

## **A Great Sign & A Great King**

(Isaiah 7:14)

INTRODUCTION: Today we are learning about the third and fourth signs in our advent series on Four Great Prophecies of Christmas.

- 1) A Great Battle (Genesis 3:14-15)
- 2) A Great Star (Numbers 24:17)
- 3) A Great Sign (Isaiah 7:14)
- 4) A Great King (Isaiah 9:6-7)

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So far, we have looked at the prophecy of a great battle started in the Garden of Eden and the prophecy of a great star which started when the Israelites were going through Moab. Today we come to the prophecy of a great sign, and next we will look at the prophecy of a great king. (Read Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.)

Our third great prophecy of Christmas – the prophecy of a great sign: “The virgin will be with child, and she will give birth to a son.” (Isaiah 7:14) And yes, the answer to the question of the virgin birth really does define history for us. If Jesus was born of a virgin, that changes everything!

The prophet Isaiah gave this prophecy seven hundred years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Similar to last week, we will look first at the background of the prophecy, then the content of the prophecy, and then finally the fulfillment of the prophecy in the birth of Jesus.

### **I. Seed of the woman; attack on Judah (background of the prophecy)**

#### **A. The Messiah will be born from the seed of the woman**

We already looked at the prophecy of the seed of the woman when we looked at the first great prophecy of Christmas – the prophecy of a great battle between Satan and Christ. God told Satan in **Genesis 3:15**

When we studied this prophecy a few weeks ago, we looked at the battle aspect of the prophecy. But now we can look back and see another aspect of this prophecy that we may have missed before. Notice the prophecy emphasizes that the Messiah would be born of “the seed of the woman” rather than “the seed of the man.” This is significant because the line of descent was normally traced through the man rather than the woman.

Have you ever wondered why God didn’t tell Satan: “And I will put enmity between you and the man, and between your offspring and his?” The answer is because when Messiah came, he would not be born from the seed of the man but from the seed of the woman. And so, we can now see that there was an early hint of the virgin birth tucked away in this first great prophecy of Christmas all along.

This emphasis on the seed of the woman rather than the man continues in the New Testament references to the birth of Jesus as well. For example, the gospel of Matthew in chapter one gives Jesus’ genealogy listing the names of many fathers in Jesus’ line. But after a long list of fathers, Matthew concludes the genealogy by writing: “... and Jacob [was] the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.” (Matthew 1:16) Notice how Joseph is

included in the genealogy, not as the father of Jesus but as the husband of Mary. Joseph was the adopted father of Jesus, but Jesus was born of Mary – from the seed of the woman, not of the man.

We find the same thing in Jesus' genealogy in the gospel of Luke. We read in Luke 3:23. Once again, Joseph is excluded as the physical father of Jesus. Jesus was born of the seed of the woman, not of the seed of the man.

And then we read in Galatians 4:4 Notice how Paul emphasizes in this verse that Jesus was born of a woman. Now, there's nothing unusual about being born of a woman. We all are! But Jesus was born of a woman only, and that is truly a unique aspect of his birth.

So that's the first part of the background of the prophecy – the earlier prophecy of the seed of the woman that God gave all the way back in the Garden of Eden.

### **B. The attack on Judah will fail; the seed will continue**

The more immediate background to the prophecy is found in the attack on Judah during the time of King Ahaz. King Ahaz reigned over Judah for twenty years from about 735 B.C. to 715 B.C. During this time, the kings of Aram and Ephraim joined forces against Judah and attacked the city of Jerusalem. We read in Isaiah 7:2

Notice how King Ahaz and the people of Judah are addressed as “the house of David” here. This is a reminder that Ahaz stands in the line of the Messiah – the seed of the woman who is yet to come. And so, God sends the prophet Isaiah to King Ahaz to assure him that the attack against Judah will fail and the line of Judah leading to Messiah will continue.

