

# Promise and Fulfillment

*God is always faithful*

Saturday, 12/21 at 4:00 ✦ Sunday, 12/22 at 9:00

Fourth Sunday in Advent – 2019

Christmas Eve D. Service at 6:00 | Christmas Day D. Service at 10

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: Have you ever made a promise... *but did not ACTUALLY DO what you promised?* Most of us, *even all of us*, probably have!

Sometimes we think God is like us, *but that is NOT TRUE:*

- Whatever God has promised, He **CAN** do – *because He is almighty!*
- Whatever God has promised, He **MUST** do – *because He is holy!*

In today's sermon, *God wants to build our faith* as we focus on two promises and two fulfillments!

1. **Promises:** They are located partway into **Isaiah chapter 7**, but first, what happened at *the beginning* of chapter 7?
  - a. Fear in Judah: Earlier in **chapter 7**, both Syria and Israel united together against Judah. The Bible says that Ahaz, *the king of Judah (from 735 to 715 BC)*, and his people were so fearful that they “**shook as the trees of the forest shake before the wind**” (v. 2). So the LORD sent Isaiah to Ahaz to tell him, “**do not fear**” (v. 4), because the efforts of Syria and Israel will fail. *But Ahaz did not believe the words of the LORD.*

- b. Ask for a sign: If I told you the Browns will beat the Ravens, *you probably wouldn't believe me*; however, if I could prove my words with some amazing sign, *then you might believe me*. Well, the LORD offered something far better to Ahaz through Isaiah: <sup>10</sup> **...the LORD spoke to Ahaz: <sup>11</sup> "Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol [as hell] or high as heaven."** <sup>12</sup> **But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test."** // What an amazing offer, yet Ahaz was unwilling to ask – because he did not believe.
- c. So two signs: The first one will happen *after the lifetime of Ahaz*. The second one will happen *during the lifetime of Ahaz*. Also, when Ahaz sees the first sign happen, *he should be confident that the second sign will also happen!* Now, picking up in **verse 13, Isaiah said, "Hear then, O house of David [so to Ahaz, a descendant of David, and to all of Judah]! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? //** Notice the words of Isaiah: Not **your** God, but **my** God – *to show that Isaiah believed, while Ahaz did not.*
- i. The sign AFTER the lifetime of Ahaz: <sup>14</sup> **Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.** // A huge and seemingly impossible promise, *yet the LORD can do anything!* Those who **▶**believe the words of the LORD and **▶**trust in Him are saved, *yet those who 😊laugh at His words and 😞remain in unbelief are doomed.*
- ii. The sign DURING the lifetime of Ahaz: <sup>15</sup> **He [speaking of another child to be born] shall eat curds and honey [a sign of restoration in the land] when he knows**

**how to refuse the evil and choose the good** [pointing to a time of some maturity for the child]. <sup>16</sup> **For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted** [that is why Ahaz should believe and not fear].

<sup>17</sup> **The LORD will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father's house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah-- the king of Assyria!"** // In other words, when Israel split into two nations, *about 200 years earlier*, things were very difficult. **Verse 17** is promising that similar great difficulties are going to come soon upon Syria and Israel at the hands of the Assyrians! As the LORD had said it, so *it would surely happen... and it did!*

2. **Fulfillment**: Now, let's get the *first sign* back into our minds as we come to its fulfillment here, as recorded in **Matthew chapter 1**:
- Mary is pregnant**: <sup>18</sup> **Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When [Jesus'] mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph** [not marriage, but more than engagement and legally binding], **before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.** // Imagine what Joseph must have thought: While we were waiting to get married, *you were with another man!*
  - Joseph was a nice guy**: <sup>19</sup> **And [Mary's] husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.** // Again, not yet married, *but the legal arrangement needed to be broken.* Depending on the circumstances (**Deut. 22:23-**

24), Mary could have been stoned to death, *but Joseph chose to make things as easy as possible for Mary.*

- c. A message from God: <sup>20</sup> **But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”** // When a so-called virgin is pregnant, who would ever believe it? However, *that is the fulfillment of the prophecy spoken earlier by Isaiah!*
- d. The clear connection: <sup>22</sup> **All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: <sup>23</sup> “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).** // He ✦ came, ✦ put on human flesh, and ✦ saved us!
- e. Joseph listened to God: <sup>24</sup> **When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, <sup>25</sup> but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.** // The name **Jesus** means, *the Lord saves!* And that’s exactly what He did – *by taking away our sins!*

**This Week’s Challenge:** As we rejoice in God’s promise and fulfillment for our eternal benefit, *let us kindly tell others the good news of God’s forgiveness through Jesus!*

**Let Us Pray:** Dear Jesus, TY for coming, living, suffering, dying, rising, and ascending. Since you did take away our sins, keep us **knowing You** and **making You known!**

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