



“Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14).

Messiah Is Coming

Central Truth: The prophet foretold the birth of God’s Anointed One.

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The Christmas season is a time when the attention of the Western world is turned toward the birth of the baby Jesus. We know it most likely was not the exact day of His birth, but tradition has claimed it so. The occasion has been grossly perverted by unspiritual people. But Christians can still take advantage of the religious remnants and give a witness for Christ.

Jesus Christ is God's promised Messiah. He is a “promised Messiah” because prophets foretold in amazing detail His nature and ministry centuries before He was born. Sometimes they spoke in clear statements. Sometimes their message was couched in pictures, types, and shadows. But the message was always the same. When Jesus came, He fulfilled His ministry in the exact way God had announced it would be.

Watch for the miracle of fulfilled prophecy, the sovereignty of God, the manifold fulfillment of prophecy, and the opportunity to know God more personally in Jesus Christ. To that end this study is devoted.

I. PROPHECY OF THE MESSIAH (Isaiah 7:10-14)

A. The prophecy of the Messiah had a historical setting (Isaiah 7:1-14). Most of the Middle East was ruled by Assyria at that time. The smaller and weaker nations (including Israel) had to pay an annual tribute to their Assyrian overlords. The financial burden was heavy and the people chafed under it.

Rezin (king of Syria) and Pekah (king of Israel) came to Ahaz (king of

Judah) with a proposition that they join in an alliance to overthrow the power of Assyria. King Ahaz refused, knowing it was a foolhardy thing to do. Rezin and Pekah agreed to join their armies and invade Judah. They intended to put Ahaz off the throne and replace him with a man identified only as “*the son of Tabeal*” (Isaiah 7:6). The new king would join them in the rebellion against Assyria.

King Ahaz was filled with dismay when he learned that the two armies had joined to invade his land. “*His heart was moved . . . as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind*” (Isaiah 7:2).

God sent the prophet Isaiah to King Ahaz with a message of assurance. He said the two kings were “two tails of smoking firebrands” who would come to nothing. (In sixty-five years Israel would not even exist as a nation!) Their invasion would fail and Judah would be safe. Trust God.

King Ahaz had no faith in God. He had already sent word to Assyria to come to his aid and had adopted the worship of pagan Assyrian gods. Isaiah encouraged Ahaz to ask God for a sign to prove the promise, “*either in the depth, or in the height above*” (verse 11); but the king refused. Even signs do not convince a person who refuses to believe. “Then God will give you a sign whether you ask or not,” Isaiah replied. Then follows the beautiful promise of Isaiah: “*Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. . . . Before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings*” (Isaiah 7:14, 16).

The prophecy is evidently a reference to the future coming of Jesus Christ. Matthew 1:22, 23 makes that plain without doubt. But there was also a historical application to the prophecy, which had special meaning in Isaiah's day.

There was a sign given to the “*house of David*” (Isaiah 7:13). That term “*house of David*” refers to King Ahaz (as in Isaiah 7:2, 10, 13), not to the nation of Israel. If it refers to King Ahaz, it must have had a fulfillment in Isaiah's day.

There was a child born to a young woman known to King Ahaz. (He was conceived by natural means, not like Mary conceived to bear Jesus.) She had enough faith to name him Immanuel, “God with us.” Before the child was old enough to make intelligent decisions for himself, the two kings so feared by King Ahaz would be gone. And it happened just that way!

Such an interpretation takes away nothing from the miraculous conception by Mary and the birth of Jesus. It rather elevates it by showing that it was a miracle. The manifold fulfillment of prophecy — the fact that one prophecy can have more than one fulfillment — is seen in II Chronicles

7 and Deuteronomy 18:18.

B. The prophecy had a second and greater fulfillment in Jesus Christ. The angel of God explained the miraculous conception by Mary, and the coming birth of Jesus, saying, *“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”* (Matthew 1:22, 23).

God truly was (and is) with us in the person of Jesus. God has spoken to us through Jesus, who is *“heir of all things,”* the one *“by whom . . . (God) made the worlds, . . . the brightness of (God's) glory and the express image of his person,”* and the one who *“by himself purged our sins (and) sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high”* (Hebrews 1:2, 3). Thank God for coming to us in the person of His only begotten Son. We are not surprised that He came in an unusual way, for He is an unusual person as God in human flesh.

