

Peppers
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sure him. This king of little faith doubts the message from God. The prophet tells him to be calm and not to be afraid. Ahaz is told that both enemy nations will be destroyed within 65 years. It happens just as the prophet said it would.

Lesson: Isaiah encourages the king to put God to the test. He declines to do so. Isaiah gets angry (represents God's anger) stating that he can try men's patience, but not God's! Isaiah predicts that trouble will confront Judah very soon, at the hands of Assyria. This is to occur by the time Isaiah's young son (in his arms) knows right from wrong. Then, the prophet delivers a sign of hope: A virgin will give birth to a son whose name shall be Immanuel (God is with us). God promises this to His people. He keeps His promises all the time! This prophecy isn't fulfilled until 700 years later. Ahaz doesn't believe, which represents the people's unbelief as well. The lesson moves to the New Testament. Gabriel appears to Mary, a commoner by all standards, with some exciting and troubling news. Betrothed to Joseph, the angel informs her that she is to give birth to a son whose name shall be Jesus. Through the Holy Spirit, she becomes the mother of the Son of God, who sits on David's throne. Remember the genealogy from last week? Mary is also informed that her cousin, Elizabeth, will have a son in her old age. No doubt, Mary

is overwhelmed, but her response is one of faith - I accept as the handmaid of the Lord for nothing is impossible with Him.

Application: Deuteronomy 13: 1-5, 18:15-22, and Jeremiah 28:8-9 offer criteria to judge a prophet. Prophets from God represent Him and not themselves. Praising God is fore most for them. When prophets speak often times their message is twofold. There is nugget for now and a huge gem for the future. Such is the case in today's lesson. Isaiah gives Ahaz hope for the present and the future. His response to the prophet is quite different from Mary's response to the angel. It is important to remember that Christ's (Anointed One) coming is to save humanity! To do this, He could not be merely a man. He has to be divine (coming directly from God) and human at the same time. In the days of the Old Testament, animal sacrifices were made. What type of animals were accepted? Broaden your thinking. Messiah/Christ also had to be sacrificed; should He be perfect as well? The human part of Him symbolizes His ability to identify with humanity. It also shows us how to live holy in this temple. Notice how, once again, God takes what society discards and uses it for His glory. Hallelujah! There is a connection between the old and the new. Do you see it? Furthermore, do you appreciate it? God at times seemingly gives us impossible news. How do we respond, like Ahaz or Mary?



Pastors Scottie and Earline White

Group that helps ex-felons to present honors this weekend

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

The I Care Support Group, a non-profit organization that runs the Save the Youth Program and a comprehensive work project for ex-offenders, will present awards to outstanding local leaders on Saturday, Dec. 12. The event will take place at the Martin Luther King Center, 2001 Pittsburgh Ave., from 6 - 10 p.m.

The two main honorees will be Pastors Scottie and Earline White, the leaders of the I Care Project, which helps ex-inmates. Their mission is to motivate inmates to work hard while they were incarcerated so that when they are finally released, they will be prepared to build a better life for themselves. The project was inspired by Johnny X Williamson, an ex-inmate who spent 20 years in prison. Williamson was released just a few months ago.



Williamson

This awards program's theme is "Empowering Our Community," and the main speaker is Kenneth Fox, the former mayor of East Spencer, N.C. There also will be other speakers, including local teachers, preachers and businesspeople.

There will be a special mini family gathering of friends of family members of Williamson, as well as a special tribute to President Barack Obama for his historic election victory and for all his efforts around the world.

For more information about the I Care Support Group, call 336-816-0571 and or 336-986-6650.

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