

Anticipated Present Realities of Jesus
November 18 – December 30 2012, Week One of Seven
“God with Us (i.e. Immanuel)”
Isaiah 7:1- 8:15 (7:14), Nov 18 2012

Focus for Week One

This morning, we begin a series from Isaiah that will carry us through the Advent and Christmas season. It is a series in which we want to carefully “pay attention” to the “Anticipated Present Realities of Jesus.” Said simply, “What do we learn from Isaiah about the REALITY of Jesus TODAY?”

This morning, we consider that Jesus is “Immanuel, God with us.” Jesus is “Immanuel, the Holy One with us.”

Summary of “Time of Reflection” and Message

1. Time of Reflection: **Introduction to Prophecy and to Isaiah 7:14 Prophecy**

- **About Prophecy**
 - a. In I Peter 1:10-12, we learn that prophets, including Isaiah,
 - 1) “Spoke of the grace that was to come.”
 - 2) “Predicted the sufferings of the Messiah.”
 - 3) Had the “Spirit of Christ in them.”
 - b. There is both a “now” and “not yet” aspect to prophecy; therefore, we must look for a prophecy’s immediate fulfillment in order to understand its anticipated fulfillment in Jesus.
- **About Prophecy of Isaiah 7:14, quoted in Matthew 1:20-23**
 - a. In Isaiah 6, Isaiah has a vision of God’s holiness; he sees God’s holiness, he became aware of his sin, he experienced God salvation, and he submitted his life to God.
 - b. This vision of God’s holiness shaped all of Isaiah’s prophecies (note that 12x in Isaiah 1-39 and 14x in Isaiah 40-66 God is called, “The Holy One of Israel;” this phrase is only used 6x in the rest of the Old Testament).
 - c. Isaiah never separates God’s holiness from Immanuel, God with us; Matthew does not separate God’s holiness from Jesus who came to save us from our sins either.
 - d. When we think of Jesus as Immanuel, God with us, God intends that this REALITY will lead people to see God’s HOLINESS PRESENT with us in Jesus.

2. **Summary of Message**

- **The Context of Isaiah 7:14 Prophecy**
 - a. **About Isaiah**
 - 1) He began as a prophet after Uzziah died (740BC). Uzziah’s son, Jotham, then became king for sixteen years.
 - 2) We read that both Uzziah and Jotham “did what was right in the eyes of the Lord,” though not perfectly (II Kings 15:34-35).

b. About Ahaz

- 1) He was Jotham's son.
- 2) He did what was evil in God's sight (see II Kings 16:1-3, II Chronicles 28:1-4).

c. The Story from Isaiah 7

- 1) The King of Syria (i.e. Aram) and the King of Israel march against Judah to force them to join alliance against Assyria; however, they could not overpower them (7:1).

Note: Assyria Invasion came in three waves: 738-732 – devastated Israel; 725 – 722 – carried off people and the last king of Israel, Hoshea; 701 – Campaign against Judah (see pp 594-595 in *NIV 2011 Study Bible*)

- 2) Ahaz was terrified because of previous defeat by Syria and Israel (7:2; see II Chronicles 28:5-15).
- 3) The Lord tells Isaiah to tell Ahaz NOT to join alliance (7:3-9).
 - a) He calls Syria and Israel “two smoldering stubs of firewood.”
 - b) He predicts the downfall of Israel (within 65 years).
 - c) He calls Judah, including Ahaz, to stand firm in the faith: “If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.”
- 4) At this time, Ahaz seeks help from Assyria (see II Kings 16:7-9, II Chronicles 28:16-21).
- 5) Also around this time, the Lord speaks to Ahaz, telling him to ask for a sign. Ahaz refuses, saying he does not want to “test” God. God interprets refusal as “trying the patience of God” (7:10-13).
- 6) Why did Ahaz refuse the sign of Immanuel?
 - a) Ahaz was entangled in the “mess” of his own making (see II Chronicles 28:22-25; note that he even closed the doors of the temple).
 - b) Ahaz was preoccupied with doing everything in “deference to the King of Assyria (see II Kings 16:10-18; note 16:18).

• **The Prophecy Given**

- a. **The prophecy:** 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. (Isaiah 7:14, NIV 2011)
- b. **The Time of the prophecy**
 - 1) It will be a time when people eat curds and honey; that is, usual farming practices will not be done due to invasion by Assyria.
 - 2) It will be a time when Syria and Israel will be laid to waste (“land of two kings you dread will be laid to waste”).
 - 3) It will be a time when Judah too will experience oppression of Assyria (7:17).
- c. **The Prophecy's immediate fulfillment (see Isaiah 8)**
 - 1) Isaiah's new (virgin) wife gives birth to a son (8:1-4).
 - 2) Assyria comes, a further sign of Immanuel (8:7-10; note repeat of word, Immanuel, in 8:8, 10).
- d. **Warning to Isaiah: The presence of the Lord IS HOLY (8:11-14).** God says,
 - 1) I AM present.
 - 2) I AM Holy.
 - 3) HE will be a Holy Place; he is the one you are to honour.
 - 4) HE is the ROCK on which people will stumble OR be saved.

- e. **Fulfillment in Jesus (Matthew 1:20-23)** – Words of angel to Joseph about baby to be born to Mary, a virgin
 - 1) Holy Spirit – HOLY
 - 2) Save people from sins – SAVE
 - 3) People will call him Immanuel – Name not Immanuel, but people will call him “Immanuel”

- **What is REAL about Jesus NOW?**
 - a. Jesus IS present.
 - b. Jesus is GOD with US.
 - c. Jesus is “the HOLY ONE” with us.
 - d. Jesus is the HOLY PLACE; no longer a place but his person.
 - e. Jesus is the STONE on which we stumble to be saved OR to fall.

For Further Study

1. Review the notes from the “Time of Reflection” and “Message” above; what details related to the prophecy and its context do you want to consider further?
2. Read I Peter 1:10-12 and note the many qualities of prophets that would have also been true of Isaiah.
3. Piece together the corresponding stories about Ahaz in II Kings 16:1-20 and II Chronicles 28:1-27. Now read Isaiah 7:1-17 in light of this larger context.
4. What are some ways you see the immediate fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14 in Isaiah 8:1-14?
5. In what ways do you see the immediate context of the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14 reflected in its fulfillment in Jesus as recorded in Matthew 1:20-23?
6. From this first prophecy, where is God calling you to pay closer attention to the REALITY of JESUS now in your life and situation?

* Prepared by Tim Berends

Scriptures for Week One

I Peter 1:10-12 (NIV 2011)

¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ¹¹ trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

Isaiah 7:1-17 (NIV 2011)

⁷ When Ahaz son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, was king of Judah, King Rezin of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel marched up to fight against Jerusalem, but they could not overpower it.

² Now 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.

³ Then 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 Launderer’s Field. ⁴ Say 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. ⁵ Aram, 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.” ⁷ Yet 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.”

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 humans? Will you try the patience of my God also? 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.** ¹⁵ He will be eating curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, ¹⁶ for 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.”

Matthew 1:20-23 (NIV 2011)

²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to [Joseph] 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”). (Matthew 1:20-23, NIV 2011)