

Week Four: Promise Kept

When we think of the Christmas story, our minds go immediately to the first chapters of the New Testament. We often think or act as though Jesus's birth comes out of nowhere. We have been reminded over the past few weeks that this is not at all the case. The Christmas story begins in Genesis 1 and ends in Revelation 22. The Bible is one big overarching story. What God began promising and predicting in the early chapters of the Old Testament, He began fulfilling and doing in the first chapters of the New Testament.

As we approach Christmas and look to some of these New Testament passages, let us remember that God does nothing spontaneously. None of His acts are reactionary. Our God is deliberate and faithful. He does what He says He will do. Everything for the 4000 years before Jesus's birth was happening to prepare for His coming. God has made another promise. Everything that has been happening for the past 2000 years has been happening to prepare for Jesus's return.

Let us rejoice this week that we have a God who is faithful to his word and a reigning savior who rules over His creation even right now. "Joy to the World the Lord has come, let earth receive her King." First Baptist Church Fairdale, let's welcome and receive our King Jesus again this Christmas Season!

"Joy to the World!"

Joy to the World! The Lord is come; let earth receive her king;
let every heart prepare him room,
and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns; let men their songs employ;
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love
And wonders, wonders of his love.

Matthew 1:18-25

Kyle Pomeroy

Matthew 1:18-25 focuses on the events leading up to the birth of Jesus. It briefly describes Joseph initially planning on quietly divorcing Mary. Then an angel appears to him in a dream telling him to “not be afraid.” The next two verses (22-23) are the ones I want to focus on. Verse 22 clearly shows us that Jesus being born of a virgin is a fulfillment of prophecy. Verse 23 is a direct quote from Isaiah 7:14. Naturally this piqued my curiosity, so I wanted us to look and see what is going on in Isaiah 7.

In this section of Isaiah 7 we see the Lord, through Isaiah, having a conversation with Ahaz. God is challenging Ahaz to, “ask a sign of the Lord your God” (v. 11). Ahaz responds saying, “I will not put the Lord to the test” (v. 12). Isaiah insists that the Lord will give a sign and that the sign will be, “the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (v.14). This is the verse that we see repeated in Matthew 1:23. Since Matthew wrote his account specifically for the Jewish people, adding in this prophecy would have carried a lot of weight back then, as it still does to this day. Matthew is connecting the prophecy in Isaiah to the birth of Jesus. One of the most enjoyable things about reading the Bible is seeing details connect like this.

One final thing that I found interesting about the passage in Isaiah is God choosing the name Immanuel. Its meaning of “God is with us” has a bit of a double meaning. To the people in Ahaz and Isaiah’s time it would have meant that God was with them. Specifically, to Ahaz this would have meant a lot. At the time Ahaz was relying on the King of Assyria, rather than God. The use of the name Immanuel showed him that God was with him. He had no need to put his faith in the king of Assyria. On the other hand Immanuel was the perfect name for Jesus Christ because He truly was God, and He was on earth with us. Jesus was 100% man and 100% God. He could not have chosen a better name than Immanuel!