

Jesus Then and Now Born of the Virgin Mary

By Rev. P. Michael Williamson December 13th 2009

Introduction: Jesus Then and Now is a sermon series on and off between Now and Easter 2010. We will be exploring the prophetic words that are declared in OT about the coming Messiah and how they are fulfilled in the Life of Jesus Christ.

These are foundational aspects of our faith, which affirm and establish that Jesus is who he says he is The Messiah the promised Christ. Why does it matter? Because in these times of doubt, and heretical teaching in and outside of the church we want to remind ourselves that faith, our faith, is established on some firm principles that have been prophesied from ancient times. They have been handed down to us and it is our responsibility to hand them on in tact.

Today we are going to examine the prophesy from Isaiah 7 and it's immediate fulfillment in King Ahaz's day and how God also fulfilled it in our gospel reading from Luke.

1. God Offers Hope

God continually offers hope to his people, no matter what time, place or circumstances they find themselves in. God offers hope throughout the scriptures. Hope for the present and hope for the future if you will put your hope, faith and trust in him, as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did as Moses Joshua and David did. God offers hope in the midst of a crisis and that is where we find Ahaz king of Judah.

2. Hope for Ahaz

God offers hope to Ahaz. The prophet Isaiah, in the midst of a national security threat from rising power of Assyria, offers hope to King Ahaz. Isaiah's offer springs from his conviction that faith in God and the security of the nation are bound together.

"If they will not stand by what they believe, they will not stand at all."v.9

v.10-11 "Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz. 'Ask the Lord for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights.'"

But Ahaz refused to ask, he claimed some pious response of not wanting to test God. Ahaz was avoiding God's gracious invitation. Ahaz was trying to play the "faith game" and the "political game" at the same time. He was hedging his bets he preferred to seek an ally in the Assyrians rather than have God as his friend.

13-14 Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of men? Will you try the patience of my God also? 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."

God promised His presence but Ahaz had to choose to act in faith and then God would do the rest.

Isaiah saw this prophesy fulfilled in Isaiah 8 when the prophetess conceived and had a son. He was named as a warning to the people: "quick to the plunder swift to the spoil." Before the child can say "my mother, my father" Assyria will sweep over Judah like a flood. Assyria invaded Judah and over-ran Jerusalem.

Even in the midst of this calamity God promised to be Immanuel. Isaiah proclaimed: "do not put your trust in man but put your trust in God." That was the fulfillment of the original prophesy in Isaiah's time but as we all know there were longer term implications to Isaiah's prophesy which would be for all people.

3. Hope for the World

Isaiah's prophesy declared hope for all the people of the world. The promised hope for the world would show the presence of God, to the people in human form, He would be – Immanuel "God with Us". This could be no ordinary person if the child was to be considered "God with Us" they had to have a heavenly heritage. There had to be a God initiated birth otherwise the child would just be like any other.

i. Born of the virgin Mary

Luke was unique among the gospel writers he alone provided the details of the virgin conception. Mary in her encounter with Gabriel merely asked a question about how she would conceive as she was a virgin. This question does not convey doubt but rather curiosity as to how this will happen. She never questioned that it would happen, just how it would happen.

"The Holy Spirit will overshadow you." It was and is critical and foundational for the Christian faith that Jesus was conceived by the HS in Mary's womb.

"The virgin birth demonstrated that Jesus was both one with us in our humanity, yet unique in his divinity. Jesus needed to be both so that he could save us." Commentator.

In Matthew's genealogy in ch 1 Jesus is identified as the Son of David which has a strong Messianic connection. This was part of his earthly heritage. But notice that Jesus was not referred to as son of

Joseph but rather that Joseph was described as the 'Husband of Mary' rather than the father of Jesus. His conception by the Holy Spirit was also a significant and crucial aspect of his divine heritage, which contributed to his title as Son of God.

ii. God with us

Jesus fulfilled the promise of Isaiah by being Immanuel "God with us" in our midst. The life of Jesus begins with the miracle of the virgin birth and ends with the miracle of the empty tomb and everything in between pointed to his divine nature and his human compassion for those he saw in great need, those he came to save.

