

Now there can be a general principle that can have many fulfillments. There can be a statement of character which you'll find fulfilled over and over. But if there is a specific prediction, I am very strongly convinced it will ~~have~~ one fulfillment. I ~~believe~~ believe--in fact I cannot see how anyone can have any doubt that between Isa.40 and 55 there are many statements that have no direct application to Israel, though there are those who try to apply them to Israel, but which specifically look forward to the suffering Saviour.

Now I want to take a few minutes to rather hastily look at an earlier section of Isaiah--the section that runs from chs.7-12. The section that is called "The Book of Immanuel." Because it begins with this Immanuel prophecy. And secondly that Immanuel is in view all through it: Isaiah is speaking to his own people, speaking to an immediate situation, and perhaps 3/4 of the material (perhaps a little less than that) in this section is specifically dealing with the situations of Isaiah's time. But God permits Isaiah from time to time to look far into the future, and to speak specifically about God's wonderful promises that would be fulfilled a long time off.

So we have in ch. 7 here was this problem that Ahaz was trying to get help for a desperate situation, and playing off great powers against each other, and getting the distant Assyrians to come in and deliver him from the smaller nations that were giving him trouble in his neighborhood. And Isaiah said your clever scheme is just going to bring the terrible Assyrians right next to you. It will only do harm; it won't do you any good. You should trust the Lord. The Lord can deliver you if you truly put your trust in Him. And ~~when~~ when the prediction is given that the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and call his name Immanuel, people say, But where would Ahaz get any comfort from the birth of Christ 700 years later?

And of course if you read the passage with any care it is quite obvious that the last thing Isaiah was interested in doing was bringing any comfort to Ahaz! The verses that immediately precede it say, "Hear now you house of David, is it not enough to try the patience of man, will you try the patience of my God also? Wherefor the Lord himself will give you a sign. The virgin shall be with child and give birth to a son and will call his name Immanuel". This was rebuke to Ahaz; it was comfort to the people of Israel. It was assurance to the people of Israel that the House of David would not always be headed by an ungodly man like Ahaz, but that there would be a head of the House of David--the permanent head, the great successor of David, the One whose reign is never to be destroyed--that he would come with his virgin birth.

Nothing is said as to when it will take place. There is nothing in Hezekiah's time of which we have any knowledge that fits the prediction. It clearly is looking forward to Christ. Now in the next two verses he comes back and he says, We don't know when this one is going to be born. But just assume that she was