Isaiah tells Ahaz in Isa 7:5-7

And you know what? It didn't happen! The line of Judah continued, and later on in the New Testament we even find Ahaz listed right there in the genealogy leading up to Christ, just as God foretold. We read in [Matthew 1:9](#)

King Ahaz and the people of Judah were safe – for now. Later, the people of Judah would be exiled due to their lack of faith, but for now the attacks of their enemies would fail. So, this is the background to the prophecy – the earlier prophecy of the seed of the woman, and the attack on Judah during the time of King Ahaz.

### **II. The miraculous sign (the content of the prophecy)**

Now we come to the actual content of the prophecy, which is a prophecy of a great sign. After assuring Ahaz that his enemies will fail, God tells Ahaz to ask him for a sign. Ahaz refuses saying he does not want to put the Lord to the test. Now, Ahaz sounds spiritual here, but he is just making excuses. (We later find out the real reason Ahaz refused was because he did not believe God, and he wanted to form an alliance with the nation of Assyria instead. This would prove disastrous to the people of Judah.)

This leads us to our third great prophecy of Christmas, the prophecy of a great and miraculous sign. Judah was being attacked and there was danger that the line of David would be wiped out, but God promised a great sign that would take place when the promised seed of David finally appeared once and for all. Ahaz refused to ask God for a sign, so Isaiah tells him in Isaiah 7:14

This is our third great prophecy of Christmas, and you will notice it has three parts to it.

#### **A. The virgin will be with child**

First, the virgin will be with child. This is the miraculous part of the sign. Now, it's impossible for a virgin to conceive and be with child. But you see, that's what makes this a sign. There's nothing amazing about a non-virgin giving birth to a child. You can find that in any maternity ward in the state. It happens every day. But a virgin conceiving a child? Now that's a sign!

### **B. She will give birth to a son**

Secondly, Isaiah says she will give birth to a son. This moves the emphasis from the mother to the child. The sign is not just that a virgin will conceive, but that she will give birth to a specific individual, and that individual will be a son. He will be a male child. This reminds us of the prophecy of the seed of the woman where we are also told that the specific individual who will come and defeat the serpent is a man. God told Satan in Genesis 3:15

### **C. They will call him Immanuel (which means, "God with us")**

And then the third part of the sign is that they will call him Immanuel, which means, "God with us." This male child, born of a virgin, born of the seed of the woman, would somehow signal God's presence with us on earth. The promised seed of David would arrive just as God said, and the sign of his coming would be the virgin birth.

## **III. The birth of Jesus (the fulfillment of the prophecy)**

So, we have looked at the background of the prophecy, and we have looked at the content of the prophecy. Now we come to the fulfillment of the prophecy. And the fulfillment of the prophecy, of course, is found in the birth of Jesus as recorded in the New Testament. And we find this fulfillment affirmed in several places.

### **A. The angel's announcement to Mary**

First, we find it in the angel's announcement to Mary. The angel tells Mary in Luke 1:31. When you compare the angel's words here with the Isaiah's prophecy back in [Isaiah 7:14](#) Other than that, they follow the exact same pattern. Mary was a virgin, and yet she would be with child and give birth to a son. So, we find this fulfillment first in the angel's announcement to Mary.

### **B. The angel's explanation to Joseph**

Next, we find it in the angel's explanation to Joseph. After Mary became pregnant with Jesus, we read in Matthew 1:20. Joseph was afraid that Mary had been with another man, but the angel assured him that what was conceived in her was from the Holy Spirit.

### **C. The angel's instruction to the shepherds**

And then, thirdly, we find it in the angel's instructions to the shepherds. ([Luke 2:11-12](#))

Notice that the angel calls the birth of Christ "a sign." Now, the shepherds didn't know Mary was a virgin. All they would see is a mother and a child. But the angel knew. The virgin was with child, and she gave birth to a baby boy – just as God promised. The great sign that was prophesied seven centuries earlier had now come to pass, and the proof of it was this newborn baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.

### **D. The significance of the virgin birth**

So, we have looked at the background of the prophecy, we have looked at the content of the prophecy, and we have looked at the fulfillment of the prophecy. Finally, I would like us to look at the significance of the prophecy. What is the significance of the virgin birth? In closing, let's look briefly at five reasons why the virgin birth is such a significant event in human history.

