

## December 24

**Scriptures:** Read Isaiah 7 ( Special Christmas Reading )

**Key Verse:** “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.” (Isaiah 7:14)

### Overview

Immanuel, “God with us!”

God sent the prophet Isaiah to call for repentance and warn God’s people during their apostasy under the reign of king Ahaz of Judah. The occasion of this prophecy was the attempted invasion of the combined forces of Israel and Syria against Judah. Their goal was to dethrone Ahaz from the Davidic dynasty and set up another king of their own choosing who would be subject to them (Isaiah 7:6; 2 Kings 16:5-7). Ahaz feared that this terrible threat would mean the end for himself and the line of David upon the throne of Judah, but God sent Isaiah to reassure him that this attempt would not be successful. God still had a plan for the line of David in Judah. He also has a plan for the salvation of the whole world through the righteous King of the line of David whose throne would be established forever, just as God had promised Ahaz’s forefather, David (2 Samuel 7:16).

Isaiah prophesied that a child would be born. From the context, it is clear that this child would be a king and a deliverer from the line of David. His coming would be a “sign” to verify the truth of His deliverance. The sign was to be that a young virgin would miraculously conceive and give birth to a son whose name would be Immanuel, thus confirming the ancient and first promise of the Bible in Genesis 3:15 about the deliverer who would come from the seed of woman.

In the midst of despair and turmoil in Judah, Isaiah foresaw and foretold of Immanuel. He thus gave hope and shed light on not only the immediate dark situation that faced Ahaz, but the whole darkened world lost in sin (Isaiah 60:1). This hope was in the Messiah, the coming Wonderful Child (Isaiah 9:6-7) whom God would send.

It is amazing to see God sovereignly acting in history, for this prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled 700 years later in the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, who came “in the fullness of time” (Galatians 4:4). God had prepared everything for His coming. There was political stability under the power of Rome. There was the universal Greek language into which the Bible had been translated (the Septuagint), and this Old Testament Scripture, full of prophecy, prepared hearts for the coming of the Messiah. The time was ripe, and God sent the Lord Jesus through the virgin birth, thus fulfilling the sign that He would be the deliverer. Indeed the virgin birth is a theological truth. Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit and therefore sinless. He was the unblemished sacrifice that God had pre-ordained for the salvation of the world, even before its foundation.

“Immanuel” is defined and explained in Matthew 1:22-23 as “God with us”. This time God did not send a prophet but came Himself (Hebrews 1:1-3). God was always present in the events of the world, but now He was there more intimately in His Son, Jesus Christ (John 1:18). Because

of this, we may have that more intimate relationship and fellowship with Him; “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself” (2 Corinthians 5:19).

What was the purpose of Immanuel? It was not just to give the greatest teachings, perform the most wonderful miracles, or go around doing good and making great claims. It was not just to fulfill prophecy and have the most unique birth; His purpose was to complete God’s plan of redemption. The birth of Christ was truly the greatest event in history. The King of the world came in the form of a mere man (Phil. 2:5-11). He came to die on the cross, that He might save His people, give life, and have fellowship with them. Indeed He deserves the praise of the angels, the visit of the adoring shepherds, the worship of the magi, and the witness of heaven by the star. He deserves the heart of everyone.

How marvellous is the plan of God! It is beyond any human wisdom or understanding. Great is the mystery of godliness (1 Timothy 3:16); God is not distant; He appeared in the flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14), and His Spirit is within us. Let us therefore worship and glorify Him, for He is worthy! “God with us”. Have you felt the power and impact of these words? Jesus said, Those who have seen Him have seen the Father (John 14:9-11) and he who believes in the Son has eternal life (John 3:36).

## **Prayer**

Thank You Father that You gave us Immanuel, Your Son Jesus, as our Saviour. Once again we give to You, Jesus, our hearts, adoration, worship, and praise. You alone are worthy!