



“She Shall Call His Name Immanuel”  
(Isaiah 7:14)

Introduction: In our passage this morning, Ahaz, king of Judah, was in trouble. Darkness was closing in all around, and it didn't look like there was much hope for him or for his kingdom. Rezin the king of Aram and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, had come against Jerusalem with their armies, and were trying to take his kingdom by force. When the messengers told the king, he and all the people were terrified. They began to shake like trees blowing in the wind. As far as they could tell, there was no hope. But in the midst of this darkness, a light began to shine, a ray of hope that the Lord was going to intervene. The Lord sent Isaiah the prophet to speak to Ahaz to comfort him, to assure him that what these two kings were planning to do would fail. And, so that Ahaz would believe, the Lord told him that he could ask for a sign. Usually the Lord expects His people to accept what He says at face value, but here, the Lord condescended to the weakness of His people and told the king that he could ask for any sign that he wanted. And so what did Ahaz ask for? Did he lay out a fleece for the Lord, like Gideon had done, did he ask for the sun to move backward, as Hezekiah had done? No. Ahaz, said, “I will not ask, nor will I test the Lord!” Now when we ask the Lord to prove something He's said, that is tempting the Lord, which is a very sinful thing to do, but it is not tempting Him when He tells us to ask for a sign. When He does, then we must. If we refuse, we are actually disobeying Him. This is what Ahaz did. He said he would not ask for a sign. This not only made God angry, but it made Isaiah angry as well, and so Isaiah said to Ahaz, “Listen now, O house of David! Is it too slight a thing for you to try the patience of men, that you will try the patience of my God as well? Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel. He will eat curds and honey at the time He knows enough to refuse evil and choose good. For before the boy will know enough to refuse evil and choose good, the land whose two kings you dread will be forsaken” (7:13-16). The sign the Lord appointed for Ahaz was that of a virgin bearing a child. By the time this child was old enough to know the difference between good and evil, the two kings that Ahaz was afraid of would be destroyed. In the middle of this very dark situation, the Lord gave the sign of a virgin with child to give His people the hope of deliverance.

Later in the Bible, we read of another darkness and of another virgin and child. Israel had again fallen into bondage. Rome had conquered them, and the Jews had become their servants. Things looked dark for them. But there was a darkness which was even greater. The people of God had fallen away from the Lord and were wandering in spiritual darkness. Isaiah writes, “The people . . . were sitting in darkness . . . in the land and shadow of death” (Matt. 4:15-16). This was not a physical darkness, it was not the darkness of night. It was spiritual darkness, the darkness of ignorance, the darkness of unbelief. The priests no longer taught the people the Word of the Lord, but their own ideas. They had hidden the key of knowledge and the people were wandering around like blind men. They had closed up the kingdom of God. They were not entering in themselves, nor would they allow anyone else to enter. If things had continued like this, all the people would surely have perished. But in the middle of this darkness, a light began to shine. The Lord sent an angel named Gabriel to a town called Nazareth to speak to a young virgin there, whose name was Mary, to give her a sign that the Lord would soon deliver His people from their bondage to that darkness. He told her that she would conceive and bear a son, and that she was to call His name Jesus. This was the promise of the Messiah, the anointed One of God, the One who was coming to save His people from their sins.

Now it is this birth and this child that I want us to consider this morning. The prophecy which the Lord gave to Ahaz years before was really pointing to Jesus. It was one of the many pictures which God gave to His people in the Old Testament of who the Messiah would be and what He would do. What He shows us here is that

*Jesus Christ is the Son of God in human flesh, the Savior of the world.*

**I. Now the first thing that Isaiah points us to is the fact that it would be a virgin who would carry and bear this child.**

- A. We have to admit that this is not only very unusual, but impossible from a human standpoint.
  1. God has made us in such a way that we cannot have children unless there is a father and mother involved. But in this case, there would only be a virgin.
  2. This of course is what makes it a sign. Why do you think that Isaiah began by saying, “Behold”? It was because he wanted us to pay attention. Something impossible was going to happen. But this is

what a sign is, something happens that is impossible unless God does it. If God did something that happened every day, it wouldn't make anyone stop and pay attention. If this child had come in the normal way, what would there be to look at or consider?

