

waited for redemption. But through the long night of Israel's history God had promised a redeemer...to be born of such fascinating stock and lineage as to give the sure sign of divine help to the people. That deliverance could neither be replaced nor hurried. Deliverance must be by God's appointed means.

How plain this is in Isaiah. The wicked king would deliver the people through treacherous compromise. But God had a program of truth that would secure all that was needed...in his time and through faith in him.

2. We learn, both in our passage, in the the general tenor of Scripture, a number of things about this practical lesson:

a. We are totally dependent on God, especially for matters of deliverance and strength.

The history of Israel would help in this case but in the context of our study there is plenty of evidence about this. The whole problem centers around the need for help with a particularly vicious foe. Who will deliver the nation? Recalling the size of Israel and God's choice of her in her weakness, the observer knows almost at once that she will not save herself. But the king may not know that. Likewise many of the people of the day may not know it. Rejecting history and theology they may actually think the compromise with the Assyrian gods will bring them victory. Perhaps when Ahaz "wins" they are glad and maybe even feel that the Assyriangods are mightier than Jehovah. But when the tribute is exacted from the land...when the temple is plundered and no man's possession safe from the warring kings of Assyria, then it must have been an unhappy recognition that the deliverance schemed by the king was really another form of bondage. Start anywhere in the history of the past and look to the future of the nation. It may not have known it but it was terribly (wonderfully?) dependent on God at all times. The more quickly this is known the better the possibility of health.