

Learning (Knowing God)

Key Doctrines

- **Progressive Revelation**- the doctrine that the sections of the Bible that were written later contain a fuller revelation of God than the earlier sections. God did not unfold His entire plan to humanity in the entire Old Testament. The Old Testament revelation, though accurate, is incomplete. The fullness of certain teachings cannot be found in the Old Testament.

Key Observations

- Was there anything that stood out to you about this week's sermon, what specifically encouraged or challenged you?
- *Read:* Isaiah 7:1-17
Why does King Ahaz reject God's offer of a sign?

This sign was to offer assurance and confirmation to Ahaz that God is real, powerful, and will act on his behalf. Ahaz rejected God's offer of a sign based on the biblical injunction that prohibits putting God to the test (Deut 6:16). Although most interpreters tend to deride Ahaz's false piety, there is a real faith issue to struggle with in this offer. Should the king only act when God proves something to him through some "miraculous" fleece, or should the king step out in faith and reject the quest for a fleece because it borders on manipulating God? The obvious answer is to walk by faith without a sign (Matt 16:4; Mk 8:12; Lk 11:29), but in this case it is not a question of whether Ahaz should ask for a sign, for God is offering a sign. Ahaz's rejection of God and what God might have to tell him is an indication of little faith in God. He is not really interested in trusting God, for he has already developed his own plan to put his trust in Assyria to deliver him from Syria and Israel.

What is the significance of The Lord giving Ahaz the sign of "Immanuel"?

Isaiah describes God's future plans for the Davidic dynasty. This involves a sign of a child and a prediction of the end of Ahaz's control of Judah. Isaiah shows how Ahaz's negative response to God's positive promise of 7:4, 9 will impact the Davidic dynasty, which would rather trust Assyria than God (Ahaz failed to believe and stand firm as required in 7:9). The name of the promised new son is Immanuel "God is with us." The name of this son suggests a general hope for an heir who will be a godly Davidic ruler to replace Ahaz at some point in the future, but the name Immanuel is not applied to any specific situation until a later message (8:8, 10; 9:1-7). The child's age and moral abilities are mentioned in 7:15-16, but otherwise his importance is largely ignored in the following verses. Thus the contextual surrounding of 7:14 does not give very much information that would help the reader understand exactly who this mysterious son will be.

- *Read:* Isaiah 8:5-10
How have the people of Judah put their hope in men and what can we learn from their mistake?

The people had made the choice to trust the Assyrian king to deliver them and assumed that now they would live in peace. The people of Judah totally misconceived what was happening. They will not have peace because they sided with Assyria and rejected God. Instead, God will destroy Judah and their proud king with a great flood of Assyrians. Using the metaphor of the river Euphrates overflowing its banks and stretching its floodwaters out like wings to every low-lying valley in Judah, Isaiah depicts a nation almost totally destroyed, with the flood waters reaching up to the neck. Since Judah did not trust God for deliverance (they rejected him) and had already called on Assyria, God could not honor them.

The Lord proclaims judgment upon Judah but what hope does He offer them as their "Immanuel"?

This judgment oracle ends with a surprising reference to "Immanuel," making a reference to Isa 7:14. If Isaiah understood Immanuel as a generic prediction of a future Davidic king who would rule the nation justly, then this could be a prophetic cry to this Immanuel, asking him to take note of what will happen to his land and people and to do something to intervene.

This appeal to Immanuel for protection seems to cause the prophet to remember what God promised about his plans for his people in Zion. Imitating thoughts in earlier Zion songs (Ps 2; 46; 48; 76), Isaiah assures his audience that God does not intend to destroy his people completely. Nations and armies may come and fight; they may develop great strategies to defeat God's people, but God will shatter them. God will be with his people to accomplish his own plans. Whatever God plans will happen (14:24), and no one can frustrate his plans (14:25-27; Prov 21:30-31).

What does this passage teach us about God as a promise keeper?

This type of promise assured the person of faith that God's cares, even in times of great trials and defeat, but it also warned the naive not to trust in human armies or even the best political strategies their leaders could devise.

- *Read:* Isaiah 9:1-5 (cf. 11:1-16)
The focus here shifts to Judah's future, what promises are made to them and what hope is given?

