

# Hopeful Expectation - Sermon 1

## Isaiah 6 & 7

**ILLUSTRATION:** As John Wesley the founder of the Methodist Church and one of the leaders of what history calls, “The Great Awakening” lay on his death bed, he uttered his final words.... “*The best of all is God with us*”. He had given his entire life to meditating on the implications of the name - Immanuel - God with Us.

I want to ask you today to give the next 30 minutes to thinking on what Wesley thought on his entire life. What is the meaning and what are the implications of, “Immanuel - God with us”.

**CONTEXT:** At the time of Isaiah’s prophecy, the Jewish Nation is a divided Kingdom

- **Israel** in the North with it’s capital in **Samaria**
- **Judah** in the South with it’s capital in **Jerusalem**

**UZZIAH REIGN** - Judah had anointed a 16 year old young man as King named **Uzziah**. Uzziah’s reign began really well. 2 Chronicles tells us that he did was was right in the eyes of the Lord.

### **2 Chronicles 26:4–5 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. <sup>5</sup> He set himself to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God, and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him prosper.

### **2 Chronicles 26:15 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> ...his fame spread far, for he was marvelously helped, **till he was strong.**

Note that something radically changed when he became strong.

There is something about fame that can cause one to think that the rules don’t apply.

### **2 Chronicles 26:16–19 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> But when he was strong, he grew proud, to his destruction. For he was unfaithful to the Lord his God and entered the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense.

Now God was very particular about how people worshiped him. It was very important that NO ONE do the things God had ordained the priests to do... NOT EVEN THE KING. For that act of rebellion God struck Uzziah with leprosy ultimately it took his life.

### **Isaiah 6:1–8 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup> Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. <sup>3</sup> And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" <sup>4</sup> And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. <sup>5</sup> And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" <sup>6</sup> Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. <sup>7</sup> And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for."

**AHAZ REIGNS** - When Uzziah died his son **Ahaz** ascended to the throne of Judah. Ahaz had some very important decisions to make.

Soon after Ahaz became King, the Nation of Judah came under attack by a strange alliance of Israel (*or as the text calls it Ephraim*) joined with Syria. They wanted to depose King Ahaz and set up a puppet King.

**This was a massive war.** Ahaz would lose a son in this conflict. Scripture tells us that 120,000 men of Judah were killed in one day... which keep in mind that was more than the population of many ancient Nations. Alexander the Great's army may have been 50,000 men total... well imagine if your people lost 120,000 men in a day... how long could you survive such casualties. Defeat seemed imminent.

**The question arises - what will happen to God's promise of a descendant of David to rule on the throne of Israel throughout time?**

It is in the midst of this sense of impending doom that the Prophet of God appears in the narrative. The Prophet meets King Ahaz at a certain aqueduct.

### **Isaiah 7:4 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> And say to him, '1. Be careful, 2. be quiet, 3. do not fear, and 4. do not let your heart be faint because of these two smoldering stumps of firebrands'

So Isaiah says, "these two armies coming against you are nothing more than smoldering stumps". As a matter of fact within 65 years the nation of Ephraim will be utterly defeated.

### **Isaiah 7:10–16 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, <sup>11</sup> "Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." <sup>12</sup> But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test." <sup>13</sup> And he said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup> Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. **Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name**

**Immanuel.** <sup>15</sup> He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. <sup>16</sup> For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted.

So as we said last week this was a two fold prophecy. It had an immediate fulfillment to Ahaz in his day... but it also spoke to the larger question - "WHAT IS TO HAPPEN TO THE DAVID DYNASTY AND THE PROMISED RULER"?

**To Ahaz** - a young lady will have a son and name him Immanuel... meaning, "God is with us". Before they young boy is old enough to know right from wrong this war will be over, the enemies defeated.

**To the World** - God says, "There is a greater sign coming". The ultimate Immanuel who will be in the most literal sense of the word, "God With Us"

Isaiah must have sensed there was something more to this promise. You see there were a couple of things that were strange about this prophecy.

1. What sort of a sign is a young lady having a baby in a nation the size of Judah? It happens every day?
2. And why is there no mention of the child's Father? Israel was a Patriarchal society. They were not in the habit of giving undue attention to a mother without emphasizing the role of the Father.
3. By Isaiah 9 while still referring to this child Immanuel... Isaiah says he will be called, "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God!"
4. Perhaps the best argument I have seen that this was understood as a dual prophecy is that those who translated the Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek Septuagint translated the Hebrew ALMAH into the Greek PARTENOS which according to the New American Commentary suggests that they favored an interpretation in which this immediate fulfillment was not seen as exhausting Isaiah's prophecy.

