



May 13, 2018

“Mission Messiah: Jesus is Born”

Isaiah 7 - 9

Pastor Gary Hamrick

In about 700BC, Isaiah prophesied specific details about the birth of the Messiah. All of Isaiah’s prophecies, as well as more than 300 others in the Old Testament relating to the first coming of Messiah, were 100% fulfilled in Jesus. In today’s message, Pastor Gary shares about the details of these prophecies in Isaiah’s time and how they apply to our time too.

Historical Background

1. About 150 years before Isaiah was born, the nation of Israel became a divided country and people because of civil war.
 - a. Israel was in the north (10 tribes), and Samaria was the capital city.
 - b. Judah was in the south (2 tribes), and Jerusalem was the capital city.
2. Isaiah was called to minister to the kings of Judah, and at this point in time, Ahaz was reigning.
3. Israel and Syria joined forces to attack Judah, which made King Ahaz and the people of Judah anxious and terrified.
 - a. **Isaiah 7:2** - *“... so the hearts of Ahaz and his people were shaken, as the trees of the forest are shaken by the wind.”*
4. The Lord called Isaiah to go and bring comfort and encouragement to Ahaz.
 - a. **Isaiah 7:4** - *“Say to him, ‘Be careful, keep calm and don’t be afraid. Do not lose heart because of these two smoldering stubs of firewood [Israel and Syria] - because of the fierce anger of Rezin and Aram and the son of Remaliah.’ ”*
 - b. **Isaiah 7:7** - *“Yet this is what the Sovereign LORD says: ‘It will not take place, it will not happen...’ ”*

- c. **Isaiah 7:9b** – *“If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.”*
 - i. Pastor Gary said: “[This is] a great verse for us to remember. Isn’t it? Because, there are times we have to remember that sometimes faith in God is all we’ve got. I mean, when this life becomes unpredictable, and people and circumstances become unreliable, sometimes all we have is faith in God. And if you don’t stand firm in your faith [in] him, then you won’t stand at all.”
5. God went beyond sending a messenger with words of encouragement; he sent word through Isaiah to Ahaz to let him know that it was okay for him ask for a sign, so God could let him know how he was going to help Ahaz and the people of Judah.
- a. **Isaiah 7:10-11** – *“Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, ‘Ask the LORD your God for a sign...”*
 - b. Pastor Gary said: “Normally, it’s not right for us to ask God for a sign, so resist that temptation. ... In this story, God [was inviting] Ahaz to ask [for a sign].
 - i. **Matthew 16:4** – *[Jesus said], “A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a miraculous sign...”*
 - c. **Isaiah 7:12** – *“But Ahaz said, ‘I will not ask; I will not put the LORD to the test.’ ”*
6. Isaiah told Ahaz that God was going to show himself strong on people of Judah by sending a sign, whether he wanted to ask for a sign or not!
- a. **Isaiah 7:13-14** – *“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.’ ”*
 - b. Pastor Gary said: “Aren’t you glad that sometimes... in our foolishness we refuse God’s help, that he helps us? Sometimes we don’t even know that we are refusing [his help], because we don’t think to pray, but God still shows up strong!”
 - c. In Hebrew, the word “you” is plural, meaning that Isaiah’s prophesy wasn’t just spoken to Ahaz, but to all of humanity!

Jesus, The Messiah

7. Jesus was born approximately 700 years after Isaiah’s prophesy.
8. **Matthew 1:22-23** – *“All this ¹took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through*

¹ **Matthew 1:18-21**

the prophet: 'The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel' – which means, 'God with us.' ”

9. Pastor Gary said: “The virgin birth of Jesus Christ is an essential doctrine of the Christian faith. Why? Because God had to offer a perfect sacrifice as a substitute for [you and me]. [We are] sinful people in need of a Savior. [Another] sinful person can't save sinful people. [We] need a perfect sacrifice. [We] need a perfect, faultless Savior. [God] came into the world through a natural birth, but a supernatural conception. Every single one of us receives a sin nature from the seed of our [father]. It's handed down to us. Ever since Adam sinned, the sinful nature of mankind is passed from generation to generation. ... God bypassed the sin nature of humanity by miraculously impregnating Mary with his own nature, so that then the original sin nature was not transferred to Jesus. [Jesus] would be fully human, coming from a natural birth, but fully Divine, coming through a supernatural conception. And thus, Jesus is the only one who can be that sinless, perfect sacrifice to die for all [sinners].”

10. Dr. Peter Stoner ²

a. The statistical improbability of one man fulfilling the 300+ Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah is mind-boggling to say the least. Dr. Peter Stoner, Professor Emeritus of Science at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, California, calculated that the likelihood of one person fulfilling 48 of the 300+ prophecies would be 1:10¹⁵⁷ (that's 157 zeros!). How many people have lived on earth? The numbers vary widely, however, some have estimated that a good number would be 100 billion people. If you used this number for the prophecy fulfillment calculation, it would read 1:10¹¹ (that's only 11 zeros). Practically speaking, mathematicians and scientists aren't that concerned about a number that goes beyond 1:10⁵⁰, so statistically, it's not possible that anyone other than Jesus could be the Messiah! Dr. Stoner said, “Any man who rejects Christ as the Son of God is rejecting a fact proved perhaps more absolutely than any other fact in the world.”