We can see through the life of Jesus that he had human emotions, he wept at Lazarus' tomb, and he was tempted as we are and yet did not sin. He suffered pain and rejection and finally he overcame death when he rose from the dead.

The description of Jesus as "the holy one" was the clue to the importance of his unique conception.

iii. Jesus Lamb of God

On the one hand it was critical that Jesus was born of a woman, so that he could share the human nature of those he came to save.

Read Gal 4:4-5

But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive the full rights of sons (& daughters).

However, it was just as imperative that Jesus should be perfectly holy. Why? The purpose of his coming into the world was to make possible reconciliation between God and humanity --- and no sinful being could accomplish that --- he had to be the perfect unblemished sacrifice, like the lambs of the OT. He had to be fully acceptable to God in order that he would be Jesus the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

Conclusions:

What is our choice?

◆ Ahaz's response

Did want a sign, thought he could live life his way and that he didn't need to rely on God... you can fill in the blanks... we have all done it and God has picked us up after we have fallen flat on our faces. If Ahaz would have put his hand in God's he would have learnt a profound truth about God. He would have understood that when God makes promises he then sets about to make sure that those promises are fulfilled.

God inspired Isaiah to proclaim a sign for Ahaz and that sign was fulfilled in little more than a year and

yet God fulfilled that same prophecy in an incredible way hundred's of years later.

◆ Mary's response

Mary understood what was going to happen, after all she had already found favour with God, which points to her current faithfulness, trust and obedience to the Lord. She is curious as to how. Mary is a young women of strong faith in God which was rewarded with an awesome responsibility of being the mother of our Lord.

These prophecies that have been foretold from earliest times and as the old bible would say "Have now come to pass.." in other words these prophetic words have really happened. The prophecy's confirm that God not only promised but also fulfilled those promises in extraordinary ways through ordinary people like you and me.

Let me tell you a story about Elizabeth a car salesperson who had come to St Paul's one Sunday looking for a church. In 2004 we were buying a used VW Golf so I looked up Elizabeth at the VW dealer. I found the car and then I had Janet come and drive the car to see if she liked it. While Janet was there she got talking with Elizabeth the salesperson about life and marriage and the fact that she and her husband wanted to have kids but that she had been unable to get pregnant. Janet drove the car and she liked it. Elizabeth gave us a date when the car would be ready. That morning in prayer the Lord said you have two things to do when you pick up the car 1. Is the car 2. Is to pray for Elizabeth to have a child. When I was picking up the car I explained we had two things to do so we dealt with the car and then I said I had been praying that morning and I sensed the Lord saying to me to pray for her to have a child. So I asked "Would you mind if I prayed for you?" so in front of the car dealer I asked the Lord to give her and her husband a child as a gift. About a year later a friend of mine who also had brought a VW from Elizabeth told me that she had had a baby, so God guided me to pray, he promised and then he fulfilled his promise as I was obedient to pray.

God carries forward his purpose

God makes promises and fulfills them in his time.

Embrace the God who is faithful

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Introduction:

Born of the Virgin Mary: Why does it matter?

4. God Offers Hope

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5. Hope for Ahaz

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Ahaz had to choose to act in faith and God would do the rest.

Isaiah proclaimed: "do not put your trust in man but put your trust in God."

6. Hope for the World

Isaiah's prophecy declared hope for all people in the world. – Immanuel "God with Us".

i. Born of the virgin Mary



"The Holy Spirit will overshadow you."

ii. God with us

Jesus fulfills the promise of Isaiah by being Immanuel "God with us" in our midst.

iii. Jesus Lamb of God

Read Gal 4:4-5

The purpose was to bring reconciliation between God and humanity. How?

Conclusions:

The promise fulfilled

God carries forward his purpose

What is our choice?

- ◆ Ahaz's response

- ◆ Mary's response

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