This Prophecy had the same effect as the Star Wars movie - it answered a few questions, yet raised 1000 more!

Who will this ultimate Immanuel be?

## 1. Jesus is GOD -

**LISTEN:** Never take it for granted that people understand the fact that scripture teaches that Jesus was God in the flesh.

**ILLUSTRATION:** At my last church, I will never forget a lady walking into my office, she was in her 80's, had taught sunday school for years, active in our WMU and she said,

“Pastor - you won’t believe what this Sunday School book is teaching!”. She slammed it down on my desk and I looked down at the title of the lesson which was - “JESUS IS GOD”. She said, “we don’t believe that do we?” I said well yes mam... at least I believe it. And I showed her what I’m going to show you today....

The Bible says this Explicitly and Implicitly many many times.

- **GOSPEL OF JOHN -**

**John 1:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

**John 1:14 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- **GOD’S BLOOD - Acts 20:28 (ESV)**

<sup>28</sup> The Church is that .....which he obtained with his own blood.

- **JESUS RECEIVED WORSHIP** - When people would see an angel often they would instinctively fall down and worship them.. but remember what the Angels would always say? “Don’t worship up... we are created like you!” **But when Thomas worshiped Jesus - Jesus allowed him to do so.**

By the way, the last people in the entire world who would worship a human being as God were the Jews. You see... the pantheist have always believed that human beings could be avatars they could contain the god force... the Greeks thought from time to time the gods would dress up as humans and dwell among us... remember they thought Paul and Luke were Zeus and Hermes. BUT NOT THE JEWS - They thought of God as that which Isaiah 6 describes.

But Jesus convince his own family that he was God. Can you imagine worshipping your big brother? He must have had perfect moral character!

- **JESUS FORGAVE** - When Jesus said to the Paralytic, “Your sins are forgiven” remember what the Pharisees said, “That’s blasphemy, no one can forgive sins but God alone!” Yes that’s correct....

**ILLUSTRATION:** Let’s say Tom, Dick, and Harry are talking. Tom punches Dick smack in the mouth. There’s blood everywhere. Then Harry goes up to Tom and says, “Tom, I forgive you for punching Dick in the mouth. It’s all right. It’s over.” What is Dick going to say, once he’s calmed down? “Harry, you can’t forgive him. Only I can forgive him. He didn’t wrong you; he wronged me.” You can only forgive a sin if it’s against you.

Jesus is saying to this man - all of your sins have actually been against me.

*JESUS IS GOD... But not only that he is GOD....*

## **2. Jesus is God WITH US!!!!**

It is this passage that came to the mind of Matthew when he wrote:

**Matthew 1:22-23 (ESV)**

<sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: <sup>23</sup> “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).

All throughout the Old Testament you see God appearing to his people in terrifying ways.

- Here in Isaiah is the clearest picture with Angels circling and crying out!
- But you also have Moses on the Mountain - God says, “If I literally appeared to you, you would be annihilated... so I will pass by, hide you in the cleft of a rock and you can see the back of my shoulder... from this Moses was glowing for days.
- To Israel he was a Pillar of Fire!
- To Abraham he was a burning furnace!

**But to us God came.... as a baby!**

How can one so majestic? So terrifying? Be transformed into something so.... approachable?

**ILLUSTRATION:** BB-8 in many ways stole the show in Star Wars 7. According to Good Morning America there is a reason we find the droid so adorable. He is small, round, with a big head, big eyes, and somewhat clumsy... he is designed to remind us of everything we love about babies. Babies, are the opposite of intimidation. They are dependent not threatening.

How strange it must have sounded to Isaiah to imagine Adonai of the Temple... in the form of.... a baby!

**THE MESSAGE OF CHRISTMAS is that the LORD of Isaiah 6, became the BABY of Isaiah 7.** Everything else about Christmas is secondary. Peace on Earth flows out of this, everything else flows out of this.

**INVITATION:** Someone said,

If mans greatest need had of been information God would have sent us a educator  
If our greatest need had of been technology God would have sent a scientist  
If our greatest need had of been money God would have sent us an economist  
If our greatest need had of been pleasure God would have sent us an entertainer  
But our greatest need was forgiveness so God by his grace sent us Jesus.