### **1) Jesus' birth was a fulfillment of prophecy**

First of all, Jesus' birth was a fulfillment of prophecy. We read in Matthew 1:22 Jesus' birth did not take place in an historical vacuum. His birth was prophesied centuries in advance, and everything took place just as God had foretold. Jesus' birth was a fulfillment of prophecy.

### **2) Jesus' birth was a miracle of God**

Secondly, Jesus' birth was a miracle of God. That's what the angel told Joseph in Matthew 1:20 Some people say, "I don't believe in the virgin birth. That's impossible!" No, that's the point! A miracle is supposed to be impossible – for us. But as the angel told Mary in Luke 1:37 A miracle is something only God can do. Jesus' birth was a miracle of God. The lie of the immaculate conception inoculates people from believing the truth.

### **3) Jesus was fully human and fully God**

A third reason the virgin birth is so significant is because Jesus was fully human and fully God. The little baby born in Bethlehem was fully human. He was born of a woman just like you and I were. And yet he was also fully God, for God was his Father and he was born of a virgin. Isaiah prophesied and Matthew confirmed: "... and they will call him Immanuel" – which means, "God with us." (Matthew 1:23) His name was Jesus, and yet he is also "Immanuel," for he is fully human and fully God – "God with us."

### **4) Jesus was born without sin**

A fourth reason the virgin birth is significant is because Jesus was born without sin. The angel told Mary in Luke 1:35 Conceived by the Holy Spirit, the child himself would be born holy and without sin.

We read in 2 Corinthians 5:21 Jesus lived a perfect life without sin and offered himself as the perfect sacrifice for sin at the cross, so that we could be saved and receive God's righteousness through him.

### **5) Jesus was born to be our Savior**

And then finally, the virgin birth is significant because Jesus was born to be our Savior. We read in Matthew 1:21 The name Jesus means "God saves" or "God is salvation." Jesus' very name foretold the work that he would do on the cross in dying for our sins.

We read in 1 Timothy 2:5-6 This is why Jesus needed to be fully God and fully man. Only as God could he die for sins. Only as man could he die. Jesus has two names! He is also Immanuel, "God with us," because only as Immanuel could he also be Jesus, the Savior of the world.

Remember: The virgin birth of Jesus defines history for us. Jesus was born of a virgin just as Isaiah prophesied. That means he is the promised seed of the woman as prophesied in Genesis 3. He is the promised seed of Abraham through whom all nations will be blessed. (Genesis 12:3) He is the promised ruler from the tribe of Judah. (Genesis 49:10) He is the promised king from the house of David. (2 Samuel 7:12-13 When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.) He is Immanuel, God with us. (Isaiah 7:14) He is God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary – fully God and fully man that he might die for our sins as the Savior of the world. Jesus, and Jesus alone, is the fulfillment of this third great prophecy of Christmas.

## **And now, let's look at the prophesy of A Great King**

### **I. Seed / Star / Scepter / Sign (the background of the prophecy)**

#### **A. The seed of the woman ("a great battle")**

The first great prophecy of Christmas we looked at was the prophecy of a great battle. We found this prophecy in Genesis 3:15 In this prophecy, we learned that a specific individual would be born of the seed of the woman who would defeat Satan and his seed. We also saw an early hint of the prophecy of the virgin birth in the emphasis on the seed of the woman rather than the seed of the man. This is the first prophecy in all of Scripture, and it is specifically a Messianic prophecy, a prophecy about the coming Messiah who will deliver God's people from all their enemies.

#### **B. The star and scepter of Judah ("a great star")**

The second great prophecy of Christmas we looked at was the prophecy of a great star. In the prophecy of the star, we learned that the Messiah would be a king who comes from the line of Judah. We found this prophecy in Numbers 24:17: "A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel. He will crush the foreheads of Moab, the skulls of all the sons of Sheth." (Numbers 24:17) The star and the scepter are both royal terms, and the scepter brings us back to Genesis 49:10 which foretold a royal line of kings from the tribe of Judah leading up to the Messiah. The prophecy of the star tells us this king who comes from the line of Judah will crush the heads of God's enemies, which brings us back to the prophecy of the great battle where we learned that when Messiah comes, he will crush the head of the serpent.