II. EFFECTS OF THE MESSIAH (Isaiah 9:1-5)

A. Light has come by Him. *“The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined”* (verse 2).

The Gospel According to John emphasizes Jesus as the Light of the World. *“In him was life; and the life was the light of men. . . . That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world”* (John 1:4,9). Jesus said of himself, *“I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life”* (John 8:12). Men rejected Him for that very reason. *“This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil”* (John 3:19).

To be saved means to receive the light of God. Second Corinthians 4:6 describes conversion as God shining *“in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”* No wonder Isaiah described His coming as the shining forth of a great light.

B. Joy has come by Him (verse 3). Let each of God's saints testify, *“I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness”* (Isaiah 61:10). *“Ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory”* (I Peter 1:8). No wonder the children sing, “I have the joy,

joy, joy, joy down in my heart.” That is a good song for adults!

C. Deliverance has come by Him (verse 4). It is God's purpose “*to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house*” (Isaiah 42:7). His message is to announce “*liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD*” (Isaiah 61:1, 2). Think what that means in the spiritual deliverance from what binds us!

III. NATURE OF THE MESSIAH (Isaiah 9:6, 7)

A. He came as a child. “*Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given*” (Isaiah 9:6). What a marvel of grace! To think of the infinite Lord of all lying as a helpless infant in a manger is almost beyond our imagination. He whose voice shook the heavens and the earth (Hebrews 12:26) cried with the voice of an infant in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). He was born to a good and godly woman, but an ordinary human mother (Luke 1:31). He was born as any other child, a more humble birth than many, and was laid in a manger for His first bed (Luke 2:6, 7). He was a special child, the only begotten Son of God in human flesh.

B. He came to reign. “*The government shall be upon his shoulders*” (Isaiah 9:6). His mother was told, “*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*” (Luke 1:32, 33).

“*There was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed*” (Daniel 7:14).

Look at the manger at Christmas in the light of the throne He occupies today. “*He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet*” (I Corinthians 15:25).

C. He came with an unusual nature. The Hebrew culture used names to indicate nature. Look at the names Jesus would wear: “*Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace*” (Isaiah 9:6). He has such great names because He is one with God the Father (John 10:30). He spoke the Father's words and did the Father's works (John 14:10).

“*Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; . . . that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*” (Philippians 2:9, 11).

D. He came to give peace. “*Of the increase of his government and*

peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this” (Isaiah 9:7).

He is here *“to guide our feet into the way of peace”* (Luke 1:79). God sent His message to Israel, *“preaching peace by Jesus Christ”* (Acts 10:36). *“He is our peace”* (Ephesians 2:14). How does it come? He *“made peace through the blood of his cross”* (Colossians' 1:20). *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Romans 5:1). To a world totally beset with fears and pressures, the peace of God through Jesus Christ is welcome news!

E. He came to do the will of God. When He came into the world, it was with the commitment, *“Lo, I come . . . to do thy will, O God”* (Hebrews 10:7). The will of God is our salvation and our sanctification. Jesus made both possible when He died for our sins and arose for our salvation (Romans 5:10).

All of that, and more, is involved in the song of the angels and the birth of the Christ child. His birth is not a past event, but a continuing reality. It is a historical reality which has an influence far beyond its time.

God has come to earth personally in Jesus the Christ. Jesus Christ is the Savior, the only Savior. Forgiveness of every sin is in Him.

God foretold the coming of His Son in such detail that we can read the Old Testament and understand clearly the person and work of Jesus. God's promises concerning Jesus have been fulfilled in exact detail. You can safely trust Him.

The aim of this study is to call forth your personal faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior. Whether you are now a believing Christian or not, you can trust Him. That makes the lost man saved and the saved man spiritual. *“Be not faithless, but believing”* (John 20:27).

Questions

1. How is “Messiah” related to “Christ” in the Bible?
2. What was the historical setting of Isaiah 7:14?
3. What is meant by the *“house of Israel”* in Isaiah 7?
4. How does Isaiah 7 show the manifold fulfillment of prophecy?
5. In what way is Jesus the *“Emmanuel”* of Isaiah 7?
6. How did Jesus bring “light” into the world?
7. How does II Corinthians 4:6 describe salvation?
8. Why did the Savior come as a child?

9. What are the meanings of His names in Isaiah 9:6?
10. How can you keep a spiritual emphasis in your Christmas season?