

OT751 Isaiah
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Essay 3: What is one new thing you learned or idea to which you were exposed?

One new thing that I learned this lesson is how “children” act as a unifying theme for this part of Isaiah. Three children appeared in chapters 7-8, each with a symbolic name. The first is Shear-Jashub, whom Isaiah brought with him to meet King Ahaz. His name means “only a remnant will return”, which bears a message both of judgment and of hope (Oswalt, 138). The second child is the sign of Immanuel “God with us”. Again, “God is with Judah” can be both a positive sign and a negative sign (Oswalt, 141) since God’s presence requires Judah to be faithful and righteous, and a failure to do so would result in judgement. The third child is another son of Issaiah Maher-Shalal-hash Baz, who is likely the first fulfillment of the Immanuel sign (Oswalt, 149). His name means “hastening to the spoil”, and destruction will fall upon Israel and Aram before he can speak. Constable suggested that the Immanuel sign was primarily for Ahaz, while Maher-Shalal-hash Baz speaks to all of Judah (Constable, 81).

This portion of Isaiah is centered around the question of whether Judah would trust in the Lord or rely on the strength of Assyria. Facing the threat of neighboring countries, Judah was naturally worried about her future. Children were a great concern for the Judeans of the time. In addition, children also symbolize weakness, trust, and humility (Constable, 71), and can therefore be a compelling sign. Aram and Israel frightened Judah, but before a child could speak, they would no longer stand as a threat. Assyria seemed to be powerful and trustworthy, but God will punish her pride (Isa 10:12) unto the point where there would be so few trees in the forest that “a child could write them down” (Isa 10:19). Judah was weak and afraid, but God is with her, and a child will be born to bring redemption (Isa 9:6). Although Judah’s failure to trust in the Lord led her to suffer greatly in the hands of the Assyrians, still “a remnant will return” when they truly rely on the Lord (Isa 10:20). The contrast between the strength of the nations and the meekness of a child brings out the theme of whole-hearted reliance on God in a powerful manner. Eventually, the all-powerful God would use a child to bring salvation not just to Judah and Israel but also to the whole world in a glorious and miraculous way. (Isa11:10-11)