

Theme: In the most unlikely and adverse circumstances, God fulfilled His promise to come redeem and rescue us.

I. Intro - The Movie “Signs”

- A. Movie about pastor whose life seems shattered
- B. Lost his wife; daughter leaving water everywhere; brother in law failed at baseball
- C. Aliens invade and are taking over, but all threads come together to save humanity
- D. A parable of how God providentially works

II. A Long Awaited Promise

- A. The Promise originally had been given millennia before
And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” Genesis 3:15
 - 1. This Promise had been given in the Garden
 - 2. Many generations and thousands of years had passed since then
- B. The promise had been ratified, renewed and expanded
 - 1. It had been ratified, renewed and expanded through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
 - 2. God has built His covenant with Israel upon this promise - delivering them from Egypt and giving them the Promised Land
 - 3. God had renewed and expanded the promise through David and his descendants
 - 4. Prophet’s gave many promises & glimpses of the Seed, the Messiah - but when would He come?

- 5. It had been 1,000 years from David to the time of the NT - where was the Messiah, the Son of David?
- 6. Israel had survived bondage in Egypt, oppression by Assyria, and exile by the Babylonians
- 7. Israel had returned to the land under Persian rule, been conquered by the Greek Empire, and even experienced brief freedom - but still they waited for the Promised One
- 8. And now Rome had put them under its boot. When would Messiah come?

III. The Advent Promise Fulfilled

- A. The Promise fulfilled in unexpected circumstances
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. Matthew 1:18–19
 - 1. Mary appears to be an immoral woman - pregnant but not married
 - 2. The Law demanded that she be stoned - but Joseph was upright and kind, and simply wanted to break the betrothal

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.” Matthew 1:20–21

3. But an angel appears - and tells Joseph Mary is still a virgin!
4. The Child is conceived by the Holy Spirit - not a human father
5. Not only was the Child not conceived in sin - He was coming to save His people from their sin!
6. What a reversal!

B. The Promise fulfilled the ancient prophecies

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

1. This was a fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14 - a Virgin conceives! A miracle only God can do!
2. The Child is literally God with Us - Emmanuel!
3. This is why He can save - He is both God and Man
4. This is also a fulfillment of the original Advent Promise in the Garden
 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and **hers**; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” Gen 3:15
 - a. The Promise had always been about the Seed of the woman - not the man
 - b. God’s promise that the Seed of the woman would crush the Serpent is fulfilled in Jesus, the Seed of the Virgin Mary who crushed Satan to save us!
 - c. How true - and how unexpected!
 - d. The link from Eve to Mary (photo) - the Seed of the woman; the serpent is crushed!

C. The Promise fulfilled unexpectedly against all odds

1. Simple pawns in Caesar’s world

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. Luke 2:1

- a. Caesar is the mighty Emperor - all others are pawns
- b. God seems to be nowhere involved - but He is!

2. An arduous trip - with pregnant Mary

And everyone went to his own town to register. ⁴ So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. Luke 2:3–5

- a. Joseph is forced to return to Bethlehem - tough trip
- b. And he has to take along Mary, who is pregnant
- c. This will make the tongues wag - what have they been doing???
- d. But God is at work in all of this, fulfilling the Promise

3. A painful birth in a stable - no room in the inn

While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Luke 2:6–7

- a. Mary goes into labor - and there is pain! It was not a silent night, there was blood on the ground!
- b. Not a sterile hospital, not even a room in the inn - they are in a manger with the animals

- c. But God is at work in all of this, fulfilling the Promise
4. Announced to humble shepherds - not the powerful
And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Luke 2:8–10
- a. We expect the birth to be announced to kings with pomp - but it is given to shepherds
 - b. Caesar, Quirinius, Herod - they are not told, but unnamed shepherds get an angelic concert!
 - c. The religious leaders do not know - but humble shepherds do! The religious leaders will fight against this all their days, but the humble receive Him gladly!
 - d. And God is at work in all of this, fulfilling the Promise
5. The promise fulfilled - glory to God, good to us
Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." Luke 2:13–14
- a. God's purposes and promises are always for His glory and the good of His people
 - b. Through all the long years, the disappointments, discouragement and doubt, God was at work, fulfilling His promise, bringing glory to Himself, and working all things to the good of His people!
 - c. That is how a promise is fulfilled by God!

IV. Applying the Word

- A. Do I see the unexpected way God fulfills His promises?
1. We think the promises are fulfilled in power and in ways no one fails to see
 2. Sometimes God does this - and we should give thanks when He does!
 3. Most often, God's promises are fulfilled in times and ways we never expect
 4. Example from my own life
 - a. Disappointment at USMC MOS - and God's gift
 - b. It seemed God had failed me; I was hurt, angry
 - c. God was actually at work giving me the greatest gift in this world - Linda!
 5. Often at the very moment God is fulfilling the promise it feels like all is chaos and failure
 6. This calls for patient endurance on the part of God's people!
 7. Are there areas where it seems like all is chaos and disappointment - but God is actually at work?
 - a. Marriage?
 - b. Raising our kids?
 - c. Church?
 - d. Work?
 8. In whatever area I am tempted to doubt God's promises and work, I need to put off fear, put on faith, and recount God's story each day to patiently endure until God fulfills His Word of promise

B. A prayer for patient endurance to receive God's promises

The Advent Promise Fulfilled

Matthew 1:18-25

December 24, 2017

Prayer

Psalm 20:1-5

Teaching keywords: Advent and Christmas; covenant; prophecy

May the Lord answer you when you are in distress; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you. May he send you help and always remember you. May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed. May the Lord grant all your requests. Psalms 20:1–5 paraphrase

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 1:18–25