

Isaiah 8:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son. Then said the LORD to me, Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz.

Analysis

Isaiah's union with 'the prophetess' (likely his wife, possibly a prophet in her own right) produces a sign-child. The conception and birth follow natural processes, yet the child becomes a prophetic symbol. This illustrates how God uses ordinary life events for extraordinary purposes. The Reformed understanding of providence recognizes God's sovereign orchestration of natural events to accomplish His purposes. The child's very existence becomes a living prophecy, a walking reminder of God's promised judgment on Syria and Israel.

Historical Context

The term 'prophetess' could indicate Isaiah's wife shared prophetic gifting or simply denoted her status as a prophet's wife. Prophetic sign-children appear elsewhere in Scripture (Hosea's children, Isaiah's other son Shear-jashub). The conception and nine-month pregnancy provided a time marker—before this child could speak 'father' or 'mother' (roughly age 2), Damascus and Samaria would fall. This proved accurate: Tiglath-Pileser III conquered Damascus in 732 BC.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does God use ordinary family life and relationships to accomplish His prophetic purposes?
2. What does this teach about God's sovereignty over all aspects of life, including conception and birth?
3. How might our children and family relationships serve as witnesses to God's work in our generation?

Interlinear Text

וָאֶקֶבַב	אֶל	הַנְּבִיאָה	וַתְּהַר	וַתֵּלֶד	בֵּן		
And I went	H413	unto the prophetess	and she conceived	and bare	a son		
H7126		H5031	H2029	H3205	H1121		
וַיֹּאמֶר	יְהוָה	אֵלַי	קֹכֵא	שְׁמוֹ	מִהָרָא	שֵׁלִל	שֵׁלִל
Then said	the LORD	H413	to me Call	his name	H0	H0	H0
H559	H3068		H7121	H8034			
בָּז:							
Mahershalalhashbaz							
H4122							
