

Isaiah on the birth of Jesus

Isaiah 7:1-9:8

Isaiah, the prophet, lived 800 years before the birth of Jesus. The book of Isaiah is 66 chapters long filled with history and prophecy. Isaiah was a prophet in the country of Judah.

Judah and Israel split in about 930 BC largely due to the sin of Solomon. Judah was made up of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin and part of the tribe of Levi. The remaining tribes made up Israel.

Today we are going to take a glimpse into the part of Isaiah that encompasses Part 1 of Isaiah's Historical Revelation found in Isaiah 7:1-9:8.

At this time Judah, under the new King Ahaz was in distress at the threat of the countries of Aram and Ephraim were threatening Jerusalem. If that wasn't bad enough, Israel under King Pekah joined in the siege.

This is where we will join the story as Aram seeks the Lord.

Isaiah 7:10-12, "Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, 11 "Ask the Lord your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights."

12 But Ahaz said, "I will not ask; I will not put the Lord to the test."

Ahaz is fearful of angering God by putting Him to the test. But God had invited him to seek a sign. Now notice what the Lord says through the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 7:13-14, "Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also?"

14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel."

They are in the midst of this siege with God ready to come to their defense. But ultimately Ahaz, out of fear, signs an alliance with the King of Assyria and swears allegiance to Assyria's idols as part of that alliance.

Despite his failure God gave this sign...the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son. Did you hear that? A virgin will conceive and give birth to a son. That's the

sign people! This was written 800 years before Christmas #1.

Let's look at how this prophecy, this sign was enacted:

Luke 1:26-38, "In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

34 "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

35 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. 36 Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. 37 For no word from God will ever fail."

38 "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her."

This is how God began the process of a virgin giving birth. Notice the words of verse 37 again, "For no word from God will ever fail."

Reminiscent of Jesus saying that every letter and every part of a letter of Scripture will be fulfilled, doesn't it? God's word is reliable!

One of the first-tier theologies of Christianity is the Virgin Birth of Jesus. By these we mean that it is a vital part of our faith. So, let's look at it a little closer here.

The virgin birth is only mentioned a few times in Scripture, but it is also vital to what we believe. Modernists attacked the virgin birth in the early

1900's. Theologian J. Gresham Machen defended the virgin birth in the 1930's providing 3 key reasons.

The first reason Machen provides is that the virgin birth is obviously important to the general question of the authority of scripture. It is clear that the Bible affirms this doctrine.

Machen therefore argued that a denial of the virgin birth compromises an adequate doctrine of scripture.

Second, Machen argued that the virgin birth is important as a test to determine whether one holds to a naturalistic or a supernaturalistic view regarding Jesus Christ. What this means is that how one holds to the virgin birth will reveal how someone views on the deity and how they accept the resurrection of Jesus. The modernist rejected the virgin birth but verbally accepted Jesus' deity and resurrection but the details of how they viewed His deity and resurrection are drastically different than we view them.

Third, Machen insisted that the virgin birth has an intrinsic importance. By this he means that the virgin birth is an organic part of the whole Christian message of Jesus and protects His supernatural

character. He states that the virgin birth protects us against various Christological heresies. It enables us to uphold a full doctrine of the incarnation, God taking on human form. It also guards the doctrine of Jesus' sinlessness.

In reflecting on Machen's arguments Gavin Ortlund writes this:

"Biblical authority is one of the most pressing issues for the life and health of the church: it ensures that we remain the judged, not the judges, in our relation to God and truth."

In every age there is the 'spirits of the age' which are in conflict with the gospel. It is our doctrine, our theology which anchor us in the truth of the gospel. This is why we must defend the doctrine of the virgin birth of Jesus!

Ok, a few have asked that I go deeper...we just stepped into the deep end of the pool. If you felt like you were under water, that's ok. You can always go back to the recording and watch the last few minutes in slow motion.

Back to Isaiah, in all the fear that Judah was living in Isaiah reminds them to trust in God, for if God is with

us who can stand against us. In chapter 9 he begins a prophetic writing with these words. Listen closely for the clues he gives us.

Isaiah 9:1, “Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan.”

Honor Galilee? Seriously, Galilee is a small area of Israel. It has a small village called Nazareth in it. And you know what they say about Nazareth don't you, does anything good come out of Nazareth?

Notice the transition in the passage when Isaiah writes “in the future.” Over the next few chapters Isaiah prophesies about various times in the future, but let's look at one which comes just a few verses after this transition.

Isaiah 9:6-7, “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 greatness 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.”

This is one of the most powerful prophetic prophecies regarding the Messiah! In these 2 verses we see the eulogy of the Messiah born baby and then the ruling King of the future.

Isaiah found it important to acknowledge the birth of Messiah, and to come into the world as a child. He just didn't pop down from heaven as the ruling King, He became human.

His becoming human was essential to His role of becoming the Savior of humanity. It allowed Him to identify and relate to the people of this world. So, just as Adam became our representative into sin Jesus became our representative into holiness.

Earlier Jesus was called Immanuel, God with us. Then Isaiah here gives Jesus 4 names: Wonderful Counselor, not a mediocre counselor. He is able to help us figure out our stuff. He helps us see the

effects of sin in our lives. How that sin twists us and distorts our view of reality. He is the Wonderful Counselor.

Mighty God! In Isaiah's world there were all kinds of small g gods. Jesus wasn't just another god, He was and is The God. He is mighty when the small g gods were powerless.

What kind of God do you want? One that is powerless, providing no hope, no salvation or do you want a mighty God? One that provides hope, provides joy, provides peace, provides salvation. Choose, which God you will serve, the Mighty one or the inconsequential one.

Everlasting Father! This characteristic of Jesus, not God the Father in this reference, denotes the fatherly character of Jesus. He is the perfect father who will provide for and protect his children.

Do you remember his warning about harming children? It would be better to have a millstone hung around your neck and be cast in the sea than to harm one of these little ones. And then do not forbid the children to come to me.

Jesus has the very best qualities of a father and it will last for eternity. He is fatherly and will never leave us.

Prince of Peace! Jesus' reign will bring peace to a chaotic world. He is not just a peace giver, but He is the Prince of Peace.

This title carries the concept of a general or commander, He is the ruler of rulers. The word peace here doesn't mean calm or tranquil, rather it holds the concept of spiritual harmony. This is the peace Jesus brings to us. He brings us back into spiritual harmony with God the Father.

Right now the work of the Holy Spirit is moving us toward this spiritual harmony, but until Jesus returns it is incomplete here on earth.

Let's reread verse 7 again, "Of the greatness 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."

Jews in the Old Testament had all the prophecies of Messiah and what we know He did in His 1st coming

and what He will do in His 2nd coming were all seen as one coming by these OT Saints.

We know that what Isaiah writes in verse 7 refers to the coming Kingdom Jesus will rule in the Millenium and then on the New Earth & New Heaven.

The greatness of His government and peace there will be no end. Let those words sink in.

He will rule with justice and righteousness...forever. Humanity has never seen anything like what Jesus will bring as our King. He alone is worthy and for that reason we should all fall to our knees and give Him all praise and all worship and all glory forever and ever!