

# Facebook Activism

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**Paul VanderKlay** is working prepping for Sunday. 3 hours ago clear

Wall Info Photos Boxes Relatives +

Update Status Share Link Add Photos Write Note Add Video

What are you doing right now?  Post

View Photos of Me (87)  
View Videos of Me (4)  
Edit My Profile

I love this picture. I think these kids are just as beautiful as they could be!

**Information**

Networks:  
Sacramento, CA  
Relationship Status:  
Married  
Birthday:  
July 24  
Current City:  
Sacramento, CA

**Friends**  
162 friends See All

Rev. Eric William Anne

**Today**

**Nancy Schuller** wrote at 11:44am  
Wow how sad for Kate his wife and four children Two handicapped.  
Wall-to-Wall - Write on Nancy's Wall

Paul wrote on Randy Blacketer's wall. 11:36am

**Randy Blacketer** wrote at 11:22am  
Paul, did you hear thae one of our pastoral colleagues Jeff Vorhees was killed last week in a car accident? He is survived by four young children and his wife.  
[http://www.mlive.com/grpress/news/index.ssf/2008/11/pastor\\_killed\\_in\\_allegan\\_court.html](http://www.mlive.com/grpress/news/index.ssf/2008/11/pastor_killed_in_allegan_court.html)  
Wall-to-Wall - Write on Randy's Wall

**Paul is working prepping for Sunday.** 10:13am - Comment

**Yesterday**

**Paul is dozing.** 5:07pm - Comment

**Nov 26**

Paul discussed Overview in the group Help the Preacher. 8:27pm  
Paul joined the group Help the Preacher. 8:27pm - Comment  
Paul wrote on Bert Van Harmelen's wall. 8:27pm

**Bert Van Harmelen** wrote at 6:45pm

Advertise

**Oprahs Acai Berry Diet**

Acai berry body cleanse flush pounds and remove toxins safely!

**Experience Rolling Razor**

The new iPod of shaving is finally here! Once you roll with it you will never look at shaving the same way again! See advantages.

**Today's Top IQ is 126**

# Holiday Motivations

- Keep Christ in Christmas!
- Use Christmas to bless the poor!
- Help the Economy! Go out and spend money!
- May Christmas be an emotional refuge for you and your family

# Advent

- The Christian church has traditionally celebrated this time of year
- “Advent” means “coming”
- We’re going to experience this advent through 4 passages from the prophet Isaiah

# Week One

Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the maiden is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.

# Ah, this is nice...

- Familiar
- Christmassy
- Has a baby in it
- You've got a plug for the virgin birth

Advent is not about us grasping something to fix what we think ails us!

- Keep Christ in Christmas!
- Use Christmas to bless the poor!
- Help the Economy! Go out and spend money!
- May Christmas be an emotional refuge for you and your family

