

LIFE GROUP APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Advent

These questions are for the **December 5, 2021**, sermon, "The Promised Gift, Part 2." Please read the sermon passage (Isaiah 7:1-17) together out loud.

Sermon Outline

IN THREATENING TIMES, STAND FIRM IN THE FAITH, NOTING . . .

1. The assurance that God has given. (1-9)
 - a. God speaks a word of promise through Isaiah the prophet . . .
 - i. While an evil king was on the throne.
 - ii. Note that even the unfaithfulness of leaders does not negate God's promise.
 - b. Threatening conditions (such as wicked leaders and opponent's armies) . . .
 - i. Remind us of where our true help comes from.
 - ii. Help us listen clearly to what God has said, holding to his promise.
 - iii. Test and prove that our faith in God is genuine. Stand firm!
2. The sign that God has granted. (10-17)
 - a. Prophesied 700 years prior to Jesus' arrival in Bethlehem:
 - i. The virgin (specific person) shall conceive.
 - ii. And bear a son.
 - iii. And she shall call his name Immanuel (God with us).
 1. This future servant will be "God with us."
 2. This sign is given by "the LORD Himself."
 - b. This "sign" is a coming set of circumstances (virgin birth) that clearly reveal Messiah.
 - c. Judgment will come upon all who refuse to believe this clear sign; this clear Servant.

Life Group Discussion Questions

1. Based on #1, above: God often allows us to experience very difficult circumstances which seem to challenge the validity of his promise. Yet he sends frequent assurances and reminders when our days seem bleakest. Discuss this. (We might be "shaken," v. 2.)
2. Based on #1, above: Note the instruction of v. 4: "be careful," "be quiet," "do not fear," and "do not let your heart be faint." How have threatening circumstances challenged your resolve to believe the Lord? Which of these four directives are most difficult for you to put into practice? How are you learning and growing, especially emotionally?
3. Based on #2, above: God seems to delight in providing huge signs which stand in history as billboards to his grace and mercy, yet which can be easily dismissed without true faith. In what way does a 700-years-prior prophecy about the virgin bearing a son inform and embolden and bring confidence to your faith in Jesus Christ?
4. Based on #2, above: How do you think this obvious and monstrous sign (virgin birth) encourages faith in these people: the Jew, the naturalist (evolutionist), the unwed mother/father and the religious (but not Christian)? How can it be used as an on-ramp to talk about Jesus, Messiah?