### **The Virgin Birth a Great Sign**

And then, in the prophecy of the great sign, we learned about the sign of the virgin birth. We read in Isaiah 7:14 The Messiah will be born of a virgin, and this male child – born of a virgin, born of the seed of the woman – would also signal God's presence with us on earth.

### **II. A great king (the content of the prophecy)**

All of this leads us to our fourth great prophecy of Christmas – the prophecy of a great king. Interestingly, this great prophecy is found in Isaiah 9, just two chapters after the prophecy of a great sign in Isaiah 7. The two prophecies are similar to each other. They both speak of the birth of a child, specifically a son. The similarity in content and their close proximity to each other in Scripture show that these two prophecies belong together and should be interpreted together.

#### **A. A child is born who is a king.**

There are three parts to this fourth great prophecy of Christmas. First, the prophecy tells us about a child who is born a king. We read in Isaiah 9:6

Notice the similarity in phrasing between this prophecy and the prophecy of the great sign given two chapters earlier. Isaiah 9:6 says: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder." (Isaiah 9:6a) **Isaiah 7:14** says: "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) The two prophecies follow a similar pattern: the word "child," followed by the word "son," followed by a descriptive phrase. Once again, the similarity in phrasing and their close proximity in Scripture leave no doubt that the child described here in Isaiah 9 is the exact same person as the child who was described two chapters earlier in Isaiah 7. Isaiah tells us the government will be on

his shoulders, which is another way of saying that this child is born a king. So, that's the first part of the prophecy.

## **B. He will be called by divine Names.**

– Isaiah 9:6b

And then secondly this prophecy tells us that this child who is born a king will be called by divine names. We read in the second part of Isaiah 9:6:

### **1) Wonderful Counselor (divine wisdom)**

First, Isaiah tells us he will be called Wonderful Counselor. Some translations present this first name as two separate names – “Wonderful” and “Counselor” but we should really view this as one compound name, just like the other three names in the prophecy. The word translated “wonderful” in this name is a word that means “astonishing, miraculous, beyond understanding.” When paired with the word “counselor,” this first name tells us that this child who is born a king will be filled with divine wisdom. He knows things that only God can know.

### **2) Mighty God (divine power)**

Secondly, he will be called Mighty God. This is another divine name. The emphasis here is on power. The word translated “mighty” in this name is a word that means “hero, champion or warrior.” This child who is born a king not only has divine wisdom. He has divine power. He not only knows things that only God can know; he does things that only God can do. He is a warrior, a champion who goes forth to conquer God's enemies as prophesied in the first great prophecy of Christmas – the prophecy of the great battle.

### **3) Everlasting Father (divine life)**

Thirdly, he will be called Everlasting Father. This is another divine name, and the emphasis here is on God as the source of all life. This child is everlasting. He does not come into existence at the time of his birth or even at his conception, because he has always existed and always will exist. Not only is he everlasting; he is the Everlasting Father – which means he is the Creator. He is not God the Father; we know this is God the Son. But by calling him Everlasting Father – a father is the source of life – Isaiah is saying he is the Creator. He who has no beginning himself is the cause of all other beginnings. He is the creator of all things; he has life within himself; he is the divine source of all life.

### **4) Prince of Peace (divine sovereignty)**

And then, fourthly, he will be called Prince of Peace. This is another divine name, and the emphasis here is on his sovereign rule as God. The word translated “prince” simply means ruler. The fact that he is Prince of Peace signifies that this child will bring universal peace to the world.

You put all these divine names together and Isaiah is telling us that this child will have divine wisdom, divine power, divine life and divine sovereignty over all the nations. In other words, he will be divine himself. Or as the prophecy of the great sign in Isaiah 7:14 puts it: “He will be called Immanuel,” which means “God with us.”

