

Date: December 18, 2005
Text: Matthew 1:22-23, et al.
Topic: Second Coming
Series: none
CD #: 05-40

Home for Christmas??

Longing for the *Next* Advent of Emmanuel



Matthew 1:22-23

²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"—which means, "God with us."

(NIV)

1. Anticipate _____

A. 

B. 

2. Make _____

A. 

B. 

C. 

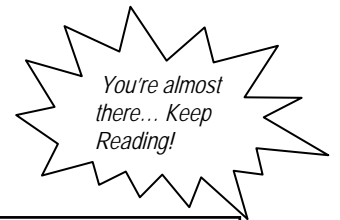
Application Questions

These questions are provided for your further study and application of today's message. Thoughtfully writing out the answers to these questions will help to drive home the point of today's message. It is also helpful to discuss your answers with others. This can take place with friends, your family, accountability partners, or ministry groups within the church.

1. While we all seek to commemorate the first coming of Christ with joy and festive celebrations, there is no denying that things are not as they should be here on earth. Sin still pervades and infects our world, our families and our own lives. How have unrealistic expectations about life "between the advents" created frustration or conflicts in your Christian life?

Read **Revelation 21:3-5**. How do passages like this change your perspective about life now ...and then?

2. List three specific things which you look forward to in the coming kingdom.



3. Read **Titus 2:13**. What can you do on a daily basis to keep your heart in sync with this verse?

We are reading through the Bible in a year! Here is this week's schedule.

December 18th

Nah.3 & Rev.9

December 19th

Hab. & Rev.10

December 20th

Zeph.1-2 & Rev.11

December 21st

Zeph.3 & Rev.12

December 22nd

Hag. & Rev.13

December 23rd

Zech.1-2 & Rev.14

December 24th

Zech.3-4 & Rev.15

December 25th

Zech.5-6 & Rev.16

4. To what tasks has God called you in order to "accelerate his next arrival" (cf. 2Pt.3:12)? What can you do to give yourself more fully to the work God has called you to do in preparation for Christ's second coming?

5. There is a long list of recommended resources in the box below which may help you fix your hope on Christ's next advent. Which of these look like an appropriate and interesting supplement to this weekend's sermon?

Here are some resources which may help you understand and apply the truths presented in this week's sermon.

- Anderson, Robert. **The Lord from Heaven**. Kregel Publications, 1978.
- Bounds, Edward M. **Heaven: A Place, A City, A Home**. Baker Books, 1975.
- Carson, D. A. **How Long O Lord? Reflections on Suffering & Evil**. Baker Books, 1990.
- Fabarez, Mike. **Divine Solutions: The New Jerusalem Sounds Great, But What About...?** Focal Point CD #9732.
- _____. **Life's Last Enemy (A Five-Part Series on Our Resurrection from 1 Cor. 15)**. Focal Point CD #0427 – 0431.
- _____. **Looking Forward: The Present Effects of Anticipating Our Future Home**. Focal Point CD #9735.
- _____. **The Final Glimpse of "Heaven": Five Gifts God Gives to those in the New Jerusalem**. Focal Point CD #9736.
- Habermas, Gary and J. P. Moreland. **Immortality: The Other Side of Death**. Thomas Nelson, 1992.
- Habermas, Gary R. **The Risen Jesus and Future Hope**. Rowman & Littlefield, 2003.
- Hanegraaff, Hank. **Resurrection**. Word Publishing, 2000.
- Hendriksen, William. **The Bible on the Life Hereafter**. Baker Books, 1971.
- Lloyd-Jones, Martyn. **Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cure**. Eerdmans, 1965.
- Lutzer, Erwin. **Your Eternal Reward: Triumph and Tears at the Judgment Seat of Christ**. Moody Press, 1998.
- MacArthur, John. **The Glory of Heaven: The Truth About Heaven, Angels and Eternal Life**. Crossway Books, 1996.
- McClain, Alva J. **The Greatness of the Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God**. BMH, 1974.
- Moody, Dwight L. **Heaven**. Reprint. Moody Press, 1995.
- Stowell, Joseph. **Eternity: Reclaiming a Passion for What Endures**. Chicago: Moody Press, 1995.
- Tada, Joni Eareckson. **Heaven: Your Real Home**. Zondervan, 1997.