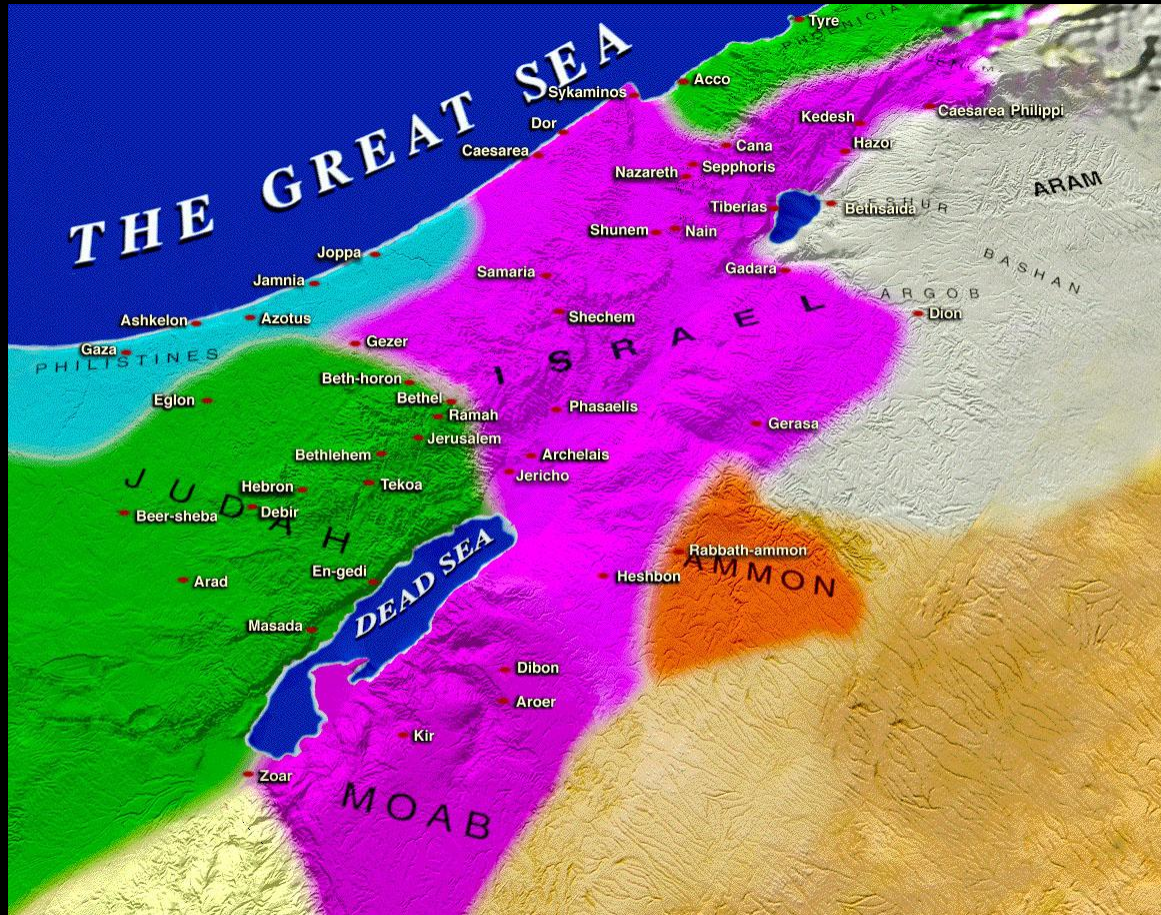
# The story behind the quote



# Palestine's perpetual dilemma



# Divided Kingdom





# Tiglath-Pileser III

- His name means
  - “my trust is in the son of Esharra”
- Amazingly competent general who took power in a bloody coup by slaughtering the Assyrian royal family and reforming the empire
- Israel and Aram see this threat and want to enact regime change in Jerusalem to help them in their war on terror.

# King Ahaz of Jerusalem

- Ahaz is a descendent of King David
- Ahaz is panic stricken
  - He's trying to save his place as king
  - He's trying to save his kingdom
  - He's trying to save his neck

# King Ahaz of Jerusalem

- Ahaz is a “spiritual” man
  - If one god doesn’t get what you need, get more
  - He sacrificed at least one son to Molech
  - He has been engaged in an altar building campaign in his kingdom

# What's in a name?

- Ahaz is what he was called in the Bible
  - “Ahaz” means “he has grasped”
- The Assyrian record has him by another name
  - “Jehoahaz”
  - “Yahweh has taken hold”
  - “Yahweh will hold fast”

## Isaiah 7:1-2 (NRSV)

In the days of Ahaz son of Jotham son of Uzziah, king of Judah, King Rezin of Aram and King Pekah son of Remaliah of Israel went up to attack Jerusalem, but could not mount an attack against it. When the house of David heard that Aram had allied itself with Ephraim (Israel, the northern kingdom), the heart of Ahaz and the heart of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake before the wind.