## **C. He will reign on David's throne forever**

So, we are looking at the content of this fourth great prophecy of Christmas. 1) First, a child is born who is a king. 2) Secondly, he will be called by divine names. 3) And then thirdly, he will reign on David's throne forever. **Isaiah 9:**

This is yet another indication that the child who is born is the Messiah. God promised King David back in [2 Samuel 7:12-13](#)

Remember we said that there is a progressive narrowing of the prophecies concerning Messiah as we work our way forward through the Old Testament? First, we learned that the Messiah would be the seed of the woman. ([Genesis 3:15](#)) Then we learned that he come from the seed of Abraham. ([Genesis 12:1-3](#)) Then we learned that he would come from the tribe of Judah. ([Genesis 49:10](#)) And now here in 2 Samuel 7 we learn that he will come from the line of David and that God will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ([2 Samuel 7:12-13](#))

[Isaiah 9:7](#) picks up on all of these earlier prophecies and tells us that this child who is born a king and who is called by divine names will reign on David's throne forever. He is the promised Messiah who comes with divine wisdom, divine power, divine life and divine sovereignty to bring peace to the whole world and to reign on David's throne forever. That is the content of this fourth great prophecy of Christmas.

### **III. The birth of Jesus (the fulfillment of the prophecy)**

We have looked at the background of prophecy in the three earlier great prophecies of Christmas. We have looked at the content of the prophecy here in Isaiah 9. Finally, let us look at the fulfillment of the prophecy now in the birth of Jesus at Christmas. Remember the prophecy had three parts. Let's see now how Jesus fulfills each part.

#### **A. Jesus was born a king**

The first part of the prophecy said that a child will be born who is a king. Well, when you come to the New Testament, you find that Jesus was indeed born a king. [Matthew 2:1-2](#)

Notice the Magi don't ask, "Where is the who has been born who will one day become king of the Jews?" No, they ask, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?" It's not that Jesus would one day become king. Jesus was born a king.

There are not many people who are born already kings. There are plenty of people born who eventually became kings or who are born next in line for the throne. But has anyone ever been born already a king? There's only one that I know of! Jesus was born a king, just as Isaiah prophesied so many years before.

#### **B. Jesus is called by divine names**

The second part of the prophecy said that this king would be called by divine names. "and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.." ([Isaiah 9:6b](#)) When we come to the New Testament, we find that Jesus was indeed called by divine names. He is called Immanuel, which means "God with us." ([Matthew 1:23](#)) He is called Jesus, which means "God saves" or "God is salvation." He is called Christ, which means Messiah.

Most importantly of all, he is called Lord. [Philippians 2:9-11](#) "Lord" is God's personal, covenant name from the Old Testament. God does not share his name with anyone. And yet Jesus is called Lord.

Jesus is our Wonderful Counselor. He is Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. He is Immanuel. He is the Christ the Lord. Jesus is called by divine names. That's the second part of the prophecy.

#### **C. Jesus will reign on David's throne forever**

And then the third part of the prophecy said that this child who is born a king and who is called by divine names will reign on David's throne forever. Turning to the Christmas narratives in Scripture, we find these words also fulfilled in the birth of Jesus.

We read in the gospel of Luke how God sent the angel to Mary. Mary was troubled when the angel greeted her, but the angel said to her: "And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." (Luke 1:30-33)

Once again, this is a direct fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. Jesus was born a king. Jesus is called by divine names. Jesus will reign on David's throne forever.

**CONCLUSION:** And so, the good news is that this king who was promised so many years ago in the Old Testament was born according to Scripture. The baby born in the manger is more than just a nice idea or a sentimental photo op for a Christmas card. He is the seed of the woman who will defeat Satan and all the enemies of God. He is the ruler from the line of Judah whose appearance was marked by a miraculous star in the sky. He is the child born of the virgin. He is the great king who comes in the line David to reign forever. He was the One who all the signs pointed to. He was the fulfillment of the star and victor of the battle.

Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords. He is Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. This is why we bow down and worship the babe in the manger. The promised king has come! O come let us adore him!