

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Quincy, IL
Rev. Martin R. Eden

Christmas Eve
Thursday, December 24, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. & 9 p.m.

“They Shall Call His Name Immanuel”

Isaiah 7:10-14

This is a very special time in the lives of God’s people. That first Christmas was an event that forever changed the world in which we live. When God, the Creator of all things, entered into the world as a baby, born to the virgin Mary, God’s relationship to us and to the world changed. However, the promises and message to His people remained the same.

Tonight, as we celebrate Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, being born. We are not going to focus on the events surrounding Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem. As we have done throughout this Advent season, we are going to focus our attention on the events that led up to God keeping His promise to Adam and sending His own Son to be born as a human – God promised the “Seed of the woman” who would crush the head of Satan.

These past four weeks, we have focused our attention on John the Baptist and how he prepared the way for Christ, the Light of the world, to be revealed to

the world. We are still going to hear about John the Baptist even tomorrow morning. But tonight, we are going to step back even further as we see how God prepared the world to receive His Son.

We begin tonight with words of Isaiah. If you want to know who Jesus Christ is, and what God's plan of salvation has always been, read the book of Isaiah. Isaiah spent his entire ministry preparing people for the fulfillment of God's promise first made to Adam. Isaiah wrote these words about 700 years before Christ entered the world as that child of Mary.

God spoke to King Ahaz through the prophet Isaiah. King Ahaz was a descendant of King David. He had inherited the throne of David, but the throne of David was under attack. A couple of kings from the north were trying to destroy Jerusalem.

Isaiah came to Ahaz and assured him through God's Word that the kingdom of David would not be destroyed. Ahaz was reassured of the promise that the Lord had made to David several hundred years before Ahaz was born.

God's message to Ahaz was that David's throne will last forever. I promise you that, just as I promised your forefather David, says the Lord. God told Ahaz

that he did not need to worry, but that he only needed to trust in the Lord's promises. Through Isaiah, God even told Ahaz to, "Ask the Lord your God for a sign. Let it be as deep as Sheol or high as heaven." God told him that no sign was too much.

But Ahaz didn't want a sign from God. In fact, Ahaz didn't want to listen to Isaiah or have anything to do with God. It wasn't just that Ahaz was not one of the faithful kings. (Of course, the reality was that very few of the kings after David were faithful, and only Hezekiah and Josiah were completely faithful in their worship practice). But Ahaz was just plain evil. I won't go into detail as to what Ahaz did as king, but he would definitely be on Santa's "naughty" list.

Ahaz wanted to try to cut God out of his life. When someone does that, it always ends up badly. However, even though King Ahaz did not want to have anything to do with God's plan to save His people from destruction, God still kept His promise to the faithful children of Abraham and saved His people, God still kept His promise to David and preserved his throne, despite what Ahaz had done.

Ahaz did not want a sign from God, but God gave him one anyway. Nothing was going to stop God from giving a sign that He would redeem His people. And it

was greater than any sign that Ahaz could have ever dreamed up. The sign that God gave to His people to show that they would be saved from their enemies was that “the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel.”

The sign that God gave to His faithful people assuring them that they would be saved from their enemies was not a sign that the generation of Isaiah or Ahaz, or their children, or their children’s children would ever see.

It took a while until the virgin gave birth to a son who would be called Immanuel. God sent His Son into the world as the child in Bethlehem. He did this to save all of His children. And still most of the world wants to have nothing to do with Him. However, the rebellion and sin of God’s children cannot nullify the promises God has made – and the promises He has kept.

God has made and kept His promises for you, because only He could nullify our rebellion and sin. Christ came into the world to be much more than just a sign from God or example of holiness. He came to be the final Lamb of sacrifice to cover our sin. From the depths of Sheol to the highest heaven, God is in control. God is with us – and we call His name Immanuel. Amen.