

The Miracle in the Manger

Preached by: Matthew S. Black

Text: Isaiah 7:14¹

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Series: Miracle in the Manger

Introduction: I want you to take your Bibles now this morning and be finding your place at Isaiah chapter 7 if you will. As we move into the Christmas season, I want to begin a series of messages on the birth and life of Jesus that I want to entitle, "Miracle in the Manger."

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."

Several weeks ago I saw a very interesting video at Macy's in Philadelphia, where all of the sudden people started singing the Hallelujah chorus. It seemed spontaneous, but it had been planned. The people there were members of the Opera Company of Philadelphia.

It reminds me of another chorus. A multitude of heavenly hosts announced the birth of the virgin born King of kings to some lowly shepherds. But this chorus had been a long time in the planning. It began before the very creation of the world, for "Jesus", John tells us, is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (**Revelation 13:8**).

This morning, as we begin this series, I want us to consider the hundreds of improbable prophecies that came together at Jesus' birth. When you consider Jesus in the manger, you are considering the GREAT I AM, Jehovah, the Ancient of Days in the tiny weak body of an infant. It is a "Miracle of The Manger"—a miracle that God would not come to us sternly as a Judge, even though He is the Judge of all the earth. He came to us as a baby so that we might not be intimidated. He wants us to come to Him.

Jesus gave up everything for you. He gave up heaven, and He would give up His life for you so that His people – anyone who trusts in Him could live, and live FOREVER!

This morning, we're going to be looking at the birth of the only man in history who at the moment of His birth was as old as His Father and infinitely older than His mother.

Jesus Christ came to earth to be rejected by men that we might be accepted by Him in heaven. He was born of a virgin that we might be born again. He was made the son of man that you and I might become sons and daughters of God. That is the miracle of the manger.

We read in our text in **Isaiah 7:14**, "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign.

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture is from the *English Standard Version* of the Bible.

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

This verse speaks of “the virgin”. There is only one virgin that ever conceived a Son. That is why she is called “the virgin”.

Two Miraculous Births

But there were two miracle births around the time of Jesus birth. Remember Elizabeth was “advanced in years” so she “had no child, because [she] was barren” (**Luke 1:7**). Just when Elizabeth and Zachariah had given up on having children, God sent a miracle.

So there was one very young virgin with a child—Mary was carrying Jesus, the Son of God. And Elisabeth, who was probably like a mother to Mary, was a barren woman, and God touched her womb and gave her John the Baptist.

These two newborns would one day give their lives in proclaiming the glory of the Lord! And in fact, one of them was the Lord God Almighty Himself in human flesh.

Mary and Elisabeth were both chosen to bear special sons, but Elisabeth’s son would not even be worthy to untie Jesus’ sandals! Jesus is John’s Lord. Jesus’ is your Lord!

You're there in Isaiah chapter 7, look down there at verse 14, and let me show you three things straight from this verse about the miracle of the manger.

I. The **Promise** of the Messiah.

We read in our text in **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.”

The word for *Lord* here means **Lord of all**, and it is emphatic. Not just anybody gave this sign; the Lord of the universe Himself gave it.

God’s plan was that a promised seed would be born in Israel, and He would be the Redeemer of the world. He would be the “Desire” not just of Israel, but He would be the “the Desire of all nations” (**Haggai 2:7**). Whatever nation you are from, there is guiltiness in your heart and soul and conscience—there is a stain of sin that only the blood of Jesus can cleanse away!

A. The first mention of the promise was to **Eve**. God did not give the prophecy first to Mary or even Isaiah, but to Eve, the first mother—and the mother of all the living. That’s what her name means! Her seed would crush the head of the serpent (**Genesis 3:15**). So God promised the Redeemer would come not to the race of angels, but to the human race!

B. Another mention through **Sarah**. God later gave prophecies of promise son to another barren woman—Sarah, and her husband Abraham. Sarah would have a miracle baby too! Isaac is even called the “son of promise”. Through Abraham’s

seed “all the families of the earth” would “be blessed” (Gen. 15:1-3). Christ would be born from this specific family—of the **family** of **Abraham**. It was a disgrace to be childless, and so God blessed Sarah and Abraham with a son. This would be the Messiah’s family. But this family grows into a nation.

1. He would be of the tribe of Judah.
 2. He would be born in a tiny town, Bethlehem according to **Micah 5:2**.
 3. He would be a king and have a royal **dynasty** through His father **David**.
- C. We come to the fulfillment of the promise with **Mary**. **Isaiah 7:14b**, “the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”
Isaiah says, he’d have a miraculous, virgin birth. But this put her in a place of ***disgrace*** and scandal.

Remember Elisabeth was ***disgraced***, because she was childless. This was a stigma in the ancient world. But the Lord took away Elisabeth’s disgrace. But young Mary was brought into disgrace. The world around her assumed the worst, and Mary had to bear that shame.

More disgraceful than being barren was finding out your pregnant before you are married. Mary was just betrothed to Joseph—not yet married! And so Mary had to endure the scorn and rejection of her friends and neighbors. She would have to carry this her whole life. Even though it was the most sacred and divine conception in the history of the world. The Messiah would be virgin born, conceived by the Holy Ghost. She was so wondrously favored by God, but very few people saw the miracle in the manger for what He is: God in human flesh.

Transition: The Lord gave a sign. The Lord made a promise. What was it? The Messiah was born in a manger. The King was laid in a cradle. The Savior was found in a stable. The infinite became an infant. And all of that was promised and predicted and prophesied ***700 years before*** Mary and Joseph found no room in the inn.

A sign **is a miracle, a supernatural act in which God exercises authority over His own creation and directly intervenes in the natural world.** The sign refers to the unusual miraculous event itself.² God is in the business of doing the impossible.

