

Sermon 6: The Miracle of the Incarnation: Isaiah 7:3-14

Text: Isaiah 7:3-14 "Then said the LORD unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shearjashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field; And say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah. Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying, Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal: Thus saith the Lord GOD, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass. For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people. And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established. Moreover the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying, Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD. And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel..."

Summary: Despite constant human failure and disobedience, God's plan to send a Redeemer was promised and fulfilled.

Proposition: We should marvel at God's faithfulness to His word.

Part 1: The background of the Immanuel prophecy: 7:3-9 "Then said the LORD unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shearjashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field; And say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah. Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying, Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal: Thus saith the Lord GOD, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass. For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people. And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son.

- **Chronology:**

- It is difficult to pinpoint how long Isaiah was ministering in Judah when these words were written.

- He had some form of ministry at the end of Uzziah's reign, but his primary calling took place in the year that Uzziah died.
- After Uzziah's death, his son Jotham reigned as sole monarch for around 5 years.
- About 10 years before Uzziah's death, he was struck with leprosy and Jotham reigned alongside him during the time he was sick.
- After Jotham's death, his son Ahaz reigned, which brings us up to the time these words were written.
- **Political environment:**
 - Early in Ahaz's reign, the kings of Syria and the Northern Kingdom formed an alliance to fight against Jerusalem.
 - God sent Isaiah to Ahaz to encourage him as he faced this daunting alliance.
 - The threat would not last, and the Northern Kingdom would be conquered by another great empire which would culminate in the complete annihilation of Ephraim 65 years later.
- **Spiritual environment:**
 - Despite these encouraging words, the Davidic line was apostate.
 - Within 150 years, Judah would also be conquered, the temple and Jerusalem left in ruins, and the people killed or uprooted into Babylon for 70 years.

Part 2: Ahaz's faithless response to Isaiah: 7:9-12 "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established. Moreover the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying, Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD..."

- **God's promise to David:**
 - **Psalms 132:11-12** "The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne. If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore..."
 - **1 Kings 2:3-4** "Keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways...that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest...That the LORD may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel..."
- **Three critical details:**
 - **"If" 7:9** "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established..."
 - **"Ask" 7:11** "Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God..."

- **"But I will not" 7:12** "But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD..."

Part 3: The Immanuel prophecy: 7:13-14 "Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel..."

- **The unfaithful king refused a sign: 7:12** "But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD..."
- **Every Davidic king fell short: 7:13** "Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?"
 - This unfaithfulness led to unnecessary grief in the nation.
 - It grieved God as well.
- **God promised to the people to do it Himself: 7:14** "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign..."
 - This promise is focused on a unique Person.
 - He will be identified through a miraculous conception.
 - This promise was for the people, not Ahaz.
 - The rest of Isaiah will be an unfolding of prophecies related to Immanuel.

Part 4: The significance and fulfillment of the Immanuel prophecy: Matthew 1:18-25 "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost...Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us..."

- **First: Jesus is God in flesh: John 1:1,14** "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth..."
- **Second: His right to the throne follows two Davidic Paths:**
 - **Joseph's lineage establishing legal right: Matthew 1:16** "And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ..."
 - **Mary's lineage establishing biological connection to David: Luke 3:23** "And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli..."
- **Third: He had no human father:**

- **It was a sign: Isaiah 7:14** "The Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son..."
- **Joseph was not Jesus' biological father:**
 - **Matthew 1:16** "And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ..."
 - **Matthew 1:18-23** "Before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost...But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us..."
- **This was a miraculous conception: Luke 1:30-37** "Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible..."
- **The people did not understand this sign: Luke 3:23** "being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph..."

Why does this matter: The miracle of the incarnation is an inescapable part of the gospel:

- **First: Christ had to be God in flesh: Hebrews 2:14-18** "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful

high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted..."

- **Second: Christ was accurately called the seed of the woman:**
 - **Genesis 3:15** "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel..."
 - **Galatians 4:4** "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law..."
- **Third: His nature was sinless unlike ours:**
 - **Romans 5:12** "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned..."
 - **Hebrews 4:15** "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin..."
- **Fourth: He did not descend from a cursed man: Jeremiah 22:30**
"Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah..."
- **Fifth: He would be called the second Adam:**
 - **1 Corinthians 15:45** "So it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit..."
 - **1 Corinthians 15:21-22** "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive..."
- **Sixth:** We should marvel at God's faithfulness to His word.