need to master them to understand Matthew’s central claim.



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NOW READ MATTHEW

Joseph learns that Mary's child is from the Holy Spirit

Mary is found pregnant before she and Joseph come together. Joseph, described as righteous, plans to end the betrothal quietly. An angel tells him not to fear taking Mary as his wife because the child is conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18–20).

The child receives two names with two messages

Jesus—"Yahweh saves"

Joseph must name Him Jesus "for it is he who shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21 WEB). His mission is salvation, not merely political rescue.

Immanuel—"God with us"

Matthew says these events fulfill Isaiah's words. In Jesus, God's presence is not merely represented by a symbolic name; the eternal Son truly comes among His people (Matthew 1:22–23; John 1:1, 14).

Matthew's opening has prepared us

Matthew identifies Jesus as the Christ, Son of David, and Son of Abraham (Matthew 1:1). The genealogy traces God's faithfulness through deeply imperfect generations. The miraculous conception then shows that the promised King enters history by God's initiative.

Matthew's announcement

The God who preserved David's house and stayed faithful through Israel's history has now come near in the promised Messiah.



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HOLD BOTH SETTINGS TOGETHER

The earlier sign reaches a greater fulfillment

Matthew does not ask us to choose between Isaiah's historical setting and Jesus. The earlier sign was meaningful in Ahaz's crisis; Jesus brings its language, royal hope, and divine-presence theme to their fullest expression.

QUESTION	ISAIAH 7	MATTHEW 1
Setting	Judah threatened by Israel and Syria	Joseph learns Mary is pregnant
Human fear	Ahaz fears invading kings	Joseph faces a painful decision
God's word	Trust the Lord; the threat will not stand	Do not fear to take Mary as your wife
The child	A sign tied to the crisis and its timetable	Jesus, conceived by the Holy Spirit
Immanuel	God is present with His people	God truly comes to dwell with His people

A careful summary

Isaiah's sign assured David's threatened house that God remained present and His purposes would stand. God's covenant with David had promised an enduring royal house and kingdom (2 Samuel 7:12–16). Matthew announces that Jesus—conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, and heir to David's throne—is the climactic Immanuel: God with us to save His people from their sins.

Not prediction only, and not pattern only

This connection includes a word of promise, an earlier historical sign, a continuing Immanuel theme, and a greater messianic completion. Biblical fulfillment can gather several strands without denying the original context.



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PART TWO · DIGGING DEEPER

Immanuel becomes part of a larger royal hope

The word Immanuel does not disappear after Isaiah 7. Isaiah 8 warns that Assyria will flood Judah and spread across “your land, Immanuel,” while the prophet still declares that hostile plans will fail because “God is with us” (Isaiah 8:8, 10).

The promised child theme grows

Isaiah 9 announces, “For to us a child is born. To us a son is given” (Isaiah 9:6 WEB). His royal titles include “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace,” and He rules on David’s throne with justice forever (Isaiah 9:6–7). Isaiah 11 then describes a Spirit-anointed shoot from Jesse who judges righteously and brings peace (Isaiah 11:1–10). Together, these passages enlarge the hope from one threatened moment to God’s promised King.

Canonical growth

Isaiah 7 begins in a near crisis, but Isaiah 7–11 develops hope for a Davidic ruler whose identity and reign exceed an ordinary short-term deliverer. Matthew reads Isaiah 7:14 within that larger horizon.

Already and still with us

Matthew begins with “God with us” (Matthew 1:23) and ends with Jesus’ promise, “Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20 WEB). God’s presence frames the whole Gospel.

Why this matters

The fulfillment is not exhausted by the circumstances of Jesus’ birth. Immanuel describes who He is and the continuing presence He promises His disciples.



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PART TWO · DIGGING DEEPER

Questions thoughtful readers often ask

Was Isaiah 7:14 only about Jesus?

The verse belonged to a real eighth-century BC crisis and included a near timetable. Matthew shows that its deepest royal and Immanuel significance reaches fulfillment in Jesus. “Only” is too narrow if it erases either setting.

Did Matthew misunderstand Isaiah?

No. Matthew knows Scripture's storyline and presents Jesus as David's promised heir, the Spirit-conceived Son, and God with us. His use grows from Isaiah's words, setting, royal context, and developing hope.

Must I identify the first child to understand Matthew?

No. Studying the proposals can be helpful, but the central claims remain clear: God gave Ahaz's house a meaningful sign, the immediate enemies would soon fall, and Jesus brings the Immanuel promise to its climactic fulfillment.

Does “God with us” mean Jesus is God?

Matthew's Gospel progressively reveals Jesus' divine identity and authority. Read with John 1:1, 14; Colossians 2:9; and Hebrews 1:1–3, Immanuel rightly belongs to the New Testament's witness that the eternal Son became truly human without ceasing to be divine.