3. Now I believe we are to assume that the virgin in Ahaz's day was no longer a virgin once she conceived her child. The sign to him had more to do with how long it would be before the Lord would destroy his enemies.
  4. But this was not the case with Mary. She was a virgin when she conceived, and she was still a virgin after she gave birth. This certainly stops traffic.
    - a. Now how was this to happen, since she had never known a man? Mary wondered this herself. But the angel told her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God. . . . For nothing will be impossible with God" (Luke 1:35, 37).
    - b. The answer was that God Himself was going to bring this conception about. He was going to take some of her substance, and complete what was missing, so that she would have a complete child in her womb. And all this would be done without the help of a man.
- B. Now why is this important? Why did Jesus need to be born of a Virgin?
1. The first answer is that God had said He was going to do it this way, and once He says something, He always carries it out exactly as He said.
    - a. This prophecy of Isaiah tells us that this was God's intention.
    - b. Even from the very beginning, from the very Fall of our first parents, Adam and Eve, this is what God had promised. It's interesting that when the Lord is pronouncing the curse upon the serpent, He tells him that the seed *of the woman* will crush his head (Gen. 3:15). In other words, a child which would come forth from the woman would do battle with and crush this serpent who had just brought about the fall of the whole human race. What's interesting is that this child was said to be the seed of the woman, and not the seed of a man, which, if you understand the patriarchal nature of that culture was, was very unusual.
    - c. But as you look through the Bible, you also see something else very interesting. There are several pictures of this coming battle between the woman's seed and the devil. When David killed Goliath, how did he do it? He put a rock in a sling and hit the giant in his *forehead*. Then he took the giant's sword and cut off his *head* (1 Sam. 17). David was a type of the Messiah. He was the seed of the woman, for he was a believer. And Goliath was a type of the devil. He was the devil's champion that the devil had sent to destroy God's people. The same thing happened when Deborah and Barak went out to fight king Jabin and Sisera, the commander of his armies. When the battle went against them, Sisera ran into the tent of a woman named Jael. And when he had fallen asleep, she took a tent peg and drove it through the *temples of his head* (Judges 4). When Abimelech, who had unrighteously killed all his brothers to become king, fought against Thebez to try and capture it, a woman threw a millstone from the tower, and it crushed his *skull* (Judges 9:53).
    - d. These prophecies and pictures tell us that this champion who would defeat the devil by crushing his head was to be the seed of a woman, so it was important that Jesus be the son of a woman, but not have a human father.
  2. But there was another reason, which was even more important.
    - a. The Messiah, the Savior, the One who would save us from our sins, had to be free from sin Himself, or He would not even have been able to save Himself. How could He have been free from sin if the sin of Adam was passed on to every single one of his children?
    - b. The answer is the virgin birth. Jesus did not have a human father, but a divine One. Since Jesus was not born of a man, the sin of Adam was not imputed to Him, it was not credited to Him. He was free from that guilt.
    - c. The Holy Spirit was able to do this in the womb of the virgin. He was the One chosen to do it, because it is His unique job to work holiness in His people. He sanctified that human nature of Christ in the womb of the virgin so that an immaculate conception took place, a conception free from sin. We do not believe, as the Roman church does, that *Mary* needed to be immaculately conceived and free from sin in order to conceive and bear the Savior. But we do believe that Jesus was immaculately conceived and free from sin. He had to be. Otherwise He would not have been

qualified to save us from our sins.

