

23-07-01.wpd—Immanuel—the Prophecy
Incarnation, prophecy, faith, judgment, Advent
Isaiah 7:2-17

In the midst of His displeasure with our sin, God is with us.

INTRODUCTION:

—OT prophesy had a dual message: one *historical*; one *timeless*. Advent also has 2 themes: Christ's 1st Coming ends the OT; His 2nd begins the NT. Isaiah's "*Immanuel*" prophesy exemplifies both (**read Isa 7:2-17**).

—*The situation*: Judah was threatened by an enemy alliance (Syria and Ephraim), but they had a greater threat coming: an Assyrian invasion.

—A child born named "*Immanuel*" [*lit.*, "*God with us*"] was to be a sign of two things: 1) Judah's deliverance from the *enemy alliance*; and 2) God's judgment on both Israel and Judah by the *Assyrian invasion*.

—Isaiah's message went unheeded in 700 B.C., but it still speaks today of the *deliverance* and the *judgment that happens when God shows up*.

—This *Immanuel* prophesy still applies today: 1) Because God is not pleased with humanity's sins, we face a coming judgment. But 2) because of His loving character, [in the words of the Christmas carol] God is "Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel."

—**HOM.idea.**

I. The Importance of Prophecy in Turbulent Times:

A. Prophecy brings stability in times of worry and woe— v.4, '*Be careful, keep calm and don't be afraid. Do not lose heart...*

1. "*be careful*"— worldly threats caused Ahaz to worry; but God called him to be spiritually careful— Deut 4:23, Be careful not to forget the covenant of the LORD your God...; Deut 5:32, So be careful to do what the LORD your God has commanded you; do not turn aside to the right or to the left (Worries can distract us from the real worry, which is that we might stray from God and depart from His ways.)
2. "*keep calm*"— worldly threats are temporary and usually brief (Why was Jesus calm enough to sleep in a tempest-tossed boat?)
3. "*don't be afraid*"— Luk 12:4-5, "I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him." (our temporal fears can distract us from the fear of God).

4. "*do not lose heart*"— when worldly threats are noisy (v.6, "*Let us invade Judah; let us tear it apart and divide it among ourselves*"), we need to feed our mind and heart with God's promises and prophecies (v.7, the Sovereign LORD says: "It will not take place, it will not happen..")

B. Faith is our foundation in the midst of trial, v.9b, "*If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.*"

1. Prophecy places the invisible above the visible— **Heb 11:1**, Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.
2. Prophecy places the eternal above the temporal— **2Cor 4:18**, So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

II. Immanuel Was a Sign Given to a Trembling King, v.14:

- A. If God wants to give us a sign, and we hesitate, as Ahaz did (v.12), it tries God's patience (v.13) [Like not answering God's "Knock, knock!"... we're supposed to say, "*Who's there?*"; "*I AM*"; "*I AM who?*"; and God replies from **Ex.3:14**, "*I AM WHO I AM*"] (God uses signs to strengthen feeble faith and to build confidence in Him as I AM.)
- B. This first Immanuel was good and bad news for Ahaz and Judah:
1. "*God with us*" foretold Judah's deliverance from an evil alliance.
 2. "*God with us*" also predicted Judah's future judgment: Assyria.

TRANS: Was God happy with Judah? No. Was He happy with our sinful world we He sent His Son to Earth? No. But, in the midst of God's displeasure with sin, God wants to be with us, He wants to be *Immanuel*, "God with us," because He loves us. How reassuring this is when we feel guilty for having failed the Lord.

III. Immanuel Was a Sign for a People in the Darkness of Sin—

Mat 1:21-23, 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." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"—which means, "God with us."

- A. In both places (OT & NT), *Immanuel* related to judgment on sin:
1. *Immanuel* stood as a sign of both deliverance (for Judah) as well as judgment on Syria, Israel, and Judah.
 2. Jesus' coming was a message of light to a dark world— **Isa 9:2**, The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. **John 3:19**, This is the

verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. (Why is God both a God of deliverance and a God of judgment? Because He is Light! When light is with us, it automatically spells death to darkness!)

B. *Immanuel* came to be the ultimate King:

- a. “*God with us*” – the Creator Himself dwelling with the created ultimately means submission to the Creator’s rule as King!
- b. The dual focus of the Advent season:
 - (1) *Immanuel’s* 1st Coming would establish a spiritual kingdom in our hearts– Isa 9:6. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
 - (2) *Immanuel’s* 2nd Coming will complete Christ’s reign as King and Judge– Isa 9:7. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

CONCLUSION:

–*Immanuel*–the Prophecy: *a sign to ancient kings*—and to us—that **in the midst of God’s displeasure with sin, God is with us.**

–*Immanuel*, the child in Bethlehem’s manger: *our hope of salvation*, for He is *Jesus*, “*Jehovah saves*,” Who saves His people from their sins.

–*Immanuel*, coming again to be “*God with us*” forever, reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords, and bringing final judgment on sin and on all who cling to sin by rejecting His reign.

–*Immanuel*–“*God with us*,” **but only personally “with us” if we invite Him into our hearts:** “*Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.*”

–Is He dwelling in your heart today? If not, invite Him there to reign as your King. No matter how unworthy you might feel because of sins past or present, He can be your personal *Immanuel*: “God with you.”

Isaiah 7:2-17 (NIV)

2Now the house of David was told, “Aram has allied itself with Ephraim”; so the hearts of Ahaz and his people were shaken, as the trees of the forest are shaken by the wind.

3Then the LORD said to Isaiah, “Go out, you and your son Shear-Jashub, to meet Ahaz at the end of the aqueduct of the Upper Pool, on the road to the Washerman’s Field.

4Say to him, ‘Be careful, keep calm and don’t be afraid. Do not lose heart because of these two smoldering stubs of firewood—because of the fierce anger of Rezin and Aram and of the son of Remaliah.

5Aram, Ephraim and Remaliah’s son have plotted your ruin, saying,

6“Let us invade Judah; let us tear it apart and divide it among ourselves, and make the son of Tabeel king over it.”

7Yet this is what the Sovereign LORD says: “‘It will not take place, it will not happen,

8 for the head of Aram is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is only Rezin. Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be too shattered to be a people.

9 The head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is only Remaliah’s son. If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.’”

10Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz,

11“Ask the LORD your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights.”

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

13Then 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?

14Therefore 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.

15He will eat curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right.

16But 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.

17The 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.”