

Christmas Isaiah Sketch

Narrator:

There is civil war in the Land of Israel, 700BC.

Ahaz, the new king of Judah, ascends to the throne. He is afraid of the king of Israel and his pagan ally, the king of Aram. Ahaz, in his turn, seeks allies.

God sends the prophet Isaiah to reassure king Ahaz and offer a sign of hope, hinting at a promised Messiah. Ahaz refuses. Then Isaiah speaks again.

Isaiah:

Are you going to try the patience of God Himself, like you're trying mine? Well, the LORD has a sign for you anyway!

See this young unmarried girl? Soon, she's going to have a son. By the time he knows right and wrong, the king of Israel and the king of Aram will be history.

But another king is coming instead.

When he gets here, he will inflict great suffering and shame. Where food was plentiful, only thorns will remain.

Narrator:

Things look bad. And yet, in the midst of suffering, the LORD has not abandoned His people.

Isaiah:

God is with us.

Listen, all of you from distant lands! You may make an uproar, but you will be shattered.

If you arm yourselves, you will be shattered.

If you devise a plan, it will come to nothing. Say anything you want, but it won't happen - because God is with us.

Narrator:

This is what the LORD said to Isaiah, speaking with a strong hand, warning him not to live the way this people does...

The LORD:

"Don't regard as an alliance what this people calls 'alliance'. Don't fear what they fear or be awestruck by it.

"Consecrate yourselves to the LORD of Heaven's armies! Let Him be the object of your fear and awe!

"He is there as a sanctuary, but for Judah and Israel He will be a stone to stumble over - a rock obstructing their way. He will be a trap and a snare for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Many will stumble and fall. Many will be broken and captured."

Isaiah:

I will wait for the LORD, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob. I will look for him.

And while I do, I and the children whom the LORD has given me will become signs and wonders for Israel: signs and wonders from the LORD of heaven's armies, living on Mount Zion.

"When they tell you to consult those squeaking, squawking mediums and fortune-tellers, answer: "Shouldn't God's people seek their God? Must the living ask the dead for teaching and instruction?"

Believe me, they will suggest this, but they will pass through the land without settling, distressed and hungry. Because of their hunger, they will grow angry and curse by their king and by their God. But whether they look up or down, they will see only trouble and darkness - anguished gloom and pervasive darkness.

Narrator:

Now Isaiah speaks of hope to a divided nation, to people at odds, at war. To leaders desperately scrabbling for alliances and answers. Into a situation that seems hopeless.

Isaiah:

There will be no more gloom for those who are now in anguish. In the past, the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali were regarded lightly; but in the future, He will honour the way to the lake beyond the Jordan. Lake Galilee.

The people living in darkness have seen a great light. Upon those living in the land that lies in the shadow of death, light has dawned. You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice in Your presence as if rejoicing at harvest time, the way men rejoice when dividing up the spoil after a battle is won.

The yoke that weighed them down, the bar across their shoulders, and their driver's goad, you have broken as on the day of Midian's defeat.

All the boots of soldiers marching and every cloak rolled in blood is destined for burning, fuel for the fire.

For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. Dominion will rest on HIS shoulders, and He will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace; to extend the dominion and perpetuate the peace of the throne and kingdom of David. To secure it and then sustain it through justice and righteousness, forever.

The zeal of the LORD of heaven's armies will accomplish this.

Narrator:

His name means 'Salvation'.

His name **is** salvation.

His name is Jesus.