

have thought that...but it was not so. The word from Isaiah was from God. If one wonders how the king should have known this, the answer seems to be this: the prophet had begun his ministry sometime before (in the year that Uzziah died -6:1) (maybe) and as he was a familiar figure around the court...the king ought to have known his role. But, even had he not, when the prophet said "Ask for a sign" the king should have shown the respect of asking. His complete disregard for the prophet and his lack of attention or interest indicates that he had no knowledge or concern for a message from God.

This is true of the general pattern of biblical revelation. Men must see it as the Word of God. God will bring to pass his intended ends without them--no question on that--but if they are to be blessed they must believe he has spoken. We do not press this apologetically so much...we proclaim what Christ has done...but we do so on the basis of the fact that we believe God has spoken and that his Word is right for our age.

b. He must believe God means what is said.

We easily begin acting as if God spoke in the on-again, off-again manner of men. This no doubt was in Ahaz's mind. He was looking for the Assyrian army and ready to compromise with its gods. He felt this was all the deliverance he needed. So when the prophet invited him to ask for a sign he may well have felt that it was not worthy of his intention. And in my mind there is no doubt that when Isaiah pronounced the judgments to come, the wicked king simply leaned back and yawned. 'He was counting on being delivered by a powerful foe now friendly to his cause...and he little dreamed that the tribute they (the foe) would exact of him would strip his land so frightfully as it did. In some ways his land would be worse than Israel.

If one does not believe God means his Word then he is likely to pay little attention to it. This is Ahab's problem in a nutshell. It is a characteristic