

Theme: The great expectation that a virgin would conceive and her Child would save us has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

I. Intro – Great Expectations - Advent 2012

- A. Today Advent begins - preparing to celebrate Christmas
- B. This year - Great Expectations - Reflections From Isaiah
- C. We will look at some of Isaiah's prophecies about Christ
- D. What is the nature of these prophecies?
- E. How are they fulfilled by Jesus?
- F. What do they mean for us today?

II. The Life and Times of Isaiah the Prophet

- A. Isaiah prophesied in the late 8th century BC
 - 1. During this time Israel & allies threatened Judah
 - 2. Judah tempted to look to Assyria and others for help
 - 3. During this time the northern tribes fell to Assyria
 - 4. Assyria was now threatening Judah
- B. To strengthen their faith God offers a sign (7:14)
 - 1. This is rare but God wants them to turn to Him
 - 2. What is the sign? How does it help them?

III. The Virgin Will Conceive?

- A. A translation controversy - virgin or young woman?
 - 1. Virgin will conceive - NIV and most translations

- 2. Young woman will conceive - RSV

- a. Footnote has 'virgin' as second choice

- B. Why does RSV have 'young woman'? They say:

- 1. Hebrew bethulah means virgin
- 2. Word here is almah which means young woman
- 3. If he meant virgin he would have used bethulah
- 4. Context - child born during Isaiah's time
 - a. Isaiah 7:15-17 - must be near future
 - b. Isaiah's children - Is 8:1-4; 8:7-10; 8:18
- 5. So it must mean 'young woman' - not virgin

- C. The VIRGIN will conceive!

- 1. Matthew 1:22-23 - the virgin will conceive
- 2. Why Matthew is correct in his quote
 - a. Almah can mean young woman or virgin
 - b. In Israel, young women were virgins!
 - c. LXX - translated almah as parthenos - virgin
 - d. Matthew 1:23 - almost verbatim of LXX
 - e. Also, description of the child in Isaiah 9:6-7
 - f. Isaiah's children (& Hezekiah) cannot fulfill this

IV. The Nature of Prophetic Signs

- A. The sign usually has multiple fulfillments

1. Prophets - and THE Prophet
 - a. Deut 18:15,18-19; John 1:21; Heb 1:1-2
 - b. All other prophets pointed to THE Prophet - Jesus
 2. Abram's seed - and THE SEED
 - a. Genesis 12:7; Gen 26:3; Galatians 3:16
 - b. All other "seed" pointed to THE Seed - Jesus
 3. Early fulfillments sustain hope while awaiting THE fulfillment
- B. The true fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14
1. The initial fulfillment was Isaiah's children
 2. But THE fulfillment is Jesus!

V. Applying the Word

- A. Do we see God's signs all around us?
1. We live in confusing, fearful times like Isaiah
 2. We are tempted to look everywhere but to God
 3. But God is actively working all around us
 4. Do we see God's work - or miss it?
 5. Do we let these works of God sustain our hope?
- B. Do we let God's signs point us to Jesus - THE SIGN?
1. Everything God does points us back to Jesus
 2. Do we let God's signs and work do that for us?
 3. The problem was not Assyria - it was Israel's sin

4. So the solution was Jesus!
5. Do we see the same thing today?
6. The root of all our problems is our sin
7. But Christ has come and dealt with our sin
8. He frees us to trust in God
9. He frees us to have true hope in God

C. Communion - A Sign Pointing To Jesus

1. We come to this table regularly
2. We can miss that this is a sign - it points elsewhere
3. Come to the Table - and to Jesus
4. Receive from Him today

Great Expectations - The Virgin Will Conceive

Isaiah 7:14
 December 2, 2012
 Communion
 Romans 15:13

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman[a] shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Imman'u-el
Isaiah 7:14 (RSV) [a] or virgin

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.” Isaiah 7:14–17

1 The Lord said to me, “Take a large scroll and write on it with an ordinary pen: Maher-shalal-hash-baz. 2 And I will call in Uriah the priest and Zechariah son of Jeberekiah as reliable witnesses for me.” 3 **Then I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and gave birth to a son. And the Lord said to me, “Name him Maher-shalal-hash-baz. 4 Before the boy knows how to say ‘My father’ or ‘My mother,’ the wealth of Damascus and the plunder of Samaria will be carried off by the king of Assyria.”** Isaiah 8:1–4

7 therefore the Lord is about to bring against them the mighty floodwaters of the River — the king of Assyria with all his pomp. It will overflow all its channels, run over all its banks and sweep on into Judah, swirling over it, passing through it and reaching up to the neck. Its outspread wings will cover the breadth of your land, **O Immanuel!**” 9 Raise the war cry, you nations, and be shattered! Listen, all you distant lands. Prepare for battle, and be shattered! Prepare for battle, and be shattered! 10 Devise your strategy, but it will be thwarted; propose your plan, but it will not stand, for **God is with us.** (literally - Immanuel). Isaiah 8:7–10

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. Isaiah 8:18

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.” Matthew 1:22–23

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.** 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. **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. Isaiah 9:6–7

18 I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. 19 If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account. Deuteronomy 18:18–19

They asked him, “Then who are you? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you **the Prophet?**” He answered, “No.” John 1:21

1 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. Heb 1:1–2

The Lord appeared to Abram and said, “To your **offspring** I will give this land.” So he built an altar there to the Lord, who had appeared to him. Genesis 12:7

Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and **your descendants** I will give all these lands and will **confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham.** Genesis 26:3

The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say “and to seeds,” meaning many people, but “and to your seed,” meaning one person, who is Christ. Galatians 3:16