

Old School

Week #2

Week #2: With Us — One of the magical things about Christmas is being with people. From family celebrations to work parties to special services, we tend to gather with others who bring us laughter and joy. For some, however, Christmas is a very lonely time. In fact, being alone is at the top of many people's Top 10 fear list. How do people face that fear or any other fear? That's one of the greatest things about Christmas, namely, knowing that God is with us.

- 2 Chronicles 28 - *Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king..he did not do what was right in the eyes of the Lord. He...made idols for worshipping the Baals...sacrificed his children in the fire, engaging in the detestable practices of the nations the Lord had driven out before the Israelites... In his time of trouble King Ahaz became even more unfaithful to the Lord. 23 He offered sacrifices to the gods of Damascus, who had defeated him; for he thought, "Since the gods of the kings of Aram have helped them, I will sacrifice to them so they will help me." But they were his downfall and the downfall of all Israel.*

"Israel...we have a **problem!**"

- Isaiah 7:1-3 - *When Ahaz son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, was king of Judah, King Rezin of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel marched up to fight against Jerusalem, but they could not overpower it. 2 Now the house of David was told, "Aram has allied itself with Ephraim"; so the hearts of Ahaz and his people were shaken, as the trees of the forest are shaken by the wind.*

What makes your "heart **shake**"?

- Isaiah 7:3-9 - *Then the Lord said to Isaiah, "Go out, you and your son Shear-Jashub, to meet Ahaz at the end of the aqueduct of the Upper Pool, on the road to the Launderer's Field. **4 Say to him, 'Be careful, keep calm and don't be afraid. Do not lose heart because of these two smoldering stubs of firewood—** because of the fierce anger of Rezin and Aram and of the son of Remaliah. 5 Aram, Ephraim and Remaliah's son have plotted your ruin, saying, 6 "Let us invade Judah; let us tear it apart and divide it among ourselves, and make the son of Tabeel king over it." 7 Yet this is what the Sovereign Lord says: "**It will not take place, it will not happen,** 8 for the head of Aram is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is only Rezin. Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be too shattered to be a people. 9 The head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is only Remaliah's son. **If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.**"*
- Isaiah 7:10-13 - *Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, 11 "Ask the Lord your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights." 12 But Ahaz said, "I will not ask; I will not put the Lord to the test." 13 Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also?"*

When your heart shakes, who you **depend** on matters.

- Isaiah 7:13-14 - *13 Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also? 14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.*
- Psalm 46:1-2,7 - *God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear...The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.*

The fear factor life changer is **Immanuel = God (is) with us.**

- Matthew 28:20 - *(Jesus said,) "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

- Hebrews 13:5-6 - *God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?"*

Points to Ponder

- 1) The Psalms are famous for relying on the presence of God. Read Psalm 46, listing the potential fears and the authors' answer to each one. Share 1 big take away from the Psalm with your group or spouse.
- 2) What have you found to be true when you are facing fears and depending on yourself or others as the solution? As great as a resource as others might be and as strong as you think you are, why isn't it the first and best place to turn to for facing your fears?
- 3) Write down three of your greatest fears. Then compare each one to the God who created the heavens and the earth. Why is a "big view" of God necessary if you are to find peace in our crazy world?
- 4) Philippians 4:4-9 is the most highlighted section on the YouVersion Bible app. Meditate on its words and list your top 3 reasons why so many people turn to this chapter in their time of need. How might you find it helpful in the future when your heart shakes with fear?

Homework: Isaiah 9