b. The mother of the child is an unmarried woman. Why did Isaiah designate her by this particular word 'almâ? It is sometimes said that had he wished to teach a virgin birth there was a good word at his disposal, namely, b^etûlâ. But an examination of the usage of the latter word in OT reveals that it was very unsatisfactory, in that it would have been ambiguous. The word b^etûlâ may designate a virgin, but when it does the explanatory phrase 'and a man had not known her' is often added (cf. Gn.24:16). The word may also designate a betrothed virgin (cf. Dt.22:23ff.) In this latter case the virgin is known as the wife ('iššâ) of the man, and he as her husband ('iš). But the word b^etûlâ may also indicate a married woman (Joel 1:8). On the basis of this latter passage a tradition arose among the Jews in which the word could clearly refer to a married woman. Had Isaiah employed this word, therefore, it would not have been clear what type of woman he had in mind, whether virgin or married. Other Hebrew words which were at his disposal would not be satisfactory. Had he wished to designate the mother as a young woman he would most likely have employed the common term na^arâ ('girl'). In using the word 'almâ, however, Isaiah employs the one word which is never applied (either in the Bible or in the other Near Eastern sources) to anyone but an unmarried woman. This unmarried woman might have been immoral, in which case the birth could hardly have been a sign. We are left then with the conclusion that the mother was a good woman and yet unmarried; in other words, the birth was supernatural. It is the presence of this word 'almâ which makes an application of the passage to some local birth difficult, if not impossible.

c. We must note the force of the term Immanuel. A natural reading of the passage would lead us to expect that the presence of God is to be seen in the birth of the child himself. This interpretation, however, is seriously disputed, and vigorously rejected by most modern writers on the passage. The presence of God is found, rather, so we are told, in the deliverance of Judah from her two northern enemies. The infancy of the child is made the measure of time that would elapse until the two enemies are removed. Such a period of time would be short—a child learns the difference between good and evil at a tender age.

Hence, within, say, 2 years, or possibly even less, Judah would have nothing to fear from Syria and Israel. In this deliverance the presence of God would be manifested, and as a token or pledge of this deliverance some mother would call her child Immanuel.

This interpretation poses tremendous problems which it does not answer. What warrant would a mother have for naming her particular child Immanuel? How could she know that her own child and no other would be a sign that in 2 years or so the presence of God would be manifested in the deliverance of Judah from Syria and Israel? Furthermore, how would Israel itself know that a particular child had been born in answer to the prophecy and that the birth of this particular child would be the promised sign? It would seem that, if the prophecy refers to a local birth, the child to be born must be someone prominent. The most prominent person, namely Hezekiah, is ruled out, and therefore we must assume that it is a child of Isaiah or some other child of Ahaz. But this is also ruled out by the word 'almâ. Neither the wife of Ahaz nor the wife of Isaiah could properly be designated an 'almâ, for the obvious reason that both were married women.

It seems best, then, to apply the name Immanuel to the Child himself. In his birth the presence of God is to be found. God has come to his people in a little Child, that very Child whom Isaiah later names 'Mighty God' ('ēl gibbôr). This interpretation is strengthened by the fact that Isaiah is seeking to dissuade men from trusting the Assyrian king. The nation's help rests not in Assyria but in God. In this dark moment God is with his people. He is found in the birth of a Child.

The infancy of the divine Child is a measure of the time that will elapse until Ahaz is freed from the fear of his two northern enemies (Is. 7:15-16). Ahaz rejects the sign of Immanuel, and turns to the king of Assyria. That king and his successors caused Judah's downfall, but for the remnant there was given the promise of Immanuel, and in Immanuel they would find their hope and salvation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY. E. J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, 1, 1964; E. W. Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament*, 1856, 2, pp. 26-66; J. G. Machen, *The Virgin Birth of Christ*, 1930; J. Lindblom, *A Study on the Immanuel Section in Isaiah*, 1957/8; J. S. Wright, C. Brown, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* vol.2, pp. 86f.