## Isaiah 7:3-6 (NRSV)

Then the Lord said to Isaiah, Go out to meet Ahaz, you and your son Shear-jashub (which means: “a remnant shall return”), at the end of the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the Fuller’s Field, and say to him, Take heed, be quiet, do not fear, and do not let your heart be faint because of these two smoldering stumps of firebrands, because of the fierce anger of Rezin and Aram and the son of Remaliah. Because Aram—with Ephraim and the son of Remaliah—has plotted evil against you, saying, Let us go up against Judah and cut off Jerusalem and conquer it for ourselves and make the son of Tabeel king in it;

Isaiah 7:7-9 (NRSV)

therefore thus says the Lord God:

It shall not stand,

and it shall not come to pass.

For the head of Aram is Damascus,

and the head of Damascus is Rezin.

(Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be shattered, no longer a people.)

The head of Ephraim is Samaria,

and the head of Samaria is the son of Remaliah.

If you do not stand firm in faith,

you shall not stand at all.

# Perspective

- Ahaz is an apostate king!
  - He has no moral legitimacy to claim God's protection or favor!
- God sends Isaiah to him with a message
  - "I know you are terrified. Chill! I will save you! These two jackals you fear will soon be food for flowers!"

# What does that mean?

Isaiah 7:7-9 (NRSV)

therefore thus says the Lord God:

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(Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be shattered, no longer a people.)

The head of Ephraim is Samaria,  
and the head of Samaria is the son of Remaliah.

If you do not stand firm in faith,  
you shall not stand at all.

Isaiah 7:10-11 (NRSV)

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.

# Intepretation

- “Ahaz, you have demonstrated that you are a “spiritual” man. You’re dependent upon the “visual aids”...
- “I know you haven’t believed in my promise to your father David and never imagined I would care for you...”
- Ask me for a sign, and I’ll give it!

## Isaiah 7:10-12 (NRSV)

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. **But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test.**

# Perspective

- This sounds pious
  - Israel in the desert doubted God's presence with them and so they demanded a sign "putting God to the test"
    - It was a way of saying "the plagues, the exodus, the manna, the cloud... still not enough!"
- It isn't.
  - He's saying "I won't believe in God's promise anyway, no matter what!"

# They never put the preceding verse on the Christmas card

Isaiah 7:13-14

Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the maiden is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.

Isaiah 7:15-17 (NRSV)

He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted. The Lord will bring on you and on your people and on your ancestral house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria.”

The sheep called the wolf out of fear of two jackals.  
What will become of the sheep after the wolf has dealt with the jackals?

## Isaiah 7:18-20 (NRSV)

On that day the Lord will whistle for the fly that is at the sources of the streams of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria. And they will all come and settle in the steep ravines, and in the clefts of the rocks, and on all the thornbushes, and on all the pastures.

On that day the Lord will shave with a razor hired beyond the River—with the king of Assyria—the head and the hair of the feet, and it will take off the beard as well.

# Advent is NOT

- Appropriating spiritual or religious assets to
  - Score religious points against our competitors
  - Help in making us more moral
  - Fixing our politics or economics
  - Build an emotional nest away from the world
- “Ahaz” means “he has grasped”

# We don't summons Him

- By our theological correctness
- By our moral impressiveness
- By our spiritual inclusiveness
- By our worthiness of pedigree

# HE COMES!

- If you do not stand by faith, you will not stand at all!
- Ahaz has faith in his grasping
- Ahaz has rejected his true name
  - “Yahweh (the LORD) will hold fast!”
- The self-salvation project of Ahaz has become his own undoing

# How will you receive him?

Isaiah 7:13-14

Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the maiden is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.

# It could have gone differently

- Ahaz could have acknowledged the desperation of his condition
- Ahaz could have gratefully received the salvation that Isaiah announced
- Ahaz could have led his nation in a grateful celebration of their deliverance
- Ahaz could have become Jehoahaz

# What about you?

- Do you acknowledge your desperate situation in the age of decay?
- Can you gratefully receive the salvation from it that has been announced to you in the sign of his coming (Immanuel)?
- Can you join the celebration of the first advent as we longingly await the second?