

Awaiting Advent: The Promises before the Manger – Week 2 – Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:18-25

Isaiah 7:14: *Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.*

INTRO to series—***Awaiting Advent: The Promises before the Manger:*** Long before that silent night in Bethlehem, the Lord was already writing the story of our Savior's birth. God had promised the Advent, or "arrival," of a just and righteous King who would reign forever. Generation after generation waited and watched. They looked for this Messiah King who would bring light into their darkness, peace into their turmoil, and hope into their hearts. This Advent, we'll follow that story—from the ancient promises of the Old Testament to their beautiful fulfillment in Jesus. We'll see Him as the true Light shining in the darkness, the Shepherd who leads us with love, and the King whose glory reaches to the ends of the earth. Jesus is our Immanuel—"God with us."

INTRO to **Isaiah 7:** The main content of this chapter is God's oracle to King Ahaz regarding the judgment coming on the northern Kingdom of Israel (Ephraim) and warnings to the southern Kingdom of Judah to purify the house of David. Within this prophecy is one of the greatest promises of God—that of a child being born to a virgin who would be called Immanuel.

I. LOVE: God promised a sign for His people to assure them that He would not forsake them.

-The word the Lord gives to King Ahaz through Isaiah about the destruction God's people would face in the coming days; but tucked in the middle of the judgment oracle is the promise of a sign that would come later—a sign not of judgment but of God coming to His people so that His people could come back to Him.

-Context of Ahaz

-The Lord promised a sign—something that would stand out as different from normal things that might happen—and this sign would be that: *The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son...*

-In the next chapter Isaiah speaks of his own children, but the son who would be born to the young virgin would be called by a different name—Immanuel, which means "God with us."

-In the generations that followed, the statement of faith of God's people was to be: "God is with us!" (see **Isaiah 7:9** and **Romans 8:31** below)

II. LOVE: God promised He would fulfill His Word to His people by coming to us Himself.

-The true fulfillment of the promise of Immanuel was revealed some 700 years later to a man named Joseph in Nazareth, who was pledged to be married to a young virgin named Mary (see **Matthew 1:18-25** below).

-When Joseph first learned of Mary's pregnancy, his plan was to divorce her quietly so that she might not face public disgrace. But, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said to him: *"Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."*

-**Matthew 1** connects Joseph's part in the first Advent story directly to Isaiah's prophecy *All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us")*.

The Significance of Jesus as Immanuel: "God with us."

- Jesus' birth – He identified with us by putting on flesh, Jesus identified with our humanity—coming down from heaven to live as one of us so that He might make the way for us to be made right with God through Him.
- Jesus' life – He identified with us by living amid the temptations of this world, while modeling for us what a perfect relationship with God the Father looks like. He also modeled for us perfect character, perfect teaching, and perfect priorities.
- Jesus' death – He identified with us through physical death. He gave up His life willingly on the cross, as a sacrifice for the sins of the world in order to fulfill God's Law that human beings could not fulfill on our own.
- Jesus' resurrection – He rose from the dead physically, as a promise that in Him our bodies will also be raised from death to life—therefore, in Christ Jesus, we are no longer dead in our trespasses and sins but are instead alive in Him.
- Jesus' return – We give thanks for the first Advent—Jesus Christ has already come into the world to bring us salvation—but there is a second Advent yet to come—Christ is coming back again, so that He might take His people to be with Him.

-The promise of Immanuel—God with us—is not just for the people of ancient Israel and Judah. This promise is for all who trust in Christ through faith. God loves us so much, the Bible says, that He sent His Son Jesus to put on human flesh and make His dwelling among us in order to save us from sin and death. (see **John 3:16** and **John 1:14** below).

-Joseph walked in faith just as God commanded through Isaiah and through the angel. Joseph never says a word in any part of Scripture but his actions speak loudly and demonstrate both integrity and wisdom.

QUESTIONS: Will we also represent the Lord well in all we do as we wait for the second Advent when Christ returns? Will we continue to trust in faith that no matter what we face, God is with us?

Other Scriptures Referenced:

Isaiah 7:9: *"If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all."*

Romans 8:31: *What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?*

Matthew 1:18-25: *This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.*

²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

John 3:16: *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

John 1:14: *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

Other Quotes/Resources:

-*"Advent is not our journey to God, but God's journey to us."*