**II. And this brings us to the second thing we see in our passage. Not only was this Child to be born of a virgin, He was also to be given a very unique name, “She will call His name Immanuel.”**

A. Now what does this name mean?

1. It is actually a sentence in the Hebrew language. It means, “God with us.” And this is significant for two reasons:
  - a. It tells us that God had certainly seen the condition of His people and had felt compassion for them, so He was sending His Deliverer to set them free from the devil’s tyranny.
  - b. But more importantly, it tells us something about who this One was.
2. Jesus is Immanuel, God with us, in the most literal sense of the word.
  - a. This One who was coming into our dark situation to fight with the devil to set us free, was not just a man like anyone else. Nor was He simply a *perfect* man. He was God in human flesh.
  - b. The angel said to Mary, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). Jesus did not have a human father, but a divine One. He literally is the Son of God.
  - c. He was the Son of God not only because of the divine parentage of His human nature, but also because He was eternally begotten of the Father. Paul writes that “when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” (Gal. 4:4-5). This One that was born of the Virgin already existed before His conception and birth. He was already the Son of God. God sent His Son into the world.

B. Now why is this important? Why did Jesus have to be the Son of God, as well as the Son of Man?

1. The first reason again is that this is what the Lord told us He was going to do.
  - a. He said through the prophet Micah, “But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *too* little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity” (5:2). The One He was sending would have existed from all eternity.
  - b. He also said through Isaiah in another prophecy, “For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of *His* government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this” (Isa. 9:6-7). This child would be called the Mighty God and the Father of Eternity. What else could He be but God in human flesh?
2. But the second reason is that only a God man would be able to do what needed to be done.
  - a. We had a problem. We were born in sin, dead to the things of God, and under the sentence of everlasting destruction in hell. Our father Adam had sinned in the garden and forfeited heaven for all of us. When we came into this world, our hearts were hard, we didn’t love God, but hated Him. We were His enemies. And for our sin and hatred and rebellion, the Lord had very justly sentenced us to death, everlasting death. Things were dark, very dark. There was no hope for us. There was nothing we could do.
  - b. But God sent us a ray of hope, a light to shine in the darkness. He told His people from the very beginning, right after the Fall, that He was planning to do something about the situation, and He did. He sent His only begotten Son into the world to save us from our sins.
  - c. Jesus had to become a man so that He could save us. God’s justice had been violated by us, and it needed to be paid by us. And so in order pay it, Jesus had to become a man. He had to become one with us so that He might take our place in God’s judgment, and He did, so that God might forgive us and still be just.
  - d. But for this reason, Jesus also had to be God. We had all of us committed crimes far worse than any man has ever committed against another man, far worse than stealing, or adultery or murder. Our sins were all against an infinitely holy God. Every one of them deserved everlasting damnation. How could a mere man ever hold up under the terrible judgment which would have

been ours? The answer is that a man couldn't, but a God-man could. It was Christ's divine nature that gave Him the strength to withstand all of God's wrath on the cross, a wrath which would have forever swept us away into the fiery lake. Jesus also had to be God for His obedience and suffering to reach all who would believe, for if He hadn't been, then all His work would have been good for only one man. Jesus came to save a multitude which no man can number, to pay their debt, and if God was to be just, the payment that He made must be equal to or greater than what was owed. The payment Jesus made is much greater, for being God, it has unlimited value.

- e. Jesus needed to be born of the Virgin and to be God Himself in human flesh so that He might be perfectly suited to be our Savior. The only question remaining this morning is to ask whether or not He is your Savior. Was that payment Jesus made for you? Has He delivered you from the darkness of your sins? He has, if you are trusting in Him this morning. The Bible says, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). If you believe in Him, not just the facts about Him, but if you are actually resting in Him as your Savior, and turning from all your sins to serve Him as your Lord, then you are saved, you have been delivered from eternal judgment. But if you have not believed in Christ, if you have not turned from your sins, you are still under His wrath. The Lord tells you this morning that you must believe on His Son to be saved or you will perish in hell forever. There is no other name under heaven by which anyone may be saved. If the Lord has opened your eyes to see this this morning, then believe on Him now, receive His life, and begin to live the life He calls you to. May our gracious Lord give us all the grace to do this. Amen.