Application: God is in the business of doing the impossible. You can trust Him.

- If you panic because you do **not have enough money** to pay your bills, you need to trust God. Rest in God. Trust Him and obey His Word.
- If you panic because you just found out that **someone you love has some serious or even terminal illness**, you need to trust God. **That means that if you put all your confidence in medical research and highly-trained doctors, you are in**

² It is noteworthy that the Septuagint translates this word with the Greek word for a miraculous sign [shmei/on].

unbelief. Medical doctors are extremely important, but remember, “the prayer of faith shall heal the sick” (**James 5:15**). Ultimately, it is God who gives the power to heal. He is the great Physician.

- If you panic because **your job security is in jeopardy**, you need to trust God.
- If you panic because **you have not yet found a life’s mate** (and you’re not getting any younger), you need to trust God.
- What does **Philippians 4:6** say? “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”
- But your greatest need is the salvation of your soul. God can save you. What is impossible with man is possible with God.

II. The **Person** Of The Messiah. Isaiah again says, “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” In this verse, we see the humanity of Jesus—“the virgin shall conceive and bear a son.” But we also see the deity of Jesus —“and shall call his name Immanuel.”

Isaiah tells us two things about the person of the messiah. He tells us about. . .

A. The **Nature** of the Messiah. —“the virgin shall conceive and bear a son.” A son! A human being.

We read in **John 1:1**, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” And then **verse 14**, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us”.

Now, the theological term for what happened here is "incarnation." The word 'incarnation' comes from two Latin words, the word "IN" which means, "with or in" and the word "CARNE" which means "flesh." So, the word "incarnation" literally means, "in the flesh." In other words, that baby that was laid in that manger was none other than God Himself.

Explanation: Let me tell you something. Jesus wasn't just a good man. He wasn't even a godly man. He was the God-man. That cradle 2000 years ago held the creator. He was God in the flesh.

He was the earthly child of a heavenly father, and a heavenly child of an earthly mother. He was not half and half. He was all God, and all man. He was not man with a God-like character, nor was He God with man-like qualities. He was the God-man.

B. The messiah's **Name**. Isaiah again says, “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and

bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." What name was prophesied and what name was pronounced? "Immanuel" This son was to be no ordinary son, because His name was to be called, "Immanuel."

Matthew tells us what it means. **Matthew 1:23**, "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).".

1. Jesus Christ has all the incommunicable **Attributes** of God. Christ is described in **Hebrews 1:3** as "He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power". He said in **John 14:1**, "Let not your heart be troubled: you believe in God, believe also in me." Paul said, "For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (**Colossians 2:9**). Therefore, we would expect for Jesus to have all the attributes of God, and He does. Now these are attributes that none of us can have. We can be like God in some ways. He says, be pure as I am pure. We are to love as He loved. We are to be merciful as he is merciful. But God never calls us to be all powerful or all knowing or omnipresent or eternal or self existing. No, these are attributes of God that cannot be transferred to men. Yet Jesus Christ of Nazareth had them all. He said, "he that has seen me has seen the Father" (**John 14:9**).
2. As God, Christ is **eternal**. In **Revelation 1:8**, Christ says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty".
3. As God, Jesus Christ is **omnipresent**. He says in **Matthew 18:20**, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them"; and in **Matthew 28:20**, He promised, "I am with you alway, even to the end of the age." He promises to be everywhere at once with each of His children when he says, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (**Hebrews 13:5**).
4. As Jehovah God Christ knows everything. He's **omniscient**. Christ never met a person he didn't already know. He already knew all about the people he would meet for the first time. He says, "All judgment is given unto me in heaven and in earth." He knows everything about you and about everything. He was also omniscient when He walked the earth.
 - On five occasions, the Bible says that Jesus knew what people were thinking (**Matthew 9:4; 12:25; Luke 5:22; 6:8; 11:17; cf. John 2:25**). He had the ability at any time and know the heart of any man.
5. As God, Christ is **omnipotent**. When Jesus spoke, the creation obeyed His voice, and the disciples asked, "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" (**Mark 4:41**).

Christ is coming “In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”.

6. As Jehovah God, Jesus Christ is **immutable**—He never changes! **Hebrews 13:8** is a familiar declaration of the immutability of Christ: “Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today, and forever.”
 - Paul speaks of our Lord as “the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).
 - Jesus is Jehovah, the **“I AM”**, of the Old Testament. **John 8:58**. He says, “Truly, truly, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.”
 - Paul tells us plainly in **1 Timothy 3:16** that “God was manifest in the flesh”.
 - John says, **John 1:1**, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”
 - Thomas after seeing the risen Lord said in **John 20:28-29**, “said unto him, My Lord and my God.”

III. The **Purpose** Of The Messiah. **Matthew 1:23**, “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).”

God’s purpose in sending Jesus is really found a few verses before this. Look at Matthew 1:20, “behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).”

Is Christ your Savior? Is He bearing your sins?

Conclusion: The miracle in the manger is not just that God came to earth, but that the Holy, righteous omnipotent God that is at war with sin and sinners came to give His own life for us. “He will not at all acquit the wicked”. Every proud thought, every vain look, every jealous attitude, every selfish motive must be given proper justice from God. Even mentioning this, this morning, makes us all a little bit uncomfortable as Luther was. Why? Because we all cry out with the Psalmist: “If you, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?” (Psalm 130:3). None of us would stand!

God truly is love, and that love drives Him to be “just” and at the same time be the

“justifier of...” sinners “that believe in Jesus” (**Romans 3:26**). He became a curse for us! Jesus was born to die! He came not to forsake us, but to be with us, to be Immanuel and bear our sins for us!

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.” He is God with us! The miracle in the manger!