

IMMANUEL

Second Sunday in Advent

December 8, 2024

*Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, you house of David!
Is it not enough to try the patience of men?
Will you try the patience of my God also?
Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign:
The virgin will be with child and give birth to a son,
and will call him Immanuel."*

Isaiah 7:14

Why Isaiah needed

1. Beginning in Isaiah:

- 1) Isaiah introduces us to God's holiness and salvation
- 2) Isaiah's message reveals God's judgment and his restoration, with the restoring ministry of Messiah always in the background.
- 3) Isaiah's questions to Ahaz: Who are you going to trust? To whom are you going to listen?

2. Visualizing the message of Isaiah:

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Putting the *analogia scripturae* to work: Isaiah 7:10-17

¹⁰ Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, ¹¹ “Ask the Lord your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights.”

¹² But Ahaz said, “I will not ask; I will not put the Lord to the test.”

¹³ Then Isaiah said, “Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of men? Will you try the patience of my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. ¹⁵ He will eat curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right. ¹⁶ But before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste. ¹⁷ The Lord will bring on you and on your people and on the house of your father a time unlike any since Ephraim broke away from Judah—he will bring the king of Assyria.”

1. Hermeneutic keys for reading the prophets

- 1) Always begin with a commitment to read all Scripture as God’s inspired word
- 2) The prophets are preparing God’s people for Messiah in their message of judgement and restoration
- 3) Piper’s Golden Rule: “Read the author as you would have the author read you.” The context is especially important in this text – we need to know why Ahaz didn’t turn to God.
- 4) Leave room for one promise with multiple fulfillments – but here the promise must fit both the Isaiah 7-9 and Matthew 1 settings.
- 5) Names are a “sign” (see 18:8). Isaiah 7-9 can be seen at the “tale of four names” as God reveals his provision for his people even as they commit spiritual adultery.

2. Isaiah responds to Ahaz’ hypocrisy (the most evil king according to 2 Kings 16) – he will turn to Assyria but not to God. So the remnant left will have to stand on tiptoes to survive the “flood” of the Assyrians (see Isaiah 8:6-8). A remnant will be saved because “God is with us” (8:9-10).

3. The sign of a child is a reminder to God’s people that he is present to deliver his people (see Gen. 21:22; Exodus 3:12; Deut. 2:7; Joshua 1:5; Psalm 46:7).

4. “God with us” is a promise that even evil Ahaz will see God break in to save his people, and the remnant will be even be returned – the double promise of *Shear-Jashub!*

5. The key question: To whom will I turn when God is “hiding his face”

¹⁶ Bind up the testimony and seal up the law among my disciples.

¹⁷ I will wait for the Lord, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob.
I will put my trust in him.

¹⁸ Here am I, and the children the Lord has given me. We are signs and symbols in Israel from the Lord Almighty, who dwells on Mount Zion.

¹⁹ When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? ²⁰ To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn. ²¹ Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land; when they are famished, they will become enraged and, looking upward, will curse their king and their God. ²² Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness.

Isaiah 8

Living in the fulfillment of the promise

¹⁸ *This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and 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 be with child and will 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 had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.*

Matthew 1

1. When my Rezin and Pekah are on the doorstep, the object of my faith will be revealed, just as Joseph's faith is revealed

⁷ *Yet this is what the Sovereign Lord says: “ ‘It will not take place, it will not happen If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.’ ”*

Isaiah 7

2. God is at work even when his methods are counterintuitive – a virgin giving birth?!?!

²⁸ *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose*

³¹ *What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?*

Romans 8

3. God is still in the business of breaking in

⁶ *You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

Romans 5

4. The child/son is the sign, in very large part, because the Son is central to our salvation

³¹ *What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?*

Romans 8

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. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.*

John 3