11. **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 Gentiles, by the way of the seas, along the Jordan.”*

² Dr. Peter Stoner (Born June 16, 1888 – Died March 21, 1980) was Chairman of the Departments of Mathematics and Astronomy at Pasadena City College until 1953; Chairman of the science division, Westmont College, 1953-57; Professor Emeritus of Science, Westmont College; Professor Emeritus of Mathematics and Astronomy, Pasadena City College. For more information, please use this link to read/download *Science Speaks* by Dr. Stoner. The information about Dr. Stoner's statistical analysis is found in the last part of chapter three. <http://sciencespeaks.dstoner.net>

- a. Pastor Gary said: “Zebulun and Naphtali were tribal allotments of land, and if you look at a map, Zebulun and Naphtali [are] on the western coast of the Sea of Galilee... When God allowed the Assyrians – as the rod of his discipline – to correct the northern territory of Israel, the Assyrians [attacked this region first]. [So, God had humbled them], but in the future... God [would] show his favor... [In Isaiah’s day and Jesus’ day, there were a great number of Gentiles living in this region, so it was known as the ‘*Galilee of the Gentiles*.’ The trade route that connected Africa to ancient Mesopotamia goes through this area. It’s known as The Via Maris, which is Latin for The Way of the Sea. Jesus’ ministry headquarters, so to speak, was in Capernaum, which is located on The Via Maris. God showed favor to Zebulun and Naphtali in that would be the region from which the news of Jesus’ life and ministry would be made known]!
 - i. **Isaiah 9:2** – *“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.”*
 - ii. **John 8:12** – *“When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’ ”*
12. **Isaiah 9:6** – *“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given...”*
- a. Pastor Gary said: “Jesus did not come into existence when he was born. He has always eternally existed, being God himself. So, he was given to the world through this natural birth but supernatural conception.”
13. **Isaiah 9:6** – *“... and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase 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.”*
- a. Pastor Gary said: “This last section primarily refers to the Millennial Kingdom, when Jesus will rule and reign from Jerusalem, [which takes place] after his Second Coming.”

God’s Announcement 700 Years In Advance

14. Pastor Gary said: “This is the most important part of all of this. Why would God choose to give this great pronouncement 700 years in advance, to this guy – Ahaz? Now, I know that these promises are given for the plurality of humanity, but, God chose, in his providence on the timeline of history, that on this particular day Isaiah would be the one to speak these prophecies and direct them toward [King Ahaz, a man who was an exceedingly wicked king. Why?] Because Ahaz is

typical of humanity. Ahaz is in me, [and] Ahaz is in you. I know [that] we can play the game of comparing ourselves with other people, trying to feel better about ourselves compared to someone we can find who are worse than we [are]. But the fact of the matter is that we are all sinners. ... [God did this to show that he would do something that we could not do for ourselves, as well as something that we don't deserve]! ... He didn't pick someone who was good or righteous to announce this news to. He picked someone [who] was the most depraved and wicked of his day, so that all of us [can] relate [to] when we realize our own personal need for the cross [of Christ, which] was expressed as the love of God in the sacrifice of his son for us."

- a. **2 Kings 16:1-20** – This chapter provides the account of King Ahaz's plan to steal money from the Temple to enlist the king of Assyria to help him. We also learn about Ahaz's plan to create a replica of a pagan altar he saw in Damascus, Syria. He worshiped false gods on this pagan altar that he had set up in the Temple!
- b. **2 Chronicles 28:1-3** – *"[Ahaz]... did not do what was right in the eyes of the Lord. He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and also made cast idols for worshiping the Baals. He burned sacrifices in the Valley of Ben Hinnom and sacrificed his sons in the fire, following the detestable ways of the nations the Lord had driven out before the Israelites."*

Discussion Questions

1. Read **Isaiah 7:10-14** and **9:1-2, 6-7** to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about times when they weren't living in right relationship with the Lord, yet they still were blessed by the Lord's grace and mercy. (See #3 and #4a-b above)
3. Spend time talking about times when you've received strength from the Lord to stand firm in your faith, as well as times when your faith was weak, and you stumbled. (See #4c above)
4. Share examples about times when you've been unsure about the Lord's will in your life, so you sought a sign to help you discern what he would have you do, say, etc. (See #5 and #6 above)
5. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's remarks about the birth of Jesus Christ. (See #9 above)
6. Spend time talking about the remarkable statistical certainty that the Jesus Christ was the Messiah. (See #10 above)

7. Read and discuss [Isaiah 9:1](#) and Pastor Gary's comments about the Lord's blessing upon Zebulun and Naphtali. (See #11 through #13 above)
8. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's remarks about the announcement of Christ's birth 700 years in advance and focus on the reason God gave the announcement to someone as vile and wicked as King Ahaz. (See #14 above)
9. Close your time in prayer as the Holy Spirit leads.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).