Study habit

A difficult fulfillment text becomes clearer when you read backward into the whole Old Testament section and forward through the whole New Testament book.



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PART TWO · EARLY INTERMEDIATE

How to study a near-and-greater fulfillment

01

Read the earlier setting

Identify the people, danger, promise, sign, and timetable.

02

State what the first audience could understand

Do not jump to Jesus before hearing the passage in its own historical moment.

03

Follow the theme beyond one verse

Trace Immanuel and the promised-child hope through Isaiah 7–11.

04

Read the New Testament setting

Notice Matthew's genealogy, virgin-conception narrative, names, and purpose statement.

05

Ask what remains the same

God's presence, faithfulness to David's house, a promised child, and deliverance remain central.

06

Ask what becomes greater

The threat is no longer merely two kings; Jesus comes to save from sin. Immanuel is no longer only a sign-name; God the Son has come among us.

07

Name uncertainty honestly

You can explain disputed details without allowing them to obscure what the texts clearly affirm.



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PART TWO · EARLY INTERMEDIATE

Language, history, and fulfillment

This section is optional

The beginner guide is complete without this page. Continue when you are ready for early intermediate questions.

Near and greater horizons

Some prophecies are rooted in an immediate historical situation while their language and place in God's promises open toward a greater fulfillment. Christians describe this relationship with terms such as typology, escalation, or a fuller fulfillment. The labels differ, but the later reading must honor rather than contradict the earlier context.

The identity of the first child

Proposals include a child of Isaiah, a royal child, or another contemporary child. Hezekiah is sometimes suggested, though chronology creates difficulties. The text's ambiguity should keep us humble; the sign's timetable and message are clearer than the child's precise identity.

The Hebrew and Greek witnesses

Isaiah 7:14 uses the Hebrew word 'almah, which refers to a young woman of marriageable age. It is not the most technical Hebrew term for virginity, but it does not exclude virginity. Long before Jesus' birth, the Greek Old Testament rendered it with parthenos, a word normally meaning "virgin." Faithful scholars continue to debate the exact nuance of Isaiah's Hebrew term and how the earlier sign worked; Matthew's inspired narrative is unambiguous about Mary's virginal conception (Matthew 1:18, 20, 23, 25).

The house of David and messianic hope

Isaiah addresses David's house, then develops hope for an extraordinary Davidic ruler (Isaiah 7:13; 9:6–7; 11:1–10). Matthew begins by naming Jesus "son of David" and repeatedly presents Him as the promised King. The quotation belongs within this royal storyline.

Deeper-study guardrail

Do not use technical language to sound certain where the text leaves questions. The goal is to understand Scripture more faithfully and see Jesus more clearly.



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PRACTICE PAGE

Trace Isaiah and Matthew for yourself

Isaiah 7:1–17

What danger did Judah face? _____

What did God command Ahaz to do? _____

What did the child-sign communicate? _____

What timetable appears in verses 15–16? _____

Matthew 1:18–25

What does the angel reveal about the child? _____

What do the names Jesus and Immanuel reveal? _____

How is Matthew's fulfillment greater than the earlier crisis? _____

My conclusion

In one sentence, explain Matthew's use of Isaiah 7:14: _____

One possible faithful summary

Isaiah gave David's threatened house a real sign of God's presence and faithfulness; Matthew shows that its greatest meaning is fulfilled in Jesus, the virgin-born Son who is truly God with us and saves His people from their sins.

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THE MOST IMPORTANT PLACE TO BEGIN

Would you like to begin with Jesus?

The Bible's message is good news. God created us to know Him, but every one of us has sinned and fallen short of His glory (Romans 3:23). Sin separates us from God, and we cannot repair that relationship through good works, religion, or effort.

God did for us what we could not do for ourselves. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, lived without sin, died for our sins, and rose from the dead. Through Him, God offers forgiveness, reconciliation, and eternal life as a gift of grace (Romans 5:6–8; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:3–4; Ephesians 2:8–9).

How do we respond?

01

Turn toward God

Repentance means turning from sin and self-rule toward God. It is not becoming perfect before you come to Him (Acts 3:19).

02

Believe in Jesus

Trust that Jesus is Lord and that His death and resurrection are sufficient to save you (John 3:16; Romans 10:9–10).

03

Call on Him

Speak to God honestly. Confess your need, place your trust in Jesus, and ask Him to forgive you and lead your life. "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13 WEB).

A prayer can express your faith

Jesus, I know that I have sinned and cannot save myself. I believe You died for my sins and rose again. I turn to You, ask for Your forgiveness, and trust You as my Savior and Lord. Help me follow You and grow in Your Word. Amen.

A prayer is not a magic formula—the words themselves do not save us. Jesus saves everyone who truly comes to Him in faith. If you have trusted Christ, begin reading His Word, tell another faithful Christian, connect with a Bible-believing local church, and learn about baptism and discipleship (Matthew 28:18–20; Acts 2:38–42).