In this section the future righteous Davidic king is introduced. He who will bring a period of light and peace to God's people. This contrasted to King Ahaz, by the presence of light, joy, and peace. The peace and justice that the future Davidic ruler will establish is also contrasted with the sinful pride and oppression that led to the downfall of both Israel and Assyria. It is also thematically connected to the final matching prophecy of hope in 11:1-16, for both envision a glorious future time of peace when a righteous Davidic ruler will reign forever. This

section contrasts those who “are walking” in darkness with those who “will see” a light of hope in the future. At this point the light is not identified, but it was certainly a sign of hope and deliverance from the darkness that pervaded the land. This light was a sign that God had not completely given up on his people. A new day of hope and light will eventually arrive.

- *Read:* Isaiah 9:1-2 & Matthew 4:13-16

How is this promise fulfilled by Christ?

That light which was promised is was Christ himself. Christ's ministry began in Galilee in the north of Israel, just as Isaiah's prophecy had foretold. Galilee was open, densely populated, and laced with roads that fostered its bustling commerce. Matthew indicates that Jesus' relocation fulfilled Isa 9:1-2. This prophecy, connected with the birth of the Child in Isa 9:6-7, refers not to the restoration of the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali after the exile but to the ultimate restoration of Israel in messianic days, aspects of which were beginning during Jesus' ministry. Since the majority of Jesus' ministry took place in this northern area of Israel, around the Sea of Galilee, God certainly did have a special blessing for this once “lightly esteemed” land.

Read: Genesis 9:4, Judges 7:1-8

How is Gideon's victory over the Midianites a type of Christ's victory on the cross?

Gideon was not who Israel expected to lead them to victory over the Midianites. The least in his father's house which was from the weakest clan in Manasseh. He was far from the picture that most of us would expect to be the mighty warrior Israel needed to save them from oppression. But God's plan had the least of the least rescuing His children from the worst of the worst. More than a thousand years later, God revealed His plan that looked a lot the same. His plan to rescue His children from the worst enemy ever — the clutches of sin and death — with a His Son whom nobody recognized. God surprised His people and chose Gideon to lead His people to freedom with his tiny army, God surprised mankind and sent His Son Jesus Christ to rescue mankind from inevitable servitude to the enemy we could not conquer alone. Everything about Gideon's story is a surprise. The underdog wins because God gets to show off His almighty power. Similarly, the way Jesus Christ came, His modus operandi while He was here, surprised God's people, too. A tiny baby, whose mom was a virgin, was literally born in a barn. He didn't come any kingly human power to speak of. His methods were even more surprising. He waged war on mankind's enemy named death by picking up a cross and letting Himself die on it.

Read: Genesis 9:6a

Why is it significant that the pronouncement a “child is born” is followed by the statement “a son is given”?

The initial announcement that a child “will be born” is further explained in the parallel phrase, God “will give a son to us.” The second line emphasizes that this is a work of God's gracious giving, not just a coincidence.

- *Read:* Genesis 9:6 b

What do we learn from the titles given to Jesus?

- Wonderful Counselor

Christ's position as our Wonderful Counselor means we can trust Him to listen to our problems and guide us in the right direction ([Proverbs 3:6](#)). We can be sure He is listening because He told us to pray to Him about our worries ([Philippians 4:6](#); [James 1:5](#)). We can be certain He has our best interests at heart because He loves us ([1 John 4:19](#)). And His love is so wide and deep (and wonderful) that we cannot fully understand it ([Romans 5:8](#)).

- Mighty God

The messiah is God of all creation and glory, the Lord who reigns in heaven, the one worthy of our worship and praise.

- Everlasting Father

The idea in these Hebrew words is that Jesus is the source or author of all eternity, that He is the creator himself. It does not mean that Jesus himself is the person of the father in the Trinity

- Prince of Peace

Peaceful doesn't mean “easy.” Jesus never promised easy; He only promised help. In fact, He told us to expect tribulation ([John 16:33](#)) and trials ([James 1:2](#)). But He also said that, if we called on Him, He would give us the “peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension” ([Philippians 4:6–7](#)). No matter what hardships we are faced with, we can ask for a peace that comes from the powerful love of God that is not dependent on our own strength or the situation around us.

Listening (*Responding to God*)

In light of this week's sermon in our series, “Peace on Earth,” how might the Lord us be asking to rely upon His promises?

- How are you tempted to put your hope in men?
- In what tangible ways are you challenged to make Christ your “Prince of Peace?”
- What does it look like for Christ to be your Immanuel (God with us)?

Loving

Obeying God

- What is happening in my own life right now that I need to share and for which I need prayer?